

Gorgias, Plato, the Class Struggle, and the Art of Rhetoric

Michael S. Kochin
Department of Political Science
Tel Aviv University
kochin@post.tau.ac.il

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Both the historical Gorgias and Plato's Gorgias see the justification of the profession of the rhetorician as grounded in the ontological claim that speeches exist as a distinct class of things. Gorgias's rhetoric purports to serve the interest of the Athenian aristocracy, whose capacity for violence depends not on speech, but on familial wealth and on familial relations. Gorgias argues that a sharing of things through common deliberation is in fact impossible. The rule of one is always and everywhere the case, Gorgias claims, and that rule can be made more effective by the art of verbal manipulation that Gorgias professes. Turning to Plato's dialogue Gorgias I show that Socrates in an important sense vindicates Gorgias by describing the rhetoric as a kind of sauce-cookery capable of dressing things with appearances in speech.

It is impossible... to predicate anything concerning doctrines, methods, or tendencies common or peculiar to all the Sophists. There were none such; nor has the abstract word – "Die Sophistik" – any real meaning, except such qualities (whatever they may be) as are inseparable from the profession or occupation of public teaching – George Grote¹

In On What is Not and in the Encomium of Helen, Gorgias professes an art that purports to be a trick for the few to retain their control over the masses, or at least the few so hope. Gorgias's tools are not so much manipulative as demobilizing: Gorgias wants to break our faith in speech as persuasion and convince us that all human relations are relations of physical violence, sometimes with fists and swords, whose material existence we readily acknowledge, sometimes with speeches, for whose material existence Gorgias argues. After expounding Gorgias's own account of the material being of speeches and his consequent picture of rhetoric, I will explore the arguments and the action of Plato's Gorgias as a reply to the project of the historical Gorgias that stands behind the Encomium of Helen and On What is Not.² Both the historical Gorgias and Plato's Gorgias, I will contend, offer as the justification of the profession of the rhetorical master as grounded in the ontological claim that speeches (logoi) exist as a distinct class of things.

Gorgias's rhetoric is to be used within "democratic" institutions, but it is intended to serve the interest of the traditional Greek aristocracy, whose capacity for violence does not depend on speech, but rather on familial wealth and on familial relations.³ The many can only exercise violence to impose their decrees on the few if the many can be joined together by common deliberation. Gorgias argues that a sharing of things through common deliberation is in fact impossible: what seems like agreement is in fact simply the imposition by one alone of his speech as a master-speech, a speech that one body among other bodies uses to master the bodies (including the souls) of his audience. The rule of one is always and everywhere the case, Gorgias claims, but that rule can be more effective insofar as the one who rules has mastered the art of verbal manipulation that Gorgias professes and offers to teach – to those wealthy young men who can afford his substantial fees. The rule of many,

especially the rule of an equal many, the regime first known as isonomia and later as demokratia, cannot exist. The few, therefore, need not and ought not submit to the claim that the many, the demos, does or should rule. Turning from the surviving Gorgianic texts to Plato's dialogue, Gorgias, I will show that Socrates interrogates Gorgias, Polus, and Callicles in order to drive a wedge between the master Gorgias and his would-be student Callicles by calling into question the aspirations that Gorgias's art of rhetoric purports to serve.

Gorgias of Leontini (c. 490 – c. 380 BCE) -- ancient sources indeed attest that he lived to be over a hundred -- was a Sicilian, but made his fame in Athens when he came in 427 on an embassy. Gorgias professed the art of speaking well, or perhaps the art of rhetoric, rhetorikē.⁴ We have inherited the Platonic problematic of defining Gorgias's profession in relation to clearly conceived notions of the orator and the philosopher. Whether this problematic is based on a genuinely adequate account of rhetoric is another matter.

Whatever Gorgias's profession was, he was enormously successful at it. He charged high fees, and a golden statue was erected to him at in the sanctuary of the Pythian Apollo at Delphi, where it would be seen by all the Greeks.⁵ Of his writings very little survives: two more-or-less complete display speeches, the Encomium of Helen and the Defense of Palamedes, a text called "On What is Not" or "On Nature" that survives paraphrased in two different presentations, and scattered fragments of other speeches and pronouncements. Gorgias was notorious in antiquity for his style, which readers of Plato can sample in pastiche in Polus's answer to Chaerophon (Gorgias 448c). The style is homophonic, jingly, with balanced sentences and often seems to sacrifice meaning to the effect of sound. It is enchanting, magical, bewitching.⁶ Though we contemporaries, "nattering nabobs of negativism" all, affect to despise the Gorgianic style, his style was in fact enormously influential, on later Greek prose, and on English in the Elizabethan age of "euphuism."⁷ One can hear echoes of Gorgias even in the highest moment of American political rhetoric, in

Lincoln's Second Inaugural: "Fondly do we hope, fervently do we pray, that this mighty scourge of war shall speedily pass away."⁸

The Encomium of Helen, is, as Gorgias puts it, a plaything (paignion, 21), whose purpose is pleasure (terpsis, 5), and yet it is relentlessly and exhaustively logical.⁹ Gorgias moves systematically through three, or rather four, possible explanations for why Helen abandoned her husband and went to Troy with Paris. Helen either did what she did by the wishes of the Gods and the decrees of necessity; was seized by force (bia); was persuaded by speech (the explanation to which Gorgias devotes the most attention); or acted out of love for Paris, that is, she was stimulated erotically by the beautiful body of Paris Alexandros. Gorgias then works through each possible explanation to show that Helen, if any of these explanations holds, was not the true cause (aitia) of Helen's going to Troy with Paris.

In the Encomium of Helen Gorgias presents a doctrine of logos as material object, albeit with the smallest, least manifest embodiment (smikrotatōi sōmati kai aphanestatōi, 8). Robert Wardy writes that according to Gorgias "a logos is, or is like, a unique physical object incapable of bilocation or cloning" -- but Wardy's "is like" simply shows the difficulty we have in digesting such a materialist account of language.¹⁰

To overcome our logocentric dyspepsia, it is useful to look at the doctrine regarding perception of Empedocles, attributed to Gorgias as well by Socrates in the Meno (76c-e). On that account images are effluvia (aporroai) produced by things. These flows are of the material composition as the things that produce them, and they are also of the same material composition as the organs of sense and thought by which we perceive them. As Empedocles himself put it "By earth we see earth; by water, water; by aither, shining aither; but by fire, blazing fire; love by love and strife by blazing strife."¹¹ These material effluvia act on the materially similar parts of our eyes, causing visual perceptions.

Gorgias's doctrine regarding speeches appears to be modeled after Empedocles' doctrine regarding perception and thought.¹² According to the Encomium of Helen, logoi are

material objects that move from the speaker to the listener and thereby alter the judgments (doxai) of the listener's soul, which is likewise material.¹³ Speech, Gorgias writes in the Encomium of Helen, impacts through the sense of hearing to produce changes in the souls of the listeners: for speech “is able to stop fear and remove pain and to work up joy and make pity grow” (8).¹⁴ Gorgias shows the material effect of speech through the examples of the effects of poetry and sorcerous incantations. Poetry inspires fear, pity, and longing not though its meaning but through its meters, through the material effect of metrical rhythms, while soothing incantations work as charms to produce in the bodies of their hearers or ease their sorrows (9, 10).¹⁵ Gorgias compares logos working on the soul to a drug working on the body: “Just as different drugs expel different humors from the body, and some stop it from being ill but others stop it from living, so too some speeches cause sorrow, some cause pleasure, some cause fear, some give the hearers confidence, some drug and bewitch the soul with some base persuasion” (14, tr. slightly modified from McDowell). Gorgias's psychological materialism, as Charles Segal has written, “treats the psyche as a tangible reality and places its functions on a level of reasonable explicability coordinate with other physical phenomena.”¹⁶

Speech is compulsion (anangkē), and it is a compelling force (bia), even as the force of a forcible rapist is compelling (12).¹⁷ “All who have and do persuade people mold a false logos” (11), that is to say, they use a logos that alters the soul’s judgments but reveals nothing of what is. The reader of the Encomium is thus liberated from the dichotomy between force and persuasion which he had previously taken for granted.¹⁸ In the hands of a skilled rhetorician, logos can form the soul as it wishes (13): no judgment or opinion can stand before it, as can be seen from the effects of philosophic disputes. The effect of speech on the soul is molding like the effect of sight on the soul. Hearing frightful speeches is like seeing frightful sights (cf. Encomium 15-17): not because the speeches represent frightful things or

communicate them but because the speeches are themselves frightful. Logos operates on the soul without being understood or interpreted.

Rhetoric, the art of speech, is thus implicitly revealed, in Charles Segal's words, as "a *techne* which can directly touch the psyche through a process of aesthetic and emotional excitation, and hence guide or control human action."¹⁹ Segal's words "directly touch" are, once again, for Gorgias not a metaphor but a description. Speech is a material thing that impacts on the soul, another material thing, and artful speech or rhetoric moves the judgments of the target soul or souls as the master of the art wishes. As I said above, the Encomium is a plaything (paignion, 21), so that we are momentarily reassured that Gorgias is not trying to bewitch, or move our embodied souls for his own purposes. Any such reassurance, however, would of course be false.²⁰

Gorgias's On What is Not or On Nature is a response, and it seems safe to say, a parodic response, to Parmenidean and later Eleatic treatises on being. On What is Not has come down to us in two later discussions: in Sextus Empiricus, Against the Logicians 1.65-87, and in the treatise On Melissus, Xenophanes, Gorgias in the received corpus of the works of Aristotle.²¹ Gorgias's original text apparently contended that we cannot say, know, or communicate anything, by showing that we cannot say, know, or communicate that anything is. Nothing exists – existence cannot truthfully be predicated of anything (Sextus Empiricus I.65-76, MXG 979a10-33).²² If something exists, its existence cannot be thought. If something's existence can be thought, its existence cannot be communicated.

Things cannot be communicated because things are not logoi. I cannot communicate what I see or hear, because I must speak logoi, not colors or sounds. We therefore cannot say what is, because what we say exists in a different way from what is. Logos is a type of thing alongside the other beings, brought into being by the impression of external things on the speaker. Perceptions, therefore, cause logoi: a logos that predicates color (ho kata chrōmatos) is caused by the color perception, but the logos does not reveal or signify the

color (Sextus Empiricus, Against the Logicians 1. 85-6). That perceptions cause logoi is simply the inverse of the claim of the Helen that logoi alter judgments and perceptions.

Thoughts and perceptions cannot be shared. I cannot communicate my thoughts, because my thoughts and your thoughts are two different material things, my thoughts being located in me, your thoughts located in you, but to communicate a thought would require that the same thought were present simultaneously in two different people (Sextus Empiricus I.83-84, MXG 980b5-10). Even if, counterfactually, the same thought were copresent in two thinkers, the one thought would be thought differently by the two people thinking it. One cannot communicate perceptions because perceptions are not shared by the same man across time, all the more so by different men at different times (MXG 980b10-17).

The doctrine concerning logoi that we learn from On What is Not and the Encomium of Helen is that a logos manipulates corporeally the same way that garlicky breath manipulates corporeally -- by pushing upon the one breathed upon. Language cannot communicate anything. Logoi are false, unrevealing of what is, and in that sense are deceptive, but these deceptions are not due to the necessary imperfections of language.²³ According to Gorgias's doctrine, language is not a sometimes imperfect medium of communication but a field of moving, material, rhythmically pulsating logoi that effect change when they impact receptive bodies. Gorgias (like the more recent cultural materialists of the Frankfurt School) denies that opening ourselves to the influence of those speaking can make us free. Speech is just another means of bodily, somatic -- or as we would say, physical -- compulsion. Speech is effective, but not because it represents. Speech cannot represent sensible things -- it is simply another kind of sensible thing, perceived through the appropriate sense (Sextus Empiricus 1.86).

The art of speaking well, what we would call rhetoric, teaches one to manipulate others proficiently. The art of medicine teaches what foods to eat or liquids to drink, and what drugs to administer, so as to alter the body, while the art of speaking well teaches how

to form the judgments of the soul,²⁴ the soul that is a material part of the self, using speeches which are themselves material. Rhetoric is a conscious art of manipulating others through speeches that corporeally overpower the judgments and perceptions of the listeners and leave the speaker supreme.

The doctrine of Gorgias would obviously have great appeal to the few who would rule the many. The Gorgianic doctrine appeals to the few not just because of its positive promise of an all-powerful art of manipulation, but because in its negative aspects, the Gorgianic doctrine denies the idea of the common, the idea that we can reason together about things through speeches. If Gorgias is correct, speech, which for Aristotle we supposedly possess as animals that live together in a many (plēthos),²⁵ is in fact the exertion of the will of one alone. Conversation is only a charade. We can act on each other through speeches, but being persuaded is to suffer passively the manipulation of others. "The aim of [Gorgias's] rhetoric is to influence action, nothing more," Paul Woodruff writes.²⁶ One should say, rather, that for Gorgias the aim of all production of logoi is to provoke reaction, nothing more. To be persuaded is neither to be free nor to be rational – Gorgias thus abolishes the distinction between rule, and domination or subjugation. Gorgias's doctrine is therefore a potent attack on the vaunted superiority of democracy -- the notion that through institutions and practices human beings can speak and reason together as equals about common concerns, and thus come to decide well about these concerns.

Gorgias's doctrine is easily appropriated as a defense of privilege, the privilege of those, to appropriate the phrases of a contemporary rhetorical critic, whose power "is not rhetorical in any public sense When they think of power they rarely think of words, and when they think of the mass media they think of an enemy, not of a friend."²⁷ Like Strepsiades in Aristophanes' Clouds, these few desire the power to manipulate words freely, that is, in free expression of their material and familial resources. They do not see themselves as threatened by the Gorgianic attack on the notion of a common good because their own

shared good, their family interest, does not require deliberation in order to be constituted. It is not surprising, therefore, that the Athenian elite had a particular interest in Gorgias's professed art of verbal manipulation.²⁸ This we shall study by reading Plato's own, hardly pro-democratic presentation of Gorgias, in his dialogue of that name. Among the riches of the dialogue we will concern ourselves with Socrates' confrontation with Gorgianic rhetoric in his conversations with all three antagonists, Gorgias, Polus, and Callicles. We shall also be concerned with decoding the place of Callicles' hopes for Gorgias within Callicles' own Typhonic soul, the Calliclean bog of contradictory desires.²⁹

What is it that the man Gorgias teaches? Socrates asks (447c). In answer Polus and Gorgias state the thesis of the omnicompetence of rhetoric, the claim that the art of rhetoric grants its masters the power to manipulate matters through speech with complete responsiveness to their own will. This is illustrated by the example of the arts, and in particular by the contest between the rhetorician and the physician (456-7).

Yet Socrates expresses doubt that the posited art of rhetoric can be separated from the other arts. After all, nearly all human activities use speech at least to some extent (449e ff.), at least to some extent. Rhetoric's peculiar product, Socrates claims, is persuasion (peithō) about justice or injustice that produces belief, opinion or trust (pistis), rather than persuasion that produces knowledge (454b-d). Gorgias seems to confirm this ontological differentiation of belief-producing-persuasion from knowledge-producing-persuasion with his example of the rhetorician outdoing the doctor at persuading the sick. Persuasion in the courts and assemblies where the just and unjust things are considered, Socrates easily gets Gorgias to admit, is the implanting of belief rather than knowledge in the hearers (459ab).

Rhetoric is sovereign over persuasions that produce belief, and, in particular, rhetoric is sovereign over the imitation in logoi of what is.³⁰ In that sense Socrates endorses Gorgias's claim in On What is Not that we cannot communicate things. Socrates asserts with no uncertainty that we cannot communicate things when the occasion of communication is

public and subject to limitations of time.³¹ In any human communicative context the best we can do, Socrates suggests elsewhere, is to communicate speeches that while distinct from the things they imitate or represent, are as similar as possible to those things (Cratylus 435c).

Rhetoric is the cosmetic knack of adorning the appearances or imitations of things in speech so as to produce belief in the listeners (Gorgias 454e-455a).

Socrates' separation of persuasions that produce belief from other entities serves Gorgias's interest as a professional teacher of rhetoric. Gorgias's problem, on Plato's presentation -- the need that brings Gorgias to hope for something from his conversation with Socrates -- is that Gorgias must have something teachable to profess in order to justify his practice of teaching and underwrite the cash value of that teaching. If Gorgias doesn't have an art among the arts, how can he have something to teach others for pay? The mere fact that Gorgias is frightfully good at making brief or long speeches on any subject (449b-d) is irrelevant to Gorgias's capacity to teach, insofar as that ability could be natural talent, mere unteachable eloquence, or the product of his personal and thus incommunicable or unteachable experience.

Socrates and Gorgias can agree on a distinction between belief and knowledge as traits in the soul (454e), on the notion that speeches are images or imitations of things (459c-e), and on the notion that there are rhetorical tools peculiar to lying or deception. Gorgias can then be the professor of that highly valuable art (or at least, knack) of deception. Socrates thus concedes to Gorgias an entire ontological realm, the realm of belief-producing-speeches, as his personal -- and lucrative -- province (454e-455a). This is not a realm of things, but a realm of appearances.³²

The ontological separation of speeches that produce belief from speeches that produce knowledge require that there be some marks of knowledge-directed speech, either marks within the soul of the listener and speaker, or marks within the speech itself. Only in that way can there be an internal distinction between arguments that aim toward truth, and

arguments that aim toward opinion, a differentiation in the sorts of things that these two kinds of arguments are. Socrates gives an example of such an internal distinction when he asserts that arguments based on the authority of witnesses cannot aim at the truth (471e-472a).³³ Plato is principally interested in exploring the possibility of marks of correct speech in the soul of the listener or in the speech itself. These possibilities both posit a separation between knower and known, and then ask how this individuation can be bridged by some kind of connection. One wonders if this Platonic project should be replaced with a project that does not assume that there are self-subsisting marks that distinguish true knowledge from false opinion, whether in the soul or in the logoi themselves, but understands knowing as a relation between knower and known, and true statements as those statements we can utter that state things as they are.³⁴

Rhetoric, Socrates claims, is but a phantom of politics (463d), a crafting of imitations of knowledge of what is good for the city. Rhetoric does not educate the multitude but rather creates images of the truth, even as the wants of the multitude are but images of the truth of their needs. By presenting these images the artful rhetorician flatters the multitude into pursuing the pleasant rather than the good. Rhetoric is a kind of sweet-sauce-cookery for the soul, and the masses who are the audiences for rhetorical performances are childlike in their ignorance of their own real interests (463, 500e-501a, 521e-522a). The speaker flatters them in part by claiming that they know their own good and are capable of acting to get it. The judgment of the many as to their own needs and wants cannot stand in for the true needs of the many as the standard for correctness in speeches about the public good, Socrates claims.

Note that we are still within the framing set by Gorgias's professional needs, or rather, by Gorgias's need to have a defined profession in which he can sell instruction. Socrates does not yet dispute the success of the flatterer. As Bruno Latour writes:

The most moving feature... is that even in this famous coup de grâce Socrates is still complimenting rhetoric. How can we not consider as positive qualities

being "good at guessing," "having courage," "knowing how to interact with people"? ... For that matter, what is so bad about being talented as a cook? I myself prefer a good chef to many bad leaders.³⁵

This convenient correspondence between Gorgias's professional aspirations and Socrates' ontology puts that ontology into question.

The ontological status of the productions of rhetoric is determined by the relation between rhetoric and justice. The crucial issue is whether rhetoric must be used justly, so as present only the truly just things (459-60). Gorgias readily admits that rhetoric can be used justly or unjustly (457), but he contradicts himself on the claim as to whether knowledge of rhetoric is different from knowledge of justice (see 460a). For the rhetorician to be unjust while seeming just there must be more to justice than the mere appearance of justice, although nearly all the Athenians, including Pericles and other famed and glorious statesman, would seem to agree that justice is only a matter of appearances.³⁶ Socrates tells Polus that nearly all Athenians and foreigners would agree with what he says about justice. The few pride themselves on their cynicism, but their cynicism is in fact shared, and even heightened, among the demotic mob.

If justice is only a matter of appearances, freely manipulable, as Gorgias professes, by the rhetorician skilled in logoi, we cannot inquire about justice in order to find out how we truly want to be. Some truth about what is humanly desirable would have to stand behind rhetoric, telling us how to use it. As Seth Benardete has written, the reality of the good would dominate the shadow of justice.³⁷ If we lack the knowledge of the things which are truly good, but possess an art of rhetoric that would enable us to evade the weight of appearances by enabling us to mold others' opinions of us and our actions, we would simply drift further from what we ought to want. This problem dominates the conversation with Polus (466b ff).³⁸

Callicles enters the conversation by contending that Socrates has defeated Polus and Gorgias by equivocating on the fine or noble (to kalon), ignoring the distinction between those things that are fine by nature and those things that are fine by convention. To benefit from doing wrong to others is fine by nature, but wrong by convention, while to suffer wrong is foul by nature. It is better by nature to do wrong than to suffer it, and better by convention to suffer wrong than to do it. This natural right, Callicles claims, is the right that the Persians invoked against the Greeks (483de), or Darius against Scythia. Callicles thus ignores the small problem that the Persians lost these wars.³⁹ The reductio ad Hitleram is supposedly a counter-argument to the claim that might makes right, yet if might truly maketh right, the mightiest refutation of Nazism was the conquest of Berlin by the Red Army.

The few, Callicles wants to argue, are by nature strong, but weak by the convention or law (nomos) that makes the many strong. The doctrine of Callicles is apparently what one learns from a moderate amount of philosophy. The teaching of Callicles gives us some insight into what philosophy is, and to its place in the city. Callicles' doctrine is what many have learned from the nature philosophers, whom we call the Pre-Socratics. Among those whose view of nature comes from the materialists among the nature philosophers is the historical Gorgias. The real personage Gorgias is thus split among the personae of Plato's dialogue: Plato's Gorgias and Polus have the commitment to a profession and the style, or in Polus's case a pallid imitation of the style, with Plato's Callicles taking over the naturalism. The materialist naturalism would seem to be what Socrates calls, in irony, the "greater mysteries" (497c).

The result, then, is that Callicles' claim to be superior is a claim to superiority in knowledge (489e), that is to say, knowledge of the truth about justice. The superior should have more, that is to say, more of what the many value, not what the discerning few value (490). Crucially, rhetoric can only help Callicles do what the many want because his notion of his own superiority is superiority in the goods the many value (491e-492c). Callicles is

well educated, as many of the Athenians say (487b), that is, Callicles is well-steeped in the opinions of the many about the good and the bad, the fine and the foul, the just and they unjust.⁴⁰ At bottom, the elite too subscribe to the thesis of the wisdom of the many -- this is unsurprising, inasmuch as the elite act as individuals according to the views that Athens adopts, say, in her conduct toward her empire (503cd), as one can see in Thucydides' account of the Mytilenean debate and the dialogue on Melos.

The demos thus shows its power to mold the few, to do violence to the most just (biaiōn to dikaotaton), as Callicles in the heat of his passion misquotes Pindar, to tame the young lions.⁴¹ Callicles even forgets himself and speaks of “we” enslavers of the best men.⁴² This is a truth that the few with whom Socrates is speaking do their best to avoid confronting, for they might then have to confront the question as to whether the superiority of the many in number over the few in number is in fact grounded in nature. Better simply to repeat to oneself the Gorgianic doctrine, that what looks like many joined together to hold the few in bondage is in fact many embodied souls manipulated artfully through the speeches of one alone (cf. 452e).

In the soul of Callicles, as Socrates exposes it, there is a fundamental ambivalence about the many (481c-482a). At one moment Callicles wishes to express his love for the demos, and another moment he wishes to turn the tables on his love-enslavement. Callicles hates his rivals in love, the demagogues, and yet disparages his beloved demos. Callicles resents his erotic subjugation by the demos, for he regards the people as uneducated, boorish, and ugly, and resents even more the prospect that the demos would abandon him and subjugate somebody else.

Callicles thinks that, in natural justice, he deserves something for being, as he thinks, superior to his beloved mob in knowledge of the conventionality of justice, and he consorts with Gorgias because he thinks that Gorgias's professed art will help him to get what he deserves. What Callicles wants from Gorgias is what young male readers hope for from

books like How to Get Any Woman You Want: an all-powerful rhetorical prescription that will permit them to have their way with those whom they desire. Gorgias has proclaimed that his art “is both the cause of freedom for persons for themselves, and for each to rule others in his own city” (452d). Callicles hopes that Gorgias's rhetoric will free him by helping him to manipulate commonplace opinions freely, and thus enable him to rule in democratic Athens without having either to betray his beloved demos by seizing power by force, or having to enslave himself wholly to these demotic opinions.⁴³

Callicles wishes to manipulate the democratic regime, not destroy it. After all, Callicles distinguishes himself from the anti-democratic lovers of things Spartan (515e) – e.g. Plato’s relatives. He is a neo-Periclean, it would seem: he is a great admirer of the old statesmen of the democracy, and he is careful to distance himself from Socrates' attack on Pericles (516d, 517ab). It would seem that what Callicles wants to know is if the art of Gorgias will make him a new Pericles, a free leader but unchallenged leader of a free people.⁴⁴ It is this aspiration that Socrates is determined to purge.

If rhetoric is not an art, but merely an effective mode of flattering and courting the demos, the fact that the elite seek training in rhetoric is the triumph of the demos. One could even say that assuming that the claim of the many to rule is just, rhetoric could then only be employed justly, that is to say, in submission to the just rule of the many.⁴⁵ Something like this is, of course, suggested by the images of the beast and the cave in the Republic. We think of political corruption as that of the many by the few, but Socrates speaks of the corruption of the few by the many. The people, he says, are like a great beast, and the pretended art of sophistry is skill at anticipating its whims, rather than guiding them. All the sophists do is teach how to guess the whims of the many in regard to the good, or the bad, the beautiful or the ugly, the just and the unjust. Moreover, as one devotes to this practice of anticipatory flattery one’s own standards of the beautiful and just are inevitably assimilated to these ignorant whims, Socrates argues.⁴⁶ Political reputation is simply based on flattering the

beast. It is not an activity suitable for refined, "beautiful people," or for real men (Gorgias 512d-513c).

Socrates offers a twofold refutation of the possibility that Gorgias can teach Callicles what Callicles wants to know. First, Pericles and Themistocles did not study rhetoric. Second, at best learning rhetoric will only help the exceptional man do what the demos wants and will tempt him away from acting in his own interest (525d). Being a Pericles was not good for Pericles himself, since the demos, when it is done with the would-be statesman, beats him, fines him, exiles or even sentences him to death, according to its whims (515c-516e).⁴⁷ Socrates is astonished, or affects to be astonished, that Callicles has foresworn the life of philosophy, the life that is devoted to doing your own thing, in order to enter a life of service to the very demos Callicles affects to despise. Callicles, to speak in the image of the Republic, returns to the cave, after only a little venture into the sun, and Socrates is determined to drag him out of the cave again.

To Callicles, Socrates offers the choice of lives between public, rhetorical life as it currently is lived, and a life of public speaking that aims only at the good of the audience, not at pleasuring them by flattering their false sense of their own goodness (500cd, 503ab). It is the second form of life that Socrates, both here and in Plato's Apology, claims to practice (Apology 29d- 33b, 36b-37a, Gorgias 521d). Socrates therefore speaks only when speaking can contribute to the realizing of the good, and public speaking can contribute to the public good, Socrates claims, only very rarely indeed (503ab). But at least to the extent that such opportunities arise to intervene for the sake of the true good of the public, philosophy itself is a kind of governance or a kind of political life, and we should note of Socrates that, as Bruno Latour has put it, "no tyranny has been more lasting than that by this sacrificed, dead man, over the living, no power more absolute, no reign more undisputed."⁴⁸ The fact that the historical record shows no trace of a Callicles as an active politician suggests that Socrates' refutation was successful, that Callicles eventually returned to the life of philosophy (527e).⁴⁹

Let me conclude with a reply to Plato, and to Socrates' vision of rhetoric as the art of flattering the demotic beast. One cannot separate the essential from the inessential in speech, nor the supposed adornment provided by rhetoric from the content of the speeches. The ornamentation or "sauce" view of rhetoric originates here, in Plato's Gorgias, and it will subsequently be retained even by those like Hobbes, who understand themselves to be rebels against the old philosophy.⁵⁰ Notwithstanding the antiquity and authority of the sauce view of rhetoric, rhetoric is not separate from the substance of governing -- rhetoric is the mode of governing many through speech. Nothing has failed more consistently than the sauce view of rhetoric, when put into practice by separating the manufacture of policy from its marketing.⁵¹

Contemporary observers who claim that an all-power and manipulative art of rhetoric exists may have more democratic intentions than did Gorgias. Who has not read the endless complaints by intellectuals about the American system of political campaigning, where money in the form of campaign contributions supposedly rules all? These writers claim that capitalist society is peopled by one-dimensional-men whose lives are ruled by manipulated passions and desires. The only problem is that no such all powerful art of rhetoric exists, and not only because, as John Austin wrote, "you cannot fool all of the people all of the time" is analytic.⁵² If the product is lousy, the best advertising campaign in the world will only make sure that people never forget who sold them that junk.⁵³

There are, Socrates and Gorgias notwithstanding, no tools peculiar to deception or lying. This is the main difficulty with the claim that rhetoric is just adornment. All the alleged tools of adornment are in fact used as tools of communication, and can be found in scientific and philosophic texts.⁵⁴ There is an art of persuasive communication that aims to present things clearly, and a defensive art whose aim is to disparage the authority of speech and thereby preserve the existing fabric of human relations from the corrosive power of things.⁵⁵ By this defensive art the speaker tries to draw attention to himself: to seduce, to emphasize our relation to himself rather than to the things of which he is speaking. Gorgias

is the great theorist of this second, defensive art, even if his claims of the comprehensiveness of his own peculiar contribution to rhetoric must be rejected.⁵⁶

Notes

¹History of Greece, new ed. (London: John Murray, 1888), vol.7, p. 53.

²The fragments and biographical statements pertaining to the historical Gorgias are conveniently collected in Thomas Buchheim, ed. and tr., Gorgias von Leontinoi: Reden, Fragmente und Testimonien (Hamburg: Felix Meiner, 1989). In this paper I return to the "Gorgias/Gorgias" problematic addressed by Robert Wardy, The Birth of Rhetoric: Gorgias, Plato, and their Successors (London and New York: Routledge, 1996). My approach differs from Wardy's in situating Gorgias's arguments as appeals to the class interest of the Athenian elite, in stressing the coherence of Gorgias's ontological views notwithstanding their expression in paradoxes, and in exploring the parallels between these views and the ontological claims put forward by Plato's Socrates.

³On the "aristocratism" of Gorgias and professionalized paideia in general, see Kenneth Freeman, Schools of Hellas, second ed. (London: Macmillan, 1912), p. 177; cited by Scott Consigny, Gorgias: Sophist and Artist (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2001), pp. 118, 220 n. 10; Thomas M. Conley, Rhetoric in the European Tradition (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994), p. 5. Cf. also Gorgias, Apology of Palamedes 33 with Plato, Gorgias 454e, and Mario Untersteiner, The Sophists, tr. Kathleen Freeman (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1954), p. 139 n.12. While the claim is frequently made of a connection between Gorgianic rhetoric and democratic institutions, partisans of a pro-democratic Gorgias do not generally ask which interest, faction, or class would have been in a position to learn and use Gorgias's professed art within democratic institutions; see e.g. Brian Vickers, In Defence of Rhetoric (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988), pp. 6-7; Richard Leo Enos,

"Why Gorgias of Leontini Traveled to Athens: A Study of Recent Epigraphic Evidence," Rhetoric Review 11, no. 1(Autumn 1992):1-15.

⁴It is true, however, that the word rhetorikē does not appear in any of the fragments of Gorgias's writings that have come down to us, and that rhetorikē appears for the first time in extant Greek literature, recent scholars have shown, when Plato's Gorgias is asked about his profession; see Thomas Cole, The Origins of Rhetoric in Ancient Greece (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1991); Edward Schiappa, The Beginnings of Rhetorical Theory in Classical Greece, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999. Yet since even those scholars such as Cole and Schiappa who assert that rhetorikē is a Platonic coinage agree that the historical Gorgias professed an art of speaking well, that he claimed that this art was teachable, and that he distinguished this art from philosophy (Encomium of Helen 13), it seems fair to describe Gorgias in twenty-first century English as a rhetorician and his art as the art of rhetoric; on this point see Consigny, Gorgias: Sophist and Artist, pp. 12-13.

⁵Buchheim, Gorgias, testimonium 1.4 = Philostratus, Lives of the Sophists 1.9; a statue was also dedicated to him at Olympia by his great-nephew Eumpolus, the inscription of which survives (Buchheim, testimonium 8).

⁶Charles Segal, "Gorgias and the Psychology of the Logos," Harvard Studies in Classical Philology 66(1962):99-155, p. 127; Jacqueline de Romilly, Magic and Rhetoric in Ancient Greece (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1975).

⁷See Bromley Smith, "Gorgias: A Study of Oratorical Style," Quarterly Journal of Speech Education 7(1921):335-359, p. 348.

⁸On the legacy of Gorgias see Gary Wills, Lincoln and Gettysburg: The Words that Remade America (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1992), p. 212; for a sample of Gorgianic tropes in Lincoln's rhetoric see Charles N. Smiley, "Lincoln and Gorgias," Classical Journal 13, no. 2 (November 1917):124-128. Lincoln's successful uses of Gorgianic style seems to me

sufficient refutation of Porter, who reads the Encomium of Helen on the assumption that the Helen is not merely unpersuasively but self-consciously unpersuasive; James J. Porter, "The Seductions of Gorgias," Classical Antiquity 12 no. 2 (October 1993):267-299; similar in approach to Porter is Richard A. Lanham, "The Rhetorical Ideal of Life," in The Motives of Eloquence (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1976).

⁹References to the Encomium of Helen are by section number; I have relied upon the text in D. M. McDowell, ed. and tr., Gorgias: Encomium of Helen. Bristol: Bristol Classical Press, 1982. On Gorgias's "passion for antithetical argument, trading mercilessly on the law of the excluded middle" see A. A. Long, "Methods of Argument in Gorgias, Palamedes," in The Sophistic Movement: Papers Read at the First International Symposium on the Sophistic Movement Organized by the Greek Philosophical Society 27- 29 September 1982 (Athens: Athenian Library of Philosophy, 1984).

¹⁰Wardy, Birth of Rhetoric, p. 20. Charles Segal, similarly, writes of "the almost physical dynamis of logos and persuasion" (p. 106), or the "almost physical impingement on the psyche" (pp. 142-3, n. 44). Segal cannot bring himself to write "the literally physical dynamis of logos and persuasion". At p. 142, Segal writes there of "a reciprocal relationship between the psychic and the physical worlds." For Gorgias there is in fact only one world, in which speech is a material element. Our resistance to Gorgias's linguistic materialism is justified inasmuch as his account denies our experience that speech can successfully present things. The most useful commentary on On What is Not is G. B. Kerferd, "Meaning and Reference: Gorgias and the Relation between Language and Reality," in The Sophistic Movement: Papers Read at the First International Symposium on the Sophistic Movement Organized by the Greek Philosophical Society 27- 29 September 1982 (Athens: Athenian Library of Philosophy, 1984).

¹¹Empedocles fr. 17/109, in The Poem of Empedocles, ed. and tr. Brad Inwood, rev. ed.

(Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2001), and cf. fr. 16/110. For a broader picture of the Empedoclean doctrine, with its consequences for thought as well as perception, see Testimonium A86 = Theophrastus, De Sensibus 1-2, 7-24. The passage from the Meno is discussed by John M. Robinson, "On Gorgias," in Exegesis and Argument: Studies in Greek Philosophy Presented to Gregory Vlastos, ed. E. N. Lee, A. P. D. Mourelatos, and R. M. Rorty, Phronesis Supplementary Volume I (New York: Humanities Press, 1973), pp. 53-54. Robinson does not connect the perceptual materialism with the linguistic materialism of Gorgias's own writings. See also the account of perception as the reception of material films (membranae) in the only surviving ancient systematic presentation of materialism, Lucretius's de rerum natura (4.26 ff).

¹²See e.g. Untersteiner, The Sophists, p. 158. On Gorgias as a student of his fellow Sicilian Empedocles -- according to the doxographical tradition, at any rate -- see Buchheim testimonia 2, 3, 10. I doubt, however, that the doxographers had sources for Gorgias and his relation to Empedocles other than those available to us, so they add nothing to the evidence of the Meno, and the comparison we ourselves make of the surviving texts of Gorgias with the fragments of Empedocles.

¹³Gorgias's claims for power of logoi over judgments, perceptions, and opinions are expounded usefully by Untersteiner, The Sophists, pp. 117-118.

¹⁴See also Thomas G. Rosenmeyer, "Gorgias, Aeschylus, and Apate," American Journal of Philology 76(1955):225-260, p. 231; Empedocles, by contrast, teaches that while his true tales, like any thought, work by their material impact, they do not work easily: "very troublesome indeed it makes / men, and harshly resented, the impulse of persuasion into their thought organ (epi phrena hormē pistios)" (fr. 2/114, translation modified from Inwood).

¹⁵On meter as a corporeal cause of a corporeal effect see McComiskey, Gorgias and the New Sophistic Rhetoric, 42-43; and cf. Plato, Republic 398c-403c, Laws 790c-791b; Allan Bloom,

The Closing of the American Mind (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1987), pp. 73-5.

¹⁶Segal, "Gorgias and the Psychology of the Logos."

¹⁷John R. Wallach, The Platonic Political Art: A Study of Critical Reason and Democracy (College Station: Penn State University Press, 2001), p. 183.

¹⁸Schiappa, The Beginnings of Rhetorical Theory in Classical Greece, 128; Guido Calogero, "Gorgias and the Socratic Principle nemo sua sponte peccat," Journal of the Hellenic Society 77 (1957):12-17, p. 13.

¹⁹Segal, "Gorgias and the Psychology of the Logos," p. 133.

²⁰Wardy, Birth of Rhetoric, p. 51.

²¹Jonathan Barnes classifies On Melissus, Xenophanes, Gorgias among the works "whose spuriousness has never seriously been contested" in his revision of the Oxford translation of Aristotle, The Complete Works of Aristotle, 2 v. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984). Diogenes Laertius lists in his catalogue of the works of Aristotle (5.25) a book Against Melissus, a book Against Gorgias, and a book Against Xenophanes. The most thorough recent treatment in English of On Melissus Xenophanes Gorgias begins with the statement that "No agreement as to the nature, the quality, or the date of the pseudo-Aristotelian treatise On Melissus, Xenophanes, Gorgias has yet been reached"; Jaap Mansfeld, "De Melisso Xenophane Gorgia: Pyrrhonizing Aristotlianism"; Rheinisches Museum für Philologie 131(1988):239-276. I am not persuaded by Mansfeld's own thesis that the treatise reflects Pyrrhonist influence.

²²I thus follow the predicative interpretation of the paradoxes in On What is Not, after G. B. Kerferd, "Gorgias on Nature or That Which is Not," Phronesis 1(1955):3-25 and ibid., "Meaning and Reference: Gorgias and the Relation Between Language and Reality"; for a presentation of the two distinctive families of interpretation of On What is Not, the existential and predicative, see Edward Schiappa, "Interpreting Gorgias's 'Being' in On Not-Being or On

Nature," Philosophy and Rhetoric 30(1997):13-30.

²³Pace Bruce E. Gronbeck's pioneering effort, "Gorgias on Rhetoric and Poetic: A Rehabilitation," Southern Speech Communication Journal 38 (1972):27-38, p. 35.

²⁴Segal, "Gorgias and the Psychology of the Logos," p. 128.

²⁵See Politics 1253a, 1263b.

²⁶Paul Woodruff, "Rhetoric and Relativism: Protagoras and Gorgias," in The Cambridge Companion to Early Greek Philosophy, ed. A. A. Long (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), p. 308.

²⁷Roderick Hart, Seducing America: How Television Charms the Modern Voter (Oxford: Oxford University Press, p. 144.

²⁸Schiappa, Beginnings of Rhetorical Theory, pp. 55-6.

²⁹Socrates "draws attention much more frequently than in any other dialogue to the personal shortcomings of his young antagonist," Callicles; George Kimball Plochmann and Franklin E. Robinson, A Friendly Companion to Plato's Gorgias (Carbondale and Edwardsville: Southern Illinois University Press, 1988), p. 106. Thematic treatments of the encounter between Socrates and Callicles abound; the most useful is the chapter in Ober, Political Dissent in Democratic Athens: Intellectual Critics of Popular Rule; and the series of papers stressing Callicles' hidden and incoherent moralism (he thinks he in justice he deserves to rule because he knows that justice is but appearance) including Thomas Pangle, "Plato's Gorgias as a Vindication of Socratic Education," Polis 10 (1991); and Devin Stauffer, "Socrates and Callicles: A Reading of Plato's Gorgias," The Review of Politics 64 no. 4 (Fall 2002):627-657. In the paper I wish to situate the Callicles/Socrates encounter within the framing encounter between Socrates and Gorgias in the text of the Gorgias, as well as within the intertextual encounter between Plato and the historical Gorgias.

³⁰Cf. Gorgias 453b, 463c-e, 465ab with Cratylus 423c ff., 430a-e.

³¹Gorgias 454e-455a; cf. 522bc, Cratylus 408c.

³²Consigny claims that Gorgias “would adamantly dispute Plato’s foundationalist conclusion[]... that our distinction between knowledge and opinion in any way suggests that there are two distinct ontological domains of, say, Being and Non-Being, to which are terms ultimately refer”; Gorgias: Sophist and Artist, p. 81; and see also Bruce McComiskey, Gorgias and the New Sophistic Rhetoric (Carbondale and Edwardsville: Southern Illinois University Press, 2002), chapter 1. Yet Consigny himself recognizes (and as we have shown above), for Gorgias logos “is ontologically different from the objects it purports to communicate” (p. 71). It is precisely because the historical Gorgias admits that there are two ontological domains, and by claiming an art of rhetoric claims knowledge and not mere opinion of what ought to persuade, that Plato found it plausible that Gorgias would have accepted Socrates’ distinction between ontological domains of reality and appearance if that ontological distinction offered support for Gorgias’s profession to be a knower of the art of rhetoric. Relativist or antifoundationalist accounts of Gorgias’s teaching (such as Consigny and McComiskey) run aground on the difficulty of explaining what makes Gorgias’s professed art uniquely valuable when compared with ordinary, untutored, ways of going on speaking within social conventions – in much the way that the most celebrated defender of professional conventions, Stanley Fish, repeatedly ran aground as provost of the University of Illinois, Chicago, in trying to justify higher salaries for humanities professors to Illinois citizens and legislators. If “reality is rhetorical,” as McComiskey puts it (p. 88), than what distinctive hold on reality is given to us by professors of rhetoric? Plato seems to have thought that forced to choose between foundationalism and undermining his ability to make a living by charging tuition for teaching his professed art, Gorgias would have preferred foundationalism (cf. Theaetetus 161c-162a, where Socrates makes a similar point about Gorgias’s rival teacher, Protagoras). Or to put it in a way Fish might like, there are

foundations and Foundations, and disdaining one might lead to being cut off from the other.

³³Every scientific paper with footnotes is a refutation of this. An alternative approach would be to distinguish true and false speech as a distinction between saying things as they are and saying them as they are not. True and false speech would not be different from things in themselves, nor would true speech be a different kind of thing from false speech. True and false speech would not be things at all, but ways things are presented to us. Good arguments would be better than bad arguments because they come closer to stating things as they are. The logical connections of good arguments would then present the real relations between facts.

³⁴Socrates is nearly always evasive or equivocal in predicating truth of a logos (see e.g. Phaedo 90c, 91b). At Symposium 199c, Socrates says that a certain inattention to the nouns and verbs that compose a logos is necessary if Phaedrus is to hear in the logos the truth about eros. At Cratylus 385b, Socrates calls a true logos one that says that the things that are, are. Yet according to the discussions in the Cratylus, it would seem that these true logoi are not available anywhere in human life or at any rate cannot be spoken. The logoi that we can utter are all false strictly speaking, for the logoi that we utter are all other than the things that are (Cratylus 408c). A logos-that-we-can-utter can only imitate things more-or-less correctly (Cratylus 431b-433d). Humanly utterable logoi are therefore a realm of things, a portion of the realm of appearances, distinct from the things they represent by imitation. If what Socrates says at the end of the Cratylus about names (onomata) can be applied to the logoi of which these names are on his account parts, we ought not to look for a way through the logoi to the things that are (438e ff., and see Phaedrus 276c), at least when we take the logoi as images of the things that are (see Socrates' rather mysterious statement about the flight to the logoi; Phaedo 99e-100a) It would seem that for Socrates, a logos-that-we-can-utter can be said to be most true, most like the truth of all the possible images in speech (see e.g.

Theaetetus 208b), but not true simply. For Socrates truth and falsehood are more readily predicated of judgment or opinion (doxa) than of logoi-that-we-can-utter.

Sometimes Socrates comes very closely to predicating truth of logoi-we-can-utter, but in the end he almost always swerves away: e.g. at Republic 376e, Socrates speaks of true and false eidē logōn. At Philebus 39a, 39c, Socrates speaks of true logoi in the soul, and at Republic 560b and 561b Socrates speaks of those whose soul lacks true logoi, but he does not make clear in any of these four places whether a soul can actually have true logoi or whether true logoi in the soul are logoi-we-can-utter. The one exception I have found, the one place where Socrates appears to predicate truth unequivocally of a logos-we-can-utter, is Phaedrus 270cd, where Socrates is speaking not of substantive truths but of the truth about the proper method of inquiry.

The significance of Socrates' evasiveness regarding the truth of logoi-we-can-utter is highlighted by the fact that Plato's non-Socratic principal interlocutors do not share Socrates' qualms about predicating truth of logoi-we-can-utter. At Sophist 263b the Eleatic Stranger asserts that "Theaetetus sits" is a true logos because it says things as they are (ta onta) about Theaetetus. In Timaeus, Critias and Timaeus speak repeatedly of their true logos (20d, 37b, 37e, 51e, 52b). The Athenian Stranger also speaks a number of times of true logoi (Laws 645b, 757a, 783a, and perhaps 927a; Epinomis 977d, 983b, 991c, 992c).

³⁵Bruno Latour, Pandora's Hope: Essays on the Reality of Science Studies (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1999, p. 233.

³⁶Gorgias 472ab; on the critique of Pericles in the Gorgias see Plochmann and Robinson, Friendly Companion to Plato's Gorgias, pp. xxiii-xxiv.

³⁷ Benardete, Rhetoric of Morality and Philosophy.

³⁸ Alternatively, one could suggest that the human world is merely a product of the human will. Socrates discusses this claim in the Protagoras and, principally, in the Theaetetus,

where he argues persuasively that our acknowledgment of the reality of a common future shows that the world is given to us in some way and not merely constructed by us (Theaetetus 172a-b, 178b-179b). Socrates' answer here in the Gorgias is that rhetoric is communicative and concealing of a truth about just and unjust things that is not constructed but that exists in itself. In particular we should like to use rhetoric to communicate our own injustices to the proper authorities (480), perhaps even to the demos whom his elite interlocutors resent, and to escape whose power they seek to learn from Gorgias his professedly all-powerful art of rhetoric. This is, of course, a deliberately bizarre claim.

³⁹See R. B. Rutherford, "The Gorgias," in The Art of Plato: Ten Essays in Platonic Interpretation (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1995), p. 163; Alessandra Fussi, "Callicles' Examples of nomos tēs phuseōs in Plato's Gorgias," Graduate Faculty Philosophy Journal 19(1996):119-149. As Seth Benardete has pointed out, these are examples of the universal rule that everyone seeks to have more, not the rule that the right to have more belongs to the stronger; Benardete, Rhetoric of Morality and Philosophy, pp. 66-7.

⁴⁰Josiah Ober, Political Dissent in Democratic Athens: Intellectual Critics of Popular Rule (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999), pp. 202-3.

⁴¹Gorgias 484b4-5, accepting the reading of the manuscripts; on Plato's text and its relation to Pindar see Giorgio Agamben, Homo Sacer: Sovereign power and Bare Life, tr. Daniel Heller-Roazen (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998), 30-34, whose argument, citing Hippias's expression similar to that of Callicles at Protagoras 337c, is more persuasive than E. R. Dodds, Plato: Gorgias (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1959), 270-2.

⁴²Gorgias 488c-489b, 483e-484a4; Benardete, Rhetoric and Morality of Philosophy, p. 65.

⁴³Cf. Philebus 58ab; Consigny, Gorgias: Sophist and Artist, p. 178.

⁴⁴Plochmann and Robinson, Friendly Companion to Plato's Gorgias, xxiii-xxiv.

⁴⁵See on this point Josiah Ober, Mass and Elite in Democratic Athens: Rhetoric, Ideology,

and the Power of the People (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989). As Consigny writes, turning Socrates' indictment of Gorgias into an apology, Gorgias's "rhetorical education promotes socialization, encouraging people to become active members of the community by learning its discourses and participating in its agons"; Gorgias, Sophist and Artist, p. 202.

⁴⁶Republic 493; cf. Gorgias 510a-511b, 512e-513e.

⁴⁷This is the claim of the personified Demos in Aristophanes' Knights (1121-50).

⁴⁸Latour, Pandora's Hope, p. 234.

⁴⁹On the historicity of Callicles see Dodds, Gorgias, pp. 12-13; W. K. C. Guthrie, The Sophists (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1971), p. 102 and n. 1; In seeing the silence of the historical record as evidence that Callicles abandoned a political career I follow Ober, Political Dissent, pp. 208-9 and n. 94; for contrasting speculations on the fate of Callicles see Dodds, op. cit.; Rutherford, The Art of Plato, p. 168 and n. 47.

⁵⁰On rhetoric as sauce or ornamentation, see e.g. Thomas Hobbes, Leviathan, Review and Conclusion: "For wherever there is place for adorning and preferring of Error, there is much more place for adorning and preferring of Truth, if they have it to adorn."

⁵¹This argument comes in two flavors, Republican and Democratic: for a Republican version see two books by Peggy Noonan, What I Saw at the Revolution (New York: Random House, 1990) and On Speaking Well (New York: ReganBooks and Harper Perennial, 1999); for a Democratic version see Carol Gelderman, All the President's Words (New York: Walker, 1997). In his memoir Before the Fall: An Inside View of the Pre-Watergate White House (New York: Belmont Tower, 1975), Nixon speechwriter William Safire argues the Watergate was the logical culmination of Nixon's understanding of politics as divided between policy-making and image-making. Nixon thought that he had to control his image in order to control his "place in history"; he could not realize that, whatever partisan Democrats

and Nixon enemies such as Arthur Schlesinger might write while Nixon was alive, Nixon's true place in history would be determined by future, and thus less partisan, historians based on their assessments of Nixon's policy actions.

⁵²J. L. Austin, Philosophical Papers, third edition (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1979), p. 113, n. 1.

⁵³Jerry Della Femina, From those Wonderful Folks Who Gave You Pearl Harbor: Front-line Dispatches from the Advertising War, ed. Charles Sopkin (New York: Pocket Books, 1971), p. 142.

⁵⁴The clearest demonstrations of the philosophers' employment of the full range of rhetorical devices can be found in Michèle Le Dœuff, The Philosophical Imaginary, ed. Colin Gordon. (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1989). Once we recognize that the difference between the philosopher and the sophist is a matter of fundamental orientation, or in Platonic language, of choice of lives, not of choice of words or even of choice of dogmas, we can look past our dismay at Socrates' employment of so-called "sophistic tactics" and read his strictures on the orators and the rhetorical masters as more of that habitual Socratic irony. Contrast on this point Jyl Gentzler, "The Sophistic Examination of Calicles in the Gorgias," Ancient Philosophy 15(1995):17-43 with Martin Heidegger, Plato's Sophist, tr. Richard Rojcewicz and André Schuwer (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1997), §§30-31, 34.

⁵⁵Socrates, one might say, presents an image of the true view of rhetoric in the Gorgias. The Socratic image of rhetoric is two-fold: First, there is rhetoric as deception, as the inculcating of images of things that, while imperfect images, nonetheless are connected by the relation of imaging to the things they image. Second, there is rhetoric as the expression of the speaker's love of the people.

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