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**Tracing the Roots of Resistance to Influence:
Comparison, Contrast, and Synthesis of Aristotelian
Rationality and Inoculation**

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Abstract

Most contemporary inoculation research reviews begin with the propaganda research of Lumsdaine and Janis in the early 1950s, but Aristotle was teaching resistance strategies that predate propaganda research by over two thousand years. This essay compares inoculation and Aristotelian rational analysis, noting areas of convergence and divergence. Finally, this essay proposes a synthesis of inoculation and Aristotelian rationality, answering a call made by McGuire to develop inoculation treatments that help people discern truthfulness of claims.

Keywords: *inoculation, rationality, resistance to persuasion*

Over 2000 years before William McGuire first proposed the inoculation process of resistance to influence, Aristotle warned of attempted influence by unsavory would-be persuaders. Because the “good” was often a missing adjective from Quintilian’s aim of a “good man speaking well,” Aristotle promoted principles of reasoning to discern and ultimately resist unsound persuasive efforts. Yet while the need for resistance to persuasion is as old as persuasion itself, conventional literature reviews for contemporary resistance to influence research traces the historical precedence of the scholarship to the propaganda work of Arthur Lumsdaine and Irving Janis in the early 1950s. In contrast, this essay offers an unconventional literature review, exploring the historical theoretical foundations of attitudinal resistance beginning not with propaganda research, but with the earliest writings of the study of rhetoric. Aristotle, arguably the most influential figure in the study of rhetoric, figures prominently in this essay, with the

acknowledgement that his work was strongly influenced by Plato and later emulated and extended by Cicero and others. Additionally, as “the grandparent theory of resistance to attitude change” (Eagly & Chaiken, 1993, p. 561), William McGuire’s inoculation theory plays a prominent role. McGuire’s work is cited as a theoretical foundation or reference for nearly every major attitudinal resistance study published during the last four decades, and researchers have noted its prodigious theoretical and practical growth in recent years (Compton & Pfau, 2005). One focus of this essay is to explore contemporary resistance research within classic rhetorical thought.

After presenting both a historical overview of resistance writings and then a review of the inoculation process of resistance to influence, the essay turns to its second main focus—a comparison of inoculation and Aristotelian concepts of resistance, first noting where the ideas converge, and then where the ideas diverge. This critical comparison assesses not only the effectiveness and practicality of both methods, but also explores whether McGuire’s conceptualization of inoculation is an extension of Aristotelian thought, or if the strategy of inoculation has its roots elsewhere.

Finally, this essay proposes using inoculation pretreatments to train people in Aristotelian rationality, a call first made by McGuire (1964) in one of his earliest writings on inoculation to “discover pretreatments that would make the person receptive to the true and resistant to the false” (p. 193). Synthesizing tenets of Aristotelian reasoning with inoculation pretreatments may offer one method of answering this call.

There is an often-overlooked benefit of looking back to the oldest roots of a contemporary study. While the most obvious advantage may be avoiding the same mistakes (or, some would argue, even repeating the same successes), another advantage is

learning the language of the field. The rhetorician Paul Shorey argues that studying the classical principles of rhetoric offered by the ancient Greeks “[saves] us from intellectual confusion and futile logomachy” (Crocker & Carmack, 1965, p. 12). This essay is partly motivated by an effort to avoid logomachy, or confusion about words. While Plato, Aristotle, Cicero and other classical rhetorical scholars did not use terminology of *countering* or *inoculation*, the principles of argumentation and reasoning they address share important similarities with contemporary resistance concepts, offering insight into resistance that predates the contemporary body of resistance literature by over 2000 years.

The Importance of Being Resistant

Nearly 40 years ago, Crocker and Carmack (1965) argued that the aim of contemporary education must be to insure “in every audience a resisting minority that cannot be stamped by plausible sophistry and emotional volubility” (p. 15). Predating this call for the ability to resist persuasive appeals by more than 2000 years, Aristotle made a similar appeal. The following section will provide a brief overview of the resistance-through-rationality method advocated by Aristotle. Specifically, this section will outline the underlining philosophy of knowing oppositional argument, logical analysis, refutational enthymemes, and criteria for rejection of persuasion.

For Aristotle, knowledge is knowing not only the reasons supporting a belief, but also the oppositional arguments against that belief. He maintained that knowing oppositional arguments resulted in accurate knowledge (“the real state of the case”) and would enable resistance to false persuasion. Specifically, Aristotle argued that

the orator should be able to prove opposites, as in logical arguments; not that we should do both (for

one ought not to persuade people to do what is wrong), but that the real state of the case may not escape us, and that we ourselves may be able to counteract false arguments, if another makes an unfair use of them. (*Rhetoric*, I. I. 11-14).

Knowing both sides of an issue, then, offers protection from inaccurate claims or faulty reasoning.

Aristotle also illustrates how knowledge of both sides of issues can be used to be more persuasive when influencing others. Aristotle offers:

In both deliberative and forensic rhetoric he who speaks first should state his own proofs and afterwards meet the arguments of the opponent, refuting or pulling them to pieces beforehand. (*Rhetoric*, III. XVII. 13-15)

This may be the earliest written description of the two-sided message approach later clarified and studied by propaganda scholarship of the 1940s and 1950s. This recommendation also underlies one of the principal components of the inoculation process of resistance to influence: refutational preemption. Thus, Aristotle argues that knowing both sides leads to stronger beliefs and could also be used as a strategy to prevent others from being persuaded by subsequent faulty reasoning. If one knows his arguments will be attacked, Aristotle argued, it is an effective strategy to bring up the oppositional arguments and then refute them before the opposition has a chance to speak.

Rational analysis is the Aristotelian tool for discerning false persuasion, a tool not only explained by, but some argue, *realized* by Aristotle. Aristotle writes:

It is clear that he who is most capable of examining the matter and forms of a syllogism will be in the highest degree a master of rhetorical argument, if to this he adds a knowledge of the subjects with which enthymemes deal and the differences between them and logical syllogisms. (*Rhetoric*, I. I. 10-12)

In order to weigh the strength of argumentation, Aristotle introduces the concepts of *inartificial* modes of proof—"all those which have not been furnished by ourselves but were already in existence, such as witnesses, tortures, contracts, and the like" (*Rhetoric*, I. I. 15)—and *artificial* modes of proof—"all that can be constructed by system and by our own efforts" (*Rhetoric*, I. I. 15), including "the moral character of the speaker [*ethos*], ... putting the hearer into a certain frame of mind [*pathos*], ... the speech itself, in so far as it proves or seems to prove [*logos*]" (*Rhetoric*, I. II. 3).

Refutation of false rhetoric, then, can follow a logical assessment of argumentation that considers soundness of evidence as well as considerations of proof. The aim of this type of argument analysis is to discover flaws in reasoning that would identify false persuasion and lead to resistance of these persuasive attempts.

The process of arguing against an oppositional view is conceptualized by Aristotle as the *refutational enthymeme*, or "draw[ing] conclusions disputed by the adversary" (*Rhetoric*, II. XXII. 14). This may involve identifying contradictions (*Rhetoric*, II. XXIII. 23) or spotting weak evidence. Aristotle also singles out a particular type of refutative syllogism, citing its supreme effectiveness. Aristotle writes:

But of all syllogisms...those are specially applauded, the result of which the hearers foresee as soon as they are begun, and not because they are superficial (for as they listen they congratulate themselves on anticipating the conclusion); and also

those which the hearers are only so little behind that they understand what they mean as soon as they are delivered. (*Rhetoric*, II. XXIII. 30)

Though Aristotle does not provide much analysis in this observation, this identification will prove useful later in this essay.

The Aristotelian rule of thumb for either accepting or rejecting argumentation is the soundness of the reasoning. The result of this analysis is that the hearer accepts what is accurate and rejecting what is inaccurate. Indeed, the very definition of the syllogism is "a set of propositions given which some other proposition must be true" (Aristotle, *Prior Analytics*, 24b20). Aristotle argues that "generally speaking, that which is true and better is naturally always easier to prove and more likely to persuade" (*Rhetoric*, I. I. 12-14).

In summary, the Aristotelian method of resisting persuasion is grounded in rationality. The criterion for rejection of persuasive appeals is truthfulness. The next section introduces a contemporary theory of resistance, tracing its development throughout the 1960s to the present.

McGuire's Theory of Resistance to Influence

William McGuire introduced the inoculation process of resistance to influence in 1961. "For some years my own research was on the side of the persuaders," wrote McGuire. "When I realized that social scientists had neglected the ways to immunize people against persuasion, I redirected my research..." (McGuire, 1970, p. 90). McGuire shifted his focus to methods of conferring resistance to influence.

The protection-against-propaganda research of Arthur Lumsdaine and Irving Janis is the oft-cited contemporary theoretical foundation for inoculation theory. Lumsdaine and Janis

(1953) found that subjecting participants to a two-sided message (a message that presented two sides of an argument) conferred more resistance to a subsequent persuasion attempt when compared to those subjected to a one-sided message. How does the knowledge of both sides of an issue bolster an existing attitude? It was an intriguing question, but Lumsdaine and Janis did not pursue an answer. However, a few years later, McGuire sought to explain this finding.

McGuire (1961a) conceptualized refutational defense as "defenses which involve pre-exposing the person to the mention of counterarguments against his beliefs together with a detailed refutation of these counterarguments" (p. 184). Theoretically, the detailed refutation provides both training and content for counterarguing when encountering a subsequent stronger persuasive appeal. However, McGuire discovered that the mere mention of counterarguments and refutations were not enough to confer maximum resistance to influence. In addition to the counterarguments and refutations, forewarning, or threat, was induced. Forewarning occurred by telling some participants that while they currently felt one way about a particular issue, they might encounter some conflicting viewpoints and should be ready for an "attack" on their current attitudes.

McGuire (1961a) also hypothesized that the inoculation process works to confer resistance when the same counterarguments are refuted in the inoculation pretreatment as are in the subsequent attitude attack, but also when the subsequent persuasive attempt contains novel counterarguments (ones not mentioned or refuted in the inoculation process). In the first case, resistance is thought to occur because the arguments have been directly countered; in the second, resistance could only occur if the inoculation treatment message motivated the person to develop a stronger arsenal of argumentation supporting the belief made vulnerable, or motivated the person to employ reasoning.

Subsequent studies found support for the ability of inoculation to confer resistance not only to those arguments specifically refuted in the inoculation message, but also to novel arguments (e.g., Pfau et al., 1997a; Pfau et al., 2001b; Pfau et al., 2003; Pfau et al., 2004, 2004b).

Another study appeared in 1961, conducted by Papageorgis and McGuire (1961). This was the first and only study where McGuire operationalized counterarguing and included it in the research design. While this study provided additional insight into the importance of counterarguing in conferring resistance, the operationalization of counterarguing was poor (having the people list reasons for supporting their existing belief, which was a more accurate operationalization of bolstering (Benoit, 1991; Wyer 1974)) and the participants were given only a few minutes to list the counterarguments. This was the first and last time McGuire would attempt to include counterarguing in his inoculation program of research.

While McGuire provided an important theoretical foundation for inoculation research, it remained an unexplained process. However, more recent theorizing and research has further illuminated the process of resistance by operationalizing threat and counterarguing (e.g., Compton & Pfau, 2004a, 2004b; Pfau et al., 1997a, 1997b, 2004, in press) and examined the role of affect in inoculation (Compton & Pfau, 2004b; Lee & Pfau, 1997; Pfau, et al., 2001b). Additionally, post-McGuire inoculation research has extended the process into myriad contexts, including political campaigns (An & Pfau, 2004a, in press; Pfau & Burgoon, 1988; Pfau et al., 1990, 2001a), education (Compton & Pfau, 2004b), advertising (Compton & Pfau, 2004a; Pfau, 1992), public relations (Wan & Pfau, 2004), adolescent smoking prevention (Pfau, Van Bockern, & Kang, 1992; Pfau & Van Bockern, 1994; Szabo & Pfau, 2001), and adolescent drinking prevention (Godbold & Pfau, 2000). Inoculation has demonstrated impressive utility.

The contemporary studies that measured threat found threat to be a requisite for the inoculation process (Pfau, 1997; Pfau et al., 1992), something first posited, yet not measured, by McGuire (1962). To be inoculated, one must first realize that an existing attitude, once thought unassailable, is vulnerable. This motivational element unleashes the inoculation process of resistance.

The conventional explanation for what exactly is unleashed after generating threat harkens back to McGuire's early accounts of how inoculation works. Threat motivates counterarguing—the process of raising and refuting objections to an existing attitude. The inoculation pretreatment message—by raising some counterattitudinal arguments and refuting them—provides both content and practice in counterarguing (Wyer, 1974). This conventional explanation of threat and counterarguing has a solid history of empirical support (e.g., Pfau et al., 1997a, 1997b, 2004). Yet, more is going on during inoculation than threat and counterarguing. The most recent inoculation studies, employing structural equation modeling to better highlight the nuances of inoculation, continue to find a direct path from inoculation to resistance—one that does not involve threat and counterarguing (Pfau et al., 1997a, 2001, 2004). Either current methods of operationalizing threat and counterarguing are not sufficient to capture all that is going on in inoculation, or the conventional explanation is insufficient. Attitude accessibility (Pfau et al., 2003, 2004) and affect (Lee & Pfau, 1997; Pfau et al., 2001b) were offered as possible explanations for this unexplained route of resistance.

In summary, the inoculation theory of resistance to influence is conceptualized as a process, or a method of resistance to influence. McGuire saw the process as training in refuting arguments, and contemporary research has offered a much more

nuanced understanding of the internal processes unleashed by inoculation treatments. In contrast to the Aristotelian criteria of truthfulness for rejection of persuasion, inoculation theory is amoral—applicable to any instance of attempted persuasion. Finally, the inoculation process is also specific to a particular issue, though the scope of its umbrella of protection appears quite large.

Initially, the Aristotelian method of resisting false influence and the inoculation theory are similar. Both purport to reduce influence, and both rely on a system of countering to reach conclusions about persuasiveness. A closer examination of the two ideas yields more similarities that may escape a surface comparison. One of the more interesting convergences of Aristotle's and inoculation's conceptualizations of resistance to influence involves the refutational processes of identifying faulty persuasion. Both focus on an internal cognitive process—the Aristotelian method applies the principles of sound reasoning, evidence valuation, and proof consideration to discern false rhetoric, while the inoculation process leads people through training in countering by refuting weak counterarguments prior to encountering stronger persuasive attempts. However, there is another similarity that is more specific and potentially enlightening.

Aristotle argues that the most effective refutational syllogism is one that is instantaneously recognized by the hearer (*Rhetoric*, II. XXIII. 30). We find this same idea in contemporary inoculation research, particularly the research that finds attitude accessibility as an explanatory feature of the process (e.g., Pfau et al., 2003, 2004, in press). This research suggests that inoculation makes the counterarguments more accessible, or more quickly brought to consciousness. The two ideas share the quick recognition component of resistance, and each may help to explain the other. It is possible that the positive affect we experience when we recognize or quickly follow a argument, the preference that

Aristotle explains, is what also makes the counterarguments more accessible in the process of inoculation, and subsequently, our liking of these quickly recalled arguments are what help bolster the existing attitude.

Both approaches to refuting persuasion also involve a rational analysis framework. Aristotle's approach is grounded in argument, critically examining claims, proofs, and evidence, while the inoculation process is conceptualized as training in argumentation, providing specific refutations to counterattitudinal arguments in an attempt to prepare people to more effectively counterargue and resist subsequent persuasion. Both Aristotelian rationality and the inoculation process provide tactics for resisting influence. However, there are also many contrasts in the two approaches.

The clearest difference between Aristotelian rationality and inoculation is that each has a different aim. The Aristotelian approach to argumentation seeks to assess the accuracy of a claim, whereas inoculation is a strategy of resistance, regardless of the soundness or correctness of an argument. With Aristotelian rationality, the primary criterion for rejecting persuasion is whether it is accurate; with inoculation, the primary criterion for rejecting persuasion is whether the message attacks an existing attitude.

Another substantial difference between the Aristotelian and inoculation processes of resistance to influence concerns scope. Aristotle's method is applicable to all instances of persuasive intent. Learning the principles of sound argumentation allows one to discern and then reject false rhetoric, and subsequently, avoid the influence of unsavory influencers. However, the inoculation process has a more specific scope. Research up to this point finds that the training is specific to attitudes toward a single-issue domain. The inoculation process "walks" the person through the steps of refuting counterarguments, providing specific responses to

a specific issue. While those inoculated are not limited to using the refutational content of the pretreatment messages, up to this point the inoculation scope appears limited to the single issue domain.

One might conclude, then, that the inoculation process involves the simple recitation of memorized responses to attitude attacks, suggesting a superficial method of resistance. This would reflect the rhetorical strategy of *invective (pgonos)* utilized by some polemicists, whereas "orators memorized outstanding displays of verbal combat" (Leighton, 1996, p. 533) and then recited these responses upon encountering persuasive attempts. However, this explanation is not consistent with empirical evidence. Numerous studies have found that the inoculation process is not limited to times when the same arguments are refuted in the inoculation message as are presented in the subsequent attitude attack (e.g., McGuire, 1961a, 1962, 1964; McGuire & Papageorgis, 1962; Papageorgis & McGuire, 1961; Pfau, 1992; Pfau & Burgoon, 1988; Pfau et al., 1990, 1997a, 2001a, 2003, 2004, in press). If people were simply reciting memorized content or superficially processing material in an inoculation message, inoculation would *not* work when novel arguments were used in the persuasive attempt. Evidently, inoculation is more than the invective strategy employed by the early polemicists.

Instead of memorizing responses, those inoculated against persuasive attempts have seemingly been trained in refutation, motivated to generate other counterarguments. But there is a critical distinction between Aristotle's and McGuire's conceptualizations of "training" in argument analysis. Aristotle perceives training in rational analysis at its most fundamental level. In contrast, McGuire views training in rational analysis as providing practice in countering persuasive attempts that address specific issues.

Additionally, inoculation theory requires the presence of threat to confer resistance to influence (McGuire, 1962; Pfau, 1997; Pfau et al., 1992). Threat serves to motivate the person to do the cognitive work necessary to strengthen attitudes prior to a persuasive attempt. Additionally, threat is linked to involvement with the issue at hand. If involvement is very high, it will be difficult, if not impossible, for the holder of the attitude to acknowledge threat, or vulnerability, of that attitude. However, the inverse also holds true. If the involvement level is too low, and the person does not see the importance of that attitude, then the person will not experience threat (Pfau et al., 1997a). The concept of threat in inoculation is useful in understanding what triggers people to engage in cognitive work in the face of persuasive attempts, such as the cognitive work demanded by Aristotelian rational analysis.

Another major difference between the Aristotelian method of resistance to influence and inoculation theory is found in the criteria for rejection. While Aristotle advocated soundness of reasoning as the criteria, inoculation is not a strategy of evaluating the "goodness" of claims. Ideally, writes McGuire (1964) in his first introduction to the inoculation theory of resistance to influence, one could

discover pretreatments that would make the person receptive to the true and resistant to the false. But since the distinction between truth and falsity is not strictly germane to the psychological processes under discussion, such a consideration will be ignored here. (p. 193)

This is an important distinction between the two ways of resisting influence. Aristotle's method is based on logical assessments of argumentation's validity, which is further extended to the acceptance of what are true/good and the rejection of what is false/evil, whereas inoculation theory is conceptualized as pretreatment providing training and triggering an internal process

of attitude strengthening. The inoculation process of resistance to influence is not linked to argument validity, truth, or the persuader's intent, but instead, is a method that can confer resistance to both truthful and false arguments. While McGuire (1964) proposed the possibility of using inoculation pretreatments to train in argumentation, to date, the call has been unexplored.

Aristotle's and McGuire's conceptualizations of resisting influence share a cognitive focus. While Aristotle specifically derided the use of emotion as the means to persuade—"making the rule crooked which one intended to use" (*Rhetoric*, I. 1. 3-7)—McGuire did not explore potential impacts of affect on the process beyond the motivational nature of threat. However, more recent inoculation studies have begun to explore the possible role and impact of affect in the process of resistance (Compton & Pfau, 2004b; Lee & Pfau, 1997; Pfau et al., 2001).

In summary, Aristotle sees "practical wisdom [as] a virtue of reason, which enables men to come to a wise decision in regard to good and evil things" (*Rhetoric*, I. IX. 7-15), while McGuire sees the resistance as the result of countering training. In essence, Aristotelian rationality is based on *practical* reasoning, while the inoculation process is based on *practicing* reasoning.

Assessment of the Methods of Resistance

Aristotelian rationality as protection against faulty persuasion provides a more universal safeguard against faulty persuasion. Assessing the soundness of arguments, including the weighing of evidence and the analyses of proofs, should be applicable in every instance of recognized persuasion. Becoming adept in rational analysis, however, is not easy, and requires consistent practice and training. Additionally, not all persuasive attempts are grounded in rationality. Many forms of persuasion are not explicit or obvious (e.g., Mendelberg, 2001).

Furthermore, complex persuasive claims take considerable time to analyze, and even simple decisions are sometimes under conditions where time is scarce. Perhaps this is most evident in one of the areas where inoculation offers significant utility: adolescent smoking prevention (e.g., Pfau & Van Bockern, 1993; Pfau et al., 1992). In these instances, adolescents would likely have neither the cognitive skill nor the time to systematically consider the argumentation and rationale of peer pressure. Inoculation, however, provides the content and training in refutation to confer resistance. Considering the voluminous persuasive appeals we face daily, the irrational nature of many of these appeals, and the conditions of time scarcity in many persuasive contexts, Aristotelian rationality as a means of resistance may work better in theory than in practice. The strategy of inoculation addresses this weakness.

In summary, Aristotelian rationality involves careful, systematic analysis of argumentation, but requires a mature level of cognitive complexity and time to learn and apply principles of reason. Additionally, it is used to analyze the rationality of appeals, but seems less appropriate for analyzing emotion-based appeals. It is a lengthier process, but with a more complex analysis. On the other hand, the inoculation process of resistance to influence is a systematic treatment, walking the participants through the steps of countering on a specific topic. It is a quick process with immediate strong results, but weaker long-term results. However, inoculation theory has impressive practical value, demonstrating unmatched utility in resistance studies and practical applications in politics (e.g., An & Pfau, 2004b; Compton & Pfau, 2004c; Lin, 2000; Pfau & Burgoon, 1988; Pfau et al., 1990, 2002), health campaigns (Godbold & Pfau, 2000; Pfau, Van Bockern, & Kang, 1992; Pfau & VanBockern, 1994; Szabo, 2000), marketing (Compton & Pfau, 2004a), commercial advertising (Pfau, 1992),

and academic misconduct prevention (Compton & Pfau, 2004b), among others.

A Synthesis of Aristotelian Rationality and Inoculation: Can Practice Make Perfect?

One of the earliest descriptions of the inoculation process of resistance to influence conceptualized refutational treatments as providing “detailed refutations” of oppositional arguments (McGuire, 1961a). But the nature of these detailed refutations needs closer scrutiny, and Aristotelian rationality provides a useful framework. The current inoculation process of conferring resistance provides explicit refutations of counterattitudinal arguments. Instead of merely memorizing these arguments, inoculation motivates people to think up other counterarguments and refutations as well, conferring greater resistance to persuasive attempts. However, a conventional inoculation treatment does not address the logical inconsistencies of the oppositional arguments. Instead, it is enough that one who is inoculated recognizes a threat to an existing attitude to trigger the resistance.

Future research should examine whether a synthesis of the two approaches of inoculation and Aristotelian rationality is possible, capitalizing on the strengths of both. Future research could utilize inoculation treatments that not only provide direct refutations of counterarguments, but also point out fallacies in the counterarguments. By including rational reasons for an argument’s weakness, inoculation pretreatments would provide practice that may extend further beyond the specific issue. As McGuire (1964) first posited, the ideal inoculation treatment would not only provide refutations of arguments, but also train in rational analyses to discern validity of arguments.

By consistently supporting the role of threat in resistance and providing a systematic approach to refuting counterattitudinal

arguments, inoculation scholarship offers a structure and method of conferring resistance. Inoculation also provides insight that Aristotelian rationality lacks—the motivation to engage in the cognitive effort of counterarguing. Walking people through the refutation of specific arguments in inoculation messages, while providing the logical analysis for *why* the argument is wrong, would capitalize on the depth of Aristotelian analysis and the utility of inoculation. This method of practicing argumentation by presenting examples of refutation is consistent with *imitation*, found in Aristotle’s *Poetics* (Chapter 4), as well as the writings of Longinus, Cicero and Quintillian (Hamrahan, 2003).

Conclusions

Contemporary communication scholars have identified and debated fragmentation in the field, noting that there is a divergence of studied contexts and methodologies that may not ever be (and some argue, should *not* be) unified. However, a greater chasm may not be a lack of unification in the breadth of the field, but instead, in a temporal sense, the depth of the field. As this essay explored, McGuire was accurate in attributing the theoretical foundation of his research to the earlier propaganda work of Lumsdaine and Janis, but the foundation for the study of propaganda, or systematic persuasion, returns to the birth of rhetorical study. This essay argues that returning to these classic studies of rhetoric offers additional insight into contemporary giants in communication scholarship like the inoculation process of resistance.

Placing the contemporary theory of inoculation in the context of historical resistance writings references its predecessors and offers further insight into the contemporary theory’s strengths and limitations. Inoculation puts into practice what Aristotle and other classic rhetoricians theorized, supported by an impressive body of scholarship and proven, practical utility. Incorporating Aristotelian training in argument analysis with the structure and

motivation provided by inoculation pretreatments warrants further consideration.

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