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ABSTRACT

In the "Gorgias," Plato focuses attention upon the value of dialectic as opposed to rhetoric, as well as the status of orators as opposed to philosophers. Through his agent, Socrates, Plato confirms dialectic as a legitimate endeavor while calling into question the place of rhetoric. Socrates is portrayed as a director who enacts a strategy of rigid control over the structure and movement of the dialogue, maintaining his own status and that of his chosen question-and-answer structure by blaming the inadequacy of others for failure to progress in the argument. In the interaction between Socrates and Callicles, Callicles questions Socrates' motive (calling it self-interest) and his management of the situation, as well as the overall status of philosophy. As the struggle for control progresses, Socrates wears down the status of Callicles with sarcasm and affirms his own high moral purpose. By the end of the dialogue, Callicles (though a worthy representative of rhetoric) is depicted as a whining, pouting opponent soundly chastised by Socrates, who leads the discussion toward his predisposed conclusion: the pursuit of Truth as the highest of all endeavors. To allow rhetoric in any form but that utilized by a philosopher who is already closer to the Truth than other souls, is to allow a breach in the necessarily absolutist nature of Socrates' perspective. The questions Plato posed, unresolved through the years, continue to be brought up for scrutiny. (Notes are attached.) (NKA)

The Legitimization of Dialectic:

Socratic Strategy in the Gorgias

by

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The Gorgias and the Phaedrus are often cited as the primary dialogues within which Plato addresses the question of rhetoric: its definition, its value, and its purpose. Over the ages scholars have examined these dialogues to determine Plato's meanings and attitudes toward rhetoric, and the diversity of opinion has swelled over the years. As Edwin Black has said:

> Plato is difficult to understand. He is complicated, variegated, audacious, and sometimes paradoxical. The apparent elusiveness of his view of rhetoric, alone, has engendered a vast accumulation of commentary, with few of the commentators in substantial agreement on the defining characteristics of the view.[1]

The very extent to which controversy continues to reign about these works speaks to the genius of their author. Writings which still stir such disagreement after thousands of years have kept the issues under scrutiny from dying. In this paper I will focus not only on Plato's perspective on rhetoric, but also upon the way in which he legitimates dialectic by establishing it in the realm of controversy. It is my argument that through the conversational structure put forward and the relationships portrayed in the Gorgias, Plato focuses attention upon the value of dialectic as opposed to rhetoric as well as the status of orators as opposed to philosophers. Through his agent, Socrates, Plato confirms dialectic as a legitimate endeavor while calling into question the place of rhetoric. By placing rhetoric and dialectic

in such strong juxtaposition as to their legitimacy, Plato raises issues for the debate over the relative values of dialectic and rhetoric instead of providing answers to silence it. Thus, at a more abstract level, Plato legitimizes dialectic by placing it prominently in the midst of controversy, a position it had not previously enjoyed.

Charles Kauffman approaches the Gorgias by examining not only the substance of the arguments put forward in this dialogue, but also the interrelationships of the characters. By emphasizing that the message conveyed in the Gorgias occurs on more than a substantive level, Kauffman directs attention to the roles enacted as well as the words exchanged.[2] Such a focus is useful when one considers Socrates' participation in the Gorgias, for he is portrayed as a manager, a director who enacts a strategy of rigid control over the structure and movement of the dialogue. By strict adherence to his structure, Socrates ensures the confirmation of his position (the legitimization of dialectic) while limiting the examination of issues to alternatives he has determined and defined as absolute. Socrates is an astute manager, maintaining careful control lest his opponents stray from the structure he requires. His control, in turn, establishes his own higher status in relationship to his opponents. These two factors as they come together provide the foundation for Socrates' ultimate attack upon rhetoric. I will first address the issue of control as seen in the Gorgias, secondly I will examine the issue of status, and finally I will discuss the way these two issues coalesce to affirm dialectic's legitimacy.

The management of this situation by Socrates is evident throughout the Gorgias, seen in the ways he exerts control over the structure of his

interactions with Gorgias, Polus, and Callicles. The rules of the interaction are set early with Gorgias, when Socrates tells him to "answer briefly what I ask you . . . give me a good specimen of your clipped style"(449). Gorgias immediately rises to the occasion--to the challenge--responding that "no one can say the same thing more succinctly than I. . . . You'll say you've never heard anyone speak more briefly"(449).

Having assured the question-answer format (the basic dialogue form), Socrates begins imposing further boundaries by delimiting the possible answers to questions, and by rigid definition of terms. The dialogue follows the form of division of issues under discussion into branches between which the interlocutors choose.[3] At times Socrates appears to let the discussion go beyond his control by enlisting the participation of his opponents in choosing the course, yet the discussion is always shaped into the structure he favors and subsequently into the divisions he defines. His interaction with Polus is illustrative. Socrates first tells Polus to "choose whichever course you wish to follow: to ask or to answer." Polus proceeds to ask Socrates several questions regarding the nature of rhetoric. He fails, however, to follow the structure or direction desired by Socrates:

> Polus: Then doesn't rhetoric seem to you to be a fine thing, being capable of giving men pleasure?
> Socrates: How do you mean Polus: Have you already so thoroughly learned from me what I say rhetoric is that you can ask the next question: "Don't you think it is fine?"
> Polus: Well, haven't I learned that you say it's a knack?
> Socrates: Will you be so kind, since you set such a value on pleasure to give me a little?
> Polus: Of course.
> Socrates: Ask me, then, what sort of an art, in my opinion, is cookery? (462)

Who has become the asker? Socrates goes on to lead Polus to the branching desired.

> Socrates: . . . If, then, Polus wants to find out, let him question me. . . . I shall not answer whether I think rhetoric is fine or foul until he first asks me what it is. You're not being fair, Polus. Yet, if you wish to discover my views, ask me what branch of flattery rhetoric is.
> Polus: All right, I'll ask. Tell me which branch. (463)

Socrates manages the situation by limiting the scope of discussion and by enlisting the participation of his opponent in this limitation, assuring the opponent's acceptance of the limits. It does not matter at this point precisely where the boundaries are, what matters is that they exist and that the opponent accepts the limitation imposed by Socrates within the structure of the dialectical process.[4] With this backdrop, Socrates proceeds to force limited choices, an essential element because the very act of choice plays into Socrates' hand by acknowledging the legitimacy of the limited branches. When Socrates meets resistance to this structure, as with Polus and later with Callicles, he appears to allow expansion of the imposed boundaries by exchanging roles with his opponent (e.g., letting Polus choose whether to ask or to answer) or by seeking to define absolutely the qualified definitions offered by his opponents. He soon grows impatient with any unwillingness to follow the prescribed pattern however, and an antagonist's unwillingness is translated into "inability" or some degree of badness. Willingness or unwillingness to abide by this structure ultimately becomes an issue of character and subsequently status.

In conjunction with maintaining control, Socrates consistently belittles the status of rhetoric and rhetoricians while raising his own

status in comparison. Those who would defend rhetoric: Gorgias, Polus, and Callicles, are pitted against Socrates, the dialectician and philosopher. These three are representative of what rhetoric has to offer, and their status in comparison to Socrates' reflects the relative status of rhetoric to dialectic. Socrates' repeated disavowals of his own self-interest establish the implicit comparison by which the others are judged:

> Socrates: . . . if there ever was a man who entered on the discussion of a matter from the pure desire to learn the exact truth, I am such a person; and I should say the same about you. (435)
>
> . . . . . .
>
> This I do to complete the argument in an orderly way and not to discredit you. . . . Another purpose is that you may round out your views just as you see fit, in accordance with your true aim. (454)
>
> . . . . . .
>
> Now consider that I too am concerned to promote your interest. (455)
>
> . . . . . .
>
> I hesitate, therefore, to embark on a refutation in the fear that you may imagine that I am speaking, not with a view to illuminating our subject, but to discredit you. Now if you are the sort of person I am, I shall gladly continue the questions and answers; if not, I shall let them go. . . . If, then, you declare yourself to be such a person as I am, let us continue the discussion, but if you think we ought to let it go, let us at once dismiss it and close the interview. (457-458; emphasis added)

According to Socrates, his interest is purely based upon the high moral purpose of learning "the exact truth," as he creates in himself a standard by which others are to be judged. Serving as another control mechanism, his opponents cannot refuse to submit to Socrates' program without losing face, for refusal equals admission of a lesser morality. Yet to go on admits to the accuracy of the divisions and the comparison being drawn. The entire issue of status as Socrates develops it follows the overall structure of the dialectical form--Socrates proposes a division and in continuing the dialogue his antagonists implicitly accept his conception of the situation. The basic division in this case: go on with Socrates and be moral, or choose not to and be less moral. Put another way, go on with Socrates to pursue Truth and participate in that highest of all endeavors; or don't go on, refusing to participate in the highest of all endeavors, thus admitting to being a baser soul. Acceptance of this division gives implicit acknowledgement that this structure is the only road to Truth and morality. Because of the limited choices imposed, non-acceptance is not an alternative (being equated with immorality). Once having accepted the structure of the limited choices, an opponent is caught, and must legitimize Socrates' position.

Socrates further places himself in a superior position to his opponents by disavowing any responsibility for his actions that do not seem consistent with his requirements. The others are to blame for any lack of progress in the argument, and for his lapses into what looks like rhetoric. If is Polus' fault, for example, if Socrates is

unclear, because he has not asked the right questions (463), and it is therefore Polus' fault that Socrates is forced to resort to "holding forth at some length." Socrates goes on: "Yet you really must forgive me, for when I gave you brief answers, you didn't understand them; nor were you able to make any use of my rejoinders, but required a thorough exposition " (465). If Socrates doesn't understand, it is because of the inadequacy of the speaker; if the others don't understand, it is the result of inadequacy on the part of the listeners. Thus Socrates reinforces his implied claim to superior status.

Socrates maintains his own status and the status of his chosen argumentative structure by blaming the inadequacy of others for failure to progress in the argument. Socrates, however, depicts himself as able to rise above their incompetance, partially by lengthy exposition (which if undertaken by others would be decried as the inferior rhetoric), partially by directing them into the "correct" branches or divisions, and partially by demonstrating his superior ability with the dialectical structure as he defines it.

When dealing with Gorgias, Socrates does not directly challenge status (perhaps because the status already accorded Gorgias would have made a direct attack appear illegitimate). Instead, he seems to bend over backwards to indicate that he is not intending to discredit Gorgias, rather pursue Truth. Socrates treats the problem of Gorgias' status by demonstrating his failure within the dialectical process. Gorgias immediately accepts the structure, offering no challenge to the argumentative form itself. Polus does challenge the structure to an extent, ultimately proferring qualified agreement to Socrates, a modified form of dissent. Polus' challenges however are merely depicted as his inability to abide by the dialectical structure,

therefore emphasizing the greater abilities of those who do abide by it (i.e., Socrates). Socrates blatantly attacks Polus' status by questioning his competence, but Polus (the colt) probably has low status already. In light of this relatively low status, the triumph over Polus does not gain much. The reader has the sense that Polus is not really a good representative of rhetoric. Callicles, however, is a worthy opponent, whose worthiness is emphasized at length by Socrates. By openly challenging Socrates, the argument, and Socrates' management Callicles becomes a truly serious opponent whose defeat could represent a valuable victory of dialectic over rhetoric.

The issues of status and control come together in the interaction between Socrates and Callicles. Putting forward the severest challenge yet, Callicles questions Socrates' motives, his management of the situation, his own adherance to the imposed structural requirement, and the overall status of philosophy. Calling attention to Socrates' bending of the rules, Callicles begins his challenge: "Socrates, you seem to me to be going mad with eloquence, like a true politician. And now you are prattling . . ."(482). He also questions Socrates' management and the motives behind it: "Now, Socrates, you know you really do divert the argument into such cheap and vulgar paths, saying that you're pursuing the truth" (482-483; emphasis added). Callicles directly questions the relevance of philosophy, tying Socrates' adherence to it to self-interest (despite protestations to the contrary). Furthermore, if "men of affairs" look ridiculous in debates with philosophers, it is no more so than philosophers look when taking part in "private or public affairs."

> Callicles: Here, then, you have the truth of the matter. You will become convinced of it if you only let philosophy alone and pass on to more important considerations. Of course, Socrates, philosophy does have a certain charm if one engages with it in one's youth and in moderation; but if one dallies overlong, it's the ruin of a fellow. . . . Euripides put his finger on it when he wrote:
>
> Each shines in that which can attract him most,
> The task on which he spends the livelong day,
> The work in which he can surpass himself . . .
>
> whereas a man shuns and vilifies whatever he can't do well, but praises his other work <u>out of regard for himself, with the notion that this is the way to praise himself</u>. (484-485; emphasis added)

In a direct jab at Socrates' character, Callicles compares him to a "lisping child" (485), his predaliction for philosophy "disgraceful"(486).

Socrates responds by emphasizing Callicles' worthiness as an opponent. Once again, whether through irony, flattery, or sarcasm (depending upon one's reading), Socrates appeals to the vanity of his opponent, seducing or challenging him to partake in the argumentative structure. Callicles is "the best stone possible" to test the extent to which Socrates' soul is golden (486),[6] a "man well able to discern truth" (489).

> Socrates: Please, therefore, do not stop the lessons you have begun to give me, but show me clearly what it is that I ought to pursue, and how I may come to possess it; and if ever you catch me agreeing with you now on any subject, and later neglecting to act on it, then consider me a complete dunce and don't waste time teaching me any more lessons, for I won't be worth it. (488)

Callicles has not challenged the structure of the argumentative form, however, having only objected to the paths Socrates takes. When Socrates formulates questions and defines the limits, Callicles acquiesces to the form:

> Socrates: Please define this precisely for me. Are 'stronger' and 'better' and 'more powerful' the same or are they different?
> Callicles: I shall be glad to tell you precisely: they are the same. (488)

Despite the ensuing struggle, Socrates retains structural control, urging adherence: "Please don't begrudge me your answer "(489). Callicles ridicules Socrates' enactment of the form: "Here's a fellow who'll never be done with trifling! Tell me, Socrates, aren't you ashamed to be playing with words at your age?" (489). Both make increasingly blatant attacks upon one another's method:

> Socrates: And please, my gifted friend, try to teach me my primer in a milder tone, so that I won't run away from your school.
> Callicles: What a piece of sarcasm, Socrates! (489)

In spite of his overt acceptance of the structural requirements of the dialectical form, Callicles resists that structure by objecting to the branching proposed by Socrates. Callicles' difficulties with Socrates' definitions is illustrative:

> Callicles: You keep talking about food and drink and doctors and all such nonsense! But that's not what I mean at all.
> Socrates: Well, then, by 'better' do you mean the more intelligent? Say yes or no.
> Callicles: I do.
> Socrates: But shouldn't the better have more?
> Callicles: But not necessarily of food and drink.
> Socrates: I see. You mean, perhaps more clothes? . . .
> Callicles: What's this about clothes?
> Socrates: Well, shoes then . . .
> Callicles: What's this about shoes? You insist on talking nonsense! (490; emphasis added)

Socrates sums up the altercation, implying in his description that Callicles' refusal to accept a limited definition ("Say yes or no") is not only the root of the problem with the progress of the argument, but also unquestionably unacceptable behavior once brought to light. Once again Socrates is depicted as the master, Callicles having erred in his refusal to maintain a singular definition for abstract concepts. As with Polus, Socrates places the blame upon Callicles for the lack of progress in the argument: "Callicles, you have actually forced me

into public speaking by your constant refusal to reply!" (519)

Callicles ultimately appears to enter into the structure of the argument as appeasement, eventually continuing only at the behest of Gorgias (497). Nevertheless, he consistently attacks Socrates' status and character at times directly, at times sarcastically; for example, he calls Socrates a "strange creature . . . just a plain old petti-fogger at heart "(494), a "universal genius"(495). His answers become obvious overstatement, unless they are overtly qualified: "But I do agree beyond any question whatever;" "I admit it without further questions" (495); "Oh, all right, I agree--to help you finish up your argument and out of 'gratification' to Gorgias here" (501); "Yes, I imagine so;" "Yes I think so " (501). Callicles eventually attempts to turn his entire role over to Socrates, a comment upon the extent to which Socrates retains control of the interaction: "Why can't you finish it yourself? Talk to yourself and give yourself answers!" (505)

As the struggle for control progresses, Socrates continuously wears down the status of Callicles, often sarcastically: "But let us continue our forward march, so that you may acquire some notion of what a clever fellow you are to take me to task;" "You are a lucky man, Callicles, to be initiated into the Greater Mysteries before the Lesser. I didn't think they allowed it " (497). Socrates again places himself as a standard, demonstrating his comparative superiority with more and more certainty while affirming his own high moral purpose:

> Socrates: . . . But since you, Callicles, are unwilling to help me finish the argument, at any rate please listen and take issue with me whenever I seem to be going wrong. And if you will be kind enough to refute me, I'll not be annoyed with you, as you have been with me; on the contrary, you'll be nominated my greatest benefactor. (506)

. . . . . .

> In my opinion I am one of the few Athenians (not to say the only one) who has attempted the true art of politics, and the only one alive to put it into practice. For this reason, then, I never carry on my habitual discussions with a view to gratification, but with my eyes fixed on the highest good, not on that which is merely pleasant. (521)

By the end of the dialogue, Callicles is depicted as a sort of whining, pouting opponent who has been soundly chastised by Socrates. As a representative of rhetoric, and a worthy representative (as defined by Socrates), Callicles' defeat is particularly important. Socrates has essentially taken on rhetoric and rhetoricians, demonstrating that the worthiest challenger is no match for dialectic and for Socrates. (Gorgias himself, who it could be argued is worthier, did not challenge; in not doing so he silently assents to the results of the subsequent interaction.) Should the import of the demonstration be lost, Socrates now carefully and directly addresses the issue of rhetoric's status and legitimacy. It is a two-pronged approach forming a foundation for the ultimate challenge to rhetoric: 1) a demonstration of dialectic's superiority within the assumptions and requirements set forth by Socrates; and 2) a positioning of the relative goodness of the participants. The dialectician wins the contest on all fronts by the standards which have been established by Socrates. Socrates' own position and activities, to which he constantly attends throughout the dialogue, are consistently portrayed as legitimate. The legitimizations of both dialectic (through demonstration) and Socrates (through establishing a higher relative status) form a more solid base for fending off attacks against either. Moreover, degrading the status of his

antagonists allows Socrates to, by association, degrade the legitimacy of rhetoric. A basis is thus built for the direct and frontal attack upon rhetoric.

The status afforded rhetoric is a major issue for Socrates. Not only does he deny status to the defenders of rhetoric, he denies it to the activity itself. This is implied in the discussion comparing rhetoric to cookery rather than medicine (465). Socrates is even more direct when comparing rhetoric to navigation. Navigation saves lives and property, says Socrates, "just like rhetoric."

> Socrates: . . . And, moreover, this art is orderly and modest and does not put on airs or strike attitudes as if it were performing some terrific feat. . . . And the master of the ship, the possessor of the art and the performer of this feat, comes ashore and walks along the quay by his ship with an unassuming demeanor. (511)

"Rhetoric, get thee to thy rightful place," Socrates might be intoning. Rhetoricians should not make themselves out to be something they are not, should not have such conceit. The navigator saves lives. The engineer saves cities. The rhetoric described by its defenders certainly does no more, deserving no greater recognition.

> Socrates: . . . You, however, despise both him and his art and, as though it were a reproach, you call him a mere 'engineer.' You would never consent to marry your daughter to his son, or yourself marry his daughter. Yet after the praises you bestow on your own pursuits, what right have you to despise either the engineer or the others . . . ? (512)

Socrates severely questions the value of rhetoric. A rhetoric which is "a genuine attempt to make the souls of one's fellows as excellent as may be" has never been encountered. Finally he claims that the way of Callicles--rhetoric--"has no value whatever " (527). It has no value

because, according to Socrates, "the argument which has now revealed itself declares that this is the best way to spend one's days: to live and die in the pursuit of justice and the other virtues"(527). This is the ultimate legitimization sought by Socrates in the Gorgias: the pursuit of a knowable Truth via dialectic as the activity of greatest stature, more legitimate than any other activity, certainly moreso than the practice of rhetoric. By placing rhetoric subordinate to dialectic, Socrates assures a preeminent social position for dialectic, considering the high status afforded rhetoric in Greek society.

The legitimization of dialectic and of Socrates is accomplished through Socrates' management of the interaction. Socrates struggles for and maintains ultimate control throughout the dialogue, leading the discussion ever onward toward his predisposed conclusion: the pursuit of Truth is the highest of all endeavors. By establishing early in the dialogue the pursuit of a knowable Truth as the criterion by which all else is to be judged, Socrates assures that endeavor's resulting legitimization. The dialogue culminates with a reinforcement of this criterion by which Socrates has maintained control and achieved legitimization for his activities. The others' acceptance of his management essentially reaffirms the existence of a knowable Truth. It is the key issue supporting his attempt to place dialectic in a higher and more legitimate position than it previously held.

Socrates delegitimizes rhetoric to establish the legitimacy of dialectic. Unless rhetoric argues from Truth, which is the province of philosophy, it cannot be given legitimacy for to do so would call into question the reality of the entire concept of a knowable Truth. Anything acknowledging the legitimacy of probability or contingency as opposed to

the absolute and knowable becomes the acid which would dissolve the cornerstone of Socrates' position. Rhetoric cannot be allowed.

The nature of the dialectical process--divisions, creating limited choices between which one must choose to find the correct branch to Truth--has its foundation in the existence of knowables. To allow rhetoric in any form but that utilized by a philosopher who already is closer to the Truth than other souls, is to allow a breach in the necessarily absolutist nature of Socrates' perspective. The philosopher's "rhetoric" would in actuality be an extension of dialectic and not rhetoric at all, for it cannot legitimately exist without first undertaking the dialogic form of inquiry.[7]

Ultimately, Socrates' success in achieving the sought-after legitimacy for dialectic probably depends upon the willingness of the reader to 1) accept the assumptions and requirements of the argumentative structure, and 2) accept Socrates' control of the dialogue. Nevertheless, regardless of Socrates' success, by stirring up discussion, by focusing upon the question of the legitimacy of the pursuit of Truth as a worthwhile activity, by addressing the legitimacy of a perspective on Truth as knowable, the author of this dialogue may well have achieved a measure of legitimacy for his view that was not there before. To cause something to be seriously considered is to raise its status and legitimacy as well as that of its adherents. The elusiveness of Plato's position serves a purpose here, for the non-resolution of the question keeps it forever under debate. Plato is able, by being ambiguous, to keep dialectic and the notion of a knowa Truth in the public forum.[8]

Certainly the questions Plato posed have received the attention

of hundreds over the years, with little "progress" made toward resolution of those questions. As a statement or demonstration of Western concerns, the Gorgias serves as a fine specimen. A reader can easily identify with the questions addressed, and the methods of the participants. We recognize ourselves in the struggle, as the lines continue to be drawn between Truth as knowable o unknowable, between one mode of behavior or another dependent upon one's assumptions. Searching Plato for answers is ironic, for in demonstrating the human condition he gives no answers. Rather, through the dialogue he poses the questions. Part of Plato's genius lies in being elusive, in leaving the issues unresolved, forever brought up for continued scrutiny. In so doing, he insures the the consideration of dialectic as a legitimate activity and philosophy as a justifiable way of life. In so doing, he insures that dialectic will not die.

ENDNOTES

Edwin Black. "Plato's View of Rhetoric," Quarterly Journal of Speech, 44(1958), p. 361.

[2]Charles Kauffman. "Enactment as Argument in the Gorgias," Philosophy and Rhetoric, 12 (1979) pp. 114-129.

[3]The divisions and delimitations are also a defining characteristic of Platonic dialectic, as noted by Edwin Black (1958), p. 365.

[4]Steven Rendall argues that the participation and assent of interlocutors is essential to the goals of the dialogue form: "to change the participants, to convert them to a different view of the issues involved and of the world in general." Steven Rendall, "Dialogue, Philosophy, and Rhetoric: The Example of Plato's Gorgias," Philosophy and Rhetoric, 10 (1977), p. 167.

[5]It becomes so for some modern scholars as well. Rendall argues that Socrates asks Callicles to cooperate in the search for truth, "rather than in a spirit of contentiousness and out of the desire to defend his own preconceived opinions against attack." Rendall interprets Callicles' response as indicating that "Callicles is no friend of Socrates, or indeed, of anyone else," and that his resistance could well be his inability to conform (Rendall, 1977, p. 167). Socrates does indeed appear to make such a request of Callicles, however I would put it in a somewhat different light. In restricting Callicles and the others to the dialectical form as he enacts it, Socrates is protecting his own preconceived opinions and assumptions regarding the nature of truth, and he does so relatively contentiously. Socrates does not ask Callicles to cooperate in a search to discover the nature of truth, he

demands a priori submission to Socrates' management and the conclusions to which he leads.

[6]Note that even in this exchange, Socrates places himself in a position of superior status: Callicles is associated with "stone," while Socrates is associated with "gold."

[7]Kauffman argues that the Gorgias essentially demonstrates the necessary interdependence of rhetoric and dialectic: "dialectic and rhetoric are complimentary arts; a failed dialectic will produce a flawed rhetoric, and a rhetoric which neglects dialectic will not produce justice in the audience." Plato demonstrates, according to Kauffman, the proper use of a legitimate rhetoric: "when dialectic has failed to instruct, rhetoric may be necessary to persuade. . . . Hence, rhetoric, based on a prior dialectic may be necessary." Kauffman notes the proper temporal sequence of his analysis: dialectic first, followed by rhetoric. However, this "legitimate rhetoric" can be seen as fundamentally an extension of dialectic, a continuing form growing from the dialectical inquiry; it is also dialectic, a form which can be utilized upon successful completion of inquiry. As such it is dependent upon the previous dialectical form, and cannot be separated from it. (Kauffman, 1979, pp. 126-127).

[8]Paul Campbell argues that the Gorgias is seriously flawed by the contradictions between the argument put forward by Socrates and the actions the characters take within the drama. "The dialogue is a dramatic form, a philosophical argument set forth dramatically. And that means that serious flaws in the form, as in the case of the Gorgias, are weaknesses in both the drama and the argument"(p. 16). As a result, the arguments advanced fail. In addition, Plato's skill as a dramatist must be seriously questioned.

(see Paul Nowell Campbell, "The Gorgias: Dramatic Form as Argument," Central States Speech Journal, 31 (1980) pp. 1-16). Campbell does not, however, explain the persuasive power of this dialogue despite what he terms flaws. The confusion created by the discrepancy between argument and enactment inhibits the creation of counterarguments, particularly when placed in the nearly paradoxical argumentative structure set up by Socrates. The very meaninglessness of several of Socrates' arguments encourages such confusion and the subsequent retreat from the argument of all but Socrates. The question of success or failure of Socrates' argument as it pertains to rhetoric is therefore left unresolved by the end of the dialogue. Plato has gained, however, a measure of legitimacy for philosophy and dialectic.