

PLATO'S *PSYCHAGŌGIA* IN THE COMPOSITION CLASSROOM:
EMOTION AND EMPOWERMENT

by

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ABSTRACT

This dissertation argues that Plato's idea of *psychagōgia* offers a philosophical foundation for recent research in rhetoric and composition studies regarding the role of emotions in the composition process and the benefits of a pedagogy that helps students become better aware of their emotions through the process of writing. Four distinct but related arguments are presented:

- (i) Plato's concept of *psychagōgia* offers a framework for composition teachers who believe that emotional self-awareness enables students to make more effective rhetorical moves as writers and, ideally, to take control of their development as individuals.
- (ii) Composition instructors who believe emotion plays a significant role in the process of learning are better served by adopting a theory of emotion that accounts for psychological shifts that must occur as students learn to use writing as a cognitive tool and as an effective tool for communication.
- (iii) The treatment of emotions throughout the history of therapy (St. Paul, St. Augustine, Freud) and within contemporary psychotherapy is an excellent resource for teachers who seek to help students become more aware of the role of emotional processes in their thinking (metacognition).
- (iv) Students who understand their own emotions develop a greater self-awareness, enabling them to move beyond inflexible ideologies and to consciously choose philosophical principles to guide their lives. The

health of a democratic society depends on educational institutions and programs that nurture this type of self-awareness.

I link Plato and Socrates to the modern composition classroom, first, by providing a detailed examination of how the idea of *psychagōgia* is used in the *Phaedrus*. Because the idea appears in therapeutic discourses of early Christian fathers, I examine St. Paul, St. Augustine, and then jump to Freud, exploring the connections between pedagogy and psychotherapy and outlining verbal therapeutic techniques used by modern therapists that may be useful in a psychagogic pedagogy. The dissertation concludes with suggestions for future research into the potential of *psychagōgia* in the composition classroom.

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

The roles of emotion in composition courses have attracted the attention of many composition researchers in the past decade. While some models of teaching discourage instructors from discussing or engaging with students' emotions, this recent research suggests that emotion cannot be disengaged from the writing process and that, as such, it should be taken into consideration when instructors make pedagogical choices. The research discussed throughout this dissertation will set forth two distinct but intertwined tasks for composition instructors: (1) to consider how our actions and the institutions we represent attempt to shape students' emotional lives and (2) to promote emotional self-awareness in our students in the hopes of empowering them as students, as consumers, as citizens, and as individuals. There will be a great deal of discussion about how emotional awareness (empathizing with and respecting the emotions of others) and emotional self-awareness (noticing and understanding our own emotions) might lead to positive changes in our larger social and political environment. Although emotion is often the driving force for political change in general, the social and political implications here are not quite as direct. I believe, as do many of the authors cited in this project, that making students aware of their own emotions may set them on a path toward greater awareness of their place in society (how they are affected by the people and institutions around them), which can make them more conscientious consumers and citizens. Individuals' emotional self-awareness, then, can have an important indirect impact on a larger society, primarily through each person's increased engagement in the political system and more thoughtful responses to social issues. My belief (again,

supported by much of the research in the following chapters) is that writing is an effective tool for increasing an individual's emotional self-awareness and that, therefore, the composition instructor has a valuable opportunity to help students initiate this process of self-empowerment.

As I demonstrate below and in chapter 2, this potential has been well researched and many promising approaches have been articulated in composition studies over the last fifteen years. What I offer in this dissertation is a new framework for pursuing the aforementioned goals: Plato's concept of *psychagōgia* (as expressed in the *Phaedrus*) and the pedagogical tradition that was born of this idea. This dissertation examines Plato's concept of *psychagōgia*, traces its influence on later thinkers, and argues that its focus on the psychology of learning makes *psychagōgia* a valuable framework for composition pedagogy.

Background

One example of recent composition research on emotion and the composition classroom, notable for the breadth of topics it covers as well as its articulation of key issues, is *A Way to Move: Rhetorics of Emotion & Composition Studies*, edited by Dale Jacobs and Laura R. Micciche. In their introduction, the editors explain the reasoning behind the book's title:

In particular, we are interested in emotion's capacity to construct a culture of movement in opposition to one of ossification, and in thinking about emotion as

a central ingredient in the act of persuasion that has the potential to move our discipline in new directions. (2)

The editors note that the Latin root of *emotion* is *motere* (*sic*)¹, which they define as “to move.” This etymology suggests “that a tendency to act is implicit in every emotion. Movement, or repositioning oneself in the face of ever-changing situations, is a central goal of both classical and contemporary rhetorical theory” (3). Jacobs and Micciche are interested in emotion not just as an element of persuasion, but as a force with its own energy; analyzing how emotion works in writing and in teaching can lead to more effective persuasive strategies, but can also ensure that rhetoric as a discipline continues to adapt itself to the evolving demands of human communication.

Contemporary rhetoricians have pointed out and interrogated the separation of pathos from logos in the history of rhetoric and how that separation (along with the privileging of logos over pathos) has influenced our current understanding of how persuasion works; Susan Miller traces the history of this separation in *Trust in Texts*, and Megan Boler considers its political and social ramifications in *Feeling Power*.

Other composition researchers have continued this look outward at social implications and have focused on the possibility that actively working with eros/emotion/affect in the classroom might have broader social and political implications. In *Eros as the Educational Principle of Democracy*, Kerry Burch argues that eros, which he defines

¹ The correct Latin verb is *movere*.

broadly as “passion and connection,” is an essential ingredient in an education that intends to empower students to engage in democracy (1). In *Changing the Subject in English Class: Discourse and the Constructions of Desire*, Marshall Alcorn argues that the writing classroom is a place where students can develop an awareness of their own desires, which will enable them to take control over their ideologies and political and social energies. Alcorn explains that a change in ideology – when a deeply held belief is proven incorrect, for example – sets into motion a process of mourning not unlike grieving for someone who has passed away. The intensity of this mourning is a sign of the strength of our attachments to our ideologies. With an understanding of students’ attachments to their ideologies and the process by which they can learn to question those ideologies, Alcorn argues, composition instructors can guide students through the process, enabling them to be more intentional about their beliefs and actions. Marilyn Cooper explores this process from another angle, claiming that writers can be taught to self-reflexively interpret their writing and understand it as a process of identity formation; she refers to the work of neuroscientists Walter Freeman and Antonio Damasio, among others, who point out that emotions occur as part of a largely unconscious process by which we respond to external stimuli. The choices we make in response to specific emotions accumulate and form our personalities, according to the work of developmental neuroscientist Marc Lewis (as discussed by Cooper). What we write and say, then, becomes part of who we are, and if students understand the “constructedness” of identity, they can then listen to others more mindfully and persuade them more effectively.

These works suggest to me that we can use students’ own emotional responses to their

lives and their positions in our society as part of the persuasive process as we teach writing, and we can show students that their emotions are valuable tools for use in their own persuasive writing. In this way, we can pursue one of the many goals shared by composition instructors using critical pedagogy techniques: encouraging students to examine their own ideologies and their implications.

Several researchers in psychology and communications have argued that the processes used in therapy are rhetorical and should be interpreted as such - that is, not only that these processes use language to bring about a desired change of perspective in the listener, but also that an approach to therapy expresses a particular philosophy about the nature of the mind and about what experiences or states of mental and emotional being are ideal. Psychologist Michael Guilfoyle critiques therapy's tendency to "reproduce Western ideals about being human" (298); his insights imply that other forms of Western discourse might have similar effects—like the rhetoric used by instructors of first year composition. Communication researcher Loyd S. Pettegrew examines the inherently rhetorical nature of the verbal techniques used in therapy; psycholinguist Kathleen Warden Ferrara outlines some of those techniques, providing grammatical and rhetorical descriptions of verbal therapeutic moves and how they function.

Researchers in composition also have suggested that we should bring therapeutic techniques into the classroom. Mark Bracher suggests that the principles of psychoanalysis can be used to anticipate, analyze, and resolve obstacles that many writers face (a wide range of anxieties about their writing, for example). Wendy Bishop has called

for further research into the overlap between therapeutic roles and the writing instructor's position in the learning process, encouraging respect for students' "affective needs" (514; see also Beard et al.). These observations on the rhetorical nature of therapy and on the specific rhetorical techniques used in therapeutic settings can be used to enable composition instructors to embrace the therapeutic value of the teaching of rhetoric—that is, to acknowledge the ways in which control over language allows us to express ourselves more clearly, to communicate with others more effectively, and most importantly for my purposes here, to understand our own emotions and their implications.

These insights are valuable, but most do not explicitly acknowledge the philosophical roots that generated both modern psychology and modern pedagogy or explore how those roots influence current practice. Previous scholarship on this topic makes the connection between therapy and the classroom but does not look into the roots of therapy for historical perspectives on how to apply theories of emotion in the composition classroom.

The contribution of my dissertation to composition research is that it examines Plato's vision of *psychagōgia* for clues as to how we might understand the role of emotion in the process of learning to write, and it explores how we might use that understanding to improve our techniques for teaching composition. In following with Plato's own depiction of the practice of *psychagōgia*, this dissertation also argues that psychotherapeutic techniques are appropriate and might be beneficial for enacting Plato's vi-

sion. A discussion of the rhetorical dimension of therapy will help to lay the groundwork for this transfer of techniques from psychology to composition pedagogy. Plato's conception of *psychagōgia* offers both a philosophy of education (what education should do and the teacher's role in that process) and a model for how the instructor can use the student's own emotional responses to guide the student toward increased emotional self-awareness, as well as awareness of rhetorical situations both within the classroom and outside the walls of the university.

Purpose of Study

The question that has guided my research is as follows: how might Plato's idea of *psychagōgia* contribute to recent research on the role of emotion in the teaching of composition? As an extension of this question: can *psychagōgia* offer a framework for helping first-year composition students to become more aware of their own emotions, allowing them to make more conscientious decisions as writers and as citizens?

In the course of the chapters that follow, I will build the following argument:

- (1) *Psychagōgia* offers a framework for helping students to develop metacognition and increase their emotional self-awareness, which may in turn improve their writing skills.
- (2) The influence of *psychagōgia* on later writers functions as a historical precedent for the controversial use of therapeutic approaches in the classroom.
- (3) Rhetorical moves currently used in psychotherapy could be an effective way

to adapt *psychagōgia* for the modern composition classroom, offering some of the benefits of psychotherapy to students of composition.

A Note on Terminology

Readers will notice that I have used the term *empowerment* in the title of this dissertation and that the term is used throughout the text, as well, to indicate the goal of the psychagogic pedagogy I have envisioned: to help students develop the skills and awareness necessary to make more conscientious decisions and intentional moves as writers, as citizens, and as individuals. Researchers in rhetoric and composition have pointed to the problems with the concept of empowerment, primarily the idea that it reinforces the traditional hierarchy of wise teacher and ignorant student, or the “banking” model of education, where the student is a passive recipient of static knowledge (see Luke and Gore). In using the term *empowerment*, I do not wish to lend my support to these paternalistic models of teaching; instead, my definition arises from and was developed within the overlap between teaching and therapy, in which I have been immersed during the writing of this dissertation.

My use of the term, then, means giving students the tools to be in control of their own words, decisions, and actions. As a composition instructor, my work focuses on teaching rhetorical skills, but as a firm believer in the life-altering potential of psychotherapy, I also include self-reflection and emotional self-awareness in this ideal hypothetical toolkit.

I hope readers will bear in mind that I am aware of the loaded nature of the word *empowerment*, and that when I use this term, I am not implying that the teacher (or therapist) is the infallible and benevolent source of the power in question. Rather, I am suggesting that we are in a unique position to help students reach their own goals, which are established in relation to their own values and beliefs.

Scope and Limitations

Despite my passion for this topic, I am well aware that it is beyond the scope of a dissertation to explore every facet, application, and implication of *psychagōgia*. The scope of this study examines the origins, legacy, and modern manifestations of *psychagōgia*. My project also includes a survey of recent relevant studies exploring topics relating to emotion in composition studies, the benefits of therapeutic approaches to teaching, and historical perspectives on the relationship between teaching and therapy (or moral guidance). This study does not include specific pedagogical applications of therapeutic technique, as the emphasis here is on establishing the historical precedent for such an application. I do see this as a possible next step in this research, however, and one of the primary practical applications of this work. My conclusion will explore this possibility as well as several other ideas for further research. I will also outline some of the implications of my project's insights for composition studies and for research in the history of rhetoric.

Potential Contributions to Rhetoric and Composition Scholarship

While there have been several efforts to revive ancient, especially classical principles of education and apply them to composition pedagogy (see Gibson), this work has not been conducted with particular attention to Plato's philosophy of *psychagōgia*. My approach is unique in its attention to Plato's vision but also in its attempt to draw together voices from the categories of research mentioned above and to speak to the implications of a composition pedagogy based on *psychagōgia*. My aim is to foreground *psychagōgia* as a useful framework for a composition pedagogy, to propose the use of verbal therapeutic techniques as a part of this pedagogy, and to establish a historical precedent for taking steps toward the development of a psychagogic pedagogy.

Structure

The following chapter provides a literature review showing a gap in scholarship and establishing how this project will work toward filling that gap. I summarize a series of recent books and articles in composition studies (and other fields ranging from psychoanalysis to the history of rhetoric), demonstrating the ways in which these scholars have explored topics relating to emotion, writing, learning, and the context of Plato's ideas. I will demonstrate how this work in rhetoric and composition studies has made my project possible. I will also establish the theoretical relevance of this project by pointing to the ways in which this study provides a unique and valuable contribution to the scholarship on the teaching of writing: by analyzing *psychagōgia* as it is represented in the *Phaedrus*, surveying the history of depictions of verbal therapy, presenting some

of the most common techniques used in verbal therapy today, and arguing that these techniques are the best means by which to adapt *psychagōgia* for the modern composition classroom.

Chapter 3 establishes a historical precedent for a psychagogic pedagogy by turning the focus to *psychagōgia* itself, examining Plato's *Phaedrus* as the original presentation of the concept. This chapter includes an analysis of Plato's definition of *psychagōgia* and an examination of the three elements that comprise it: eros as driving force, the knowledge of self, and the knowledge of souls. I also analyze the metaphor Plato used to describe the structure of the soul: briefly, Plato depicts the soul as a chariot drawn by two horses representing opposing impulses, steered by a charioteer who must carefully control the horses in order to reach his destination. I draw out its implications for the argument Plato makes about the process of learning and the relationship between teacher and student. In this chapter, readers will gain a familiarity with the aims of pedagogical *psychagōgia*, which allows me to argue later that this idea is well suited for use in the modern composition classroom.

Chapter 4 establishes that *psychagōgia* is a predecessor, in many ways, to modern psychotherapy by outlining the history of depictions of verbal psychotherapy. I will begin before Plato, with the Homeric epic, exploring the roots of the use of words to heal. I then examine *psychagōgia* as it is depicted and discussed in the works of the apostle Paul, Augustine, and Freud. I also examine scholarship that establishes an important connection between rhetoric and psychotherapy, paving the way for applying modern verbal techniques in a psychagogic pedagogy. This connection allows me to outline

some of the most common verbal/rhetorical techniques used in modern psychotherapy sessions, with the hope that these will be useful for the development of pedagogical techniques inspired by *psychagōgia*.

When I first encountered the term *psychagōgia* in Plato's *Phaedrus* during my graduate coursework, I was excited to see that there might be a historical precedent for my own personal perception of the relationship between emotion and learning. For me, *psychagōgia* was a chance to explore the passion that fueled my education as well as to ask difficult questions about how we might motivate students who, for a variety of reasons, do not arrive on campus with an inherent love of learning. I hoped that research on this topic might guide me towards other thinkers who could elaborate on his idea and that I might develop insights that would allow teachers to reach more of their students—to show students that writing is for everyone, and that learning to use language is empowering beyond their wildest expectations. It is my hope that this study opens the door to a new avenue for exploring these issues, and that ultimately, my work will contribute to our collective quest to engage students in their own education, and to empower them to use their language(s) intentionally and effectively, for their own aims.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

In the *Phaedrus*, Plato stages a dialogue between Socrates and his young student, Phaedrus. The young man is carrying a copy of a speech by Lysias which he has recently heard and finds quite impressive. Socrates persuades Phaedrus to read the speech to him and at first, pretends to be equally impressed. Eventually, though, he refutes Lysias's arguments against love and steers Phaedrus away from clever speeches and toward a more earnest pursuit of self-knowledge. Socrates pushes the young man to articulate his stance on rhetoric and to question that stance by examining the underlying beliefs; he then offers Phaedrus another way of thinking about his education, one that can empower him to increase in self-awareness and take a more active role. It is the goals of empowerment and increased self-awareness that led me, upon my first encounter with the *Phaedrus*, to wonder about the similarities between Plato's *psychagōgia* and both modern psychotherapy and pedagogy. All three practices share certain characteristics, like empathy for the student/client² and awareness of her personality, and all three strive toward the goal of personal empowerment and independence. One goal of psychotherapy is to teach the client a set of tools so that she may eventually be able to see her own beliefs and behaviors clearly and to manage her own emotional and mental health. A primary goal of pedagogy is to, over time, teach students certain skills and

² When referring to a person who has sought out psychotherapy, I will use the term 'client,' following the lead of researchers in the field of psychology, who tend to see the term 'patient' as pathologizing the psychological phenomena that lead people to seek out and benefit from therapy. 'Client' also emphasizes the individual's agency in choosing therapy and in participating in the therapeutic process.

techniques for learning new concepts, so that they can ultimately manage new information on their own, gauging their understanding and responding with appropriate adjustments in their study habits, research techniques, etc. The same goal of gradual empowerment can be seen in Socrates' explanation of *psychagōgia* in the *Phaedrus*.

Although *psychagōgia* is a rather obscure term, most educators are familiar with the Socratic dialogue: Socrates' technique of asking questions to lead students to a particular point or question using the students' own reasoning. *Psychagōgia*, though, is the underlying philosophical framework that is expressed through Socratic dialogue. This framework, of course, can be applied to many other aspects of classroom teaching. For this reason, this chapter includes a wide variety of disciplines, from philosophy of education to psychotherapy.

The first step is to explore if/when/how *psychagōgia* has already been discussed by scholars in order to consider how it might be useful in the writing classroom. Have other composition scholars explored the overlap between psychotherapy and pedagogy? Have they viewed this overlap favorably? Why or why not? What has been said about how we might use psychological frameworks and/or therapeutic techniques in the classroom, and how have scholars proposed that we might do this?

Very little research has been completed on *psychagōgia*, and what has been published is divided among several source texts (Luke, Paul, and Greek tragedy as a whole, to name a few). The only researchers who specifically discuss *psychagōgia* in the *Phaedrus* - and use the term *psychagōgia* - are Elizabeth Asmis and D.P.E. Muir, who will be

discussed in detail in Chapter 3. There are other researchers who have examined psychagogy in other texts, but the scope of this dissertation does not allow me to pursue each of these individual threads. Due to the limited research on *psychagōgia*, the most helpful approach to this task is to determine what other terminology might describe the practice Plato calls *psychagōgia*. A number of scholars have highlighted the therapeutic nature of the Socratic method as described by Plato, whether through direct analysis of Plato's work (see Geddes, Simon) or by comparing Socrates to Freud (see Bergmann, Sandford).

Some of the studies I have explored in this chapter focus specifically on the topic of therapy. Others, though, look at emotion more broadly – how do students' emotions influence their work in the writing classroom? How can our emotions impact our society on a larger scale? How do our assumptions about emotion impact our work, both in research and in teaching? An overview of this larger conversation about emotion in the field of composition and rhetoric is crucial to understanding how *psychagōgia* can contribute to modern composition pedagogy. Although some of the sources mentioned below discuss emotion in a theoretical sense, their arguments have direct implications for the possible benefits of a psychagogic pedagogy. In addition, *psychagōgia* itself is more of an emotional process than a cognitive one, as my analysis of the *Phaedrus* makes clear. It is with this emotional process in mind that I have selected relevant studies to include in this literature review.

In order to situate my project in relation to previous scholarship, I will first review pertinent scholarship in the field of composition pedagogy, examining texts in chronological order so as to show how the idea of emotion has grown and evolved in composition studies. I will then expand my focus to encompass philosophy, classics, and rhetoric. Readers will notice that much of the literature in Part I is most concerned with the individual and therapeutic potential of the study of emotion, while many of the sources in Part II focus on the social and political implications. While many authors come to the study of emotion in education with goals that fit neatly into one of these two categories, some studies of emotion attempt to bridge the gap, arguing that the benefits to the individual of emotional self-awareness can have positive effects on the larger society. This dissertation is one such study; my arguments (as outlined in Chapter 1) encompass both areas of concern. While these two categories are useful for focusing our attention on specific aspects of emotion in education, the two purposes are inextricably intertwined. The belief that the work we do in the classroom has an impact on the world outside the walls of the university is essential to the work of most composition researchers and is central to this dissertation.

Part I

It would be impossible to outline all that has been said in composition studies regarding emotion in this chapter; instead, I have chosen to focus on a variety of studies that are relevant to the aims of this study (introducing *psychagōgia* to fellow scholars

and educators and arguing that it is potentially useful as an approach to teaching writing).

One recurring theme among several of these texts is the idea that writing is *already* therapy – that the act of writing necessarily involves the mental and emotional processes that are the focus of modern psychotherapy. In some cases, this argument relies upon an underlying constructivist philosophy of the self – the idea that our identities are socially and culturally constructed rather than inherent or fixed. If the self is constructed as we interact with environments (physical, social, political), language is certainly an important mediator in this process. And if language is how we are constructed, then writing – along with an awareness of our constructed nature – gives us the power to reconstruct ourselves in intentional ways.

Another common thread visible here is the underlying philosophy that awareness of one's own emotions leads to empowerment. One of the primary aims of psychotherapy is to bring our unconscious desires and beliefs into conscious view so that we are no longer mystified by self-destructive habits or behaviors that prevent us from living the lives we desire. Writing itself can be integral to this process; writing even has the potential to enact this process of uncovering the unconscious on its own. It follows, then, that in our work of teaching students to write and to see themselves as writers, we can give them the tools to liberate themselves from counterproductive habits and limiting beliefs.

Finally, many of these scholars ask us to consider the larger implications of acknowledging emotion in the writing classroom, working with, rather than against, the emotions students experience as they move through the joys and challenges of a composition course. Many of the authors included here argue that changing the way we discuss and respond to emotion in the writing classroom will have a profound impact on how emotion is viewed and talked about in society on a larger scale. The implication is that a society that is respectful of emotion and acknowledges its role in social and political institutions is better equipped to meet the needs of all its people.

Wendy Bishop's article "Writing Is/And Therapy?: Raising Questions about Writing Classrooms and Writing Program Administration" (1993) is an example of the notion that writing and learning to write are already therapeutic processes. Bishop calls for further research into the overlap between therapeutic roles and the writing instructor's position in the learning process, arguing that we must respect and anticipate students' "affective needs" (514) (see also Beard et al.). In a discussion of Romantic notions of authorship, Bishop points out that writers have been known to perpetuate the myth of writing as an elite art. Reaffirming that anyone can learn to write effectively and that everyone has something to say, on the other hand, is crucial if we want students to experience writing as "a personally empowering, often curative, and necessary way to de-

velop a literate self-in-society" (506). Bishop suggests that overtly explaining to students that writing can be "part of a therapeutic process of coming of age" (506) may be a way to engage students.

In a chapter entitled "What's Love Got to Do With It?: Eros in the Writing Classroom," Susan Kirtley points to other ways in which therapeutic potential is already embedded in the writing classroom. Kirtley attempts to "create [her] own constructions of eros" and consider how they "might assist in [her] goals as a composition instructor" (57). Kirtley points out several ways in which the act of writing is an embodiment of the true spirit of eros. First, she connects her understanding of eros to Plato's explanation of it by citing philosopher Cheryl Ann Hall, who says Plato saw eros not as an "ideal state" but as a "source of movement" (as quoted in Kirtley 57-58). Kirtley then suggests that "writing functions similarly to eros, bringing together author and audience and making connections between separated parties" (61). She also reflects on the mythical origin story of eros—the child of Need and Resource—and observes that writing and eros "originate... both in abundance and lack," in the sense that writers have a message or an understanding that they wish to share with their audiences (61). This thoughtful connection between the nature of eros and the act of writing affirms the suggestion (set forth by Burch, Boler, and others) that the writing classroom is an environment uniquely suited for exploring the education of emotions—that is, how emotions (including the emotions of teachers and students) influence and are influenced by social structures and institutions.

In her article “‘Feeling lore’: the ‘problem’ of emotion in the practice of teaching” (2011), Christy Wenger makes an argument for embodied writing pedagogies as a way of “entextualising” the writer’s bodily experience of emotion rather than attempting to exclude it from considerations of how we learn to write. In other words the writer experiences emotion as an inherent part of being human; acknowledging this in our pedagogies is only embracing the already emotional processes of writing (thereby potentially producing a therapeutic effect). Wenger explains that feelings are best understood as both organic and culturally and linguistically defined, implying a connection between a student’s emotional life and the process of learning to express herself in a variety of discourses. Although Wenger sees emotional and critical literacy as the higher goal of these embodied writing pedagogies (like Alcorn and others, including myself), her argument also serves to establish students’ emotions as a crucial consideration in the composition classroom; in particular, Wenger worries that in excluding all emotion from academic discourse (or the version of it that we ask our students to imitate), we “den[y] students the possibility of passionate investigation and argumentation” (55).

Lad Tobin provides a wealth of support for the argument that what happens in the writing classroom is already very similar to psychotherapy in his book *Reading Student Writing: Confessions, Meditations, and Rants* (2004). Tobin argues that, in responding to students’ personal narratives, it is inappropriate to focus entirely on mechanics, ignoring content, but that it is also inappropriate to ignore the text and focus on the trauma or the incident discussed, as a therapist would (46). Instead, he encourages the

instructor to ask questions and make observations as a reader, helping the student to see possible gaps between his intended message and what readers are likely to glean from the text. This approach teaches students important rhetorical skills, with the added benefit of potentially spurring them to reflect further on the content they've discussed.

Tobin also makes an impassioned plea for the immeasurable value of psychoanalytic approaches to reading and responding to student writing. As Tobin makes clear, composition instructors are not trying to take over the role of the therapist, but simply to use the wealth of insights offered by psychoanalytic theory to help students "gain access to and control over unconscious material" (54). Tobin concludes his first chapter by saying he is "tired of being defensive about something we ought to be proud of—the way our field, like psychotherapy, can help people make sense and gain control of their personal as well as their public lives" (55).

Mark Bracher, whose research focuses on the social benefits of humanities education, presents one example of the argument that emotional self-awareness can empower students. Bracher argues for a psychoanalytic approach to writing instruction in *The Writing Cure: Psychoanalysis, Composition, and the Aims of Education* (1999). Bracher writes for a wide audience, explaining to educators, mental health professionals, and "cultural workers" (teachers, critics, etc) how all of their goals can be advanced by "exploring the intersection" between writing and psychoanalysis (1). To his audience of teachers, Bracher offers three benefits of his approach:

“...a psychoanalytic perspective can offer unique and valuable insights into (a) central but often hidden forces operating in the writing process, (b) the sources of writing problems, and (c) the dynamics of writing instruction.” (1)

He argues that mental health professionals ought to take an interest in this subject because writing offers a new direction for the practice of psychoanalysis and for research into its processes. Finally, Bracher explains to cultural workers that a psychoanalytic pedagogy for composition can help to “undermine the psychological roots” (2) of some of the most pressing social problems, many of which fall under the umbrella of intolerance. Bracher also roots his argument in composition scholarship, suggesting ways that his method might help to achieve the goals of both expressivists and social constructivists. Although Bracher stops short of offering a complete psychoanalytic pedagogy, he offers suggestions as to what the classroom dynamic might look like when an instructor uses this approach, and he responds confidently to some of the most common objections to incorporating psychotherapeutic approaches into classroom pedagogy.

T. R. Johnson explores the nature of authorial pleasure in composition pedagogy in his book *A Rhetoric of Pleasure: Prose Style & Today's Composition Classroom* (2003) (particularly the chapter entitled “Desire and the Question of What the Teacher Does”). He focuses on the ways in which teachers can show their students the joy and moments of discovery that can come with the process of writing. In this chapter, he discusses the various theorists and writers who have connected writing to self-actualization, and he

explains that teachers can model writerly behaviors, making their enthusiasm for writing “contagious.” Johnson, then, presents joy and pleasure as ways to engage students in writing so that they may experience self-actualization.

Marilyn Cooper explores empowerment from another angle in an article entitled “Rhetorical Agency as Emergent and Enacted” (2011), claiming that writers can be taught to self-reflexively interpret their writing and understand it as a process of identity formation. This ultimately allows them to understand the ‘constructedness’ of identity and allows them to both listen to others and persuade them more effectively. Helping students to examine their own ideologies (and their implications) empowers them with improved communication skills as well as greater awareness of their position within social and political structures.

Marshall Alcorn reveals the connections between individual self-awareness and potential social change in his book *Changing the Subject in English Class: Discourse and the Constructions of Desire* (2002). Alcorn (whose background is in psychoanalytic and Lacanian interpretation) demonstrates how changes in ideologies result in a process of mourning, arguing that the writing classroom is a place where students can be empowered to take control over their ideologies and political and social energies. Alcorn examines the roots of political tension and violence. In his view, the concept of desire is the key to creating societies in which the greater good is top priority for all citizens. Alcorn is concerned with the forces that prevent dialectic from generating new truths. This leads him to elaborate on the forces at work in disagreement, and ultimately, to explore

what makes up the self. He presents a very persuasive argument for a social-constructivist view of the self, and he argues that what we often see as pure expression or a student's personal opinion is still shaped by a variety of social forces.

Alcorn connects *psychagōgia* to a larger view of what politics is really about: desire is at the center. Although Alcorn does not directly define desire, he does point to Lacan as the philosophical foundation for his argument. T. R. Johnson, another rhetorical scholar who explores ways of applying Lacanian theory to composition pedagogy, provides the following "working definition" of desire as Lacan uses the term:

...if all creatures that are conscious are, at some level or another, conscious of the possibility of not being conscious (that is, of dying), then they must repress this awareness of their mortality in order to get on with the business of surviving as long as possible. This repression takes the form of an insatiable hunger for physical presence, for Being, and this hunger Lacan calls desire. (Johnson 90-1)

Alcorn makes it clear that desire is not an individual, subjective yearning that arises from our unique personalities. The desire we express in our speech "is a socially constructed entity that operates our subjectivity without our ever choosing or thinking" (32). If what we desire is shaped by our environment, then what we think of as "free speech" is merely a "symptom—a blind, unthinking form of repetition—of cultural practice" (Alcorn 32). It is in the next step of Alcorn's argument that Plato's *psychagōgia* becomes relevant:

If desire is the simple product of a cultural practice, then politically progressive teachers should not encourage freely expressed desires. They should, instead, seek to change desire. Good teaching should make desire work for the social good. (32)

This passage shows a clear departure from the expressivist mindset. While the expressivists seek to teach students to freely express their desires, Alcorn argues that changing the desire itself is a truly progressive aim. He believes that the composition classroom is a place where these skills of expressing desire and responding to the desires of others can be learned. *Psychagōgia* offers a philosophy and a specific set of strategies that can be used to enact Alcorn's vision.

Editors Dale Jacobs and Laura Micciche also direct our attention to the larger social implications of how emotions are framed in the composition classroom in the Introduction to their edited collection *A Way to Move: Rhetorics of Emotion and Composition Studies* (2003). Jacobs and Micciche state that one purpose of the volume is to argue that emotion is not just an "affective response to a situation" but that it also "enables and disables change" (2). The essays in this collection, according to the editors, "make visible the way emotion structures and is structured by our various professional locations" — classrooms, departments, and universities (3). While exposing this relationship between emotion and academic institutions, the editors also point to the essential social function of rhetoric: "Effective rhetoric... moves us towards new ways of knowing and creates avenues for social change" (3). Referring to their use of the word *move* in the

book's title, Jacobs and Micciche note that "movement.... gestures toward a sense of collective identity and social contestation central to movements for change that produce shifts in thinking and seeing" (3). Thus the collection is bound together, in part, by the belief that the work we do in the classroom can have far-reaching effects on our society. The editors quote feminist philosopher Alison Jaggar:

When unconventional emotional responses are experienced by isolated individuals, those concerned may be confused, unable to name their experience; they may even doubt their own sanity... When certain emotions are shared or validated by others, however, the basis exists for forming a subculture defined by perceptions, norms, and values. (as quoted in Jacobs and Micciche 5)

This possibility supports the notion that emotional responses, while partially shaped by institutions, can be reclaimed and declared publicly, and thus can serve as catalysts for major social movements. The editors conclude their introduction by quoting Lynn Worsham, a scholar of rhetoric and feminist theory (who also contributes an afterword), who argues that "the work of decolonization must occur at the affective level, not only to reconstitute the emotional life of the individual but also, and more importantly, to restructure the mood or feeling that characterizes an age" (Jacobs and Micciche 6). Thus the collection gathers essays on a variety of facets of emotion in composition but also suggests that the true importance of this topic lies in the effects that a shift in our discourse on emotion can have outside the walls (literal and figurative) of the

university. In particular, the chapters contributed by Susan Kirtley and Janet Bean, in addition to Worsham's afterword, are most pertinent here.

Janet Bean's chapter "Manufacturing Emotions: Tactical Resistance in the Narratives of Working-Class Students" focuses our attention on student writing as evidence of the connection between emotion in the classroom and the values of a larger society. Bean relates her experiences living and teaching in Akron, Ohio, a city dramatically changed by the loss of manufacturing jobs. Bean explores the ways in which her students, many of them the first in their families to attend college, write about their parents' hard work, the blessing and burdens of being first generation college students, and their beliefs about the American economic system as a meritocracy. Bean takes a stance quite distinct from that of other composition scholars: instead of exploring how teachers can provide their students with new ways of experiencing and expressing emotion, she looks at students' own methods of using the emotional responses expected of them by accepting them, rejecting them, or some combination of the two.

Emotion... can function as a powerful tactic when introduced into academic discourse because it opens up a rhetorical space for ambiguity and disrupts—at least for a moment—the privileged position of rationality. (104)

In addition to reflecting on how our pedagogies shape students' emotions, Bean suggests that we might begin by looking at how students are already expressing emotion in their writing in ways that constitute resistance to this shaping. For example, when students reflect on the physical pain their parents suffer as a result of manual labor,

...they challenge prevailing discourses of success that insist on a disembodied view of work. Expressions of emotion, particularly those of obligation and gratitude, become tropes through which children can acknowledge their parents' suffering, attribute meaning to bodily pain, and offer critique from within dominant narratives. (106)

For instance, a student can express gratitude for her mother's hard work as a hairdresser while also critiquing an economy in which that kind of hard work is necessary for survival, let alone for supporting a child who is attending college. Through these examples, Bean shows that cultural critiques made through "rhetorics of emotions and lived experience" are just as powerful as those made through "the explicit cultural critiques of Marxism, feminism, and postmodernism" (111). More importantly, students can resist the education of emotions – Bean refers to this as "ethical work" (112) – effectively without intentional efforts on the part of their instructors to help them do so. In other words, students become aware of how their emotions influence and are influenced by social structures and institutions and may actively resist this mutual influence in their writing. This lends credence to the idea that the composition classroom is an ideal place to encourage this sort of analysis and articulation of emotional responses.

In her afterword to the collection, "Moving Beyond a Sentimental Education," Lynn Worsham makes a plea for continued research on the relationship between individual emotion and social institutions, particularly educational ones. Worsham reflects

on Toni Morrison's acclaimed novel *The Bluest Eye* (1970) as a portrait of the most insidious effects of the schooling of emotions. Pecola, the protagonist, internalizes the idea that she is "ugly, worthless, insignificant, and unlovable," and in effect, she *becomes* those things (162). The culprit is the white gaze, and the story critiques American culture and its unacknowledged underpinnings of white supremacy:

What Morrison shows us in *The Bluest Eye* – and what the essays in *A Way to Move* help us to apprehend more fully – is that ideology and ideological state apparatuses do their work most effectively through a schooling of emotion. (162)

Thus, Worsham argues, understanding the schooling of emotions at an individual level is crucial to seeing how that schooling reinforces the power structures already in place in a society. In fact, the illusion that emotions are private and individual – which Worsham blames in part on "therapeutic culture" (162) – obscures the power struggle that can be seen in action in mainstream values and norms regarding emotions. Worsham concludes by reminding us "that all education is sentimental, that all education is an education of sentiment" (163), reinforcing the argument made by Jacobs and Micciche that understanding how emotions affect and are affected by education could provide revolutionary benefits to American society.

Composition researchers Carmen Luke and Jennifer Gore introduce a series of important considerations when considering the possibility of empowering students through working with their emotional responses. In their edited collection *Feminisms and Critical Pedagogy* (1992), Luke and Gore bring together essays that interrogate the

goals and techniques of critical pedagogy. In their introduction, the editors emphasize that these critiques do not represent a rejection of a critical pedagogy as a whole; the book is intended as a step “towards a re-envisioning of pedagogical relations as these are structured by institutional discourse and by embodied subjects” (2). It is important to note the connection here to the idea of the “schooling” of emotions, as Luke and Gore explore how the same forces that “school” the emotions shape the dynamics of the teacher-student relationship (in ways that critical pedagogy should not ignore and has thus far failed to reinvent). The emphasis on embodiment also echoes Wenger’s concerns with how embodied pedagogies might offer students more meaningful experiences in the writing classroom. For the purposes of my study, Luke and Gore’s most important point is their criticism of the idea of empowerment, particularly “single-strategy pedagogies of empowerment,” which they argue rely upon a unified self that, from a poststructuralist perspective, no longer exists (7).

Elizabeth Ellsworth’s essay “Why Doesn’t This Feel Empowering? Working Through the Repressive Myths of Critical Pedagogy” raises a range of important questions about critical pedagogy and empowerment (and was a major influence on my own definition of this term as expressed in Chapter I). Ellsworth argues that “empowerment,” as one of several “key assumptions, goals, and pedagogical practices” found in research on critical pedagogy, is “a repressive myth that perpetuate[s] relations of domination” (91). In other words, the attempt to empower students can ultimately reinforce the same hierarchical power relationships that critical pedagogues seek to dismantle.

One example Ellsworth describes is the emphasis on rationalism. Teachers may assume that an insistence on using ‘reason’ to support all assertions is a democratizing move, but in fact, rationalism prescribes a narrow set of rules about the use of language that, Ellsworth argues, constitute “violence... against its Others,” deeming ‘irrational’ the narratives and experiences of women, people of color, and other marginalized peoples (96). Ellsworth urges composition researchers to embrace the “unknown and unknowable,” resisting pedagogical prescriptions for helping students observe oppressive structures and instead taking cues from the specific circumstances of each class, each lesson, each student (114).

In her own book *Doing Emotion: Rhetoric, Writing, Teaching* (2007), Laura Micciche points to another social implication of the traditional rejection of emotion. Micciche refers to emotion as an often overlooked “rhetorical resource” (1). She argues that emotion is “central to how we become invested in people, ideas, structures, and objects” (1). Excluding emotion from our study of rhetoric and persuasion leads to an incomplete understanding of how and why rhetoric works. Micciche echoes other scholars in pointing out that emotion has historically been overlooked or diminished in the study of rhetoric because it is seen as a feminine trait. That connection, however, relies partly on our assumption that emotions are a passive phenomenon, whereas Micciche says decisively that “we *do* emotions—they don’t simply happen to us” (2). This suggests that the time has come to revise the notion of emotion as gendered.

Micciche also considers the debate over emotion to be a site for exploration as a discipline—a lens through which to consider the goals of rhetorical study and of composition pedagogy. Even the most basic values of composition pedagogy (such as the idea that it is possible to empower students through our work) rely upon “emotional attachments to a certain way of seeing our work, our students, and ourselves” (110). This is why Micciche argues for “emotion as a category of analysis” (1)—emotion underlies all that we do, and our current frameworks have vastly oversimplified its nature, its impact and its possibilities.

Michelle Payne offers another perspective on observing the workings of emotion in order to draw larger conclusions about the field of rhetoric and composition. In her fascinating book *Bodily Discourses: When Students Write About Abuse and Eating Disorders* (2000), Payne explores why students reveal incredibly personal trauma narratives in writing classes and what the controversy over how to respond to these narratives can tell us about the theories and practices of composition pedagogy. Payne’s exploration of the complex issue of discussing trauma and emotional responses to it in the context of a writing class contributes a unique perspective on the role of emotion in the composition classroom. Payne points out that our own anxieties about how these emotions complicate classroom power dynamics contribute to the heated objections some compositionists have voiced to personal writing assignments in the composition classroom: “Students and their essays on these subjects are characterized as threatening to the order and purpose of academic values as well as weak and in need of both discipline and

protection" (3). This contradiction is an example of the sort of assumptions that, Payne argues, we must continue to interrogate; examining cultural contexts as well as power dynamics in the classroom will lead to better strategies for responding to these kinds of student texts. In the meantime, Payne's advice is to listen to students (as they are generally happy to tell us what kind of response they are looking for) and to continue to examine our responses and their underlying biases and motivations.

Susan Miller also critiques current and historical frameworks. In *Trust in Texts: A Different History of Rhetoric* (2008), Miller examines histories of rhetoric and what they miss. Miller argues that modern scholars have an oversimplified understanding of the history of rhetoric, primarily due to histories that present the evolution of rhetoric as a linear progression from an idealized ancient Greece to contemporary society. Her main concern is that these flattened narratives give the impression that persuasive techniques can be described universally. Instead, Miller argues, we must look at the ways in which each rhetoric is situated in its social and historical context. She identifies this disembodiment of rhetoric – separating historical texts from their social/cultural/historical contexts – as one of the reasons that emotion and reason are considered to be opposing or unrelated forces today.

But this false separation is also the *cause* of flattened narratives of the history of rhetoric. Miller traces the problem back to the increasing use of the written word in ancient Greece. It is well known that Socrates criticized written rhetoric, preferring dialectic because he saw written texts as fixed and thus, lifeless. Miller points out, though,

that what gave dialectic its power was its situated nature — not only its social, cultural, and historical context but the fact that it was born of particular relationships between individuals — most notably, the relationship between teacher/mentor and student. Miller explains that “emotions are not evaluations but experiences in the relationships needed to reach Truth” (17). Miller connects the emotion/reason binary to the goals and processes of education, supporting her analysis with abundant historical examples and tracing along the way how evolving ideas about emotion influenced (and appeared in) contemporary rhetorical treatises. Her argument for acknowledging that “persuasion is always a matter of trust” (8) and that the requirements for that trust are determined by local and temporal conventions opens the door for revising the ways in which we apply ancient rhetorical concepts to the modern composition classroom. In pointing to flawed histories of rhetoric as the source of our current practice of privileging reason over emotion, Miller makes it clear that this dichotomy is socially and culturally constructed (and therefore, may be intentionally deconstructed).

Part II

The studies discussed in this section shift our focus in two new directions: outward, to the social implications of a new understanding of emotion, and backward, to the ancient roots of the philosophies that inform our beliefs and assumptions about emotions, education, and the relationship between the two.

We will first look to the past, turning a critical eye toward modern use of ancient philosophy; it is crucial to understand its social and cultural context in order to avoid corrupting its messages. We look also to how the ancient Greeks themselves approached education, and see that our modern attempts to ignore students' emotions or evict them from the classroom would be seen by ancient Greek writing teachers as counterproductive at best.

Next, Jim Garrison will modernize ancient ideas in much the way that I aim to do later in this study – by creating historical context and by tracing ancient ideas as they are picked up and transformed by later scholars. Garrison's approach is through the work of John Dewey; further research into how Dewey's work might help us to modernize *psychagōgia* is warranted.

Finally, the system of democracy and its optimal function is raised in several of these studies, and the authors will argue that an understanding of desire is a crucial ingredient for a successful democracy. Megan Boler will discuss the classroom as an ideal environment to study as we seek to understand how students' emotions are "schooled" (that is, trained to conform to specific, socially acceptable responses and patterns and how that schooling influences larger societies), and Kerry Burch will argue that eros – and a framework for discussing it – is crucial to the functioning of democracy.

In *The Therapy of Desire: Theory and Practice in Hellenistic Ethics* (1994), philosopher Martha Nussbaum argues that the illusory separation between reason and emotion did not exist for the ancient Greeks. Although she does not directly connect her work to

modern pedagogy, her philosophical writings on desire, emotion, and education are cited by a number of composition scholars, including several included in this literature review: Boler, Burch, Miller, Johnson, and Garrison.

The Hellenistic thinkers, Nussbaum argues, did not see emotions as blind, primal urges, but as “intelligent and discriminating elements of the personality that are very closely linked to beliefs” (38). She also points out that “the Hellenistic schools are the first in philosophy’s history in the West to recognize the existence of unconscious motivations and beliefs” (490). This would seem to offer one reason to reexamine Plato’s vision through the lens of modern psychology. Nussbaum also suggests that this practice is not out of line with the ancients’ point of view:

...they believe that philosophy — reasoning and argument — is what is required to diagnose and to modify the passions. This is so, they argue, precisely because passions such as fear, anger, grief, and love are not blind surges of affect that push and pull us without regard to reasoning and belief. They are, in fact, intelligent and discriminating elements of the personality that are very closely linked to beliefs, and are modified by the modification of belief. (38)

It is significant that the Hellenistic philosophers argued for emotions as “intelligent and discriminating,” as scholars like Miller and Boler (among others) are working to resurrect this view in modern rhetorical study. Nussbaum’s historical perspective and her philosophical approach suggest that we cannot base our modern ideas about writing

and education on ancient ideals unless we acknowledge the ways in which we have drifted away from those ancient views and work to recover their logic.

Continuing our consideration of ancient sources, Craig Gibson, a classicist and scholar of the history of rhetoric, argues that bringing psychological techniques into the classroom is not a new idea. In "Better Living through Prose Composition? Moral and Compositional Pedagogy in Ancient Greek and Roman Progymnasmata" (2014), Gibson explores the structure of the ancient Greek and Roman educational system of the progymnasmata, arguing that the curriculum shows a "symbiotic relationship" between the teaching of composition and the transmission of moral values (2). Gibson provides an analysis of each assignment in the progymnasmata sequence, revealing the ways in which each task includes overtly moral decisions and questions on the part of the students. He also cites the work of J. D. Fleming, who has considered the benefits modern students might reap from the progymnasmata system; rhetoric can be used for self-discovery as well as to enable the student to have a positive impact in his community (8). Gibson's argument lends support to one of the core arguments of this dissertation: it is not only appropriate but potentially quite beneficial to adapt *psychagogia* for the modern composition classroom.

Philosopher of education Jim Garrison offers an example of how we might modernize Plato's philosophy of education to fit modern aims. In *Dewey and Eros: Wisdom and Desire in the Art of Teaching* (1997), Garrison utilizes the works of educational reformer John Dewey to bring Plato's ideas down to earth. As Garrison explains, Plato

saw education as a pursuit of eternal truths, which he referred to as forms — the world around us is only a fleeting phenomenon, according to this view. Dewey, as a naturalist and holist, didn't buy the supernatural element of Plato's philosophy, as he did not agree with the dualistic idea that there is a natural world and a separate supernatural realm (21). Instead, Dewey adjusted Plato's abstract "Ideas" and referred to them as "Ideals" — "possibilities that are desired" (21). Instead of a world in which we live in the natural world and strive for supernatural truths, Dewey believed that we live in the world of "the actual" and strive for "the ideally possible" (22). Although Garrison goes on to further explore the connections between love, logic, and learning, it is this revision of Plato's philosophy of education that paves one possible path for applying the ancient wisdom to modern education.

The relationship between emotion in the classroom and the larger political culture has been examined by Megan Boler, whose work ranges from philosophy to media and communications to critical theory. Boler analyzes emotions in educational systems in her book *Feeling Power: Emotions and Education* (1999). This study argues that in the world of education, emotions are both "a site of social control" (xvii) and "a mode of resistance" (xviii). The dominant values of a culture are passed on to the next generation through the ways in which they are taught in schools; examining educational systems can reveal a great deal about a society's implicit hierarchies, economic philosophies, and gender expectations, among other things. Understanding the ways in which educa-

tion attempts to guide and limit our emotional responses gives educators an opportunity to revise their practices – to give students freedom to express their unique emotions and to see beyond established narratives of appropriate emotional response.

Boler's study concludes with what she calls "a pedagogy of discomfort" (175), which encourages both teachers and students to examine their values and beliefs using a process of "critical inquiry" (177). This approach also asks participants to consider their "constructed self-images in relation to how one has learned to perceive others" (177). Boler points out that one of the primary "risks of self-reflection" (177) is that we can be led to believe that reflection allows us to understand the experience of the other (which serves an emotional purpose for us but does not imply that we actually understand, and does not prompt us to do anything with any new insights we might gain from self-reflection). Instead, Boler's pedagogy of discomfort pushes participants (again, both teachers and students) to move beyond binaries and simplified black and white thinking to consider their (often quite ambiguous) roles in various social dynamics and how both the individual and the other can be understood in relation to their historical context(s).

In *Eros as the Educational Principle of Democracy* (2000), philosopher of education Kerry Burch points to the lack of a discourse about eros in American culture, politics, and education, arguing that the absence of eros in our national consciousness dulls the gears of a democratic society. Burch, like others, argues that we are a nation in crisis – that the conversation about eros is urgent and is the only way to "revive" democracy

(8). One of the unique contributions of his study is the historical context provided through analysis of “key texts throughout Western intellectual history” (9), including the works of Plato, Augustine, Rousseau, and Dewey. As Burch explains, the historical context is central to his argument about democracy’s fundamental need for eros: “Genealogy... reveals that the lack of an eros discourse and the subsequent absence of erotic desire is also a social construct” (9). Burch’s argument also anticipates the objections of his readers – the discomfort most people seem to have with eros as we currently understand it – and he specifies that in order for a discourse on eros to support the behaviors that make democracy work, we will need to develop “a secularized theory of love” (9). Burch also advocates for a new view of democracy, one that does not define it “by its institutionality” (4) – meaning we should not lead our students to believe that informed decisions in the voting booth are all that is required of good citizens in a democratic society. Burch warns that this attitude leads us to fall back on the idea that “we live in a democracy,” an idea which we use to excuse ourselves from questioning how that democracy functions and whether/how it is serving its people (6). Conflict, or as Burch calls it, “contestation,” is crucial to the functioning of democracy, which is not about seeking agreement but about maintaining this tension in order to ensure that the government serves the needs of its evolving population. An understanding of eros, Burch argues, is one of the keys to increased civic engagement in America.

Conclusion

Despite the variety of approaches I have outlined, there are still significant gaps in scholarship (though, of course, the study of emotion is a constantly growing field, and I believe we can expect to see these gaps explored in future scholarship). For my purposes, there are two gaps that most directly invited my development and application of *psychagogia* to the composition classroom.

Firstly, as I have mentioned above, very little research has focused specifically on *psychagogia*. While the Socratic method is well known amongst educators (as well as in mainstream culture), the underlying philosophy that informed the Socratic approach has not been explored in nearly as much depth. More research is necessary both for its implications for the Socratic method and for the other ways it might be applied to the classroom.

Secondly, while many scholars have argued that psychological concepts and therapeutic methods can and should be used in the classroom, I have found none that combine the use of these techniques with an eye toward the long history of rhetoric. Although many authors use the proven effectiveness of particular therapeutic methods (i.e., cognitive behavioral therapy, psychoanalysis, etc.), none of the studies I have reviewed have explicitly called upon historical antecedents or fundamental philosophical concepts to support their aims. While evidence based studies are certainly important, and while they may be more sought out by contemporary readers than philosophically supported approaches, it is also important to return to the origins of rhetoric to ensure

that we are only using more modern concepts (like empiricism) to support the ancient aims of increasing self-knowledge and critical thinking, rather than justifying the existence of our vocation by showing that it has "concrete" effects on our students.

In the chapters that follow, I will fill this historical gap with my study of how the concept of *psychagōgia* can be traced through the work of a handful of major thinkers throughout history. I will also outline a series of specific verbal therapeutic techniques used by modern psychotherapists that might be useful in building a psychagogic pedagogy. I will also offer some ideas as to how these techniques can serve as building blocks for teachers who see Plato's concept of *psychagōgia* reflected in their own philosophy of education and who wish to build a personal pedagogy on the foundation of *psychagōgia*.

It is this combination of three approaches (historical, therapeutic, practical) that is this study's unique contribution to composition pedagogy.

CHAPTER THREE: *PSYCHAGŌGIA* IN THE *PHAEDRUS*

Introduction

In this chapter, I will examine the two basic components of Plato's philosophy of education as it is revealed in the *Phaedrus*: Plato's definition of *psychagōgia* (including three essential concepts that establish its nature) and his myth of the soul (with its own concepts related to the nature of the soul).

I have used the *Phaedrus* as the basis of my argument primarily because it is in this text that Plato uses the term *psychagōgia* to characterize rhetoric. In order to argue that *psychagōgia* is not only useful for modern composition scholars but offers possibilities for profound changes in our way of thinking about education, I will need to examine in detail what Plato argues education should do and how a teacher should go about doing her job. An examination of Plato's use of the term *psychagōgia* and his philosophy of the mind will provide details on what Plato believed about the nature of the soul (or, as modern readers might say, the mind), the forces that motivate people to learn (and to teach), the goals of education, the qualities most desirable in a teacher, and the importance of relationships in not only education but, also, human development in general.

In the *Phaedrus*, Socrates and young Phaedrus meet while walking outside of the city. Phaedrus has just heard a speech by Lysias urging young men to choose as their partners men who do *not* love them, as opposed to men who do claim to love them. Phaedrus reads Lysias's speech to Socrates. The two then proceed to discuss what constitutes rhetoric, how true rhetoric is different from false or misleading speech, and the

role of love in true rhetoric, using the form of dialectic most readers will recognize as the Socratic method. Throughout the dialogue, Socrates leads the young Phaedrus away from a hollow, deceptive breed of rhetoric and toward the kind of rhetoric that can lead him to a better life.

Defining *Psychagōgia*

According to *A Greek-English Lexicon (LSJ)*, the Greek word *ψυχαγωγία* has three distinct meanings: (1) “evocation of souls from the nether world,” (2) “winning of men's souls, persuasion,” and (3) a “cooling treatment in acute fever.” The third meaning falls outside the scope of this study, and the first is relevant only as a predecessor to the definition in question here — that of persuasion or the “winning of men’s souls,” for which the *LSJ* cites the *Phaedrus* as the representative example of the use of the word.

In the days of Socrates’ school (and indeed in all the centuries since), the nature of rhetoric has been continuously debated. Its defenders claim it is either morally neutral or inherently beneficial, while detractors deride it as a method of deception, meant to distract audiences from the facts. Rhetoric is, in essence, either a distraction from “truth” or the only pathway to defining it.

To make his point on this matter in the *Phaedrus*, Socrates establishes the prevalence of rhetoric, defining it as a “leading of the soul” but also observing its omnipresence in society:

SOC.: Well then, would not the rhetorical art taken as a whole be a certain leading of the soul through speeches, not only in law courts and whatever

other public gatherings, but also in private ones, the same concerning both small and great things, and no less honored, with a view to what's correct at least, when it arises concerning serious than concerning paltry matters?

(261a-b)

In so doing, he establishes that rhetoric – and more precisely, *psychagōgia* – is not just speeches in public forums but also private conversation; it seems that almost any speech now falls into this category. This establishes the importance of the argument over the nature of *psychagōgia* – he demonstrates that most speech is, in fact, *psychagōgia*. But he also argues, with this definition, that the very souls of the audience are affected, not only in intimate conversations, but in public ones – the spiritual growth he implies is not undertaken only by teachers, but also by public officials at all levels, and by anyone who addresses his peers. The danger, of course, is that any orator who has malicious intent toward his audience could lead their souls in a direction that is detrimental to them.

The term *psychagōgia* may remind educators of a more familiar term for their work – pedagogy. The differences here are significant. Whereas the *LSJ* offers three separate definitions for *psychagōgia*, all relating to the soul and/or healing, the definitions for the root word for pedagogy are more familiar. Oddly enough, the noun *paidagōgos* (pedagogue) originally meant a “slave who went with a boy from home to school and back again.” However, the verb *paidagōgeō* (I educate) means “generally, train, guide, educate, moderate” – definitions more akin to modern understandings of pedagogy. One significant point of overlap is the definition of *paidagōgia* (pedagogy) –

the “office of” the pedagogue or teacher, or “generally, attendance on the sick.” Here the idea of healing is present, but overall, the definitions of *paidagōgia* indicate that it was understood to refer to traditional formal education, whereas *psychagōgia* incorporates elements of persuasion and of spirituality.

Because the word *psychagōgia* is used so infrequently, it is important to carefully define the term by looking at its specific characteristics. Turning now to the text of the *Phaedrus* as a starting point, there are three major characteristics of *psychagōgia* that are central to my task of defining this term and exploring how Plato uses it: 1) *erōs*³ as the motivator for teacher and student, 2) knowledge of the self as its ultimate goal, and 3) an understanding of the soul as the crucial trait of an effective teacher. These characteristics can be uncovered through an examination of Plato’s expression of his philosophy through the words of his fictionalized mentor, Socrates.

Erōs as Driving Force

With so much at stake, how can we tell the difference between *psychagōgia* and this dangerous, deceptive type of rhetoric? Socrates explains that, unlike deceptive speech, *psychagōgia* is motivated by *erōs*, the desire for the good. He does this gradually throughout the dialogue, beginning by defining his terms, of course:

...the desire without reason which masters the opinion striving toward

³ Here I am referring to the Greek word, which is why I have used the long ō. I have not used this spelling elsewhere when referring to the general concept of eros.

what's correct and is led toward the pleasure of beauty, and which, in turn mightily gaining strength from desires that are akin to itself toward the beauty of bodies, conquers in its leading, taking its name from this very might, is called *love*. (238b-c)

Nichols, the translator, clarifies in a footnote that what he translates as “love” is *erōs* in the original text. Soon after Socrates gives this definition, he asks Phaedrus, “Don’t you consider Love to be from Aphrodite and to be a god?” (242d)

Many scholars have noted that *erōs* is the defining characteristic of *psychagōgia* — that speech motivated by *erōs* is *psychagōgia*, while other types of speech are false and deceptive. In fact, some argue that Plato was the first to redefine *erōs* in such a way that essentially created the discipline of pedagogy. While it is not within the scope of this project to argue the point explicitly, it is worth noting, as even in his own time, Plato was challenging notions of what *erōs* could mean — and it is worthwhile noting that the history of rhetoric contains countless shifts of meaning of this nature. Modern readers have come to understand *erōs* as the concept of the erotic, with the assumption that sexual desire is central to this definition. But as Socrates understands it, *erōs* bonds people through their mutual desire for knowledge, for understanding — not through any desire for one another. As I will discuss later, we can only benefit from Plato’s concept of *psychagōgia* if we are willing to engage with it on its own terms.

American scholar Kerry Burch points out that before Plato, *erōs* was portrayed as “a force wholly external to the individual and impervious to human intention and action” (20).

Thus, while Plato brings eros “down to earth,” so to speak, and humanizes the concept, he simultaneously inaugurates the idea of pedagogy. The two concepts are in fact inseparable, since pedagogy in its Platonic conception is the educational form required to channel the powers of eros toward the good. Without the art of pedagogy to help corral and direct the life-affirming energies of eros, the concept would remain essentially *prephilosophic*, containing no person-centered educational quality. (20)

This transformation helps us consider how it is possible to find *erōs* at the center of *psychagōgia* and maintain that the relationship is not remotely sexual. Harvey Yunis analyzes Socrates’ speech in praise of love, pointing out that the shift occurs within the “Great Speech” itself: “The eros that is depicted is unfamiliar. Though it is sexual in the manner in which it is initially stimulated, the eros of the Great Speech changes as it grows, transforming itself into a higher kind of eros that seeks fulfillment in a higher, nobler, and more exciting activity than sex” (113). Yunis also explains that in the myth of souls Socrates tells, “eros is a continuum. It begins with sex but its natural goal, as well as its ultimate source, is communion with being” (113).

D. P. E. Muir offers another way of thinking about *erōs* that leads far away from sexual connotations. As Muir points out, a good teacher will recruit students with extreme care, applying his knowledge of the nature and types of souls to select students with whom he is most comfortable.

It is the recognition of a “like” soul, or a beautiful soul, that brings about

the initial attraction the educator feels towards particular students, not unlike the aspect of kinship discussed in the *Lysis*. (244)

While "attraction" is a term modern educators justifiably shy away from (and *erōs* has the same unsettling effect), the term "kinship" is useful in considering the teacher-student dynamic – the connection can be one based on a type of intellectual or spiritual similarity, not on desire for one another. Note that a teacher could sense a kinship with a student who does not show much respect for him, or even a student who does not think she is interested in rhetoric. The teacher, because he desires the good and understands his desire for the good, is by necessity responsible for forging connections with compatible students.

Even when Socrates directly compares the teacher to the lover, there is an important subtext. In making the analogy between the teacher and the lover, Plato's primary goal is to express the powerful, benevolent influence the teacher has, as well as the gratification he feels in regard to this role in the student's learning process. Kastely explores the extent to which *erōs* drives the process of developing self-understanding:

What one does when he or she is caught up by eros is to talk to the beloved and, through "education and persuasion," seek to allow the beloved to understand the divinity within him or her (253b). Understanding this divinity will allow the beloved to understand better what moves one and what are the principles and values that organize one's psychic life. And in the ensuing conversations, the lover will, in turn, make progress in understanding

better how his life is psychically organized. (468)

In our personal lives, it is *erōs* that pushes us to think critically about who we are and what we want. We might even say that only *erōs* can unsettle us enough to make us consider our lives from a new perspective, to begin to examine ourselves in a new way. It is also *erōs* that drives us to learn. Any scholar can recall a moment of sudden understanding in which all other human concerns seemed somehow smaller. *Erōs* is not limited to sexual relationships; the connection to others that we desire can be felt through a continual search for knowledge.

In this praise of love, which turns out to be a praise of the love of wisdom, philosophy, Socrates not only practices genuine rhetorical *psychagōgia*, but also makes *psychagōgia* the subject of his discourse. He shows that the lover guides the soul of another toward its former divine condition and thereby guides and finds himself. The genuine rhetorician has the same aim as the lover; and ultimately genuine rhetoric and genuine love will appear as one (Asmis 164). Eros is the love of wisdom. Most teachers would agree that teaching is an art that teaches us about ourselves. If all rhetoricians share the goal of the lover, then all rhetoricians must not only practice their art, but must also teach it in order to continually improve their work and deepen their self-understanding.

Erōs, then, can be seen as part of the teacher-student relationship without setting off any twenty-first-century alarms for inappropriateness. It is, in fact, an essential ingredient in the specific kind of relationship between the teacher and student that is one of the defining features of *psychagōgia*. Yunis points out that *erōs* is the catalyst for the student's learning process: "Rather than giving the auditor sufficient, better, or even

overwhelming reason to seek divine eros, Socrates aims to make the auditor feel the attractions of divine eros so intensely that he will desire that eros himself and move towards it on his own" (111). Even more importantly, *erōs* motivates the student to continue the journey. Jerry Stannard analyzes the hierarchy in Socrates' myth of souls, concluding that "since erotic madness is divine and... the divine is beautiful, intelligible and good (246 E), it follows that only the inspired lover can know the beautiful, intelligible and good (249 E)" (125). At the same time, the hierarchy does not allow for completion of the task – learning never ends, except when the learner dies: "...eros, in spite of its hierarchical structure, is itself a process which renders continuous any development – be it psychic or epistemic" (Stannard 125). The love (*erōs*) of knowledge is what motivates the teacher to teach, the student to learn, and the two to pursue knowledge together.

Knowledge of Self

The aim of *psychagōgia* is knowledge of the self. Socrates models this goal for Phaedrus: "I am not yet able, according to the Delphic inscription, to know myself; it appears to me laughable indeed for one who is still ignorant of this to examine alien things" (229e). The teacher here models humility but also makes his point that self-knowledge is at the center of the search for truth. It is important for the student to become aware of his own desires, and ultimately, to take responsibility for them (see Alcorn for a discussion of responsibility, though he does not specifically mention *psychagōgia*).

One important characteristic of *psychagōgia* is that this ultimate goal of self-knowledge does not imply or require self-awareness throughout the process. So while modern composition scholars encourage their students to develop metacognitive abilities incrementally, Socrates recognizes that the student doesn't fully understand his own thoughts and actions; and instead of pointing this out to him, he simply guides him toward a realization.

At first glance, this may seem to place *psychagōgia* in opposition to recent scholarship in composition, which emphasizes metacognition as a primary goal of instruction and as a valuable tool that empowers students to become active learners. But in the *Phaedrus*, Socrates doesn't try to deny his interlocutor control over his education—he simply doesn't pursue metacognition as such. Ed Cohen points out that the difference in approaches can be understood by looking at the context of *psychagōgia*:

...psychagogy does not possess the recognition factor that its etymological confrere, pedagogy, retains. An archaic concept dating back at least to Empedoclean if not Pythagorean discourse (Petit), psychagogy barely bears on contemporary thinking about the relation between politics and philosophy, let alone on our thinking about the dynamic between politics and philosophy.... (2)

Since Socrates explains to Phaedrus that one of the goals of *psychagōgia* is to know oneself by applying this standard to himself, he leads Phaedrus toward insight without in-

interrupting the student's train of thought to draw his attention to his own mental processes. While Socrates does not list metacognition as a student outcome in his lesson plans, he pushes Phaedrus to become a more critical reader and thinker and reminds him to continue trying to understand himself – all of which lead to self-awareness.

In an essay examining Socrates' discussion of myth-rectification and how it relates to the quest for self-knowledge, Christopher Moore analyzes Socrates' words on the Delphic oracle's famous edict, "Know thyself":

Self-knowledge is not merely introspecting or having true beliefs about one's inner world. It is judging which of one's commitments are worthiest of acknowledgement, and making those, rather than others, the commitments on which one acts. This takes a long time: in part, because one's dubious commitments are not so marked and therefore one has to deal with them in turn; and in part, because the self-knower aims to commit himself to goodness, not just reject false beliefs. (3)

Understanding the self is a difficult task, and one that requires a long-term commitment. Although the oracle's edict and its meaning is not discussed directly, Moore also points out that the dialogue touches on self-knowledge at several points (228a6, 245c3-5, and 255d5-6), arguing that self-knowledge thus constitutes a theme of the dialogue (13).

Moore also provides a connection between *erōs* and knowledge of the self. Like *erōs*, the quest for self-understanding gives the seeker a type of motivation that has no

expiration date: “The seeker of self-knowledge can never stop... given the depths of human ignorance and the difficulty of comprehending one’s goals” (19). From these points, a new interpretation emerges: it’s almost as if *know thyself* is simply a command to recognize one’s own ignorance; this is the only way the learner can truly understand that becoming a better person requires not only constant self-reflection but also the courage to change one’s beliefs and behaviors in accordance with what is revealed by that reflective practice. Socrates models this self-reflective behavior, indicating that it is one of the core lessons he hopes to convey to his student, and one of the essential characteristics of true *psychagōgia*.

Knowledge of Souls

The third crucial component of *psychagōgia* is that the teacher must have an understanding of the nature of the soul. Socrates argues that this knowledge is necessary in order to approach any rhetorical task “with art”:

But surely he who goes after anything with art must not be likened either to a blind or to a deaf person; but it’s clear that, if someone gives speeches by art to someone, he will show precisely the being of the nature of this thing to which he will apply speeches. And this, doubtless, will be the soul.
(270e)

Specifically, the effective rhetorician must understand the types of souls and their characteristics:

SOC.: Since the power of speech happens to be a leading of the soul, it is necessary that one who is going to be rhetorical know how many forms the soul has. Therefore there are so-and-so many, and of such and such a sort, from which such and such people come to be. And when these have been thus distinguished, then in turn there are so-and-so many forms of speeches, each of such a sort. Now then, people of such a sort are easily persuadable to such things by such speeches on account of this cause...
(271d)

In modern composition pedagogy, we advise students, whenever possible, to “know your audience.” And when that’s not possible, we teach students to imagine an audience (see Ede and Lunsford). As it relates to instructors, the terminology is different but the concept remains the same; authors like Sommers and Saltz advise instructors to be aware of the “threshold” experience of the freshman student, who is learning the language of the academy. The *Phaedrus* shows us that Plato saw this knowledge of audience as essential not only for successful teaching, but for successful use of rhetoric in any context (if we refer back to his definition of *psychagogia* as including all speech).

D. P. E. Muir explains the two primary reasons that knowledge of souls is important for Plato’s ideal teacher. First, this knowledge “ensures that one is able to present ideas in the way most appropriate, and particularly most persuasive, to each type” (245). The teacher must understand the souls of his students — their individual personalities, in modern terms. This enables the teacher to make the most appropriate and effective rhetorical choices when presenting new concepts, increasing the likelihood that

each student will be receptive to the new information. On a more comprehensive level, though, “the teacher must know the soul of the pupil in order to ascertain what is best for it” (245). As a defining feature of *psychagōgia*, the teacher’s understanding of students’ minds is not just a tool for increasing rhetorical effectiveness, but a trait that assures that the students’ needs will be met, that the pedagogy is tailored to the student’s own benefit, even if the student does not necessarily have awareness of his/her own needs. This is a delicate balance: the student has to place trust in the teacher, who is presumably more experienced in the quest for the good (or at least in the journey for knowledge). At the same time, the teacher takes on the responsibility for not only knowing the student better than he knows himself, so to speak, but for knowing him well enough to understand what will bring him closer to self-awareness, the ultimate goal of *psychagōgia*.

James Kastely offers some interesting points on the nature of the soul and how knowledge of this can be used for persuasive purposes. In analyzing Socrates’ myth of the soul (a lengthy poetic description of Socrates’ beliefs about how the soul evolves, which will be discussed in detail later in this chapter), he notes that “for Socrates, we begin as erotic, rather than civic, beings,” and that our essentially erotic nature leaves us prone to clouded perception (478). This allows Kastely to elaborate on exactly what the speaker is doing when he defines the types of souls and matches them to the types of reasoning that will influence them most deeply. When the rhetor analyzes the inherently erotic soul, “the best that [he] can do is offer a figurative interpretation as to what

are the central forces that are organized in the soul of the audience” (478). The erotic nature of the soul not only clouds our self-perception, but makes it impossible for even a skilled rhetor with knowledge of souls in the abstract to completely comprehend the particular souls he addresses. The rhetor’s approach, then, is not as simple or efficient as it sounds in Socrates’ description:

The rhetor can try to understand how to bring these forces into activity by showing the members of an audience ways in which a world can make sense to them and speak to their concerns – or to what their concerns should be, as they are understood by the rhetor. Persuasion thus becomes an effort to help an audience address the fundamental question of self-knowledge. There is a way in which any effort at persuasion inherently must be an experiment. The rhetor, in effect, invents an image for the audience and asks them to occupy that image and see if, in occupying that image, the audience becomes active. (478-79)

This is not a simple matching of Soul Type A with Rhetorical Technique A. The rhetor offers a variety of options, and each person in the audience will respond, hopefully, to at least one of the options provided. Thus the knowledge of souls is not only a defining characteristic of *psychagōgia*, but one of its most important strategies for leading the student toward greater self-knowledge. It is also worth noting that the audience does not need to be aware of this process in order to benefit from it – again, as Cohen points out, what we now call metacognition was never a necessary part of *psychagōgia*.

Socrates' Myth of the Soul

One specific speech that is worth exploring in detail in this study is the myth of the soul, or the palinode—Socrates' second speech, the third speech in the *Phaedrus*. The first speech is the one written by Lysias, read by Phaedrus. The second speech is by Socrates, using a similar argument to that of Lysias, but showing him up with superior technical skill. After this speech, though Socrates claims that he has sinned against Eros and must repent by recanting his speech. He begins a speech that will defend *erōs*, divine madness, and the influence of love on our desires and behavior. It is in this way that we reach the palinode, in which Socrates tells Phaedrus the myth of the soul.

Summary of the Myth

Socrates first offers a disclaimer: it is not possible for a human being (or more specifically, for a being using human language) to give a true account of the nature of the soul. Therefore, Socrates will not discuss "what sort of thing it is," but instead, will tell "what it is like" (246a4-5). He explains that the soul can be thought of as a pair of winged horses and a charioteer; one horse is white and is "noble and good" (246b2) while the other is black and possesses the opposite traits, making the charioteer's work "hard indeed and troublesome" (246b4).

The soul is able to fly higher when influenced by the divine, but is dragged down by the influence of the black horse; his "badness" (247b4-5) dooms the entire soul if not handled carefully and properly by the charioteer. Souls attempt to rise higher in order

to follow the gods to witness their gatherings; of these souls, “the deathless” (247b8) are able to remain near the gods and come to understand justice, moderation, knowledge, and other virtues, but the rest are dragged down and do not benefit from these divine lessons. When a soul is sufficiently “weighed down,” it loses its wings and enters a human body. Socrates specifically delineates four separate categories of souls: the ones who have “seen the most [divine] things” (248d2) will be “a philosopher or lover of the beautiful”; the lowest type of soul will live a “tyrannical” life (248e4). From here, the myth reflects the basic concepts of reincarnation: those who spend their lives “justly” (248e5) will be given a higher position in the next life, while those who do not will move even lower in the hierarchy.

All souls have witnessed some of these divine concepts – otherwise, they would not have been incarnated into human bodies. Self-improvement for mortals, then, consists of *remembering* the divine things the soul has seen in the time before its human life began. When a person can do this, when he “[sees] beauty here below and [recollects] true beauty” (294d6), he will seek to fly higher toward those divine things and will lose all care for earthly concerns. This is then called “madness” and the individual is then called “lover” (249e4-5). It’s not easy to recall the divine concepts; the human senses are “dim” (250b4) and can only with great effort perceive “the kind of what is imaged” (250b5).

When a person catches the glimpse of these divine things, he experiences *erōs*, which results in physical symptoms that bear a striking resemblance to the manifestations of sexual arousal, and which Socrates describes using very sexual terminology.

The perception of divine beauty leads the individual to devote himself to the one who possesses a tiny fraction of that beauty, and this is “the experience...that human beings name *love*” (252b4). Socrates goes on to discuss how the charioteer’s control of the black horse is crucial to both forming a relationship and to living together in such a way that both souls benefit in the long term.

The Soul’s Movement

One of the most important things about the soul as portrayed in this myth is that it has its own power of movement but can also be moved by outside forces. According to the myth, the horses provide the movement that propels the soul forward. Passion, then, along with restraint, is what gives the soul its own internal energy. Regardless of whether the charioteer is successful in guiding the horses where he wants them to go, the horses are the power that moves the soul.

The soul can move itself, but it can also be moved, or *guided*, by outside forces. The myth itself is an attempt at *psychagōgia*—Socrates tells the story to have a specific and calculated impact on Phaedrus (to lead his soul in a particular direction). Socrates’ “intention is to encourage or provoke a receptive soul to *move itself* toward the philosophical life. The myth attempts to achieve this both by stirring the individual to desire the philosophical life and by stirring him to engage in some philosophical thinking” (Werner 128). So while Socrates cannot control Phaedrus’s soul—cannot force it to move or stop it from moving where it wants to go—he can inspire in it the desire for the

good, for truth, for a philosophical life, and ideally, Phaedrus's soul will then shift its movement accordingly.

Integration and Balance

Another important lesson of the myth is that mastery of the self does not require eliminating anything, but demands that we be aware of and in control of our desires and actions. The successful charioteer will not swap out his black horse for another white one, but will learn to control the black horse's urges, guiding the horses to work together rather than against one another.

Werner sees the question of rationality as part of the dichotomy inscribed upon the two horses:

Socrates' image of the soul brings to the fore the *ineliminability of the irrational* in human life. Humans are *not* purely rational creatures, and indeed we never will be. [...] So, while each individual part has a distinct role and set of characteristics, none can stand on its own independently of the others. Taken together, they constitute the "power" that animates human beings. Our actions and choices do not spring from a single motivational source, but rather from several independent sources of motivation. (59)

As Werner claims, neither horse is of any use on its own. If we consider the white horse to be rational and the black one to be irrational, the fact that they are stuck with one an-

other suggests that it is not *only* our unruly urges that make us human, but the combination of the two—the rational and the irrational and the tension between the two.

Despite the dichotomy of white/black, restrained/unruly, the dichotomy is not one of good and evil. In fact, the urges the black horse represents are part of what makes us human: “...our bodily incarnation is not the *cause* of evil but rather is a *symptom*: it is *because* of the lower parts that the discarnate soul failed to catch an adequate glimpse of the Forms, and consequently became subject to incarnation” (Werner 60). If a soul existed that had only calm, restrained energy, it would live with the gods forever and never become human. Humans, then, have no cause to denigrate their erotic and passionate urges, according to Socrates’ view. We must instead accept those urges as inherent traits that reveal we are human, and should endeavor to harness them, so to speak, in pursuit of our philosophical goals—the pursuit of a better life.

Relationship as Path to Philosophical Life

Another valuable lesson of the myth is that our relationships with other humans are both a manifestation of our innate knowledge of the divine and a part of the process by which we can begin to lead a better, or at least more philosophical, life. In the myth, Socrates explains that what reminds us of the beauty we saw before our human lives is most often “a godlike face, or perhaps the *idea* of a body, that imitates beauty well” (251a3-4). Elizabeth Belfiore points out that the beauty we see in others is, perhaps ironically, what moves us to desire more from life than worldly pleasures:

Madness begins, according to Socrates, when humans see beauty in this

world, and are thereby reminded of the true beauty they once saw. They then start to become winged again and want to fly away, but are unable to do so. Because they then care nothing for the things below, they are said to be mad. (224)

Though labelled ‘mad’ by those who don’t share their sense of beauty, the person who has seen beauty and now desires more of it, and truer beauty, is actually displaying “enthusiasm” for the philosophical life (Belfiore 224). The myth tells us that the beauty of another individual inspires our desire for true beauty, and that relationships are the path by which the individual improves himself and pursues a philosophical life.

Why Use Myth?

Scholars have noted that the myth is not just a fanciful way of explaining the nature of the soul. As Socrates explains before he begins telling Phaedrus the myth, it is not possible to explain the soul in a literal manner, so a figurative one is the most truthful representation. But the myth has a pedagogical purpose as well.

The use of myth is intended to lift Phaedrus’s awareness from the narrow focus on human selfishness in the Isocratean speech to a new cosmic vision, in which humans aim to recover a divine condition of knowledge through love of another. (Asmis 164)

Asmis refers here not only to this particular myth, Socrates’ rendering of the nature and origin of the soul, but of Socrates’ choice to use myth as a literary or rhetorical device. The alternative—explaining in a more literal sense his own idea of what the soul is—would have only conveyed one teacher’s opinion. The myth, on the other hand,

lends a sense of ancient wisdom to that opinion. As Entralgo puts it, “myth moves the mind to receive with attention and belief that which the reason of man... is not able to prove with manifest and irrefutable logic arguments” (119). Fictionalizing the account allows Phaedrus to be carried away with it, believing it without necessarily questioning it.

Entralgo points out that the myth of the soul also functions as a charm “against the noxious childishness of the fear of death” (113). He also points out that a story that calms the mind will also, to some extent, calm the listener physically:

Under the influence of the enchanting word the mind of the hearer – and subsequently his body, to the extent possible - are calmed, enlightened, and set in good order... are "sophronized," if so expressive a neologism may be allowed. (121)

Socrates soothes his student, enabling him not only to absorb the myth, but to focus more intently on the rest of the dialogue. Werner concurs that “myth, in particular, is well suited to targeting the irrational parts of the soul, as the mythical images of honor and the pleasures of the good life easily find their way to spirit and appetite” (60). In light of the observations of these scholars, this move on Socrates’ part may show an acute awareness of the student’s mental state, and also reveals an understanding of his personality – Socrates knows not only what is upsetting Phaedrus, but what will relieve his worry. These specific rhetorical strategies affirm the philosophy Socrates espouses

about the necessary qualities of a good teacher, while also showing that Socrates himself possesses these qualities.

It is Socrates' use of myth and his attention to Phaedrus's emotional state that suggest another purpose of his interactions with his student: a therapeutic effect. In the next chapter, I will discuss the history of the relationship between therapy and teaching, and the ways in which a rejoining of the concepts of therapy and education can be of benefit to our goals as compositionists.

Adapting *Psychagōgia*

I trust that my readers have noticed a few aspects of Plato's idea that would (and should) give pause to modern composition researchers and instructors. I will address these issues here, noting that when using a philosophy of education in a social and cultural context so very different from that in which it was conceived, some adaptation will be necessary.

The most striking danger of *psychagōgia*, if brought into modern-day classrooms without critical reflection on how it may be appropriately adapted, is that it seems to give overwhelming power to the teacher. (This power, as I have noted, has long been a sticking point for critics of rhetoric as a whole.) Even the definition of *psychagōgia* given at the beginning of this chapter may raise some red flags: the phrase "winning men's souls" gives the impression that these souls are passive objects, their fates determined entirely by the teachers/rhetors who compete to "win" them.

Another place we see this danger reflected is in Plato's own explanation of what

sets *psychagōgia* apart from deceptive speech: *psychagōgia* is motivated by *erōs*, the desire for the good. Modern readers would be justified in wondering who determines what constitutes "the good."

In wrestling with these issues myself, I came to see the answer in the mutual pursuit of knowledge Plato describes, which I have outlined in this chapter. The student and teacher are bonded and motivated by the love of knowledge or the desire for knowledge. Though the teacher presumably has more knowledge than the student in some areas, there is nothing in Plato's explanation to indicate that the teacher must possess boundless knowledge or that the student must possess none at the outset. The pursuit of knowledge is a task they undertake together, but the motivation comes from the thrill of learning, of discovery, of insight. For this reason, I interpret the relationship Plato describes not as paternalistic but as genuinely intellectual – that is, that both teacher and student may arrive at new conclusions as a result of the questions that arise in their work.

Of course, as a twenty-first century researcher and teacher, my reading is admittedly colored by my own values and philosophy of learning, and by the potential I see in *psychagōgia* for composition pedagogy. Still, I see the best response to this concern in the teacher's motivation: the teacher is motivated to teach by her love of learning. A true love of learning would lead the teacher to pursue *continuous* learning – meaning the teacher sees herself as a student as much as a teacher. Some aspects of this view may not be spelled out in the *Phaedrus*, but the potential is there, open for our adaptation of *psychagōgia* for the needs of the modern composition classroom.

On a similar note, readers may have paused at Ed Cohen's notion that what we now call metacognition is not crucial to psychagogy; psychagogy is beneficial to the student regardless of whether or not he is being "led." This distinguishes *psychagōgia* from modern pedagogy, and is another way in which *psychagōgia* will necessarily change as we adapt it to the social and cultural context in which we now teach composition.

Overall, the paternalistic tone in some passages in the *Phaedrus* reflects the social, cultural, and philosophical context in which Plato developed his vision of *psychagōgia*—a socio-cultural-philosophical context much different from our own. The modern adaptation of *psychagōgia* I have envisioned should reflect the aims and concerns of modern composition instructors, seeking to empower students in the sense of helping them to develop tools that will help them to be more in control of their own words, beliefs, and actions (see Ch. I).

CHAPTER FOUR: VERBAL THERAPY: EVOLVING DEPICTIONS AND MODERN PRACTICE

In order to explain the significance of Plato's *psychagōgia*, this chapter will establish the origins and cultural context of the idea. This chapter will also place *psychagōgia* in relationship with the later ideas that bear the mark of its influence by constructing a timeline of the evolution of the idea of the word as therapy. This will lead us to the current iteration of *psychagōgia*, modern verbal therapy. An in-depth exploration of specific modern techniques will suggest some tools that might be effective in constructing a pedagogy inspired by *psychagōgia*.

Part I. Historical Depictions of Verbal Therapy

Because there is little scholarship on *psychagōgia*, I have proceeded to explore the influence of this idea by first establishing what other terminology might refer to the same practice. If we strip away the cultural context, the debates about what is and is not rhetoric, and the blurring of lines between teaching and counseling in the *Phaedrus*, we see that Socrates is drawing Phaedrus's attention to his own beliefs and thoughts, and attempting to lead him to new ways of looking at the situation. What Socrates is doing, it seems, is counseling his student. For this reason, in the following chapter, I will examine some ways that the practice of *psychagōgia*—and Plato's explanation of its value and function—has influenced (and in a sense, evolved into) modern psychother-

apy. Tracing the evolution of this idea will not only connect *psychagōgia* to modern psychotherapy but will also foreground the ways in which *psychagōgia* has been adapted to various purposes throughout history (suggesting that *psychagōgia* is also well suited for adaptation to the needs of modern composition pedagogy). Using the idea of verbal therapy as a common denominator, I have examined both the verbal therapeutic practices that were already in use in Plato's time and before, as well as several later iterations of the word as therapy, as articulated by the apostle Paul, Augustine, and Freud.

From Homer to Plato

Because my aim is to examine the influence of the idea of *psychagōgia* on philosophers and thinkers between Plato's time and our own, it is necessary to begin with the roots of the idea. This presents a unique research challenge, however, as it is difficult to find information on an ancient idea when that idea is referred to by a number of different terms. In this regard, Pedro Lain Entralgo's book *The Therapy of the Word* is a remarkable resource, examining in detail the evolution of the idea of the word as therapy from Homeric epic to the death of Aristotle. As part of this study, Entralgo explores changing cultural assumptions about the mind, the body, and the relationship between the two, as well as evolving ideas about man's role in the universe and in relation to divine forces.

In the era of Homer, Entralgo finds the origins of verbal therapy in magical approaches to healing. He narrows the idea of words as magic down to two terms: *charms* and *conjuring*, both of which are indicated in the Greek texts by the term *epodai* (the distinction comes later, as I will discuss below). He gives the earliest example of the use of a charm (*epaôidê; epôdê*) as it is found in the *Odyssey*: Ulysses has a run in with a wild boar on a hunting trip and, to treat his wounds, the other men both “bind up (*dêsan*) his wound and by means of a charm (*epaoidê*) stanch the flow of dark blood” (21). As Entralgo points out, even in this early case, the line between the “purely medical” treatment – the binding of the wound – and the “genuinely magical” one – the charm – is blurred, as the Greek verb *deô* is often used to “designate the act of enchanting by tying or binding” (21).

Entralgo observes that after this example, which is the first appearance of the *epode*, the meanings gradually diverge. The spoken word “becomes a conjuration with predominance of an intent to command or coerce the realities to be modified or avoided (such as a flow of blood or the action of a devil), a charm when its intent is predominantly entreaty or supplication” (22). This distinction between conjuring and charm is important, as both types of speech will continue to evolve throughout history as ways of healing, though their paths will diverge. Although in this early context, both the charm and the conjuration are “magical,” Entralgo credits Plato with “rationalizing” the charm (108), ultimately “*invent[ing]... a rigorously technical verbal psychotherapy*” (126; emphasis is Entralgo’s).

In explaining his claim that Plato invented verbal therapy, Entralgo specifically uses the word *psychagôgia*, which he says acts upon not the rational part of the soul, but the part “in which the irrational or the element of belief is preponderant” (122). Entralgo points to the *Charmides* for a demonstration of Plato’s understanding of how the word creates a change within the soul. He paraphrases the passage where Socrates explains how the charm becomes therapeutic:

...an *epode* will be philosophically acceptable and medically effective when it attains the status of a *logos kalos*, a “beautiful speech,” and when the patient receives it after having first “offered,” “yielded,” or “presented” his soul. (123)

What constitutes *logos kalos*? We know the statement is *logos kalos* when it induces *sôphrosynê* in the patient’s soul, which Entralgo defines as *temperance* or *serenity*, though he also acknowledges that it is impossible to translate the term neatly, as no modern language has a word that encompasses the same “ensemble of intellectual, ethical, and aesthetic elements” that the Greek concept includes. Still, he suggests that both *temperance* and *serenity*, though insufficient, express important parts of the concept (115).

As Entralgo notes, it is also crucial that the patient willingly offers himself up for verbal therapy. In the *Charmides*, the titular character “abandons himself confidently to the procedure of his master; he believes in the goodness and usefulness of *sôphrosynê* even though his reason is incapable of proving this” (Entralgo 118). We can see, therefore, that the healer’s words are only therapeutic when the patient believes that the treatment will work and that it will be beneficial. The patient’s belief in the physician is

the only 'divine' element required for the rationalized charm to be effective. Entralgo summarizes his argument about Plato's rationalization of the charm as follows:

the real modification of the soul of the hearer consists in the production of *sôphrosynê*: the *Charmides* says so categorically (157a). Under the influence of the enchanting word the mind of the hearer – and subsequently his body, to the extent possible, are calmed, enlightened, and set in good order, become *sôphrones*, are "sophronized," if so expressive a neologism may be allowed. And all this in a strictly natural way by the proper virtue of that which is said, and because of the personal frame of mind of the one who hears what is said to him. (121)

Entralgo is quick to point out that Plato did not believe that either healers or patients necessarily understood this process rationally (121). Plato's understanding of this dynamic, though, as it is portrayed in the *Charmides*, is what leads Entralgo to claim that "Plato thus becomes the inventor of a rigorously technical verbal psychotherapy" (126).

The charm and conjuration as magical acts are "resolved into three elements very different from one another: the magical, the rational, and the beseeching" (126). The rational form of speech becomes "technical psychotherapy," leading to Entralgo's claim, mentioned above, that Plato was the inventor of such a psychotherapy. And although Plato doesn't support the use of the original magical charm and conjuration, those ideas develop separately as what Entralgo calls "superstitious medicine," most notably in folk medicine, such as the work of the character of Pleberio in *La Celestina*, a late medieval Spanish dialogue (126, 243). Thus Entralgo uncovers the magical charm as the original

seed of the idea that, through Plato and many others, is transformed into both what we know now as psychology as well as pedagogy, though of course only after many more divergences and metamorphoses.

Psychiatrist Bennett Simon provides another historical perspective in his book *Mind and Madness in Ancient Greece: The Classical Roots of Modern Psychiatry*, though he also seeks to connect these origins to modern approaches to therapy. Like Entralgo, Simon looks at Homeric epic as the point of origin for modern psychiatry. Simon, though, looks to uncover the “history, sociology, and basic value system of each of the modern models” of therapy (12). In contrast, in his preface to Entralgo’s work, translator L. J. Rather describes the text as a historical survey, its “central topic” being the “strongly somatic orientation” of Western medicine (xvii). In his prologue, Entralgo suggests that modern historians fail to recognize this bias and, accordingly, have portrayed ancient medicine as distinctly nonverbal in the same way that modern Western medicine attempts to portray itself as not relying on rhetoric or persuasion (xxii). Simon, too, sets out to discuss “the ancient precursors and analogues of contemporary models of mental illness”; but in also discussing the contemporary models themselves, he is arguing for a specific kind of connection between ancient approaches to mental illness and therapy and those we see in modern psychotherapy (11). Both texts, therefore, are valuable resources for examining the ancient Greek cultural context that informed ancient approaches to mental health. They differ in terms of how they see the relationship between past and present: Entralgo seeks to point out our modern biases and to

dismantle them, giving the history of verbal therapy a more objective analysis, while Simon looks at the same history with an eye toward understanding how these early therapies developed into our modern techniques. Simon, though he doesn't specifically mention *psychagōgia*, offers a perspective that helps to establish the continuous thread of development between ancient Greek therapies and modern ones, which is essential to my task of arguing that modern therapeutic techniques can be used to practice *psychagōgia* in the modern classroom.

Simon makes connections between specific Platonic ideals and specific modern approaches to psychiatric treatment. Simon points out that "madness in tragedy is still linked to explicit divine intervention" (71), and examines Plato's reconfiguration of the concept of madness:

Several centuries after Homer, Plato constructed a model of the mind in which it is seen as a battlefield with several warring parties. Madness is the victory of one party, the wild impulsive part of the mind. Thus the assumption remains that madness is a result of intentionality, though here the intentionality belongs to one party within the person rather than to a god. It is important to bear in mind that the assumption that intentionality underlies madness is central to all later psychodynamic theories of mental disturbance. (71)

Simon sees a connection between Plato's psychology and modern psychodynamic approaches to therapy. Among other important differences, the mind was portrayed as

passive in Homeric epic (madness inflicted by the gods), while Plato's myth of the soul depicts a *psyche* that is self-moving – an active mind (162).

Simon also addresses the shifts in psychological understanding as they relate to social changes in ancient and classical Greece. The Homeric conception of mind was supported by his “traditional” culture:

Such a public and traditional model of mind serves to buttress a sense of continuity from generation to generation; it is less useful for a society that wishes to perpetuate the ideal of change from one generation to the next. It is important for a conservative culture that “mind” be accessible to traditional influences. (80)

Homeric psychology Simon points to the heroes of epic and tragedy as evidence of the shift away from this “traditional” model:

tragic heroes, especially in Sophocles, stand out as far more alone and autonomous than the heroes in epic poetry. Similarly, the Platonic dialogues, which represent an even greater break with the habits of an oral culture, are associated with a sharper definition of the individual and present a clear notion of the mind as private and internal. (87)

Simon later points out that the shift from an oral to a literate culture is one of the many social factors that influenced Plato's shift away from Homeric ideals. He supports Eric Havelock's argument that the view of mind that Plato espouses is, in fact, a direct result

of the shift away from the oral poetry tradition that Homer represents, quoting the following passage from Havelock's book *Preface to Plato*:

The "personality," as first invented by the Greeks and then presented to posterity for contemplation, could not be that nexus of motor responses, unconscious reflexes, and passions and emotions which had been mobilized for countless time in the service of the mnemonic process. On the contrary, it was precisely these which proved an obstacle to the realization of a self-consciousness emancipated from the condition of an oral culture. The psyche which slowly asserts itself in independence of the poetic performance and the poetized tradition had to be the reflective, thoughtful, critical psyche or it could be nothing. (Havelock as qtd. in Simon 190)

Thus, according to Havelock and Simon, the conditions under which Plato developed his theories of mind included the transition from an oral to a literate society, along with all of the psychological, social, and cultural changes that transition entails.

Paul

The writings of the apostle Paul provide insight into how psychagogy was enacted in early Christian communities as well as how early Christian leaders saw psychagogy as central to their communities' survival. In *Rhetoric in the European Tradition*, Thomas Conley points out that while Plato's psychagogy requires a close relationship

between student and teacher, it is unilateral or asymmetrical (13). The teacher is in control of the persuasive process, and it is the teacher's idea of truth that is the goal of the dialogue. Socrates has already mentioned in the *Phaedrus* that all rhetoric is psychagogy, and that thus, psychagogy is what takes place in meetings both private and public (68). It is only with the apostle Paul that we begin to see mutual *psychagōgia*, a community charged with the care of one another's souls.

Clarence Glad, in *Paul and Philodemus: Adaptability in Epicurean and Early Christian Psychagogy*, offers the most in-depth study available of *psychagōgia* in Paul's writings. He argues that what many scholars criticize as inconsistency in Paul's writing is actually adaptability (2). Glad points to 1 Corinthians 9:19-23, and in particular, 9:22b ("I have become everything in turn to men of every sort") as evidence of "Paul's concern with adaptation" and his awareness of the diversity of his audience (2):

Paul's use of praise and blame, of harsh and gentle means of persuasion, and his often indirect, and polyphonic approach towards the Corinthians should be seen as aspects of a friend's frank speech and psychagogic adaptation to his friends.

(3)

The myriad of different rhetorical techniques Paul uses are, in Glad's view, not evidence of a scattered approach, but of a rhetoric tailored to each individual situation. Glad's larger goal is to both explore Pauline psychagogy and to show that psychagogy was "a widespread and shared communal practice among Epicureans and early Christians" (9).

In Paul, we can see a more directly political aim, although in an early Christian community, this may have been utterly necessary for the community's survival; communal psychagogy "aimed at molding and consolidating the recipients for purposes of communal solidarity" (Glad 10). Communal psychagogy meant that not only were these early Christians partially responsible for one another's souls, they were also solidifying and perpetuating the shared beliefs that provided the foundation for their communities.

In terms of specific rhetorical techniques in Paul's psychagogy, Glad notes that the use of metaphor is the predominant trait noted by scholars. Paul refers to himself variously as "builder," "nurse," "father," and "brother" (187). The parental metaphor in particular, Glad observes, is significant, as it is a calculated move intended to establish a certain relationship and corresponding emotional response in the audience. The audience feels cared for, but at the same time, is motivated to heed Paul's words: it is a parent's responsibility to nurture a child, but the child is expected to submit to the parent's authority (188). In claiming this relationship to the audience, Glad concludes, Paul takes a position of leadership and persuades the audience that their duty is to obey him.

The parent-child metaphor also elicits gratitude from the audience. Michael Whitenton, in his article "Figuring Joy: Gratitude as Medicine In 1 Thessalonians 2:1-20," examines Paul's letter to the Thessalonians, applying a medical metaphor to Paul's approach:

Paul follows common psychagogic protocol. Specifically, having correctly diagnosed anxiety in the Christians in Thessalonica, Paul uses particular types of figured speech in order to elicit the emotion of gratitude from his audience as a medicine to soothe their anxiety. (15)

This gratitude would, in turn, bring the people in the audience to look upon each other more graciously. Glad points out that in using both “father” and “brother” to describe himself, Paul may seem to be sending mixed messages, as one of these relationships implies a superior-inferior dynamic, while the other is “reciprocal” (189). But even in this, according to Glad, Paul has specific reasons for using “father” at times and “brother” on other occasions:

...the role accentuated depends on the condition of those guided. Recalcitrant members need the forceful guidance of a stern father; obedient ones that of a considerate friend or brother. (189)

According to Whitenton, this is the crux of Glad’s argument on Paul’s adaptability. Paul seems to have built into his approach the necessary metaphors for the community to take on the task of communal psychagogy. He teaches them not only that they are equals on the spiritual path, but that they are responsible for encouraging one another. They are bound by duty and shared ideals—the faith community is a family.

Whitenton adds that because a father knows his children as individuals, Paul’s technique of referring to the audience as his children makes each audience member feel

acknowledged and cared for (20). The gratitude this elicits inspires the people to pass on the care that has been shown to them; Paul begins a chain reaction of supportive, encouraging interactions that will continue to feed upon itself, sustaining the community indefinitely. Of course, Paul, like Socrates, is driven by a higher goal; Paul hopes that, in addition to improving the audience's relationships with one another, the gratitude he inspires in the people will ultimately be directed to God (Whitenton 20).

Augustine

A study of Augustine provides another example of a Christian approach to psychagogy. Where Paul was most concerned with the needs of a community, however, Augustine's psychagogy focuses on the conversion and spiritual development of the individual.

As Paul Kolbet demonstrates in his book, *Augustine and the Cure of Souls: Revising a Classical Ideal*, Augustine was a great admirer of Plato and his *psychagogia*. Augustine was also an admirer of Cicero, whose eloquence became the standard by which he initially judged Christian rhetors; sound Christian doctrine did not impress Augustine unless it was conveyed with Cicero's eloquence (71). Augustine found this sound doctrine expressed eloquently in Ambrose, whose psychagogy had its intended impact on Augustine and deeply influenced Augustine's own formulation of psychagogic technique:

The effects of such preaching upon Augustine were exactly those that the psychagogic theory informing Ambrose's practice would suggest: it brought him into a process of gradual conversion where the convictions informing his life decisions at the time were first brought to mind with clarity and then whittled away. Ambrose attacked Manichean doctrines directly and indirectly in his sermons and defended Catholic practices against their criticisms. (Kolbet 78)

Augustine's close relationship with Ambrose, and his experience of Ambrose's psychagogic work, most likely shaped his later beliefs about the process by which a change of beliefs could be achieved. For Augustine, the development of psychagogy was a matter of refuting his long-held Manichean beliefs and devising a method for utilizing Platonic methods for strengthening the student's Christian faith and understanding of Christian teachings. Likewise, central to Augustine's psychagogy was the gradual process of encouraging the student to question his own deeply held beliefs—a goal that Kolbet sees as directly descended from Plato's *psychagōgia* (38). Christian faith could not simply be planted; conflicting beliefs also had to be dismantled.

According to Kolbet, Augustine believed that philosophy alone could not cure the ailments of the soul that led to human suffering. Only God could do that. He believed that Greek philosophers "lacked an effective psychagogy to incarnate those ideals and truly heal the fissures troubling soul and society," whereas Christians "suffer from no such fissure between their cognitive and religious lives. Indeed, they do not separate "philosophy, that is, the pursuit of wisdom" from "religious rites" at all" (115).

Still, Augustine inherited the cultural milieu which preserved Plato's legacy: as Kolbet explains, "Christians internalized not only sophistic reflexes and habits of thought but fundamental presuppositions regarding the nature of speech itself and its effects upon the soul (for better or worse)" (7). This is one reason that Augustine came to turn against Manicheanism and actively pursue a rhetoric that would help him to dismantle those beliefs in his own mind. Augustine believed that Manicheanism fell short because, according to Kolbet, it could not "accommodate itself to the psychic states of all hearers – fall[ing] short of therapeutic imperatives established since classical antiquity" (128). To Augustine, it seemed that psychagogy could provide a framework for the strategy he would need to achieve his goal: leading students and parishioners alike toward a greater understanding of God. Augustine's faith and investment in *psychagōgia* – that is, in Plato's *psychagōgia*, not in the wider category of guidance techniques later labelled by scholars as psychagogy – speaks to the potential of *psychagōgia* to guide students in any discipline toward a desired goal. These goals need not be those outlined by Plato, though a love of "the good" could be interpreted as congruent with the goals of Paul, Augustine, and, as we will see, Freud.

Despite taking the broader view of the word as therapy as related to *psychagōgia*, the fact remains that the two authors covered thus far have been specifically discussed by scholars in terms of psychagogy. I have found very little scholarship, in contrast, specifically mentioning *psychagōgia* in reference to authors more recent than Augustine. For that reason, at this point in my historical overview, I must focus solely on the word

as therapy, using this broader definition to trace the influence of Plato's idea of *psychagōgia*. Since the scope of this dissertation allows for only a condensed version of the history of ideas about verbal therapy, I have chosen to skip over a significant portion of history (roughly 1500 years) to focus on the most influential figure in modern psychotherapy: Sigmund Freud.

Freud

An examination of the impact of *psychagōgia* on the work of Sigmund Freud reveals yet another use of Plato's technique: Freud's goals had little use for a spiritual notion of "the good," and yet the leading of the soul through words is the foundation of what we now call psychotherapy. In order to trace the influence of *psychagōgia* on Freud's philosophy, I will present/discuss some of the most striking ways in which Freud seems to have been influenced by Plato (regardless of whether or not he was aware of it) and the ways in which his work initiated dramatic shifts in the development of modern psychotherapeutic techniques.

Perhaps the most suggestive similarity between the two thinkers is Freud's theory of the mind (id, ego, superego) and its striking resemblance to Plato's tripartite soul theory (Bergmann 96) as presented in the palinode section of the *Phaedrus* and summarized above in Chapter 1. Briefly put, Freud believed that the id represented the indi-

vidual's instinctual drives. The superego represents the moral and social forces that restrain us from operating entirely on the basis of instinct and desire. The ego, then, is left to manage both the impulsive id and the strict superego, ideally resulting in decisions that acknowledge both one's true desires and one's obligation to comply with moral and social norms. The id is, of course, Plato's dark, ugly horse; the superego is the noble, white horse; the ego is the charioteer, who must conjure up some sort of compromise or cooperation between the two warring forces in order to function. We can see how Freud's theory of mind preserves the pursuit of moderation, of balance – the idea of the middle way between two extremes that was so highly valued by the ancients.

Another significant connection is the basic form of therapy envisioned by both Plato and Freud. K. I. Arvanitakis explains:

'Treatment' consists of re-establishing order within the psyche through the correction of ignorance, which includes both the correction of false beliefs, as well as the discovery of knowledge present in the individual, but hidden from his awareness at the present. The method, in both theories, is a kind of 'word therapy' that involves the dyad of the individual and his philosopher/therapist, who assists him in his search for the truth that will harmonize the conflicting parts of his soul. (167)

The "correction of ignorance" is the mechanism of healing in both Plato's and Freud's theories of verbal therapy. Bennett Simon points out that Plato and Freud also shared an understanding of what we now call resistance: referring to "the treatment necessary

to remove the ignorance and replace it with knowledge,” Simon explains that “the notion of how much work is involved and how much resistance there is within the person to relinquish his blindness and ignorance is common to both thinkers” (Simon, “Plato and Freud” 107). In fact, Simon adds that the idea of resistance may be inherent in a mental model in which the mind contains multiple drives in conflict with one another:

Thus Plato and Freud came upon the importance of ‘ignorance’ in their working setting: Freud, in the analytic dialogue, and Plato, in the philosophic dialogue. But this seems to follow inevitably from splitting the psyche, or seeing the person as split. One party within the person will deal with the other, utilizing all the tricks he knows to keep the upper hand — threats, persuasion, bribery, and, finally, out-and-out deception, a deception appearing in the guise of ignorance. (“Plato and Freud” 107)

This connection between multiple drives and the phenomenon of resistance may be relevant to modern psychodynamic psychology, but for our purposes, it also enriches the mental image of the tripartite mind/soul. If warring impulses inevitably lead to the patient/client/student resisting the part of herself that wishes to embrace a new idea, then an effective pedagogy will need to acknowledge this conflict in order to gradually reduce resistance and allow for changes in perspective.

Also relevant is one fundamental difference between Plato’s and Freud’s approaches. Although both Platonic and Freudian approaches share a goal of recovering

knowledge that was previously unavailable to the conscious mind, Plato and Freud disagree on the nature of that unknown knowledge:

The fundamental task of psychotherapy is the recovery of the 'unknown,' of the anterior knowledge which is now 'forgotten.' But this, in the case of platonic psychotherapy, is the rational/suprarational knowledge of the good, whereas in Freudian therapy, it is the contents of the 'kingdom of the illogical.' Thus, it can be said that the psychic knowledge sought after in platonic therapy is knowledge of the 'good,' but, in Freudian therapy, it is knowledge of the 'evil' (Arvanitakis 170).

Arvanitakis goes on to explain that, as a result of this fundamental difference in theories of the mind, Plato works with the "alloplastic forces" in psychological development ("man strives to alter the external world so as to make it conform to his inner vision of the 'real'"), while Freud focuses on the "autoplastic forces" ("man must bring his inner world in conformity with the demands of the external reality") (Arvanitakis 170). It is certainly significant to note this crucial difference. While Freud has been a great inspiration to me (I believe he is greatly misunderstood, not surprisingly, mostly by those who have never read his work), it is Plato's insistence that we can be inspired by our inner truth to change the world that motivates my work. Still, as we will see, a certain level of acceptance of reality is a crucial part of the process of personal development and, in particular, self-empowerment. Here again, we can see that the idea of the word as therapy is adapted to meet the goals of a new understanding of the mind. Despite

the influence of Plato, Freud's approach to healing takes the philosophy and technique of *psychagōgia* into a new sociocultural context and uses it to pursue a modern notion of health.

Part II. Turning to Therapy

The historical survey above reveals how the idea of the word as therapy has evolved through time. Each iteration of the word as therapy is evidence of how this idea has been adapted to the needs of each writer's philosophy, community, and goals. This latter half of the chapter is, in a sense, a continuation of the historical survey. This section presents a more focused and in-depth examination of one of the current disciplines that is, I believe, a descendant of *psychagōgia* — psychotherapy.

The first section of this chapter has provided us with not only evidence for the connections between *psychagōgia* and modern psychotherapy but also support for the idea that there has long been overlap between the practices of teaching and counseling. In order to take the next step in adapting *psychagōgia* for use in modern writing pedagogy, I will describe some key verbal therapeutic techniques in the second half of this chapter. In order to transition from historical study to the present-day task of seeking concrete ways to begin building a psychagogic pedagogy, it will be useful to first present a few perspectives on the rhetorical nature of psychotherapy. One of the common objections to the use of psychotherapeutic techniques in the classroom is that these two areas of study are distinct and that it is somehow dangerous to blur the lines between them (see

Bishop, particularly the section entitled “Are Teachers Writing Therapists?” beginning on page 507). As a precursor to outlining the verbal therapeutic techniques I find most promising for practicing *psychagogia*, I will borrow words from a few noted scholars in rhetoric and in psychology in order to support my intention to bridge the gap between the two disciplines.

Many scholars have noted the overlap between techniques in psychology and pedagogy, as well as between techniques in psychotherapy and rhetoric; there are striking similarities between the art of persuasion and the clinical practice of changing clients’ perspectives on their situations. In his essay “Psychoanalytic Theory: A Neglected Rhetorical Dimension,” communication scholar Lloyd Pettegrew explores the relationship between rhetoric and psychoanalysis, arguing that psychoanalysis is itself a rhetorical process, and that the theories of psychoanalysis could be of great use to scholars of rhetoric. He cites several ways that Kenneth Burke points to a rhetoric that is “integrated with psychoanalytic theory,” including the concept of “terministic screens” and Burke’s examination of how psychoanalysis has supplied us with an understanding of motivation as a psychological process (51). In his article “Rhetorical Processes In Therapy: The Bias For Self-Containment,” psychologist Michael Guilfoyle examines the rhetorical practices used by therapists to guide clients toward “useful” or “therapeutic” narratives about themselves (303). The idea that repairing the patient’s narrative is the way to guide him back to wellness is a recognizable variation of Plato’s goal of helping the student come to know himself better and change his relationship to himself.

In an essay arguing that psychiatry has taken over much of the social and cultural role once fulfilled by religion, communication and rhetoric scholar John Makay points to the pioneering work of Dr. Jerome Frank in the study of psychotherapy as rhetoric. Makay cites Frank's concept of the "assumptive world" – the client's "values, expectations, and images of the self and others" (91). Makay describes three strategies for effecting change in an individual's assumptive world: the therapist can help the client to develop "a sense of personal responsibility for altering the belief system"; "bring the troubled client into a personal confrontation with the 'irrational self'"; or help the client to define the conflict and then create new "statements" (perhaps better described as slogans or mantras) that the client then acts upon to create a change (193-5). As we will see, a psychagogic pedagogy offers methods that support all three strategies.

In order to propose that certain verbal techniques used in psychotherapy might be beneficial in the composition classroom, I will outline here some of the techniques (or "moves," as I call them often, borrowing a term composition scholars often use for rhetorical techniques) that seem to be most common in the analysis and teaching of psychotherapeutic work. In some ways, this is necessarily only a partial list; my research has revealed a number of other specific techniques that are deeply intertwined with particular psychological schools of thought or therapeutic approaches, and that level of expertise in therapeutic processes is beyond the scope of this study. The techniques I have explored here, then, are those that reappear in multiple authors' discussions of important techniques, and among these recurring mentions are those that are most easily

applied across multiple contexts (and thus most likely to be effectively transferred into the composition classroom).

Despite the objections (explored above) that many people raise against the blurring of lines between teaching and therapy, I propose that the methods outlined below are based on theories of mind that are not strictly within the domain of psychology, but are fundamental assumptions in the world of composition scholarship. For example, increasing a client's self-awareness is a primary goal of psychotherapy; metacognition is a primary goal of composition pedagogy.

Another important connection between teaching and psychotherapy will help to illustrate the value of these techniques for instructors. Psychoanalysis scholar Paul Wachtel, in his book *Therapeutic Communication: Principles and Effective Practice*, argues that skill in using therapeutically effective phrasings is not ordinarily studied as other aspects of therapy are, and consequently, even for highly trained, professional mental health workers, "this capacity is particularly vulnerable to the stresses and pressures that are an inevitable part of therapeutic work..." (14). Like therapists, teachers in all sorts of educational settings get tired, stressed, and emotionally worn down by the task of teaching. Every seasoned instructor has experienced frustration at students' disrespect, apathy, and occasional manipulations. Aside from these classroom stressors, instructors face the same stressors as all humans: financial worries, interpersonal conflicts,

family obligations, health problems, burnout, etc. Wachtel points out that when therapists are under stress, they are more likely to respond to patients in ways that are impulsive and counterproductive to the goals of therapy, but he offers a solution:

Attention to the phrasings and communicational strategies described in this book is no substitute for the therapist's continuing examination of her emotional reactions to the patient's characteristic ways of experiencing and interacting. But it can provide a structure that can help keep untoward reactions within reasonable limits as well as provide a further dimension of skillfulness in the conduct of the therapeutic work (13).

Teachers can benefit, just as therapists do, from becoming attuned to their own emotions as well as pursuing focused and intentional study of appropriate responses to student/client resistance. The verbal therapeutic techniques I have outlined below show potential as building blocks for a supportive "structure" for composition instructors similar to the one Wachtel outlines for therapists. Though it is not within the scope of this project to outline a complete pedagogy, these techniques may spark further work toward that goal, and in the meantime, can be used as a metaphorical toolbox from which instructors may draw useful techniques for leading students in the direction of the insights they need to make more intentional moves both as writers and as individuals.

Part III. Verbal Therapeutic Techniques

Echoing/Mirroring/Repetition

In her book *Therapeutic Ways with Words*, sociolinguist Kathleen Warden Ferrara analyzes a variety of therapeutic discourse techniques in the recorded sessions of several therapists with their clients. Among these techniques are echoing and mirroring, repetition by the client and by the therapist, respectively. Ferrara offers examples of both techniques.

In the case of echoing, the therapist might offer an assessment of the client's situation: "You're scared of men," to which the client responds, "I'm scared of men," following the same downward intonation of the original statement (110). In this example and others like it, the therapist has set forth her own interpretation of the client's dilemma, and the client accepts it. The exact repetition, including the intonation, is important:

The most common responses to a statement are the ordinary confirming utterances such as *yes, yeah, I know, You're right*. However, by choosing to repeat the statement of another using the same word choice and basic intonation pattern, a speaker signals acceptance of and agreement with a statement. This echoed acceptance is even more emphatic than agreement with the words *yes* or *exactly....* (113)

Repetition and imitation of tone thus show that the client buys into the therapist's assessment and understanding of the situation. The client did not choose to paraphrase or substitute – she did not reply with *I don't trust men* or *I've had bad experiences with men* or *Men scare me*. She repeats *I'm scared of men*, perhaps trying the therapist's perspective on for size, but in the same breath accepting and affirming it. This is the strongest agreement that the therapist can elicit from the client. It also speaks to the relationship between the therapist and the client:

If empathy is the ability to take the other's point of view, then being able to formulate a statement about another which that other takes up as his or her own demonstrates empathy. If insight is the ability to see inside, then therapist's formulations are models of insight for clients. Later, clients will become adept at making insightful statements, such as "I'm scared of men" on their own, without assistance. (111)

Just as the client, in echoing the therapist's words, almost simultaneously tests out and accepts the therapist's statement, the acceptance itself both reaffirms and strengthens the bond between the two speakers, as it shows the client that he or she is being seen and heard by the therapist. In Ferrara's words, "It is in fact therapeutic to be understood so thoroughly by another that you can emphatically agree with statements they make about your life" (115).

While echoing is not a "technique" the composition instructor can adopt, per se (since it is an action on the part of the client/student), instructors can certainly make

these kinds of comments about what they see in a student's text, examining the student's response for signs of understanding. For example, in a student essay arguing that the federal government should invest more in programs assisting veterans in securing treatment for PTSD and related disorders, the instructor might note that the student is hinting at a moral argument about the government's responsibility for this issue. During a conference, the instructor could make a comment like, "The government is responsible for this." The student could echo the statement exactly, offering the kind of emphatic agreement Ferrara describes; otherwise, a tentative response ("Well...") or a denial ("No, but...") could lead the student to further insight about her own argument, whether or not that insight is immediate and can be further discussed in the conference.

Mirroring, on the other hand, is a strategic maneuver in which the therapist repeats a word or phrase that the client has used to describe an event, a situation, or him or herself. In an example Ferrara gives of mirroring, a client named Sharon says, "When I went home last week I made a discovery," with a downward intonation. Her therapist replies, "A discovery," not phrased as a question, but as a statement using the same downward intonation (119). Ferrara argues that this type of repetition serves as an "*indirect request for elaboration*" (119, emphasis in original). While echoing is usually an immediate repetition, in the case of mirroring, the patient may finish a sentence or thought before the therapist speaks, so the repetition is not instantaneous; while it redirects the patient's attention to an idea for which the therapist is requesting elaboration, "it is designed to increase the clients' awareness by inviting them to actually listen to

their own words and consider their meaning as they expand on the semantic content” (120). The therapist may mirror a phrase because he or she does not understand the reference, but it is also possible that the therapist understands completely, but wants to help the client see what he or she is expressing and perhaps reflect on the emotions conveyed. A therapist may choose a word or short phrase to mirror in part to ensure that he or she is redirecting the client’s narrative with minimal interruption; Ferrara refers to data showing that this tends to be effective (in that clients quickly resume their narrative and do comply with the implicit request for more detail) (123).

Mirroring can be used effectively in conferences focused on the student’s writing process (among other scenarios). If the instructor asks the student to describe any issues that came up during the writing of a first draft, for example, the student may say something like “I got stuck on the conclusion but I just summarized the arguments I had made.” The instructor might say, “You got stuck.” This draws the student’s attention to her own characterization of the problem, ideally leading her to explain further what went wrong: “I couldn’t figure out how to answer ‘so what?’ like we talked about in class....” This not only provides the instructor with insight into the essay’s conclusion, but could lead to further discussion of how the student might respond to a similar dilemma in future writing scenarios.

Urged Verbalization

In her book *Talk as Therapy: Psychotherapy in a Linguistic Perspective*, linguist Joanna Pawelczyk performs discourse analysis on the verbal interactions that take place during therapy sessions. She refers to the method of “urged verbalization” — a technique in which the therapist notices a nonverbal expression (or lack thereof) and asks the client to verbalize the thoughts or emotions that lie behind it. Pawelczyk offers several important reasons that therapists should notice, acknowledge, and ask clients to consider their nonverbal behavior. One is that the contradiction between what is verbalized and what is not verbalized can be a site of growth for the client. She cites scholars Beier and Young who claim that “nonverbal behavior is the ‘unconscious made visible’” (qtd. in Pawelczyk 82). In discussing a difficult situation, clients will frequently claim to be handling it well, but express anger or fear through nonverbal means — a deep sigh, fidgeting while speaking, or refusing eye contact are only a few of many possibilities. Urging the client to verbalize what has been expressed nonverbally is a way of “mak[ing] the client accountable for” the contradiction between what the client is saying and their nonverbal gestures (82).

Discussing the emotions that are expressed nonverbally can also “reassure the clients about their *real* emotional stances” (Pawelczyk 83). In other words, drawing the client’s attention to the fact that he is expressing anger can show him that there are no ill effects to feeling and expressing anger, or at least that it is safe to do so in the therapist’s office. Nonverbal cues may also reveal emotions that the client has yet to express at all,

which may allow the therapist to guide the client through the process of uncovering and expressing that which has not yet been discussed (83).

Pawelczyk also notes that urging clients to verbalize what they have thus far only expressed nonverbally can help to establish the relationship necessary for effective therapy:

...the therapist's careful observation and reading of the client's communicative patterns signify his/her physical and emotional presence for the client. This, in turn, constitutes an indispensable factor in building a therapeutic alliance between the therapist and client. (83)

The therapist's demonstrated emotional presence lays the foundation for the crucial relationship of trust between therapist and client.

In the composition classroom, urged verbalization is a very effective way to encourage participation from students who are otherwise hesitant to speak up during whole-class discussions. For example, in the silence after a thought provoking discussion question, it is often evident that a generally quiet student is making connection between the discussion question and her own research topic. In a case like this, the instructor might say, for example, "Rachel, I can see your wheels turning – tell us what you're thinking." This technique depends, of course, on a certain rapport between teacher and student as well as a strong sense of classroom community; using this technique in the wrong way or on a student who might completely refuse to respond can

backfire, the end result being no better than the traditional (and terrifying) method of “calling on” students to intentionally force a response.

An alternative is to use urged verbalization, like the other techniques discussed above, in a private conference with a student. Here I draw upon Pawelczyk’s example of a client who fears the consequences of expressing anger. A student might write about, as an example, mass shootings and the student protest movement that has arisen in response. In this scenario, particularly in a private conference, it might be appropriate for the instructor to say, “you seem to be expressing anger here but in an indirect way.” This might lead to a productive discussion about expressing emotion effectively in an academic essay, which students tend to assume is not possible (due to misconceptions about academic writing in general).

Ferrara examines a similar technique that can be used in very specific contexts. Unlike the concepts of echoing and mirroring explored above, what Ferrara calls “(urged) repeating” is not a spontaneous act, but occurs when the client repeats a word or phrase at the request of the therapist (125). The simplest way a therapist can urge the client to repeat herself is to say “say that again.” In an example from Ferrara’s study, a therapist says, “Say that again. So you’re sure you hear it” (126). The therapist wishes, as in mirroring, to draw the client’s attention to something he or she has said – in this case, not to request any further information, though further discussion may follow. Instead, the intent here is entirely for the client’s benefit – that she will hear her own

words, and accept her own wisdom, whether or not she originally understood the significance of her statement.

Urged verbalization has benefits that stretch far beyond the closed door of the therapy session, however. In a section on the importance and nature of self-disclosure, Pawelczyk quotes humanistic psychologist Sidney Jourard, who in his book *Self-Disclosure: An Experimental Analysis of the Transparent Self*, says, “no man can come to know himself except as an outcome of disclosing himself to another person” (qtd. in Pawelczyk 98). And Mikhail Bakhtin, from *Problems of Dostoevsky’s Poetics*: “...I become myself only by revealing myself to another, through another and with another’s help” (qtd. in Pawelczyk 98). As she hopes to demonstrate with these quotes and references to a wide variety of other scholars of linguistics, psychology, and philosophy, it is only through expressing our identities to others that we become aware of those identities—and even further, it is perhaps only through expressing ourselves that we can create those identities. Whether or not the dialogue is between a therapist and a client, “verbalization of one’s experience to a significant other who actively listens and provides an empathetic response clarifies and in turn validates one’s emotions” (Pawelczyk 99). This validation is key to the long-term goal of empowering clients to understand their own emotions and make more conscious decisions in their own lives.

The benefits of asking a client to verbalize what was once nonverbal or to repeat something significant are partly reliant on the fundamental benefits of verbalizing our thoughts. Psychoanalyst Anthony Storr points out in *The Art of Psychotherapy* that, as

other scholars have noted, verbalizing is an essential part of how we gain distance from difficult situations or emotions in order to analyze them:

It is true that when one embarks upon self-observation, one enters upon an infinite regress. I may observe myself, but I cannot observe the 'I' which is the observer... But the fact that we can never observe the whole of ourselves need not prevent us from scrutinizing what we can with accuracy. I may not be able to see my own back; but I can get a good idea of it with the help of a mirror, or by comparison with someone like myself.

(25-6)

The metaphor of the mirror is interesting here—one of the major goals of therapy is, of course, to make the client more aware of himself. This allows him to see how he already has some ideas about the solutions to his problems; with the right tools, he can approach problems and dilemmas objectively and make more confident decisions. Through urged verbalization and urged repeating, the therapist can help the client become more aware of what he already knows about himself and his situation.

In the composition classroom, urged repeating requires that the student express the significant thought first so the teacher can draw attention to it; as such, this situation might arise when asking students to reflect (perhaps in small groups) about issues they have run into during the process of constructing an essay. For example, if a student is experimenting with using personal experience as evidence in an argumentative essay, she might say something like, "I felt like I was doing something wrong, but I tried it,

and it worked.” Perhaps the instructor might say, “say that again... you felt like...?” The student replies, “I felt like I was doing something wrong.” This could open the door to a discussion about the unwritten rules of academic writing and the opportunity to push back against genre conventions, particularly within the relatively open environment of a first-year composition classroom.

Questions

“Probing questions” (Pawelczyk’s term) are the real technique behind the pop culture idea of the therapist’s soothing voice asking, *and how does that make you feel?* These are questions that the therapist uses either to gain more information or to simply draw the client’s attention to what he or she is saying — or not saying.

Pawelczyk considers the probing question to be a response to the problem of clients’ tendency to refer to very difficult topics or uncomfortable emotions only indirectly or vaguely. She points out that therapists may ask *what do you mean?* (the most common form of this strategy) when they do not know what the patient is referring to, but will also do so even when they are clear on the referent: “It also happens that the therapist may have no doubts as to what the client specifically means by a certain phrase, yet he will still confront him/her about its significance. In this way, the client is being gradually instilled with the ability to be aware of the projected emotional states” (67).

Pawelczyk also points out that the effectiveness of probing questions depends on the developing relationship between therapist and client. As she explains, the client

will initially struggle to share thoughts and emotions on sensitive issues with the therapist who is, in the beginning, a stranger. The trust required in the therapeutic relationship is required in order for probing questions to have their intended effect: "It seems that the trust that their innermost feelings and traumatic experiences will not be rejected or minimized enables the clients to respond to the therapist's confrontational 'what do you mean' with further and 'person-specific' elaboration of their personal/intimate dramas" (74). Thus, some verbal techniques can be used to build the trust required for the ideal therapeutic relationship, while others are not fully effective until that trust has been completely established.

Wachtel, on the other hand, advocates a very specific method of inquiry that, rather than drawing the patient's attention to his or her words, instead allows the patient a measure of comfort while he is gradually encouraged to question his basic assumptions. Many patients, in fact, will respond negatively to Pawelczyk's probing questions. One of the basic elements of therapy is an understanding that patients often hold particular views because those views provide stability in some way; attacking those views can result in the patient feeling as if he's had the rug pulled from beneath his feet, or worse, that the therapist is in fact an interrogator. Although of course this is not the intention of the probing questions (which, when used as Pawelczyk describes, seem to be quite effective), there are some exchanges in which Wachtel's approach may be more helpful in eliciting information without the patient beginning to perceive the therapist as a threat.

Wachtel advises therapists to devise questions that invite the patient to explore, to ask questions that don't *seem* to "probe" but that ask the patient to do just that. He relates the example of a patient he calls Joseph, who is plagued by the intensity of his ambivalent feelings toward his father. Joseph struggles to admit that his feelings for his father are not entirely positive, perhaps because he feels guilt about his negative emotions. As Joseph discusses his father's admirable qualities, claiming that he hopes to pass those qualities on to his children one day, Wachtel advises the therapist to ask, "If there were just one thing of your father's you were not going to impart, what would it be?" (90) Wachtel explains how this approach is more effective than, say, pointing out the patient's ambivalence and asking him to comment on it.

Inquiring in this fashion does not (at least initially) challenge the basic structure of the patient's beliefs. It operates largely from *within* the patient's belief system, seeking out weak points, as it were, in the defensive structure. The patient is being enlisted in the effort to find the appropriate point of entry; he is being given an opportunity to explore his reservations about his father without having first to acknowledge explicitly anything questionable in what up until now has been an essential element in his identity and his sense of stability. (90)

In "enlisting" the patient to help the therapist analyze the problem and look for ways to consider other possible ways of framing it, Wachtel's technique disarms the patient, making him a collaborator in his therapy rather than a victim whose worldview is on

trial. Naturally, this reduces resistance and reminds the patient that he and the therapist have a common goal: breaking down maladaptive thoughts and behaviors and finding ways to help the patient move forward.

Depending on the dynamic of a particular classroom, instructors may find that Wachtel's less invasive approach is more likely to lead to productive discussion. Imagine a student writing about his decision to attend a four-year university — a decision he regrets, or perhaps resents the pressure that led to his decision. He might say "I applied to college because that's what you do after high school." Again, allowing for varying levels of directness, the instructor might ask, "What would it mean if you *didn't* go to college after high school?" Here the student is able to explain the social norms and expectations in his hometown without implicating himself in perpetuating those norms or falling prey to social pressure.

Metaphor

Many therapists as well as researchers in composition studies and rhetoric have studied the power of metaphor in recent years. Teachers of writing are already familiar with the power of metaphor — to connect things that didn't previously seem to be related, to reveal in the comparison a truth not evident in any other manner, to give us new perspective on ancient problems, or at least to express them. In his book *Psychology and the Poetics of Growth: Figurative Language in Psychology, Psychotherapy, and Education*, psycholinguist Howard Pollio describes the function of figures of speech as helping us to "express [our] unique understanding of relations among the various aspects of a life"

(Pollio 101). Pollio also refers to the concept of *models of awareness* developed by influential cognitive and educational psychologist Jerome Bruner, arguing that the connections made by metaphors “seem to provide the reader or listener with a model of how to understand his or her particular pattern of impulses, emotions, and ideas” (101).

In their article “Distinctive Therapeutic Uses of Metaphor,” clinical psychologists Leonard Cirillo and Cathleen Crider point out that “the general appeal of metaphor to therapists is that by jolting us out of convention, all metaphors facilitate self-reflection, providing one of the conditions of change (Evans 1988)” (512). Cirillo and Crider describe four different uses of metaphor in a therapeutic setting: “Making a Point Vividly with an Implied Comparison,” “Accommodating Disparate Interests through Multiple Meanings,” “Changing Perspective on a Topic with Borrowed Terminology,” and “Using a Novel Combination to Create or Reveal Something New.” In an example of the first use, making a point vividly, the authors describe a client who feels that no one cares for her. She is upset that even when she is on the phone with her mother, her mother will regularly put her on hold in order to talk to other friends or business contacts. The client and therapist discuss the metaphorical feeling of being ‘on hold,’ and this metaphor “allowed the client to see a pattern in her responses” and served “both to condense the nuances of her feeling, and to highlight its recurrence across various situations” (Cirillo and Crider 513).

In another technique, changing perspective through borrowed terminology, the client is first asked to take note of her own use of metaphor: she may refer to her mother

as the “family pet,” or frequently use military imagery and metaphors of battle to describe family relationships (Cirillo and Crider 515). Once the client has become aware of what she is expressing through this figurative language, the therapist can suggest alternative metaphors to help her try out new perspectives. For example, a client who complained of sexual impotence was attempting to solve the problem on his own by observing himself and “coaching his body to do better” – what the authors call a “performance approach” (Cirillo and Crider 516). The therapist knew that the client also had a hobby of woodworking, which he referred to as a “love” of the work, and that the client took a sort of sensuous joy in the process of working with wood. They give an example of the way he spoke of this work: “Each type of wood has its own special character . . . as I’m sanding and shaping I can sense the subtle variations and work with them” (Cirillo and Crider 516). The therapist gradually introduced the idea that perhaps the client might think of sex the same way he thought of woodworking – as a sensuous process, rather than a task with a concrete performance goal. This use of metaphor is a way to help the client “prepare for change and aim to bring it about by articulating and modifying viewpoints” (Cirillo and Crider 516).

The woodworking metaphor is an appropriate transition into Ferrara’s perspective on therapeutic metaphor. Ferrara emphasizes that the analysis of metaphor in therapy sessions requires the researcher to keep in mind that the metaphor is “not... static but... emergent in context” (128). The metaphor in therapy is not one the therapist or client has thought of beforehand and brings into the conversation for its own sake. It is

born of the situation being discussed; both the meaning of the metaphor and the nature of its use in the session can only be analyzed within the context of the larger conversation.

Ferrara echoes many of the previously outlined uses of metaphor but points to two other elements of what metaphor offers in a therapeutic setting. Ferrara cites anthropologist Keith Basso, whose essay "'Wise Words' of the Western Apache" begins with a discussion of why metaphor is an effective persuasive tool (before he moves on to discuss a set of specific Apache metaphors from an anthropological perspective). Paraphrasing his explanation of how metaphor not only draws our attention to a similarity between two things but persuades us of that similarity's significance, Ferrara says that "makers of metaphor speak in semantic contradictions and extend to their audiences an invitation to resolve them" (131). She emphasizes that when the metaphor is 'resolved' successfully, the result is "the acquisition of a concept that is in a very real sense unspeakable" (Ferrara 131). Thinking of metaphor itself as an invitation casts it as another way of approaching Wachtel's technique of "temporarily siding with the defense"; it allows the client to become a collaborator in the meaning created in the therapy session. It is important to note that, in this sense, the therapist suggesting a metaphor does not impose meaning, but offers a possible way of looking at the problem, and allows the client to find or create the meaning inherent in the comparison.

Ferrara also characterizes metaphor as one of the methods that therapists can use to build rapport with their clients. She cites psycholinguist and child development specialist Susan Ervin-Tripp, who describes questions as having “force” and metaphors, instead, requiring “problem-solving skills” and providing a “mental challenge” (Ferrara 131). Aside from inviting a client to participate in interpretation of his problems, the metaphor requires the client to become an active listener, which improves communication between the client and the therapist. This serves to continue the development of the therapeutic relationship and to reduce the likelihood of counter-therapeutic misunderstandings throughout the therapeutic work.

Of course, the goal of showing students we are listening is crucial in the classroom, as well; the “emergent” nature of the metaphor shows the student that he is receiving the instructor’s undivided attention. If a student is explaining that he feels disconnected when he returns to his hometown, perhaps unsettled by no longer seeing many familiar faces, the instructor might say, “it sounds like you feel like you’re a stranger now, or a ghost—people act like you aren’t there at all, or like they’ve never seen you before.” Whether the student agrees with the metaphors offered or instead, offers up his own, the metaphor that fits will provide him with an image that might be helpful in organizing the complex emotions he is struggling to articulate.

Therapist Self-Reflection

Many therapists and scholars of psychotherapy urge their colleagues to engage in focused and consistent self-care and self-reflection, both for their own wellbeing and to ensure that their own emotions do not decrease their effectiveness in their work.

Therapeutic work puts the therapist under a variety of emotional pressures than are inherent in the work. In his book *Making Contact: Uses of Language in Psychotherapy*, psychiatrist and psychoanalyst Leston Havens refers to the phenomenon he calls “contagion” of affect: therapists have reported being overcome by the emotions their clients complain of, including “anxiety, depression, anger, excitement, ecstasy, even affectlessness” (17). Storr also reflects on this phenomenon, citing his feeling that working with schizophrenic patients often left him feeling unsettled (184). Storr refers to Jung’s concept of “unconscious infection,” explaining that some patients can have an unsettling effect on “unconscious areas within the therapist’s own psyche which, in ordinary life, might never have been stirred up, or even seen the light of day in his own personal analysis” (183-84).

Taking a different perspective on the hazards faced by mental health professionals, psychologists Frederick Kanfer and Bruce Schefft describe the “three devils” that are natural pitfalls of therapeutic work and that therapists must be on guard against: voyeurism, power seeking, and self-therapy (360-63). The authors argue that self-knowledge is key to avoiding these pitfalls and crucial in making therapy sessions as effective as possible:

To conduct most effectively the approach to therapy we have described, the therapist must recognize that her personal thoughts and feelings influence judgment, selection of interventions, and timing of interventions in clinical interaction. Therefore, she should have knowledge about her own personal strengths, weaknesses, and sensitive issues and be open to acquiring new skills and experimenting with them." (Kanfer and Schefft 363)

Kanfer and Schefft advocate the use of three specific approaches by which therapists may improve their self-knowledge: self-application of methods, observation of others, and use of tape recordings (365-66). Therapists can benefit from observing their own behaviors just as they instruct clients to do, for example, by setting small self-improvement goals and monitoring their own progress (365). Observing others, of course, exposes therapists to their colleagues' techniques and to a wider variety of interpersonal communication styles (366). Using recordings of any time allows the therapist to step back from the work of the session and reflect on her own performance, perhaps noting places where she missed therapeutic opportunities, but also reflecting on her own growth.

One additional issue brought up by Kanfer and Schefft is the matter of the therapist's cultural awareness: "Therapists must understand the social, biological, cultural, and economic context of the client and the problem situation in order to evaluate the nature and scope of the client's problems and recognize appropriate solutions" (374-75).

Fortunately, the authors point out, quite often the therapist can simply ask the client to help fill in the gaps in her cultural knowledge. In other cases, though, a therapist may need special training or at least to educate herself with extensive reading in order to understand the needs of clients of different genders (376) or from socioeconomic backgrounds very different from her own (377).

Kanfer and Schefft give detailed advice on how therapists can maximize the benefits of being supervised by an instructor or senior therapist, including asking specific questions about sessions, seeking feedback in relation to her own strengths and weaknesses, and learning to speak objectively about her reactions to clients and clients' behaviors (370). While stressing that the mentor-mentee relationship under supervision must be carefully monitored to avoid the development of a pseudo-therapeutic relationship, the authors highly recommend supervision as a crucial part of therapists' preparation for clinical work and as a practice that can help to maintain therapeutic effectiveness throughout a therapist's career.

Many of the authors mentioned in this chapter agreed that therapists can benefit from undergoing their own psychotherapy. Anthony Storr, in his book *The Art of Psychotherapy*, argues that "...doctors are better doctors if, at some time, they have had to be patients; and I think it is valuable for psychotherapists to be exposed to psychotherapy in order to make it easier for them imaginatively to enter into what their patients are experiencing" (181). Respected therapist Dr. Irvin Yalom also encourages therapists to undergo psychotherapy:

To my mind, personal psychotherapy is, by far, the most important part of psychotherapy training. Question: What is the therapist's most valuable instrument? Answer (and no one misses this one): the therapist's own self. (40)

Yalom elaborates, offering a detailed inventory of his own "odyssey of therapy" (41), and then pointing out two important characteristics of his list: its "diversity of approaches," ranging from Freudian psychoanalysis to gestalt therapy to bioenergetics, and the timeline ranging over "many different stages" of the author's life (42). Yalom points out that different issues will arise at different points in any individual's life, as our issues tend to arise from our circumstances, and as circumstances change, so will the obstacles we face in our own minds.

Storr also suggests that the therapist should "find some area in which he lives for himself alone, in which self-expression, rather than self-abnegation, is demanded" (182). He also quotes Thomas Szasz, who says that therapists should "combine analytic work with other activities compatible with it, for example, with teaching, research, or writing" in order to find balance (as qtd. in Storr 183). Spreading intellectual effort over a variety of activities, as well as finding balance between introspective and other-oriented activities, can help therapists to maintain motivation for their work and avoid professional burnout.

It may be helpful to reflect here on the apostle Paul's reciprocal model of pedagogy as discussed earlier in this chapter. In this model, the "teacher" is not an outside

source of wisdom so much as a leader within the community; as such, he does not simply transmit wisdom to the rest of the community (as in the modern “banking” model of education) – he grows along with them. While the modern therapist does generally maintain a clearer boundary than we might see in Paul’s mutual/communal psychagogy, the therapist can, of course, learn along with the client – as composition instructors can learn and grow alongside their students, refining their approaches and improving their understanding of the psychological dynamics involved in writing with each interaction.

Instructors are already aware of the risks mentioned here, particularly burnout. Many of these therapists’ suggestions can be used by instructors to their great benefit. One crucial practice that can safeguard against many of the risks discussed above is self-reflection; this might mean journaling after each class about how well a lesson worked or the class’s progress toward a particular goal, or it may be more personally oriented, including a daily practice of journaling about the instructor’s own emotional state and considering how it might be influencing her teaching. (This is not to imply, of course, that instructor emotions *shouldn’t* influence teaching; they do, and being aware of this can ensure that they are not having undue effects on our students.) Reflection can also help instructors to process *students’* emotions, identifying and helping to alleviate any instances of the kind of contagion mentioned by Havens and Storr.

Instructors can address several other issues by maintaining professional relationships with colleagues and mentors and practicing continual professional development

(continually researching new theories and best practices for teaching). Professional development can include educating ourselves on students' varied cultural backgrounds and circumstances (problems facing LGBT+ students, for example, or students from rural settings, etc.). Maintaining a relationship with fellow compositionists, by the same token, allows instructors to reap the benefits that are discussed above in relation to therapists who pursue therapy for themselves: seeing themselves as students rather than teachers as well as being exposed to a variety of approaches that may offer them insights useful for their own teaching.

Of course, the final suggestion – that therapists must find some activity that is unrelated to their work – is valuable advice for instructors as well. Not only can a hobby or activity further protect against burnout, but it provides instructors with another avenue in which to experience a topic from the perspective of a student or amateur; keeping that experience fresh in one's mind ultimately strengthens the instructor's ability to empathize with students and to keep her own love of learning alive.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have used a historical survey to trace the influence of *psychagōgia*, following a line from Homer to modern psychotherapy. I have sought to reveal the connection between *psychagōgia* and modern verbal therapy in order to draw attention to the ways in which modern verbal therapy is another iteration of the idea of

the words as therapy, just like Plato's *psychagōgia*, the psychagogy of Paul and Augustine, and Freud's "talking cure." This is not to imply that this is a final iteration or some sort of pinnacle; each adaptation of the word as therapy has been a product of specific cultures and individuals interpreting the idea to meet their own needs, and the current theory and practice of verbal therapy is no different. Verbal therapy as a practice can benefit, like any practice or discipline, from an awareness of its own origins, and that awareness may also shed light on its current state.

Tracing the evolution of verbal therapy as an idea illuminates the importance Plato's idea holds for researchers and practitioners of modern verbal therapy. It is in Plato's "rationalizing" of the ancient practice of using magic charms (as explained by Entralgo) that we see the crucial shift that allowed verbal therapy to develop separately from the magical charms once considered its equivalent. As Entralgo points out, Plato observed that only two variables affect whether or not a healer's words have a therapeutic effect: the nature of the words and the patient's state of mind. In observing that there is no external or divine factor in this process, Plato set in motion the evolution of verbal therapy as a science rather than as a form of magic. The true significance in this shift is that Plato wrested therapy from the hands of the gods and revealed that humans have the power to heal one another through our very words. Although psychagogy was used by early Christians in conjunction with spiritual belief and for religious aims, Paul and Augustine understood that psychological and spiritual change could be

brought about through specific rhetorical moves and not solely through divine intervention or inspiration. Knowing this history may reinforce therapists' understanding that they have the power to heal their patients, provided they have and use tools that have the intended effect on that individual patient. (Here we are reminded of Plato's concern with the knowledge of the soul – the therapist needs a variety of therapeutic tools but also a certain understanding of the mind and a familiarity with the individual patient.)

Another vital benefit of the concept of *psychagōgia* for modern verbal therapy is that Plato's idea clearly shows aspects of what we now see as two distinct practices: teaching and therapy. The relationship and interaction portrayed in the *Phaedrus* points to the teaching element in therapeutic relationships as well as the potentially therapeutic nature of teaching. Although their paths have diverged (and arguably, converged and split again), Plato offers us at least one point where these two practices intersected; furthermore, his depiction of *psychagōgia* calls our attention to the overlap that has existed between teaching and therapy even when we have tried to separate them. This common origin, intersection, and overlap all serve to justify the application of verbal therapeutic techniques to modern composition pedagogy.

The wealth of recent composition scholarship on emotion creates the context in which *psychagōgia*'s potential contribution to composition pedagogy becomes evident. *Psychagōgia* provides a way to apply what composition researchers have been saying about emotion: that emotion is a central part of persuasion and thus a rhetorical tool

(see Micciche), that student's writing (and their struggles) are often indicators of social and emotional factors outside of the classroom (see Bean), and that making students aware of their emotions can empower them (see Alcorn), among many other ideas presented in Chapter 2. By showing the common origins of teaching and therapy, *psychagōgia* provides a framework for reclaiming the tools and benefits of psychotherapy, and for allowing teachers to utilize the potentially therapeutic nature of the rhetoric of teaching composition. Recent composition scholarship suggests that any attempt to exclude or ignore emotion as an active force in the composition classroom is both futile and counterproductive. *Psychagōgia* gives us permission to drop this ineffective approach and use established therapeutic techniques to help students use their emotions proactively to identify and reach their own goals.

CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSION

Purpose and Findings

At the beginning of this dissertation process, I set out on a mission to both explore and draw attention to Plato's concept of *psychagōgia*. I have demonstrated the potential of this idea to resolve some of the tensions inherent in the process of teaching writing and to offer a framework for working in harmony with students' emotional experiences rather than fighting against them.

In Chapter 2, I summarized a variety of key studies in composition, rhetoric, and other fields, establishing the landscape of recent discussion on emotion in the writing classroom, the controversy over 'therapy' in the classroom, and the implications and causes of the emotion/reason dichotomy. I explored how each of the scholars whose works are surveyed has helped to lay the groundwork for my study. I positioned this study of *psychagōgia* in relation to these key works, exposing a gap in the research and explaining how this dissertation contributes to bridging that gap.

In Chapter 3, I analyzed Plato's use of the term *psychagōgia* in the *Phaedrus*, where he explains his understanding of how people learn and his views on what is necessary for learning to take place. I elaborated on the three crucial components of *psychagōgia*: eros as driving force, knowledge of the self as the ultimate goal, and understanding of the soul as an essential trait for an effective teacher. I also analyzed the myth Plato uses to depict his understanding of the soul, and discussed what this myth implies about why self-awareness is crucial to education and how it motivates us to do the work of learning.

In Chapter 4, I established the historical and cultural setting in which *psychagōgia* was born, showing that the idea of verbal therapy is seen as early as the Homeric epic. I then examined the evolution of verbal therapy, tracing its lineage through the writings of the apostle Paul, Augustine, and Freud. I then examined works in psychology and rhetoric that speak to the important relationship between the two fields, and argued that the rhetoric of psychotherapy can make valuable contributions to the aims of pedagogy. From there, I moved on to a detailed exploration of some of the most common verbal techniques used by mental health professionals in psychotherapy sessions, emphasizing those that I believe have the greatest potential in the composition classroom, and that might be most easily adapted for that purpose.

Relationship to Previous Research

I have picked up the threads of several different research pursuits and sought to combine them in this study. I have sought to contribute to the discussion in composition studies on emotion in the classroom by reviving an ancient technique for understanding and supporting students' emotional experiences. I have joined the conversation about therapy in the classroom and taken a stance firmly on the side of using therapeutic techniques when appropriate to the goals of composition pedagogy. and in the discipline of the history of rhetoric, I have traced the evolution of *psychagōgia* in order to establish the importance of Plato's idea and its influence on some of Western culture's most influential thinkers. In sum, the unique contribution of this project to the study of rhetoric and to composition studies is that I have combined historical, therapeutic, and

practical perspectives in examining a topic about which very little research has been done to date.

Limitations

While I believe strongly in the potential of *psychagōgia* to help us meet the various goals of composition pedagogy, there are, of course, some limitations of Plato's concept. The scope of a dissertation limits how many of these matters I can explore in depth; still, it is worth acknowledging a few of them here.

First, it is hard to miss the difference in social norms, cultural values, and political concerns between Plato's world and our own. There are parts of Plato's vision that may strike a modern reader as overly spiritualistic or not scientifically grounded. In particular, readers may have noticed that the opposition between passion/emotion and reason that I critique in later chapters is a core assumption of Plato's theory. It is my hope that readers will excuse Plato for such a faux pas, living as he did without access to MRI brain scans and similar data. If we can set aside the emotion/reason dichotomy as it chafes with our current understanding of the brain, the theory still offers a compelling explanation of the tensions inherent in conscious decision making and the way the love of knowledge itself motivates us to learn and to grow. It is not necessary to adopt Plato's belief system in order to appreciate the insight of his explanation of *psychagōgia*.

Readers may also notice that I have only obliquely referred to the dangers of using therapeutic approaches in the classroom. I defer to mental health professionals for the final say in just how risky it might be to use the techniques I've explicated outside of

a professional psychotherapeutic setting. Even so, I feel it is appropriate to point out that in the process of teaching composition, we are already stirring up student's emotions and deeply rooted beliefs about their own abilities and potential. In part, I argue for use of therapeutic techniques in the classroom because we are already performing these tasks whether in class, in private conferences, or in our written feedback. The conscious adoption of therapeutic techniques is simply a way to become more intentional about the ways in which we acknowledge and influence our students' emotions.

Implications and Recommendations

In conducting this research, I have noticed several key implications of my findings. I also noticed that each one seemed to naturally suggest possibilities for new approaches to classroom pedagogy and to research.

I have argued throughout this dissertation that using *psychagōgia* can help students to develop metacognitive abilities. While composition scholars are familiar with metacognition and its values, it is worth elaborating here in order to make these implications clear to all readers. Metacognition is thinking about thinking – becoming aware of your own mental processes. In the education world, this is the holy grail of teaching: students who develop metacognition are able to track their progress, monitor their understanding of new concepts, and problem-solve when they run into obstacles. Metacognition enables students to teach themselves.

One implication of my claim that *psychagōgia* might be a useful tool for encouraging metacognition is that *psychagōgia* might also change the way students observe themselves and adjust their behaviors to meet their goals *outside* of the classroom. The self-awareness that comes along with metacognition could lead students to see themselves in a new light as citizens and consumers. Certainly, it is beyond the scope of this study to argue that a good writer is a good citizen (though that view has been defended by many big names in rhetoric over the last few centuries). Still, the increased awareness of self that makes one more effective as a writer and rhetor also tends to lead to an awareness of the motivations and perspectives of others. As Alcorn suggests, this awareness has the potential to make the individual a more conscientious global citizen. While the good writer as good citizen claim might be difficult to prove, the more immediate claim is worth exploring. There is a need for further research into whether or not a pedagogy inspired by *psychagōgia* might have a beneficial effect on student's metacognitive skills.

Another important message that comes across again and again in this study is that *students' emotions matter*. Many naysayers will claim that what I'm proposing is a thinly veiled version of hand holding – that students should be responsible for their own emotional lives, and that learning to control one's emotions is a prerequisite for success in the academic world (an assumption that is problematic for more reasons than I can fully explain here). What the composition research compiled for this study shows, however, is that students' emotions are already present and active and influencing their

ability to think and to learn. Different pedagogical approaches entail different perspectives on how much students' emotions should be considered by the instructor; while every instructor must choose their own pedagogy, it is irresponsible to persist in ignoring students' emotions altogether.

One way that teachers can act upon what I have demonstrated in this study is by researching some basic concepts of psychology; concepts like projection and transference can be quite helpful in making sense of the interpersonal dynamics of a writing classroom. Of course, at the departmental/institutional level, professional development workshops could be offered that provide brief introductions to various theories on the psychology of learning, or to the ongoing scholarly discussion about the role of emotion in learning, providing instructors with starting points for incorporating psychological awareness into their pedagogies.

Of course, teachers' emotions also have an impact on the work done in the writing classroom. Instructors may have noticed, when reading Chapter 3 on *psychagōgia* in the *Phaedrus*, that the teacher's emotional state would seem to have the potential to make or break the relationship between teacher and student (as most teachers will confirm that it does in daily practice). There are a variety of individual factors that, of course, are beyond the reach of any recommendations I can make here. What I can recommend, though, is that teachers may find themselves to be more effective in the classroom if they (a) develop a habit of self-observation and reflection and (b) practice self-

care to combat professional burnout and emotional exhaustion. Again, at the departmental/institutional level, professional development programs could include self-care techniques and tools for reflecting on one's teaching.

Beyond the composition classroom, my findings in this study have important implications for the study of the history of rhetoric. Every rhetoric—every philosophy of language and learning—contains a set of values and assumptions that are not always made explicit. Of course, each of these philosophies then passes on its values and assumptions. Plato's theory was born in a particular historical/social/cultural context, and as he is considered one of the foundational thinkers of rhetoric, the values of that particular context have become part of the texture of modern rhetoric. Although this may not be news to the rhetorical scholars in my audience, one insight revealed (or confirmed) by my study is that ancient rhetorics may be immensely valuable for understanding the way language works, but these rhetorics must be critically analyzed to reveal the kinds of unwritten assumptions I've referred to. Only through such critical analysis can we avoid perpetuating assumptions that are no longer in harmony with an understanding of the mind (and here I'm thinking of the false emotion/reason split critiqued by Miller and others).

Reflection

I began this journey with a sense of wonder and excitement. *Psychagogia* was a mysterious ancient concept, and I was driven by the excitement of discovery, as if my

wading through academic databases and library stacks was the digging of an archaeologist unearthing an artifact that could change modern understandings of our ancestors. And indeed, that has been the effect of this concept on my mind. I have dug into the context of *psychagōgia*, familiarizing myself with a world that had always seemed distant and surreal to me as a student. In *psychagōgia*, I found validation of a belief I have held since my earliest days as a student – passion matters. Even if you can't measure it, market it, or charge a fee for it, passion always matters. The excitement of learning something new, the moment of insight when a new idea completely changes how the world looks to you, is the strongest motivator, perhaps the only one that's been consistently effective for me.

It is this energy that motivated me to complete this project. I am grateful to my Dr. James Comas, who, in his initial role as my History of Rhetoric professor, encouraged me to pursue this topic despite (or perhaps because of) the dearth of relevant scholarly work on *psychagōgia*. My academic goals required that I complete a dissertation; my excitement about *psychagōgia* made it an adventure rather than a chore.

My passion, of course, did not make this process easy or simple. I struggled, at first, with imposter syndrome, in the form of feeling that I had nothing original to say (not an unfamiliar feeling, and one I often tell my students to get comfortable with – it's not going anywhere). Like any other graduate student, advancing to doctoral candidacy also meant more freedom to create my own schedule and deadlines, and I have continually struggled with focus and time management. Even the content, this fascinating concept I was so thrilled to uncover, was challenging – I had to reconcile the beauty

of Plato's concept with my modern understanding of the mind and with traditional views of emotion as feminine and thus somehow out of place in academia. (I am fortunate to be doing this work in an era when that view has all but died out.) Finally, even though I began my dissertation hoping to build an exhaustive account of my topic and an unassailable argument for its value, I have had to accept the limited scope of a dissertation. (What seems a massive undertaking at the outset seems to shrink as you begin to generate ideas and realize just how much there is to explore.) I am happy to report that after fifteen years of following my passion in academia and two years of researching *psychagōgia*, I seem to have learned passion as a practice. When I came to understand the limited scope of my project, I did not find my passion tempered by this reality. Instead, I still feel that same wonder and excitement. As I see it, the fact that many of my ideas and questions could not be explored in these pages means that there is more uncovering to be done. It is my sincere hope that the work I have done may help to inspire this wonder in other teachings, who will help new generations of students come to enjoy their studies as much as I have enjoyed writing this dissertation.

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