THE PLATONIC TRADITION AND THE THEORY OF RHETORIC

by

Charles M. Kauffman
B.A., University of Minnesota
M.A., University of Kansas

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To my parents,

Brothers and sister.

To Jesse, Anne, and children,

To Wilbur and Claire,

Ernie and Eileen,

And most of all to

Their lovely daughter,

Kathleen.

Chapter I

Introduction

While Plato is arguably the most important philosopher in the history of Western thought, he has been only a minor figure in the history of rhetoric. In spite of the texts of Plato's dialogues and the testimony of ancient and modern scholars, Plato has received relatively little contemporary attention as a serious rhetorical theorist. In fact, Plato is accorded so little status in contemporary rhetorical theory that to speak of a "Platonic tradition" may seem somewhat presumptuous or even ridiculous. Nevertheless, the thesis of this study is that Plato developed a theory of rhetoric and that his theory has exercised a continuous influence on rhetorical scholars from antiquity to the present century. Moreover, I shall contend that Plato's theory of rhetoric differs substantially from that offered by Aristotle. In order to demonstrate these claims, I shall distinguish between Aristotelian and Platonic theories of rhetoric, describe the essential attributes of Plato's theory and show that there is a Platonic tradition in rhetoric; specifically, that Platonic theory has exercised an important influence on the rhetorical works of Cicero, Augustine, Fénelon, and Richard Weaver.

Paradoxically, this discussion of Plato's influence on the theory of rhetoric begins not with Plato's doctrine, but with an examination of the role of Aristotle. While the voices of both still echo across the centuries, Aristotle's is far louder and has tended to obscure the voice of his mentor. Or perhaps Aristotle's voice only seems louder because our modern ears are particularly attuned to its message. Whatever the reason, the effect has been the same: twentieth century rhetorical thought has been dominated by Aristotle.[1] Therefore, in order to understand Platonic theory, it is necessary to distinguish it from

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[1] See the following for evidence of Aristotelian influence: Donald C. Bryant, "Rhetoric: Its Functions and Its Scope," QJS 39 (1953), pp. 401-424; Donald C. Bryant, Rhetorical Dimensions in Criticism, (Baton Route: Louisiana State University Press, 1973); Forbes Hill, "Conventional Wisdom--Traditional Form--The President's Message of November 3, 1969," QJS 58 (December 1972), pp. 373-386; Hoyt Hudson, "The Field of Rhetoric," QJSE IX (April 1923), pp. 167-180; G. P. Mohrman and Michael Leff, "Lincoln at Cooper Union: A Rationale for neo-Classical Criticism," QJS 60 (December 1974), pp. 459-467; G. P. Mohrman and Michael Leff, "Lincoln at Cooper Union: A Rhetorical Analysis of the Text," QJS 60 (October 1974), pp. 340-358; Lester Thonssen, A. Craig Baird and Waldo Braden, Speech Criticism, 2nd ed., (New York: The Ronald Press, 1970); Herbert Wichelns, "The Literary Criticism of Oratory," in Studies in Rhetoric and Public Speaking in Honor of James Albert Winans, (New York: Russel and Russel, 1962), pp. 181-216. For a critique of Aristotelian influence in rhetorical theory, see: Edwin Black, Rhetorical Criticism: A Study in Method, (1965; rpt., Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1978); Karlyn Kohrs Campbell, Critiques of Contemporary Rhetoric, (Belmont, CA: Wadsworth, 1972); Karlyn Kohrs Campbell, "The Ontological Foundations of Rhetorical Theory," Philosophy & Rhetoric 3 (Spring 1970), pp. 97-108; Robert L. Scott and Bernard L. Brock, Methods of Rhetorical Criticism, (New York: Harper and Row, 1972).

Aristotle's theory of rhetoric and to examine that latter theory as it has come down to scholars in the modern era and as it was developed by Aristotle himself. Through this procedure, it is possible to distinguish between the fundamental precepts of Aristotelian and Platonic rhetorical theory.

Among classicists, Aristotle has long been regarded as the most influential of the ancient rhetorical theorists. Well before the turn of the century, E. M. Cope argued that no subsequent treatise was the equal of the Rhetoric.[1] In our century, the earliest major works on rhetoric in the classical period are Charles Sears Baldwin's volumes on ancient and medieval rhetoric and poetic.[2] In Ancient Rhetoric and Poetic, Baldwin treats Aristotle extensively while virtually omitting any reference to Plato. In the introduction to Medieval Rhetoric to 1400, for example, Baldwin treats Plato only as a hostile critic of rhetoric and concludes that Aristotle provided "the ultimate, final answer to Plato's challenge" and that "he settled the question of rhetoric philosophically. He established its theory."[3] Other scholars have taken much the same view.

Perhaps the most definitive analysis of Aristotle's contribution to rhetorical theory is Friedrich Solmsen's "The Aristotelian Tradition in

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[1] An Introduction to Aristotle's Rhetoric, (London: MacMillan, 1867; rpt. New York: Georg Olms Verlag, 1970), p. xi.

[2] Ancient Rhetoric and Poetic, (New York: MacMillan, 1924; rpt. Gloucester, Mass: Peter Smith, 1959); and Medieval Rhetoric to 1400, (New York: MacMillan, 1928; rpt. Gloucester: Peter Smith, 1959).

[3] Medieval Rhetoric to 1400, p. 3.

Ancient Rhetoric."[1] According to Solmsen, Aristotle's major accomplishments were his concept of arrangement based on "a thing's organic unity," his elevation of ethos and pathos to a status equal to that of arguments, the distinction between political, forensic, and epideictic speeches, the analysis of style in Book III, and, most significantly, Aristotle's notion of proof as a "formal" concept independent of content.[2]

I

While it is commonly noted that Aristotle's Rhetoric was written in response to the prevailing rhetorical theory in Athens, the importance of this fact is often overlooked in commentaries on the work.[3] There is ample evidence from the Rhetoric that Aristotle did not intend to describe the current state of Greek rhetorical practice (just as the Poetics did not describe what happened in Greek drama).[4] Instead, the Rhetoric is a normative work which attempts to explain how rhetoric should be practiced; it is a response to other, less satisfactory statements. Aristotle wrote in his introduction that, "the framers of current treatises on rhetoric have constructed but a small portion of that

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[1] American Journal of Philology LXII (1941), pp. 35-50; 169-190.

[2] Solmsen, pp. 38-42.

[3] See Friedrich Solmsen in Aristotle, Rhetoric, Poetics, Rhetoric trans. W. Rhys Roberts; Poetics. trans. Ingram Bywater; intro. Friedrich Solmsen, (New York: The Modern Library, 1954), p. xvi. All citations from the Rhetoric are from the Roberts translation unless otherwise noted. See also, E. M. Cope, An Introduction to Aristotle's Rhetoric, pp. 3-36.

[4] See Gerald Else, Aristotle's Poetics: The Argument, (Cambridge, Harvard Univ. Press, 1957).

art. . . . These writers, however, say nothing about Enthymemes, which are the substance of rhetorical persuasion, but deal mainly with non-essentials" (Rhetoric, 1354a13-19). The Rhetoric is a polemical work, written to encourage the practice of a particular type of rhetoric. Essentially, Aristotle recommends a rhetoric based on an analogy with the process of scientific demonstration. To understand the focus and limitations of Aristotelian rhetorical theory, it is necessary to understand his particular views of epistemology, language, and ethics.

Rhetoric and Epistemology

For Aristotle, only scientific understanding could properly be called "knowledge." In the Posterior Analytics, human beings are said to possess knowledge "when we think that we know the cause on which the fact depends, as the cause of that fact and of no other, and further, that the fact could not be other than it is" (71b8-12).[1] The method of coming to such an understanding is scientific demonstration: "a syllogism productive of scientific knowledge" (Posterior Analytics 71b18). Immediately evident from this passage is Aristotle's greater concern for the structure of knowledge than for the content of knowledge. Because Aristotle assumes that knowledge is good, useful, and productive, he is more interested in the process of coming to know than he is in the end product.

Demonstrated knowledge has three characteristics: "the premisses of demonstrated knowledge must be true, primary, and immediate, better

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[1] Trans. G.R.G. Mure in Richard McKeon, ed., The Basic Works of Aristotle, (New York: Random House, 1941). All citations are from this edition.

known and prior to the conclusion, which is further related to them as effect to cause. . . . The premisses must be true. . . . The premisses must be primary and indemonstrable" (Posterior Analytics 71b20-30). Scientific knowledge extends to all phenomena which "cannot be other than they are." Scientific knowledge is certain, immutable, and necessary.

How are the primary premises of scientific knowledge known? Aristotle rejects the Platonic theory of recognition (or anamnesis) (Posterior Analytics 71a10-30). Instead, Aristotle argues that primary premises are known through induction--that is, through the senses. Human beings perceive, gather, and integrate experiences through memory and rationally intuit the truth of primary premises.

Aristotle observed that human action is seldom "necessary" in the scientific sense. Human actions admit of variation and are, therefore, probable rather than necessary. Hence, knowledge about human action cannot be scientific. Instead, knowledge about human beings and their institutions is constructed upon an analogy with science. Whereas demonstration is the method of arriving at knowledge in the sciences, dialectic is its counterpart in the realm of human affairs and actions. Rhetoric is related to dialectic because it is concerned with the contingent, with human action that is neither necessary nor demonstrable. Aristotle clarifies this relationship early in the Rhetoric: "Both alike are concerned with such things as come, more or less, within the general ken of all men and belong to no definite science" (1354a1-2). Cope explains:

> The cardinal distinction therefore between science and dialectics, between the demonstrative and the dialectical syllogism, is that the former aims at and deals with exact

> knowledge and truth, or in other words, that the premisses and conclusions of its syllogisms are universal and necessary; dialectics, which also aims at proof and uses the same instrument of reasoning as scientific demonstration, derives its propositions from probable and uncertain materials.[1]

Because human action is seldom necessary, rhetoric is designed to develop rules for the combination of probable statements. The materials from which rhetorical premises are constructed, examples and enthymemes, are functionally analogous to the process of induction in science, from which the premises of necessary syllogisms are built. Aristotle writes: "The example is an induction, the enthymeme is a syllogism, and the apparent enthymeme is an apparent syllogism. I call the enthymeme a rhetorical syllogism, and the example a rhetorical induction. Every one who effects persuasion through proof does in fact use either enthymemes or examples: there is no other way" (Rhetoric 1356b3-7). Since a statement is persuasive only when it is "directly self evident or because it appears to be proved," all rhetoric incorporates examples and enthymemes (Rhetoric 1356b27). The object of rhetoric is knowledge of the probable, and, for this reason, some things are excluded from rhetoric. Aristotle says, "The duty of rhetoric is to deal with such matters as we deliberate upon without arts or systems to guide us, in the hearing of persons who cannot take in at a glance a complicated argument or follow a long chain of reasoning. The subjects of our deliberation are such as seem to present us with alternative possibilities: about things that could not have been, and cannot now or in the future be, other than they are, nobody who takes them to be of this nature wastes his time in

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[1] Cope, Introduction, p. 74.

deliberation" (Rhetoric 1357a1-8). The Rhetoric is aimed at providing rules and methods for the combination of contingent propositions designed to reveal probable conclusions. It is important to understand that Aristotle seems more concerned with the logical structure of argument than with the persuasive effect of a particular argument. He writes that the function of rhetoric "is not simply to succeed in persuading, but rather to discover the means of coming as near such success as the circumstances of each particular case allow" (Rhetoric 1355b10-11). For Aristotle, rhetoric is method; it is a neutral art that succeeds when the method is properly applied (and not necessarily when it persuades).

Aristotle's concept of rhetoric as method is close to the modern understanding of rhetoric as an epistemic tool through which human beings come to acquire knowledge. And while Aristotle is rightly praised for his precocious insight, it is important to remember that this conception of rhetoric abandons any concrete subject matter for the art. There is no necessary connection with any field of study.

Rhetoric and Axiology

Theories of rhetoric either posit a necessary relationship between the advancement of certain ethical principles and the use of rhetoric, or they argue that rhetoric is entirely amoral and instrumental. For Aristotle, rhetoric is correct when its methods are properly applied, and because he believes that truth and justice are naturally stronger than their opposites, he hopes that rhetoric will be used in their service. But strictly speaking, it is not the business of rhetoric to determine the nature and order of the good. Rhetoric can be used with equal

correctness to support or oppose the good: as method, rhetoric is indifferent to content. Solmsen concludes, "what matters in this system is the 'form' of the argument, this being perfectly independent of any particular subject matter or content."[1]

For Aristotle, there is no overriding Good toward which all things aspire and to which human action must conform. Aristotle pointedly denies this Platonic theory of the Good early on in the Ethics (1096a11-b26).[2] Instead, for Aristotle, the good for each thing is determined by how well it fulfills its particular entelechial purpose. That is why Aristotle describes rhetoric as an offshoot of ethics: ethical decisions are contingent and rhetoric is useful in arbitrating competing claims (Rhetoric 1356a25). J. H. Randall explains:

> There is to be found in the practical science of ethics no invariable structure that is true 'always and for the most part,' as is the case in the theoretical sciences, and is indeed the defining mark of those inquiries. Each situation has a good which intelligent inquiry can hope to discover. Aristotle is in ethics a complete and thoroughgoing relativist--an objective relativist, in our present day classifications. This objective relativism of Aristotle's is clearly a reaction on his part against the claim of the Platonists--and if our recent scholarship is sound, of the later Plato himself--that we can acquire a theoretical science of the Good that will hold for all cases.[3]

Aristotle views rhetoric as an amoral art; while its methods can be applied to axiological questions, it can be used with equal facility to support a variety of perspectives. In describing the uses of rhetoric, Aristotle remarks:

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[1] Solmsen, p. 41.

[2] Ethica Nicomachea, trans. W. D. Ross, in McKeon.

[3] John Herman Randall, Aristotle, (New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 1960), p. 252.

> we must be able to employ persuasion, just as strict reasoning can be employed, on opposite sides of a question, not in order that we may in practice employ it in both ways . . . but in order that we may see clearly what the facts are. . . . No other of the arts draws opposite conclusions: dialectic and rhetoric alone do this. Both these arts draw opposite conclusions impartially (Rhetoric 1355a29-36).

Cope comments, "The notion of art, or proceeding by rule of art, consists not in the result, or success of the process, which is often unattainable, but in the correctness of the method followed."[1] While Aristotle unequivocally argues that rhetoric should be used in support of truth, there is no theoretical reason why it must do so. It is impossible to misuse rhetoric; when rhetoric is used unfairly or eloquently in support of injustice, blame attaches to the rhetor and not to rhetoric. The method cannot be criticized for the conclusions it argues. Rhetoric can be judged only by standards intrinsic to the art.

Methods of Rhetoric

For Aristotle, the essence of rhetoric is proof. There are but two parts to any speech, i.e., "You must state your case and you must prove it" (Rhetoric 1414a30). Because rhetoric is analogous to scientific demonstration, Aristotle applies the methods of demonstration to the art of rhetoric. Persuasion, Aristotle argues, "is clearly a sort of demonstration since we are most fully persuaded when we consider a thing to have been demonstrated" (Rhetoric 1355a5-6). And further, "A statement is persuasive and credible either because it is directly self-evident or because it appears to be proved from other statements that are so"

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[1] E. M. Cope and J. E. Sandys, The Rhetoric of Aristotle, 3 Vols., (London: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1877; rpt. New York: Georg Olms Verlag, 1970), Vol. 1, p. 25.

(Rhetoric 1356b27-28). Human beings are persuaded by demonstration because they are, essentially, rational beings--creatures that respond to logos. Randall concludes:

> Thus for Aristotle the fullest and most intense activity of man's characteristic function, the completest fulfillment of man's distinctive "nature," is the operation of nous, of reason, in knowing. This is the satisfaction of the supreme desire with which man is endowed by nature, the desire to know. The philosopher who enjoys "wisdom," sophia, which is the union of "science," episteme, the demonstration of the reasons why things are as they are, with nous, the intellectual vision of the beginnings, the archai, of demonstration, of the sources of intelligibility--the philosopher who has come to "know truth" possess the fullest eudaimonia, the fullest exercise of human powers, and is hence most completely "human" and at the same time "most godlike and divine."[1]

Given this view of human ontology, it is inevitable that Aristotle will conceive the essence of rhetoric to be rational argument and thus he writes that enthymemes are "the substance of rhetorical persuasion" (Rhetoric 1354a15). The enthymeme is the counterpart of demonstration in science, designed to appeal to the innate desire to know. Aristotle argues, "The orator's demonstration is an enthymeme, and this is, in general, the most effective of the modes of persuasion" (Rhetoric 1355a7-8). Cope comments that:

> The enthymeme in Rhetoric /sic/ occupies the place of the syllogism in demonstration and dialectics; it is in fact the 'rhetorical demonstration,' . . . that is, not that it is a form of demonstration proper, but that it stands to the probable proofs of rhetoric in the same relation that demonstration does to science, as its principal instrument of proofs.[2]

Because rhetoric is analogous to science, Aristotle argues that the enthymeme is, in theory at least, the only legitimate form of persuasion.

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[1] Randall, pp. 270-271.

[2] Cope, pp. 101-102.

In criticizing the rhetorical treatises of his contemporaries, Aristotle notes, "About the orator's proper modes of persuasion they have nothing to tell us; nothing, that is, about how to gain skill in enthymemes" (Rhetoric 1354b22-23).

Aside from the enthymeme, the only other acceptable form of proof is the example, which in rhetoric functions as the counterpart to induction (Rhetoric 1356b3-7). The emphasis on proof is consistent with the epistemological function Aristotle assigns rhetoric. Like science, rhetoric is a way of knowing. The differences between the two are formal--rhetorical proofs are incomplete developments of their counterparts in science[1]--and science and rhetoric differ in the force of the conclusions they argue. The conclusions of science are necessary and universal, the conclusions of rhetoric are probable.[2] Aristotle's insistence on logical proof is necessary if rhetoric is to fulfill its assigned role.

All the modes of persuasion depend on achieving their effects through language. "Character" and "emotion," no less than argument, must be developed "by means of the principles of rhetoric" (Rhetoric 1355b38). In discussing ethos, for example, Aristotle notes, "This kind of persuasion, like the others, should be achieved by what the speaker says, not by what people think of this character before he begins to speak" (Rhetoric 1356a8-10). The production of emotion and character depends upon audience judgment. In some sense, for Aristotle, the arousal of emotion depends on a rational decision that the emotion is

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[1] Cope, 103, n. 1.

[2] Cope, p. 102.

appropriate. Aristotle says simply that "The use of persuasive speech is to lead to decisions" (Rhetoric 1391b7). In his discussion of the emotions, Aristotle remarks that before an audience can experience fear, it is necessary to make a number of independent judgments (Rhetoric 1383a7113). And, as is clear from the Poetics, judgments of this sort must conform to the standards of probability and necessity--they must be reasonable outcomes of the rhetoric.[1] In discussing the method for developing the moral character of the rhetor through speech, Aristotle recommends the use of maxims (Rhetoric 1395b12-19). Now a maxim is simply a constituent of the enthymeme: "It is therefore roughly true that the premisses or conclusions of Enthymemes, considered apart from the rest of the argument, are Maxims" (Rhetoric 1394a-28). The production of emotion and the development of character depend on reasoned judgments by the audience. Hence even when the speaker attempts to persuade through ethos or pathos, the requisite audience judgments will depend on the nature of the proof offered in support of those judgments. The speaker is still expected to use the enthymeme and example: the production of emotion, the revelation of character does not abandon reason.

Summary

From the foregoing analysis, it is possible to abstract the defining characteristics of Aristotelian rhetorical theory. Aristotelian rhetoric is pure method. It has no special subject matter; "in its technical

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[1] Poetics 1452a19-20; 1452a22-25; 1454a34-35; 1455a17, et passim. Trans. Ingram Bywater, (New York: The Modern Library, 1954). See also Gerald F. Else, Aristotle's Poetics: The Argument, (Cambridge: Harvard Univ. Press, 1957).

character, it is not concerned with any special or definite class of subjects" (Rhetoric 1355b35). Rhetoric is the method of discovering "the available means of persuasion" (Rhetoric 1355b26). The distinction between "discovering the available means of persuasion" and "persuading" is an important one. Rhetoric is judged according to the thoroughness with which its methods are applied and not necessarily by its ability to persuade and is useful because it provides human beings with a method for understanding and coping with ideas and actions whose outcomes cannot be predicted with certainty. Because human institutions and actions are necessarily contingent, rhetoric discriminates among available choices. Within Aristotelian theory, human beings are characteristically viewed as creatures who respond to reason. Confronted with a situation in which scientific knowledge is impossible, human beings are not expected to abandon their critical faculties. Instead, it is the ability to respond to uncertainty with reason that is for Aristotle distinctive of rhetoric. Therefore, rhetoric does not seek just any method of persuasion, but rather, methods of persuasion that are based on reason. Aristotle and those who follow in the tradition he initiated argue that all legitimate rhetoric emphasizes rational proof. But they do not ignore persuasion based on character and emotion. Indeed, as Solmsen argues, one of Aristotle's major accomplishments was the systematic treatment of character and emotion as means of persuasion. An essential aspect of Aristotelian theory is that appeals based on character or emotion are treated as offshoots of argument and must conform to the logic of probability.[1]

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[1] Edwin Black, Rhetorical Criticism, (Madison: Univ. of Wisconsin Press, 1978) p. 114 ff.

While rhetoric is not a science in the strict sense of the term, it aspires to the condition of science. The materials of rhetoric, enthymeme and example, are the functional counterparts of the methods of demonstration, deduction and induction. Rhetoric has a limited epistemic function in that it is one of the methods by which human beings come to understand ideas and actions which are merely probable. But rhetoric does not require knowledge of the truth, nor is it designed to seek the truth. Instead, the rhetorician "develops a method for determining which questions to ask."[1] Aristotle notes that, "people fail to notice that the more correctly they handle their particular subject the further they are getting away from pure rhetoric or dialectic" (Rhetoric 1358a8).

Because rhetoric is method, concerned with means and not ends, it has no connection with axiology. While the methods of rhetoric can be applied to ethical inquiry, rhetoric is indifferent to the outcomes of such inquiry.

The limitations of Aristotelian rhetorical theory are a direct result of its assumptions. As Campbell argues, "Critics and theorists who adopt the rationalistic perspective are led invariably to denigrate or ignore those genres of discourse seeking acquiescence primarily through means other than appeals to reason."[2] Furthermore, Aristotelian theorists are bound to dismiss rhetoric based on a priori knowledge, rhetoric bound up with a particular subject and interested in the conclusions it

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[1] Donald Bryant, "Rhetoric: Its Functions and its Scope," QJS 39 (December 1953), p. 22.

[2] Karlyn Kohrs Campbell, "The Ontological Foundations of Rhetorical Theory," Philosophy & Rhetoric 3 (Spring 1970), p. 99.

argues, and rhetoric linked to a particular axiology. The disinterested Aristotelian is always at odds with a committed rhetorician. In sum, Aristotelian theory is likely to be at odds with any theory of rhetoric more interested in ends than in means. The Aristotelian perspective views rhetoric as method; a rhetorical theory more interested in outcomes than methods will seem alien and inappropriate. Because of its assumptions, Aristotelianism cannot possibly accommodate these alien perspectives and, consequently, has sought to drive them from the field. In this, Aristotelian theorists have been most successful. Aristotelian rhetorical theory has dominated twentieth century thinking on the subject.

II

Yet Aristotle was not always the dominant figure in rhetorical theory. Cicero praises Plato frequently in his rhetorical treatises while paying scant attention to Aristotle. In the same vein, Quintilian argues that Aristotle's definition of rhetoric is unsatisfactory (Institutio Oratoria II. xv. 13) and takes the opportunity to praise Plato:

> the majority, content with reading a few passages from the Gorgias of Plato, unskilfully excerpted by earlier writers, refrain from studying that dialogue and the remainder of Plato's writings and thereby fall into serious error. For they believe that in Plato's view rhetoric was not an art, but a certain adroitness in the production of delight and gratification, or with reference to another passage the shadow of a small part of politics and the fourth department of flattery. . . . All these statements occur in the Gorgias and are uttered by Socrates who appears to be the mouthpiece of the views held by Plato. But some of his dialogues were composed merely to refute his opponents and are styled refutative, while others are for the purpose of teaching and are called doctrinal. Now it is only rhetoric as practised in their own day that is condemned by Plato or Socrates, for he speaks of it as

> "the manner in which you engage in public affairs:" rhetoric in itself he regards as a genuine and honourable thing, and consequently the controversy with Gorgias ends with the words, "The rhetorician therefore must be just and the just man is desirous to do what is just." It is clear therefore that Plato does not regard rhetoric as an evil, but holds that true rhetoric is impossible for any save a just and good man. In the Phaedrus he makes it even clearer that the complete attainment of this art is impossible without the knowledge of justice, an opinion in which I heartily concur. Had this not been his view, would he have ever written the Apology of Socrates or the Funeral Oration in praise of those who had died in battle for their country, both of them works falling within the sphere of oratory? It was against the class of men who employed their glibness of speech for evil purposes that he directed his denunciations (Institutio Oratoria II. xv. 24-30).[1]

However, in the modern period, there has been little systematic effort to examine Plato's contributions to rhetorical theory, in spite of the testimony of Quintilian and others. In philosophy, rhetoric has usually been treated as a minor adjunct of Platonic dialectic. Meanwhile, rhetorical theorists have vacillated between the belief that Plato "hated" rhetoric and the view that Plato found the art to be useful. In spite of the lack of systematic consideration of Plato's philosophy of rhetoric, the contrasting views are argued by their adherents with surprising vehemence. There are at least three positions which are commonly taken with respect to Plato's views on rhetoric: (1) Plato despised rhetoric, and his dialogues were designed to demonstrate the weaknesses of rhetoric and to eliminate its practice; (2) Plato's ideas on rhetoric, especially as presented in the Phaedrus form the foundation for much of Aristotle's rhetorical thought; (3) Plato's works establish the groundwork for a theory of rhetoric substantially different than that

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[1] Quintilian, Institutio Oratoria, trans. H. E. Butler, (Cambridge: Harvard Univ. Press, 1969).

enunciated by Aristotle. Opinion seems almost evenly divided between the three positions.

Platonic Hostility to Rhetoric

This position is perhaps best represented in two articles by Everett Lee Hunt written in the 1920's.[1] In his two closely related essays, Hunt attempts to establish the view that Plato was hostile to rhetoric and that the only acceptable rhetoric to Plato was beyond human capacities. Hunt concludes:

> Plato in his earlier years despised both rhetoric and rhetoricians. His own abundant genius made rhetorical artifice unnecessary. Later he came to see some possibility in rhetoric, and he outlined a theory of it in the Phaedrus. . . . The theory as set forth in the Phaedrus may be accepted as a noble ideal, but no one up to that time had appeared who could approach its requirements.[2]

Five years later, in an expanded treatment of the subject, Hunt's views had not changed. In the conclusion of his 1925 essay, he writes "the ideal rhetoric sketched in the Phaedrus is as far from the possibilities of mankind as his Republic was from Athens."[3] Because Hunt's work is illustrative of this perspective, his arguments are worth examining in some detail.[4]

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[1] Everett Lee Hunt, "Plato on Rhetoric and Rhetoricians," The Quarterly Journal of Speech Education VI (1920), pp. 33-53; and, "Plato and Aristotle on Rhetoric and Rhetoricians," in Studies in Rhetoric and Public Speaking in Honor of James Albert Winans, (New York: 1925; rpt. New York: Russel and Russel, 1962), pp. 3-60.

[2] Hunt, QJSE, p. 53.

[3] Hunt, Studies, p. 42.

[4] Golden, Berquist, and Coleman, writing some fifty years later, called Hunt's essay one of the two clear and precise statements to appear on the

Broadly, Hunt argues that in most of the dialogues, Plato's attitude toward rhetoric is "contemptuous." The group of dialogues which includes the Protagoras, Hippias Major, Hippias Minor, Gorgias, and Euthydemus were written, according to Hunt, in order to contrast sophistic and dialectic. Hunt argues that the image which emerges is distorted in favor of dialectic and its representative, Socrates: "Socrates is skilled in closely reasoned argument, the sophists are helpless in his hands. . . ."[1] Examining the Sophist and Statesman, Hunt concludes:

> we are warned against the rhetorician, who appears in different guises. In the Sophist, he appears as the dialectician who purges the soul of false knowledge, but he is really an eristical disputant. In the Statesman, he appears as the persuader of the public who is quick to seize power as a demagogue unless he be kept strictly under the direction of the true statesman.[2]

Hunt's aim is to demonstrate that Plato takes a consistent position against rhetoric throughout the dialogues. However, Hunt reserves most of his comment for the two dialogues whose main concern is rhetoric, the Gorgias and the Phaedrus.

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[4] Phaedrus in the twentieth century. (The Rhetoric of Western Thought, (Dubuque: Kendall/Hunt Publishing Co., 1976), p. 27). For other works taking the same perspective see: Donald Lehman Clark, Rhetoric in Greco-Roman Education, (New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 1957); Oscar Brownstein, "Plato's Phaedrus: Dialectic as the Genuine Art of Public Speaking," The Quarterly Journal of Speech LI (December 1965), pp. 392-98; Robert Cushman, Therapeia: Plato's Conception of Philosophy, (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1958), ch. IX; Adele Spitzer, "The Self-Reference of the Gorgias," Philosophy & Rhetoric 8 (1975), pp. 1-14; and Steven Rendall, "Dialogue, Philosophy and Rhetoric: The Example of Plato's Gorgias," Philosophy & Rhetoric 10 (1977), pp. 165-179. Taken together, these analyses suggest that Plato had little use for rhetoric or rhetoricians; that Plato's comments on rhetoric were largely derogatory; and that the ideal art of discourse was, for Plato, the art of dialectic. Golden, et al., Clark, and Brownstein all rely heavily on Hunt's essays.

[1] Hunt, Studies, p. 23.

[2] Hunt, Studies, p. 41.

The purpose of the Gorgias, according to Hunt, is to demonstrate the difference between the true life, represented in the dialogue by philosophy, and the false life, represented by rhetoric. Hunt argues that the dramatic encounters between Socrates and Gorgias and his followers illustrate the superiority of dialectic to rhetoric. In their encounter, Socrates entraps Gorgias by forcing him to admit (through what Hunt implies is an equivocation in the use of the word "justice") that the rhetorician does not know the difference between justice and injustice; consequently, he cannot be said to teach virtue.[1] In the encounter with Polus, Socrates proceeds to demonstrate that: "(1) Rhetoric is not an art; (2) Rhetoric does not confer power; (3) Rhetoric as a protection against suffering wrong is of little importance; and (4) Rhetoric as a means of escaping deserved punishment is not to be commended."[2] The exchange between Socrates and Callicles is intended to contrast "philosophy and rhetoric as a way of life."[3] In this section, Socrates admits that while there might be a noble rhetoric, there have been no practitioners of the art. Moreover, Socrates argues that the practice of rhetoric is ultimately destructive: "Rhetoric destroys the integrity of a man's soul, for it involves conformity to the ways of the multitude."[4] Finally, Hunt concludes that the myth which ends the dialogue "sums up the whole argument . . . the fundamental contrast is between appearances and reality;

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[1] Hunt, Studies, pp. 26-7.

[2] Hunt, Studies, p. 27.

[3] Hunt, Studies, p. 29.

[4] Hunt, Studies, p. 30.

the rhetorician deals with appearances, the philosopher with reality."[1] Hunt concludes that Plato engineered a rhetorical triumph in the defeat of rhetoric: "The Gorgias gives a much more complete account of Plato's view of contemporary rhetoric than does the Phaedrus. But here there is no contrast between a true and a false rhetoric. Rhetoric is condemned utterly, and with the public strife of the rhetoricians there is eloquently contrasted the life of the philosopher who desires only to know the truth. . . ."[2] This view of the Gorgias is widely held. Jaeger, for example, has argued, "In Gorgias, Plato hates the whole thing /rhetoric/: it is the typical education which is based not on truth but on sheer appearance."[3]

Hunt acknowledges that Plato did seem to articulate a theory of rhetoric in the Phaedrus but he has some difficulty constructing a reason for Plato's seeming inconsistency. Hunt accounts for the change in viewpoint in two ways: first, Hunt argues that the Phaedrus only represents a somewhat milder condemnation of rhetoric than does the Gorgias; and, second, he asserts that the problems confronting Plato as a teacher forced him to seek a method for imparting knowledge to others.[4] These factors, Hunt argues, account for the milder attitude taken toward rhetoric in the Phaedrus. Hunt summarized the theory of rhetoric developed in the Phaedrus as follows:

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[1] Hunt, Studies, p. 31.

[2] Hunt, QJSE, pp. 45-6.

[3] Werner Jaeger, Paideia: the Ideals of Greek Culture, 3 Vols., trans. Gilbert Highet, (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1939-1944), Vol. III, p. 185.

[4] Hunt, QJSE, p. 46.

1. "The first rule of good speaking is that the mind of the speaker should know the truth of what he is going to say." This cannot be interpreted as an injunction to speak the truth at all times. It is rather to know the truth in order (a) to be persuasive in presenting to the audience something which at least resembles truth, and (b) to avoid being oneself deceived by probabilities. In order to know the truth, the rhetorician must be a philosopher.
2. The rhetorician must define his terms, and see clearly what subjects are debatable and what are not. He must also be able to classify particulars under a general head, or to break up universals into particulars. The rhetorician, then, must be a logician.
3. Principles of order and arrangement must be introduced. "Every discourse ought to be a living creature, having its own body and head and feet; there ought to be a middle, beginning, and end, which are in a manner agreeable to one another and the whole."
4. The nature of the soul must be shown, and after having "arranged men and speeches, and their modes and affections in different classes, and fitted them into one another, he will point out the connection between them--he will show why one is naturally persuaded by a particular form of argument and another not." In other words, the rhetorician must be a psychologist.
5. The rhetorician must "speak of the instruments by which the soul acts or is affected in any way." Here we have the division under which comes practically all of rhetoric when viewed narrowly and technically. The "instruments" by which rhetoric affects the soul are style and delivery. Plato believed style to be acquired, however, as Pericles acquired it, by "much discussion and lofty contemplation of nature."
6. The art of writing will not be highly regarded; nor will continuous and uninterrupted discourse be regarded as equal to cross examination as a means of instruction. This is Plato's way of saying that any method of attempting to persuade the multitudes must suffer from the very fact that it is a multitude which is addressed, and that the best of rhetoric is unequal to philosophic discussion.
7. The rhetorician will have such a high moral purpose in all his work that he will ever be chiefly concerned about saying that which is "acceptable to God." Rhetoric, then, is not an instrument for the determination of scientific truth, nor for mere persuasion regardless of the cause; it is an instrument for making the will of God prevail. The perfect rhetorician, as a philosopher, knows the will of God.[1]

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[1] Hunt, Studies, pp. 37-8.

This summary of the Phaedrus is cited even by those attempting to argue that Plato did make a contribution to the theory of rhetoric.[1] However, most theorists have accepted Hunt's conclusion, that if there were a legitimate rhetoric, it would probably be unattainable by human beings. Members of this school of thought usually argue that Aristotle wrote his Rhetoric in response to Plato's critique.

Plato As Originator of Aristotelian Rhetorical Theory

Oddly enough, this position is the complement, and not the opposite, of the foregoing position. Many who have noted that Plato was hostile to rhetoric have, nevertheless, assumed that the origins of Aristotle's rhetoric can be found in the dialogues of Plato. This view is held in varying degrees; some argue only that the roots of Aristotle's psychological orientation to rhetoric are hinted at in the Phaedrus while others find traces of Aristotle's entire system scattered throughout Plato's dialogues.[2]

The noted Platonic scholar, Paul Shorey, mentions this position in a brief survey of Greek contributions to modern rhetorical practice. Shorey notes that Aristotle borrowed Plato's ideas and adapted them for popular use: "The main body of the Rhetoric, the first two books, is a working out of Plato's idea that if rhetoric is to be more than a rule of thumb, it must be a combination of logic and ethical psychology."[3]

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[1] Golden, et al., pp. 27-8.

[2] For examples of the argument, see Cope, Introduction, pp. 6-7; Solmsen, "Introduction", Roberts trans. of Rhetoric, pp. xiv-xv.

[3] Paul Shorey, "What Teachers of Speech May Learn from the Theory and Practice of the Greeks," The Quarterly Journal of Speech Education 8 (April 1922), p. 118.

Shorey goes on to comment that modern rhetorical theory is derived from the precepts formulated by Plato and Aristotle:

> The third feature of the interval between Demosthenes and Cicero was the development of a technical theory of rhetoric. As in the parallel case of the evolution of logic, there was really not much to add to the fundamental ideas of Plato and Aristotle.[1]

In a series of lectures presented somewhat later, Shorey went on to say that all students of philosophy and rhetoric grew familiar with Plato's rhetorical theory through their exposure to the Gorgias and the Phaedrus.[2] Hence Shorey was able to argue that much of modern rhetorical theory is derived from Plato, that what we now call the Aristotelian tradition has been heavily influenced by Plato.

In his highly imaginative work, Plato's Progress, Gilbert Ryle develops a similar, although more ambitious position.[3] Ryle notes that many of Plato's early works reflect an interest in debating. After a trial, alluded to in the Gorgias, Plato was forced to abandon the eristic method in his dialogues; only then did he begin writing treatises which were primarily philosophic in nature. The first real philosophic treatment of rhetoric, therefore, occurs in the Phaedrus. In that dialogue, Ryle argues, Plato's purpose was to announce to the world that the Academy would take up instruction in rhetoric.

> Why did Plato write the Phaedrus? To announce to the Greek world in general and to would-be students of rhetoric in particular that the Academy was now, despite his Gorgias, to go into competition with Isocrates' school

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[1] Shorey, QJSE, pp. 126-7.

[2] Paul Shorey, Platonism Ancient and Modern, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1938), p. 36.

[3] Gilbert Ryle, Plato's Progress, (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1965).

> as a school of rhetoric. The new curriculum for the rhetoric students would be long and arduous, but their wits would be trained in a philosophically proper manner. . . . In his Phaedrus Plato is showing to would-be rhetoric students that the philosopher can defeat the rhetorician in rhetoric. Being addressed to such Phaedruses, the dialogue is devoid of philosophical argumentation, though it contains some philosophical rhetoric.[1]

The teacher of the new curriculum in rhetoric at the Academy was to be the youthful Aristotle. Ryle notes that Aristotle "began to teach rhetoric under the auspices of the Academy when he was quite a young man and when Plato was still alive."[2] The text employed was probably an early version of Aristotle's Rhetoric. Ryle, with Shorey, argues that the Aristotelian rhetorical tradition began with Plato's Phaedrus: "Aristotle's Art of Rhetoric has been called 'an expanded Phaedrus.' It should have been called 'an applied Phaedrus.' The curricular prescriptions given by Socrates tally in part very closely with the actual contents of Aristotle's Art."[3]

A similar view is expressed by the Canadian philosopher, G. M. A. Grube. While Grube treats rhetoric only superficially (devoting seven of three hundred pages to the subject), he reaches conclusions similar to those of Shorey and Ryle. Arguing that in the Gorgias Plato condemned rhetoric as it was practiced and taught, Grube contends that the Phaedrus established the theoretical framework for a legitimate rhetoric. Citing the Phaedrus 271, Grube concludes that the passage "recapitulates the whole method /for a legitimate rhetoric/ in full, because it is, in all

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[1] Ryle, p. 262.

[2] Ryle, p. 260.

[3] Ryle, p. 260.

essentials, the method which Aristotle actually follows in his treatise on Rhetoric."[1]

The argument that Aristotle's rhetorical theory is derived from Plato usually rests on the assumption that Plato's suggestion at the Phaedrus 271 was carefully taken up and executed by Aristotle.[2] However, no author asserting this claim makes a detailed comparison between statements in the Rhetoric and salient sections of Plato's dialogues. Furthermore, choosing this one passage from Plato's writings about rhetoric cannot help but provide a distorted view of his thoughts on rhetoric. And while it is indisputable that there are some similarities between the Phaedrus and the Rhetoric, the differences are more significant. Finally, the comparison between the Phaedrus and the Rhetoric rests on the assumption that Plato and Aristotle share similar concepts of the psyche or "soul." In that regard, it is instructive to remember that in his account of the soul, De Anima, Aristotle discusses flaws implicit in Plato's theory of the soul.[3] On its face, the argument that Aristotelian rhetorical theory is derived from Plato appears difficult to sustain. I believe that subsequent analysis will demonstrate that the differences between the two theories more than outweigh any superficial similarities.[4]

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[1] G. M. A. Grube, Plato's Thought, (London: Methuen & Co., 1935), p. 214. See also Randall, pp. 279-287.

[2] This is the passage in which Plato argues that the rhetor must know the souls of his auditors.

[3] Aristotle, De Anima, 406b27-407b25. Trans. J. A. Smith, in McKeon.

[4] For a more extended analysis, see chapter three.

Platonic Contributions to Rhetorical Theory

There has always been a third school of thought, directly opposed to the preceding positions. This school, of which Quintilian is a representative, has maintained that Plato developed a theory of rhetoric that was uniquely his own. One of the earliest modern works to take this perspective is Eduard Zeller's Plato and the Older Academy. Zeller postulates that Plato was attempting to give rhetoric a higher purpose than it was commonly accorded in Greek society. Thus Zeller interprets Plato as arguing that the Gorgias was a critique of sophistic rhetorical practice. The Phaedrus, and brief passages from other dialogues, form the basis for a revised, ideal theory of rhetoric. Zeller sets forth the main tenets of the theory:

> /Plato/, however, proposes to give Rhetoric a higher aim. He requires from the orator dialectical training and scientific knowledge of the things on which he discourses, and of the kind of human souls which he decides to influence: that so he may be able to guide the wills and opinions of his hearers with skill and design. He should place himself and his art in the service of God, and assist the true statesman in establishing the rule of right and morality. Rhetoric, as defined by Plato, is thus made an offshoot of Philosophy, pursuing the same moral ends. Yet they do not absolutely coincide. The philosopher instructs his hearers by imparting truth, and guides them methodically to discover it; the rhetorician seeks only to persuade, and to work upon their wills and inclinations: and, as the majority of mankind is incapable of scientific knowledge, he can only rely on probabilities and must not hesitate to deceive those whom he wishes to convince. . . . But the philosopher alone is in a position to employ Rhetoric rightly; he alone, or (what to Plato is the same thing) the true statesman, can decide on the application of this art. Rhetoric can only be regarded as an instrument by means of which the philosopher brings his principles to bear on the unphilosophic many.[1]

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[1] Eduard Zeller, Plato and the Older Academy, trans. Sarah Alleyne and Alfred Goodwin, (London: Longmans, Green, & Co., 1876), pp. 514-515.

Zeller's statement remains the classic articulation of this position: that within the philosophic system of Plato, rhetoric was accorded an important, although subordinate role. Zeller's interpretation of Plato on rhetoric has been echoed by a number of philosophers in the twentieth century. I. M. Crombie and Paul Friedländer develop much the same point of view: while Crombie and Friedländer do not attempt to analyze the role of rhetoric within the philosophic system of Plato, they do argue that the Phaedrus signals the emergence in Plato's mind of a legitimate form of rhetoric, dependent on philosophy and dialectic.[1] Similarly Werner Jaeger, in his analysis of the Phaedrus, argues that Plato there describes a legitimate rhetorical art. For Jaeger, Plato's legitimate rhetoric unites rhetoric and philosophy, form and intellectual content, power of expression and knowledge of truth.[2] He concludes: "Plato's criticism of the rhetorical teaching of his predecessors and contemporaries grows into a positive ideal of rhetoric which is entirely his own, and which if realized would make rhetoric into a true art."[3]

Within the field of speech, opinion was largely dominated by the Hunt article until the publication of an essay by Edwin Black in 1958. The essay was written in response to the notion that "the only uniformity which crystallizes from this diversity of interpretation is the judgment that Plato disapproved of rhetoric, and was, in fact, rhetoric's most

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[1] I. M. Crombie, An Examination of Plato's Doctrines, 2 Vols., (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1962); Paul Friedländer, Plato, trans. Hans Myerhoff, 3 Vols., (New York: Pantheon Books, 1958-1969).

[2] Jaeger, III, p. 191.

[3] Jaeger, III, p. 191.

effective historical opponent."[1] Though Black examines many of the dialogues, he concentrates on the Gorgias and the Phaedrus. Black argues that the Gorgias was intended to discredit sophistic rhetoric in an effort to prepare the way for a reconstructed theory of rhetoric which Plato introduces in the Phaedrus. Black's interpretation of the Phaedrus is rather standard: he concludes that Plato developed a theory of rhetoric, that Platonic rhetoric is an auxiliary of dialectic, that its orientation is psychological, and that Platonic rhetoric included all discourse designed to influence human beings.[2] In many respects Black's analysis is very similar to Zeller's.

Black's essay is important because it reopened consideration of Plato's theory of rhetoric: since its appearance, numerous attempts have been made to assess Plato's outlook toward rhetoric.[3] The most important recent essay is Rollin Quimby's, "The Growth in Plato's Perception of Rhetoric." Quimby brings a developmental perspective to the interpretation of Plato in an attempt to present an evolutionary sketch of Plato's thought on rhetoric. He concludes that Plato's ideas on rhetoric are never wholly inconsistent. The works preceding the Phaedrus

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[1] Edwin Black, "Plato's View of Rhetoric," The Quarterly Journal of Speech XLIV (December 1958), p. 361.

[2] Black, "Plato's View of Rhetoric," p. 361.

[3] See, for example, David Kaufer, "The Influence of Plato's Developing Psychology on His Views of Rhetoric," QJS 64 (Feburary 1978), pp. 63-78; Charles Kauffman, "Enactment As Argument in the Gorgias," Philosophy & Rhetoric 12 (Spring 1979); Rollin Quimby, "The Growth in Plato's Perception of Rhetoric," Philosophy & Rhetoric 7 (1974), pp. 71-9; V. Tejera, "History and Rhetoric in Plato's Meno, or On the Difficulties of Communicating Human Excellence," Philosophy & Rhetoric 11 (Winter 1978), pp. 19-42; Michael Volpe, "Practical Platonic Rhetoric: A Study of Argumentation in the Apology," The Southern Speech Communication Journal XLII (Winter 1977), pp. 137-150.

merely indicate that Plato was uncertain about rhetoric. Quimby accepts many of the points made by Zeller, e.g., that rhetoric is practiced by the philosopher-king for the purpose of influencing souls for the better. He summarizes Plato's position as follows:

> Rhetoric is the art by which leaders who discern the truth guide men toward the good. It is as though Plato at last understood the nature of rhetoric and its place in human affairs and could replace his earlier tentative and inconclusive observations with a coherent statement. . . . Plato collected the observed elements of rhetoric into the general definition (the art of influencing the soul through words in all types of speaking) that is touched on in the Gorgias. He then repeated his division of rhetoric into true and false types.[1]

Taken together, these essays begin to establish the position that Plato was not irrevocably hostile to rhetoric. Nevertheless, the essays are deficient in two respects. First, the authors devote most of their effort attempting to fathom Plato's attitude toward the art of rhetoric and very little to determining the specific content of Plato's theory. Undoubtedly, Plato is partially responsible for this orientation. Much of Plato's writing passes judgment, while little of it is devoted to an explicit analysis of the assumptions and methods of rhetoric. However, knowing that Plato ultimately affirms rhetoric does not illuminate the rhetorical theory itself. It remains, I think, for subsequent analysis to explicate the main tenets of Plato's theory of rhetoric. Second, these authors do not attempt to integrate Plato's theory into the mainstream of rhetorical theory. It would be strange, indeed, if Plato's thought on rhetoric influenced no one, yet there has been little effort to trace the history of Plato's theory of rhetoric. There is ample evidence that

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[1] Quimby, p. 78.

Plato's works on rhetoric exercised some influence in both classical and modern periods. Therefore, in what follows I shall shift the perspective to the development and evolution of the Platonic rhetorical tradition.

III

Despite the fact that few scholars have attempted to determine what influence, if any, Plato had on subsequent rhetorical theorists,[1] there is evidence that Plato had an influence on Cicero, Augustine and, in more recent times, on Fénelon and Richard Weaver. The extent of that influence will be detailed in later chapters. However, in a brief and preparatory way, I shall outline some of the ways in which Cicero, Augustine, Fénelon, and Weaver borrow from Plato.

While it is evident that Cicero is an eclectic scholar, who uses a variety of sources to inform his thought (including Aristotle and Isocrates), it is clear that he has been influenced by Plato. Cicero's most important dialogue on rhetoric, De Oratore, uses a scene derived directly from the Phaedrus. In the Brutus, Cicero has the discussion of orators take place at the foot of a statue of Plato. In the Orator, Cicero adopts a Platonic epistemology as he searches for the Ideal Orator. And in De re publica, Cicero's description of the human soul and his critique of the poets seems to be a direct echo of Plato. When combined with the praise Cicero gives to Plato throughout his work, these items indicate that Cicero was influenced by the work of Plato.

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[1] Harold Cherniss' comprehensive bibliography of Platonic scholarship ("Plato (1050-1957)," Lustrum 4-5 (1959-1960), pp. 5-308; 321-618) revealed nothing pertinent. A search through the last twenty years of L'Annee philologique and Dissertation Abstracts International proved fruitless as did reference notes in important works of Platonic scholarship.

As for Augustine, there can be little doubt that the main influence on his rhetorical thought was the work of Cicero. So evident is that influence that it has been taken for granted. Baldwin summarizes contemporary scholarly opinion:

> The fourth book of De doctrina Christiana has historical significance in the early years of the fifth century out of all proportion to its size; for it begins rhetoric anew. It not only ignores sophistic; it goes back over centuries of the lore of personal triumph to the ancient idea of moving men to truth; and it gives to the vital counsels of Cicero a new emphasis for the urgent tasks of preaching the word of God.[1]

Hence, there are sound reasons to suppose that Augustine, too, was influenced by Plato. First, there is an indirect line of influence from Plato, through Cicero, to Augustine because Augustine adopts those aspects of Ciceronian rhetoric which are most congenial to Platonism. Further, early Christian doctrine was heavily influenced by Platonism. R. A. Markus has argued that, "Augustine derived from Neoplatonist thinkers the main bulk of the conceptual equipment which he used in diverse fields," and noted that Augustine remained much closer, in some respects, to the thought of Plato than did some of the other Neoplatonists.[2] James J. Murphy has argued that Augustine's De doctrina Christiana is reminiscent of Plato's Phaedrus.[3] Therefore, it seems likely that Plato influenced the thought of Augustine.

Cicero and Augustine are important because they are the writers whose works are most responsible for transmitting ancient rhetorical thought

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[1] Medieval Rhetoric and Poetic, p. 51.

[2] R. A. Markus, Augustine, (New York: Doubleday, 1972), p. xi.

[3] Rhetoric in the Middle Ages, (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1974), p. 63.

to the modern world. From available evidence, they were the rhetorical theorists who were most studied in the Middle Ages; consequently, a great deal of rhetorical theory is dependent upon interpretations of their texts. Cicero, especially, has been widely studied by other rhetoricians. James Murphy notes,

> Cicero is the unquestioned magister eloquentiae for the middle ages. Indeed, beginning with Horace and Quintilian, Cicero's reputation was maintained in a continuous tradition of superiority through the Principate, the Patristic Age, the middle ages, the Renaissance, and the Age of Enlightenment, and suffered a check only in comparatively recent times.[1]

Similarly, the works of Augustine acquired a wide following; De doctrina Christiana became the foundation for Scriptural exegesis and Christian preaching. Murphy claims that, "Its influence is clearly visible, being copied or quoted by such writers as Rabanus Maurus in the ninth century, Alain de Lille in the twelfth, Humbert of Romans in the thirteenth, and Robert of Basevorn in the fourteenth."[2] If Plato influenced these writers, then it should be possible to demonstrate that Plato affected the development of rhetorical theory, if only indirectly.

In the interval between Augustine's work in the fifth century and Fénelon's Dialogues on Eloquence which were part of the neo-classical revival in the seventeenth century, there was little significant development of rhetorical theory. The only major figure in the period, Peter Ramus, who worked in the 1500's, made contributions which were mainly negative. Ramus was concerned that each liberal art confine itself to subject matter that was essentially its own. Viewing invention and

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[1] Murphy, p. 107.

[2] Murphy, p. 47.

composition of argument as the proper business of logic and dialectic, Ramus felt that rhetoric should confine itself to the study of style, a move which is reminiscent of rhetorical practice during the second sophistic which prompted the reforms of Augustine. It was against this background that François Fénelon returned to the classical texts in an attempt to unify invention and style. In order to accomplish this goal, his dialogues rely heavily on the work of Plato, Cicero, and Augustine. Howell argues that Fénelon composed the dialogues to respond to Ramus' false concept of eloquence, "with Plato, Cicero, and Saint Augustine arrayed on the other side. . . ."[1] Fénelon's Dialogues are important because they unify the classical theorists of the Platonic tradition and apply their work to "modern" problems. The Dialogues were widely circulated in France, England, and the United States and helped to reintroduce the classical union of wisdom and eloquence to modern rhetorical theory.[2]

Similarly, in the twentieth century, Richard Weaver sought to restore traditional concepts of eloquence by returning to the work of Plato. A number of his important works, including Visions of Order and the Ethics of Rhetoric refer to Plato for their authority and their content. While Fénelon and Weaver are less important, historically, than Cicero and Augustine, their work is an indication that Plato has exercised continuous influence on the development of rhetorical theory.

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1 Fénelon, Dialogues on Eloquence, text, trans. and intro. by W. S. Howell, (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1951), p. 6.

2 W. S. Howell, Logic and Rhetoric in England, 1500-1700, (New York: Russel and Russel, 1961), p. 397; W. S. Howell, intro. to Fénelon's Dialogues on Eloquence, pp. 1-46.

IV

Goals of the Study

I am attempting to demonstrate two shortcomings in the way in which contemporary scholars of rhetoric have approached the study of the history and development of rhetorical theory. First, they have been preoccupied with Aristotle. Modern wisdom accords him more influence and respect than did the conventional wisdom of centuries past. And in attempting to make Aristotelian theory all things for all times, modern scholars have, in effect, distorted Aristotelian theory.

Aristotle did not intend his Rhetoric to account for all possible instances of rhetorical expression, and forcing Aristotle's theory to do so does him great injustice. If scholars are to take full advantage of Aristotle's legacy, a more balanced perspective is necessary. Second, while Aristotle has received a great deal of attention, Plato has been studied only as a peripheral figure in the history of rhetoric. Consequently, little is known of the substance of his theory of rhetoric or his influence on other rhetorical theorists.

Thus, I hope to accomplish two things through this study. I shall attempt (1) to delineate a Platonic theory of rhetoric; and (2) to trace the extent of Plato's influence on other rhetorical theorists in both the ancient and the modern eras. While each of these goals is important, for my purposes, the second objective is more important than the first. Even if the historical Plato cared little for rhetoric, his work still provides a foundation upon which other scholars have chosen to build. Hence, the first three chapters of this study should be understood as an attempt to extrapolate the characteristics of Platonic rhetoric from his ontology, epistemology, and axiology. Further, to the extent that it is

possible to demonstrate that Plato has been taken seriously as a rhetorical theorist in modern times, then justification exists, independent of the accuracy of any judgment of the historical Plato, for examining the influence of Plato on the theory of rhetoric. With these points in mind, I shall examine each of the goals of this study in more detail.

1. Plato's Theory of Rhetoric. Were it conclusively proven that no Platonic philosophical doctrines had survived to the twentieth century, compelling reasons would still remain for examining Plato's work. The problems Plato wrestled with in the Gorgias, the Phaedrus, the Republic, the Cratylus, etc., remain fundamental to the discipline of rhetoric. While it is easy to give Plato too much credit for his philosophical contributions, it is easier still to value him too lightly, especially in regard to rhetorical theory.

There has been little scholarship designed to reconcile Plato's rather cryptic remarks on rhetoric with the whole of his philosophy. That is, there has been no systematic effort to develop a theory of rhetoric in keeping with Plato's ontology, epistemology, and axiology. Such an attempt would require an outline of the epistemological function of rhetoric, an outline of Plato's theory of language, and an analysis of the kinds of rhetorical strategies available within the axiological limits imposed by the theory.

2. Plato's Influence on the Evolution of Rhetorical Theory. David Kaufer has warned that, although "for many years rhetorical theorists have been primarily interested in understanding Plato's attitudes on rhetoric, we now need (if we are to keep Plato a "live" issue in rhetorical theory) to redirect our energy toward an understanding of the reasons behind his

attitudes,"[1] Kaufer's position is both attractive and dangerous. If Kaufer means that scholars must explicate Plato's rhetorical theory, then I think the point is well taken. But, if Plato is to be a "live" issue in rhetorical theory, it can only be because his ideas have been, and continue to be, influential. It is not incumbent upon rhetorical theorists to create life where none exists. Hence the study of Platonic theory cannot end with Plato. Platonic theory will remain alive only to the extent that it can be shown that his rhetorical theory exercised, and continues to exercise, influence on other theorists. As I have indicated, however, there has been very little scholarship in this area, in spite of the fact that there is warrant to suspect that Cicero, Augustine, Fénelon, and Richard Weaver have borrowed from Plato. In addition to examining Plato's rhetorical theory, I shall attempt to show how that theory influenced other rhetorical theorists.

Methods

In order to specify assumptions and reservations which qualify the conclusions to this study I wish to discuss three issues: problems in the interpretation of Plato, difficulties in dealing with translation, and problems in selecting and evaluating the theorists who will be studied.

On Interpretation

The perspective I bring to the Platonic dialogues is, frankly, rhetorical. I view the dialogues as a series of treatises designed to

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[1] Kaufer, p. 78.

provoke and influence auditors and readers. The dialogues themselves are rhetorical in every classical and modern sense of the term: they are a subtle blend of argument and artistry designed to delight and stimulate the intellect. I think that modern interpreters have been reluctant to view the dialogues from a rhetorical perspective because of their suspicion that Plato regarded the whole rhetorical enterprise as something beneath the philosopher. Yet there is no shortage of commentators who are willing to argue that the dialogues have a rhetorical component,[1] and there are even more who are ready to argue that the dialogues are drama, in spite of Plato's widely publicized reservations about the art.[2] It seems evident to me that the dialogues unify poetic and rhetorical discourse. A rhetorical perspective allows the critic to examine both components--to examine how the literary and substantive elements of the dialogues combine to create discourse which influences human beings. Whatever else they are intended to accomplish, the dialogues are designed to persuade people to understand themselves in new and different ways. While it would be a mistake to take the dialogues as embodiments of Platonic rhetorical theory because there is no evidence to suggest that Plato thought he was "doing" rhetoric, there are genuine insights to be gained by examining the dialogues as rhetorical works, designed to solve a rhetorical problem--the problem of persuading the ignorant multitude to lead "the examined life."

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[1] See, for example, Brownstein, p. 398; Jaeger, II, p. 179.

[2] For examples of Plato's critique of drama, see his Ion and Republic X 595-606. See the Spitzer and Levi essays for examples of the dialogues treated as drama.

From any perspective, however, the hazards of interpreting Plato are many and dangerous. Problems begin with the fact that Plato wrote in response to a set of problems and to an audience removed from us by centuries of time and an even more significant lapse of experience. If twentieth century interpreters could be transported somehow to the groves of the fourth century Academy and hear a recitation of, say, the Republic, Plato would be no more comprehensible than he is now. Plato cannot mean for us what he meant for his contemporaries. It should not be surprising to discover, therefore, that there are no "standard" interpretations of Plato. And therein, I suspect, lies much of the continuing fascination of the dialogues. Given these barriers, the interpreter is faced with an enormous problem: what did Plato mean when he said x? Different interpreters have approached the problem in different ways.

Perhaps the most severe approach is taken by Richard Robinson. Arguing that the interpreter must have very strong grounds for making any assertion not specifically sanctioned by the text, Robinson outlined some of the hazards leading to misinterpretation:

> There are at least five ways in which misinterpretation is very common, and the first of them is (1) mosaic interpretation, or the habit of laying any amount of weight on an isolated text or a single sentence without determining whether it is a passing remark or a settled part of your author's thinking, whether it is made for a special purpose or is intended to be generally valid, and so on. . . . (2) Far more common and far more devastating is misinterpretation by abstraction. Your author mentions X; and X appears to you to be a case of Y; and on the strength of that you say that your author 'was well aware of Y', or even that he 'explicitly mentions Y'. Because you have abstracted Y from X, you assume that your author did so too. But such an assumption must not be made on general grounds, for no man has ever made or ever will make all the abstractions possible from any one object present to his consciousness. . . . (3) Closely related to the above is misinterpretation by inference. 'Plato says p, and

> p implies q; therefore Plato meant q'. The conclusion does not follow; for Plato may have thought that p did not imply q; or, more probably, the suggestion that 'p implies q' may never have occurred to him at all; or, most probably of all, even the proposition q itself may never have occurred to him. . . . One of the most frequent and difficult tasks of the interpreter is precisely to determine what the author thought his words implied, as opposed to what those words imply to us. . . . Thus, if it seems an overwhelming probability to us that p does not imply q, that is fairly good evidence that Plato did not mean q when he said p. If, on the other hand, it seems an overwhelming probability to us that p does imply q, that is little or no evidence that Plato did mean q when he said p. . . . (4) Each of the foregoing forms of misinterpretation is frequently used for the sake of insinuating the future, that is to say, of reading into your author doctrines that did not become explicit until later. . . . (5) Every human being's thought comes to an end. It comes to many ends. . . . Moreover, a thinker's last words on a given subject may appear in one of his early works; for he may have soon lost interest in that subject. It follows, therefore, that it is possible to commit the misinterpretation of going beyond a thinker's last word, of ascribing to him not merely all the steps he took in a certain direction but the next step also, which in reality was first made by a subsequent generation. . . . I have tried not to attribute to Plate any inference that he does not make in so many words, or any abstraction that he does not have a name for, without giving a special reason for doing so. I have assumed that to possess a single name for an idea is a later stage than to be able to express it only in a sentence, and that, if the author neither names nor states the idea, it requires very special evidence to say that he had it. Most fundamentally of all, I have assumed that there is an evolution of ideas, transcending the lives of individuals, that even the most obvious ideas were once obscure and still unknown, and that this evolution, while often proceeding by sudden leaps or 'mutations', often also advanced by very gradual 'variations.'[1]

Robinson's arguments are well taken and I believe they are in keeping with the rhetorical perspective I wish to take toward the dialogues.

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[1] Richard Robinson, Plato's Earlier Dialectic, 2nd ed., (London: Oxford Univ. Press. 1953), pp. 1-6.

Robinson's strictures force the interpreter to rely primarily on the text, severely limiting the amount and scope of contextual interpretation. While contextual interpretation can produce wonderful and often bizarre results, as in Gilbert Ryle's Plato's Progress, the uncertainties surrounding the history and biography of Plato make contextual interpretation extremely dangerous. Ultimately, the only thing that is directly known is the dialogues, and any interpretation must stand or fall based on the evidence of the Platonic texts.

Not only is it true that scholars can never be certain of Plato's intent in composing the dialogues, it has even been argued that Plato did not express philosophical doctrines in the dialogues because such doctrines cannot be expressed in words. The dialogues are to be taken, the argument goes, as examples of the process of philosophizing which force the reader to examine the fundamental values upon which her or his life is predicated. This argument is consistent with the Phaedrus 275 and with the Seventh Letter 341-344. The various contradictions, sophistries, unfair tactics, digressions, omissions, oversimplifications, and outright mistakes are present in the dialogues, it is argued, to poke and prod the reader to examine her or his own life, which is to say, of course, that the mistakes are intentional.

I reject this argument because it seems inconceivable that the close interrelationships between positions in the various dialogues are the result of coincidence. Albert William Levi has argued:

> The Platonic dialogues deal with increasingly abstract and difficult philosophical problems, but there is no dramatic shift in Plato's deepest convictions. The same first principles are appealed to throughout. The same basic insights recur. And, as Shorey pointed out, this is because . . . when the dialogues are taken as a whole the world view they reveal is clear and consistent. If not stated once and for

> all and with strict deductive elaboration, it is at least presented dialectically--its implications unfolded and its consequences explained. . . . only the total body of the Platonic writings--the dialogues as a whole--present the true statement of his philosophy.[1]

Further, while the problems Plato addresses are abstract, his concerns are pragmatic because these problems affect everyday life and conduct. It is hard to believe that when faced with the ethical imperative implicit in his philosophy, Plato would allow citizens of the polis to drift free and unencumbered.

I am of the opinion that when the dramatic and discursive levels of action are considered together, a good many of the inconsistencies in Plato's thought tend to disappear. Jerry Clegg has made an impressive case for reading Plato's dialogues from what he calls a "literal" perspective--a perspective which is, in effect, literary and rhetorical:

> There are several good reasons why, with due caution, one should read Plato in a literal vein. Taking his doctrines at face value will, first of all, pay him the important courtesy any reader owes a great writer of leaving what he says intact and of acknowledging that he probably had an intelligent reason for putting matters the way he did. . . . Many a sympathetic "reinterpretation" of Plato has, indeed, ended up voicing the wish that he had been a little more astute, fair, clear headed, or knowledgeable. . . . Second, if one surrenders to the logic of the metaphors Plato uses, and if one tries to fit together his tenets without bending or breaking them, the internal coherence of the position will emerge. It will emerge, of course, only because one has exercised a certain willing suspension of common sense. . . . The structure of his system cannot be left intact, or even perceived, if one insists on reading him as an author with whom most everyone might well agree. The best way to understand him--like everyone else--is to assume that he means what he says. . . . A third reason for reading Plato in a literal vein is that it helps one avoid falling back on dubious stands

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[1] Albert William Levi, Philosophy as Social Expression, (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1974), p. 51.

> that amount, in effect, to abandonments of any effort to understand his texts. . . . Since postponements often rest on the assumption that there is a difference between the unknown reality and the known appearance of an author's intent, it is merely prudent strategy to proceed as if a text means what it says. A fourth, and my last, reason for arguing that Plato's dialogues should be taken at face value is that artificial postulates of vacillation and evolution in his basic doctrines are more difficult to make if it is assumed that he really did mean just what he said. . . . It must be admitted, of course, that Plato was capable of a change of mind. It must be admitted too, that he probably did alter some of his views as he thought them over. Who hasn't? Still, more vacillation and evolution have been attributed to Plato than the evidence of the text warrants. . . . Attributing fundamental changes of mind to him is often motivated more by a desire to rescue him from an unsettling text than it is by any need to reconcile obviously incompatible stands.[1]

I take Clegg to mean that the best interpretations of Plato are grounded in the evidence of the text itself. When the evidence of the dialogues is considered, apart from any speculation about Plato's life and times, a clear philosophical position emerges. Obviously the textual record contains both the dramatic action and the discursive argument of the dialogues. By examining that record in what Clegg calls a "literal vein", from what I call a rhetorical perspective, it is possible to determine the substance of Plato's philosophy and to make a good guess at the reasons Plato had for "putting matters the way he did."[2]

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[1] Jerry Clegg, The Structure of Plato's Philosophy, (Lewisburg, Maine: Bucknell Univ. Press, 1977), pp. 195-197.

[2] Of course, I shall apply these same standards to the works of Cicero and Augustine though I think there is considerably less difficulty in their work. The ideas presented are not as complex nor are the meanings obscured by dramatic form. This is true even for Ciceronian dialogues, which are much more didactic than those of Plato.

Translations

Just as the meaning of a work can be hidden by the passage of time, so it is obscured by the process of translation. Any translation, no matter how faithful, is ultimately an interpretation that colors and shades the meaning of the text. When a translator stands between Plato and his reader, interpretation is, at best, uncertain.

Even so, the handicap of studying Plato through translation is not crippling, at least not in terms of the goals of this study. While it is impossible to eliminate the shadings of meaning introduced into a text by a particular translator, it is possible to discover and account for them. By examining a number of different translations of the same work, it is possible to get a sense of the original document. Further, when a number of translators express an idea in identical or highly similar language, there is relative agreement about the meaning of the original text.

The availability of commentaries on many of Plato's works mitigates somewhat the problem of working through translations. By expounding at length on the meaning of phrases and ideas, a commentator can often provide a more accurate sense of what Plato intended than is possible through literal translation alone. Of course, commentators are no more free from bias than translators; however, commentaries provide a rationale for a particular rendering of the text. By working through different translations of Plato's works with the aid of commentaries, I think it is possible to compensate for the inevitable distortion present in any single translation. And where interpretation depends on an ambiguous English term, I shall turn to the original Greek text to resolve ambiguities.

Representative Theorists

I have chosen theorists from the important periods in the development of the theory of rhetoric: Plato from the classical age, Cicero from the Roman era, Augustine from the early Middle Ages, Fénelon from the period of the neo-classical revival, and Richard Weaver from the contemporary period. In this way, I hope to demonstrate a historical continuity in the development of the Platonic tradition. Furthermore, it seems to me that there are important reasons for selecting Cicero and Augustine as the initial subjects for analysis. I have already indicated that Cicero and Augustine are the two most important and influential thinkers to emerge from Rome. Throughout the Middle Ages, their work and their opinions were more influential than those of anyone--including Isocrates and Aristotle. Insofar as the Middle Ages knew Plato, it would probably be through their work.

However, there is a more difficult question. Given the selection of subjects, the question of "what constitutes evidence of influence" assumes paramount importance. It seems to me that there are three types of evidence which should be considered. First, one can examine the testimony of ancient scholars and experts. While this is not definitive proof, it can be instructive. If, for example, Cicero's students and followers identify their mentor with Plato, there is some warrant to suspect that Cicero was influenced by Plato. The warrant is, of course, rather weak. Cicero's followers might be wrong, biased, ignorant, or all of these. Further, Cicero might well resemble Plato in some respects but not in others. So while ancient testimony can act as a pointer, it is not conclusive.

Second, one can look to the testimony of the authors themselves. How do Cicero, Augustine, Fénelon, and Weaver regard themselves with respect to Plato? If Cicero believes that he is a Platonist, there is a somewhat stronger reason to believe that he was influenced by Plato. Presumably, Cicero is well-versed in his own thought; the question remaining is how well he knew Plato. Cicero could be wrong about Plato, and his attributions of similarity could be spurious. Or Cicero may have misinterpreted Plato in significant and important ways. Or Cicero may have been influenced by some Neoplatonists whose thought diverged significantly from Plato's. Again, Cicero may have been influenced by Plato in some respects and rejected Plato's work in other areas. For all of these reasons, the testimony of the authors themselves is insufficient.

Third, one can determine influence by examining essential points of similarity between the work of Plato and the works of Cicero and Augustine. One can examine, for example, Plato and Augustine's theory of language and if the texts show strong similarity, then a case for influence can be made. Of course, this test can only show that, at best, two writers take similar positions on a particular subject. To avoid coincidence, it seems to me that the case for influence rests on the number and the importance of the similarities between two authors. Thus, if it can be shown, for example, that two authors assign to rhetoric similar epistemological functions, share similar ontological assumptions about the nature of human persuasibility, share similar assumptions about the nature and role of language, then it seems reasonable to assume that their theories of rhetoric are related. Obviously, by combining this third test with the first two, one can establish the strongest possible case for influence. However, the first two tests are neither necessary to the

validity of the third, nor are they sufficient unto themselves as proof. If Platonic and Ciceronian works on rhetoric show substantial similarity, then what Cicero thought about Plato is of secondary importance. However, no matter how much Cicero argues that he is a Platonist, if there is no similarity in the texts, then the claim must be abandoned.

Organization

In subsequent chapters, I outline a Platonic theory of rhetoric and trace the influence of the Platonic rhetorical tradition upon the theory and practice of rhetoric.

Chapter II, The Philosophical Foundations of Plato's Theory of Rhetoric. This chapter attempts to establish the groundwork for Plato's theory of rhetoric. Because rhetoric is linked to Platonic philosophy, this chapter examines Plato's ontology, epistemology, axiology, and theory of language in order to understand the constraints they impose on his theory of rhetoric.

Chapter III, Plato's Theory of Rhetoric. Beginning with the assumptions developed in Chapter II, this chapter attempts to isolate the characteristics of Platonic rhetorical theory through an examination of pertinent dialogues.

Chapter IV, Cicero and the Platonic Tradition. Conceding the point that Aristotle and Isocrates also influenced Cicero's rhetorical thought, this chapter attempts to illustrate how Platonic rhetorical theory affected the development of Ciceronian rhetorical theory.

Chapter V, Augustine, Fénelon and the Platonic Tradition. Through an examination of De doctrina Christiana, this chapter attempts to explore the indirect and direct influence of Plato on Augustinian rhetorical

theory. In turn, the chapter looks to Fénelon's Dialogues on Eloquence in an attempt to show that Plato exercised influence on the rhetorical thought of the seventeenth century, and to show that later authors perceive a Platonic tradition that runs through the work of Cicero and Augustine.

Chapter VI, Weaver and the Platonic Tradition in Rhetoric. In this chapter, I attempt to show that the Platonic tradition continues by examining the work of Richard Weaver.

Chapter VII, Conclusions.

Appendix, On Sources and Translations.

Works Consulted.

Chapter II

The Philosophical Foundations of Plato's Theory of Rhetoric

Theories of rhetoric account for the various ways in which human beings use symbols to influence themselves. That is to say, rhetorical theory must account for the resources, methods, and goals of persuasive symbolic acts. Hence, any theory of rhetoric will include three kinds of statements: "(1) a human ontology or theory of man used to explain how and why man is persuadable; (2) an epistemology or theory of knowledge which defines the role of rhetoric in the processes by which truth is discovered and/or created; and (3) an axiology or ethical theory which describes the role of rhetoric in history and generates standards by which rhetorical acts may be evaluated."[1] The way in which a theorist formulates these statements will constrain her or his rhetorical theory. Aristotle's ontology and epistemology suggest, for example, that his theory of rhetoric will be preeminently rational. In order to understand Platonic rhetorical theory, it is necessary to examine the philosophical assumptions which inform his theory.

Plato developed a theory of rhetoric which differed substantially from the theory of Aristotle, a rhetorical theory which grew out of the philosophic presuppositions which Plato brought to his analysis of human

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[1] Karlyn Kohrs Campbell, "The Rhetorical Implications of the Axiology of Jean-Paul Sartre," Western Speech 35 (Summer 1971), p. 155. See also Campbell's "The Ontological Foundations of Rhetorical Theory," Philosophy & Rhetoric 3 (Spring 1970), pp. 97-108.

society. Plato's ontology, epistemology, and axiology necessitate a theory of rhetoric that differs substantially from the rhetoric of Plato's contemporaries.

Ontological Foundations

As with many important concepts in Plato, references to human nature are scattered throughout the dialogues and many of the important concepts undergo substantial change. Nevertheless, throughout the dialogues it is clear that the essence of human character is contained in the psyche (Phaedo 105c; Phaedrus 245e; Republic 353c-354e; Timaeus 30b). Before examining the record of the dialogues, it is useful to clarify Plato's use of this term "psyche," usually translated as "soul." Plato's concept of the "psyche" differs substantially from the Judaeo-Christian concept of the soul. T. M. Robinson explains the problem of translation:

> The translation of the term psyche is always difficult. Is it "soul," or "mind," or "person"? Translators are in constant disagreement. After much thought I finally opted for the uniform translation "soul," on the grounds that this would be the least misleading. For the term "soul," to most people (including those who reject it as nonsense), suggests an "inner person" or "ghost in the machine" (to use Ryle's phrase) that is, in my opinion, very close to Plato's original view on the matter.[1]

With this in mind, it is useful to examine Plato's concept of the soul to gain a perspective on his theory of human nature.[2]

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[1] T. M. Robinson, Plato's Psychology, (Toronto: Univ. of Toronto Press, 1970), p. viii.

[2] I shall not concern myself with the entire theory, but only those aspects of the theory which explain how and why human beings are capable of influencing and being influenced by rhetorical discourse. For a complete account, see Robinson's Plato's Psychology.

It seems that, according to Plato, the human soul is created to perfect the rational order of the universe, to fulfill a function in a divine master plan. Admittedly, the textual evidence is sketchy and comes from the semi-mythic and qualified account of the origin of the cosmos supplied in the Timaeus. In describing creation, Plato has Timaeus assert:

> The creator of the universe addressed them /the gods/ in these words. Gods, children of gods, who are my works and of whom I am the artificer and father, my creations are indissoluble, if so I will. All that is bound may be undone, but only an evil being would wish to undo that which is harmonious and happy. Wherefore, since ye are but creations, ye are not altogether immortal and indissoluble, but ye shall certainly not be dissolved, nor be liable to the fate of death, having in my will a greater and mightier bond than those with which ye were bound at the time of your birth. And now listen to my instructions. Three tribes of mortal beings remain to be created--without them the universe will be incomplete, for it will not contain every kind of animal which it ought to contain, if it is to be perfect. On the other hand, if they were created by me and received life at my hands, they would be on an equality with the gods. In order then that they may be mortal, and that this universe may be truly universal, do ye, according to your natures, betake yourselves to the formation of animals, imitating the power which was shown by me in creating you. The part of them worthy of the name immortal /the rational element of the soul/, . . . of that divine part I will myself sow the seed, and having made a beginning, I will hand the work over to you. And do ye then interweave the mortal with the immortal. . . .(41a-d).[1]

Aside from the explanation of the purpose of creation, there is another feature of soul developed in the passage which deserves note. The soul has divine and mortal elements, it is not a strictly uniform entity. This view persists throughout the dialogues and Plato uses the competition

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[1] Timaeus, trans. Benjamin Jowett in Hamilton and Cairns. I can offer no insight into the question of how human beings complete the universe or perfect it. Plato's argument here is circular and I can find no way in or out of the circle. Robinson provides no help. See Plato's Psychology, p. 105.

among the varied elements within the soul to explain non-rational human behavior.

Plato perceives a fundamental opposition in the soul between a rational element which seeks knowledge and an appetitive element which seeks fulfillment of bodily desires. This notion of conflict appears early in the Phaedo and is maintained throughout the dialogues. In the Phaedo, Plato argues that the soul should seek knowledge and attempt "to free /itself/ of all distractions such as hearing or sight or pain or pleasure of any kind" (65c).[1] The proper function of the soul is to govern the body: it is concerned with "management, rule, deliberation, and the like" (Republic 353d).[2] Further, a soul which is good accomplishes its functions well, while a bad soul "will govern and manage things badly" (Republic 353e). Hence the opposition between appetite and reason is important because, depending upon the outcome of the conflict, the individual soul will function either well or badly. If the soul is to acquire intelligence, it is necessary to "avoid as much as we can all contact and the association with the body" (Phaedo 67a). Plato argues that the appetites of the body "contaminate the soul with imperfection" by "interrupting, disturbing, distracting, and preventing us from getting a glimpse of the truth" (Phaedo 66d). The good soul will attempt to free itself of the distractions of the body, while the bad soul will be overcome by them. The good soul will produce justice and happiness in the individual while the bad soul will produce its opposites (Republic 353e). If a human being

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[1] Phaedo, trans. Hugh Tredennick, in Hamilton and Cairns.

[2] Republic, trans. Paul Shorey, in Hamilton and Cairns.

is to be happy, according to Plato, a way must be found to harmonize the competing elements within the soul.

In the Phaedrus, Plato refines his treatment of the conflict in the soul to argue that the bodily appetites which must be suppressed result from the actions of an inferior part of the soul. Here the soul is described as divided into three parts, and the conflict among these parts is explained through the myth of the charioteer (Phaedrus 246a-257e). The soul, Plato argues, is that which is self-moved and immortal (245d-e) and is composed of three elements, a team of winged horses, one noble and good and the other base and wicked, and a winged charioteer. The soul is ever in motion throughout the entire universe, striving to reach the realm beyond the heavens:

> It is there that true being dwells, without color or shape, that cannot be touched; reason alone, the soul's pilot /the charioteer/, can behold it, and all true knowledge is knowledge thereof. Now even as the mind of a god is nourished by reason and knowledge, so also is it with every soul that has a care to receive her proper food; wherefore when at last she has beheld being she is well content, and contemplating truth she is nourished and prospers, until the heaven's revolution brings her back full circle. And while she is borne round she discerns justice, its very self, and likewise temperance, and knowledge, not the knowledge that is neighbor to becoming and varies with the various objects to which we commonly ascribe being, but the veritable knowledge or that which veritably is. And when she has contemplated likewise and feasted upon all else that has true being, she descends again within the heavens and comes back home. (Phaedrus 247c-e.)

However, the journey is fraught with uncertainty because the evil steed continually refuses the direction of the charioteer. Darting in and out of the realm of true being "by reason of her unruly steeds, /the soul/ sees in part, but in part sees not" (Phaedrus 248a). Much of the time, the charioteer, reason, is simply overcome in the effort and "though all are eager to reach the heights and seek to follow, they are not able"

(Phaedrus 248a). The souls which fail to contemplate true being are malnourished, and in their human incarnation, they are, to some degree, imperfect. Those which have seen the most of the truth become seekers after wisdom, philosophers, and if they are true to their calling, their souls may become strong again and return to the realm of true being. Those who have seen less of the true reality are incarnated in human beings who enjoy progressively lower stations in life, from the king who abides by law to the sophist and tyrant (who have seen the least of reality) (Phaedrus 248d-e). While all souls have beheld true being, and thus have genuine knowledge, some have had the vision "but for a moment." Hence, "few are left that can still remember much, but when these discern some likeness of things yonder, they are amazed and no longer masters of themselves" (Phaedrus 250a). Therefore, if the soul is to grow strong, the evil steed must subordinate itself to the rule of reason and must work in tandem with reason to regain the heights beyond the heavens.

The myth illustrates a number of important points about human nature. If the soul is to manage well, it must have knowledge. As Plato points out, all souls possess knowledge, but very few recall much of the journey through the realm of true being. Furthermore, even though the soul may try to remember what it learned, it is often deceived by likenesses which cause reason to lose control. Uncontrolled, appetites will rule the soul, cause it to become malnourished, and produce injustice and unhappiness within the individual. Happiness is attained only when reason is able to control appetite and the entire soul works to attain knowledge. Again, the central problem is the production of harmony within the soul so that reason and appetite do not work at cross purposes.

Many of the same ideas recur in the account of the soul in the Republic. There Plato offers his most succinct description of the parts of the soul and their attendant motivations:

> One part, we say, is that with which man learns, one is that with which he feels anger. But the third part, owing to its manifold forms, we could not easily designate by any one distinctive name, but gave it the name of its chief and strongest element, for we called it the appetitive part because of the intensity of its appetites concerned with food and drink and love and their accompaniments. . . (580d-e).

Each part of the soul seeks different ends: the rational part of the soul seeks knowledge; the spirited element, which feels anger, honor, and the like, pursues honor and fame; and, finally, the appetitive part of the soul seeks gain (581a-b). Here again Plato argues that it is the duty of reason to rule the soul (Republic 441e). When reason fails to overcome appetite, the result is injustice. Plato comments:

> Must not this /injustice/ be a kind of civil war of these three principles, their meddlesomeness and interference with one another's functions, and the revolt of one part against the whole of the soul that it may hold therein a rule which does not belong to it, since its nature is such that it befits it to serve as a slave to the ruling principle? Something of this sort, I fancy, is what we shall say, and that the confusion of these principles and their straying from their proper course is injustice and licentiousness and cowardice and brutish ignorance and, in general, turpitude (444b).

Plato compares this condition to a kind of disease within the soul, for it grows progressively weaker the more it gives in to appetite and strays from knowledge. By contrast, the just soul is one that accepts the rule of reason. For Plato, justice is nothing more than the proper ordering of the elements of the soul, with each part performing its proper function, guided by reason:

> Then when the entire soul accepts the guidance of the wisdom-loving part and is not filled with inner dissension, the result for each part is that it in all

> other respects keeps to its own task and is just, and likewise that each enjoys its own proper pleasures, and so far as such a thing is possible, the truest (Republic 586e-587a).

There is a paradox here which is thoroughly Platonic. If the soul is to fulfill its function, it must be nourished by knowledge of true being. At the same time, most souls simply are not strong enough to overcome the deceptions and likenesses of the physical world. Furthermore, it is clear that all souls would prefer knowledge, were they able to attain it. Hence Plato's problem is to find a method by which the elements of the soul can be brought into harmony so that each part of the soul can enjoy its proper function and pleasure. The method for bringing the conflicting elements of the soul into harmony is persuasion. This much is clear from the Gorgias 493a: "That part of the soul in which dwell the desires is of a nature to be swayed and to shift to and fro . . . because it can be swayed and easily persuaded. . . ." There is a similar passage at Republic 441e-442a: "Then is it not, as we said, the blending of music and gymnastics that will render them /the parts of the soul/ concordant, intensifying and fostering the one with fair words and teachings and relaxing and soothing and making gentle the other by harmony and rhythm?"[1]

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[1] Music, rhythm, and harmony were, for the Greeks, much broader studies than they are now. Music referred not only to song, but to story as well. Rhythm and harmony were essential components of all production of sound, including speech. See, for example, Republic 400d-e. For a discussion of this concept in Plato, see W. Jaeger, Paideia, Vol. 2, pp. 224-230. See also, R. Hackforth, Plato's Phaedrus (Cambridge Univ. Press, 1952), pp. 115-6. For further evidence of the importance of persuasion, see the Laws 719e-722b, 885e. These deal with the importance of persuasion in the state. However, without getting ahead of the argument, I would point out that Plato sees the state as analogous to the soul--discordant elements in the state must be subjected to the rule of reason if the state is to be just. Hence, Plato's prescription for dealing with these discordant elements is persuasion. There are similar instances in the Republic and the Statesman which will be incorporated into the argument shortly.

While reason may be unable to instruct the appetites (because they are not rational), the appetites are capable of being persuaded. Persuasion is an imitative art, that is, it deals with appearances rather than with true being. Hence persuasion is analogous to the appetites in the sense that each is concerned with the sensory world--epistemologically they operate at the same level, neither having a legitimate claim to genuine knowledge. Human beings are persuadable because they are created with conflict in their souls, conflict which must be resolved if the individual is to live happily and justly. Persuasion is possible because the parts of the soul which must be persuaded are susceptible to imitations, likenesses which are reminiscent of reality only glimpsed on the journey beyond the heavens.

Epistemological Foundations

There is a close and necessary link between ontology and epistemology in Plato because the human soul requires knowledge if the human being is to become happy and just. However, not just any sort of knowledge will do. When Plato refers to knowledge (noesis, episteme), he refers to a special kind of understanding possessed by very few human beings. For Plato, the only genuine knowledge is knowledge of the "eternal and unchanging" ideas which the soul glimpses on its journey beyond the heavens. The forms represent essence or being, "always constant and invariable, never admitting any alteration in any respect or in any sense" (Phaedo 78d). The forms are the only genuine reality (Sophist 250b-c), because they serve as models for all that is perceived through the senses (Republic 596b). Sensible objects merely resemble real being (Republic 597a), and they have no essential reality of their own because their nature is not

fixed; they come into being and pass away. Genuine knowledge engages the rational part of the soul, while the appetitive element pursues sensibles (Phaedo 65e-67a). If the soul is to remain strong, if it is to accomplish its functions, it must nurture itself on genuine knowledge.

However, while all souls seek knowledge (episteme), very few attain it. Human cognition takes place at two distinct levels, and each of those levels is divided into two sub-categories. Cognition can be broadly divided into the visible realm or the realm of appearances, and the intelligible realm, the realm of the forms (Republic 507a-511e). The visible realm is made up of images (eikasia) which include "shadows, and then reflections in water and on surfaces . . . and everything of that kind" (Republic 509e-510a) and belief (pistis) which comprises the class of empirical things, such as "animals about us and all plants and the whole class of objects made by man" (Republic 510a). Taken together the mental states of imagining (eikasia) and belief (pistis) form what is usually called doxa or, in Cornford's words, "the many conventional notions of the multitude about morality. It is the physical and moral world as apprehended by those 'lovers of appearance' who do not recognize the absolute ideas which Plato calls real."[1] When the appetitive part of the soul gains control and confines the soul to the visible realm, to "the world of becoming and passing away, it /the soul/ opines only and its edge is blunted, and it shifts its opinions hither and thither, and again seems as if it lacked reason" (Republic 508d). Most souls are confused by the multiplicity of beautiful things which imitate being, and are deceived by opinion (doxa): "Those who view many beautiful things but

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[1] F. M. Cornford, The Republic of Plato, (London: Oxford Univ. Press, 1945), p. 221.

do not see the beautiful itself and are unable to follow another's guidance to it . . . we shall say that such men have opinions about all things, but know nothing of the things they opine" (Republic 479e). The multitude, Plato says, are dominated by the appetites: wisdom is reserved for a very few (Republic 431c-d).

Opposed to the visible realm of appearance is the "intelligible" realm of the Forms (Republic 511e). The intelligible realm also has two corresponding states of mind: thinking (dianoia) and knowledge (episteme) (Republic 511b-c). The intelligible realm is composed of true reality, pure being, and "can be seen only by the mind" (Republic 510e). "Thinking" is a lower form of intellection than knowledge because in thinking, the mind does not apprehend being itself, but instead is forced "to employ assumptions in the investigation of it, not proceeding to a first principle because of its inability to extricate itself from and rise above its assumptions, and second, that it uses as images or likenesses objects that are themselves copied and adumbrated by the class below them. . ." (Republic 511a). Cornford argues that, for Plato, dianoia implies "a degree of understanding which falls short of perfect knowledge. . . ."[1] Knowledge (episteme, noesis), by contrast, refers to:

> That which reason itself lays hold of by the power of dialectic, treating its assumptions not as absolute beginnings but literally as hypotheses, underpinnings, footings, and springboards, so to speak, to enable it to rise to that which requires no assumption and is the starting point of all, and after attaining to that again taking hold of the first dependencies from it, so to proceed downward to the conclusion, making no use whatever of any object of sense, but only of pure ideas moving on through ideas to ideas and ending with ideas (Republic 511b-c).

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[1] Cornford, The Republic of Plato, p. 223.

Knowledge can be said to exist only when an individual can give an account of the essence of something (Timaeus 51d-e). As might be suspected, knowledge is considerably more difficult to attain than belief. Plato outlines some of the reasons in the Timaeus:

> The one /knowledge/ is implemented in us by instruction, the other /belief/ by persuasion; the one is always accompanied by true reason, the other is without reason; the one cannot be overcome by persuasion, but the other can; and lastly, every man may be said to share in true opinion, but mind is the attribute of the gods and of very few men (51e).[1]

The passage points to a critical distinction in Plato's theory of knowledge. All human beings may opine correctly, for all souls have journeyed through the realm of being. However, those souls cannot be said to have knowledge until they can provide a rational account of the ground for their belief. Belief, even when correct, is less useful than knowledge because it can be shaken; having no account of the reasons for belief, it is easily supplanted by false belief (Republic 506c; Theatetus 201a-c). Plato concludes in the Symposium that "holding an opinion which is in fact correct, without being able to give a reason for it, is neither true knowledge--how can it be knowledge without a reason?--nor ignorance. (202a)."

The process of acquiring knowledge is, according to Plato, long and difficult. In order to attain genuine knowledge (episteme), the soul must shift its gaze from the realm of the visible to the realm of the intelligible, from the realm of pistis to the realm of episteme. For Plato, knowledge is a process of remembering the details of the soul's journey through the realm of being. Plato has Socrates argue:

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[1] The phrase "true reason" is, in the Greek, alethes logos, or "true account of grounds."

> Thus the soul, since it is immortal and has been born many times and has seen all things both here and in the other world, has learned everything that is. So we need not be surprised if it can recall the knowledge of virtue or anything else which, as we see, it once possessed. All nature is akin, and the soul has learned everything, so that when a man has recalled a single piece of knowledge, learned it, in ordinary language--there is no reason why he should not find out all the rest, if he keeps a stout heart and does not grow weary of the search, for seeking and learning are in fact nothing but recollection.[1]

Socrates goes on to illustrate this thesis through the famous incident with the slave boy, eliciting from him knowledge which the boy had not previously possessed. But despite the fact that all souls are imprinted with knowledge, very few succeed in bringing that knowledge to consciousness.[2] The ability to recall the journey through the intelligible realm requires the proper disposition of the soul (Republic 484a-486e). Plato argues that, from birth, the philosopher must seek truth (Republic 490a):

> It was the nature of the real lover of knowledge to strive emulously for true being and that he would not linger over the many particulars that are opined to be real, but would hold on his way, and the edge of his passion would not be blunted nor would his desire fail till he came into touch with the nature of each thing in itself by that part of his soul to which it belongs to lay hold on that kind of reality --the part akin to it, namely--and through that approaching it, and consorting with reality really, he would beget intelligence and truth, attain to knowledge, and truly live and grow, and so find surcease from the travail of the soul. (Republic 490a-b).[3]

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[1] Plato, Meno, 81c-d. Trans. W. K. C. Guthrie, in Hamilton and Cairns.

[2] The slave boy episode does not demonstrate that all are capable of knowledge (as Robert Sternfeld and Harold Zyskind conclude in Plato's Meno: A Philosophy of Man as Acquisitive, (Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois Univ. Press, 1978), p. 45). All that can be concluded is that all are capable of right opinion. The slave boy cannot be said to have knowledge for he can give no account of the reasons for his beliefs. Socrates concludes after the episode that, "a man who does not know has in himself true opinions on a subject without having knowledge" (Meno 85c).

[3] This passage recalls the description of the incarnation of the soul at the Phaedrus 248c-249a. There Plato argues that the philosophic soul is implanted at birth.

This sort of disposition is found in very few citizens in any state. Plato argues that "the simple and moderate appetites which with the aid of reason and right opinion are guided by consideration you will find in few and those the best born and educated" (Republic 431c). Later Plato claims, "a nature such as we just now postulated /at Republic 490a-491a/ for the perfect philosopher is a rare growth among men and is found in only a few" (Republic 491a-b).[1] However, it is not enough merely to be well born; once the philosophic soul has taken root in the body, it must be assiduously cultivated through a lengthy process of education (Republic 535b-540d). For Plato, education is designed to bring the elements of the soul into harmony, to free the soul from its preoccupation with particulars, and finally, to direct the rational part of the soul to recollect the journey through the intelligible realm of the forms. The method for attaining such knowledge was dialectic.

Language and Epistemology

Plato defines dialectic as "the study that would draw the soul away from the world of becoming to the world of being" (Republic 521d). For Plato, there is a link between knowledge and discourse. Plato argues that thought is nothing more than a kind of discourse that is carried on within the mind. In the Theatetus, en route to an understanding of true and false judgment, Plato has Socrates describe the process of thought:

> /Thought is/ a discourse /logos/ that the mind carries on with itself about any subject it is considering. You must take this explanation as coming from an ignoramus; but I have a notion that, when the mind is thinking, it is simply

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[1] See also Republic 494a, 496b, 503b, 503d, Phaedo 69c.

> talking to itself, asking questions and answering them, and saying Yes or No. When it reaches a decision--which may come slowly or in a sudden rush --when doubt is over and the two voices affirm the same thing, then we call that its "judgment." So I should describe thinking as discourse, and judgment as a statement pronounced, not aloud to someone else, but silently to oneself (189e-190a).

This account is repeated at the Sophist 263e: "Thinking /dianoia/ and discourse /logos/ are the same thing, except what we call thinking is, precisely the inward dialogue carried on by the mind itself and spoken without sound." Dialectic is a kind of spoken thought, conversation which proceeds through question and answer to provide "an exact account of the essence of each thing" (Republic 534b). Dialectic takes nothing for granted, it examines all assumptions in an attempt to discover the nature of being (Republic 511b-c). Ultimately, the aim of dialectic is:

> Dividing according to Kinds, not taking the same Form for a different one or a different one for the same. . . . And the man who can do that discerns clearly one Form everywhere extended throughout many, where each one lies apart, and many Forms, different from one another, embraced from without by one Form; and again one Form connected in a unity through many wholes, and many Forms, entirely marked off apart. That means knowing how to distinguish Kind by Kind, in what ways the several Kinds can or can not combine (Sophist 253d-e).

Thus the dialectician has the power to define according to type (Cratylus 388b-389d; Philebus 59c; Republic 532a-b) as well as to discern the interconnections between Forms (Republic 537c).[1] Dialectic makes philosophy possible by allowing human beings to investigate the intelligible directly. There is a passage in the Statesman which is helpful in illustrating this point. The Athenian Stranger is talking to the Young Socrates about the method of philosophy, the art of collection and division (dialectic). He

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[1] See also Phaedrus 265d-266a.

is attempting to show that the dialectical method is a method applicable to many or all philosophical problems and not just the particular problem at hand, the definition of the art of weaving. He asks Socrates, "Is our chief purpose to find the statesman, or have we the larger aim of becoming better philosophers, more able to tackle all questions?" (285d) to which Socrates naturally replies that "we aim to solve all problems." The Stranger then proceeds to explain dialectic in detail:

> Exactly, for I cannot think that any reasonable person would want to trace down the definition of the art of weaving just for its own sake. But there is a paradox here which, it seems to me, most thinkers have failed to notice. Likenesses which the senses can grasp are available in nature to those real existents which are in themselves easy to understand, so that when someone asks for an account of these existents one has no trouble at all--one can simply indicate the sensible likeness and dispense with any account in words. But to the highest and most important class of existents there are no corresponding visible resemblances, no work of nature clear for all to look upon. In these cases, nothing visible can be pointed out to satisfy the inquiring mind; the instructor cannot cause the inquirer to perceive something with one or other of his senses and so make him really satisfied that he understands the thing under discussion. Therefore, we must train ourselves to give and to understand a rational account of every existent thing. For the existents which have no visible embodiment, the existents which are of the highest value and chief importance, are demonstrable only by reason and are not to be apprehended by any other means (285d-286a, emphasis mine).

Dialectic makes possible the whole art of philosophy; its rational account provides a method by which the soul can study essence itself. It is for this reason that Plato argues in the Sophist that, "To rob us of discourse /logos/ would be to rob us of philosophy" (260a).

For Plato, dialectic also assumes a teaching function. It is central to his concept of learning as anamnesis, in which the mind recalls knowledge that was implanted in the journey of the soul beyond the heavens.

The relationship is illustrated in the Meno (82b-86b) as Socrates elicits the answer to a relatively sophisticated problem in geometry from an uneducated slave boy. Dialectic is never treated systematically by Plato and references to the art are scattered throughout the dialogues. Yet a number of generalizations are possible: it is a linguistic art that attempts to provide a rational account of being; it is the foundation of all other studies for it proceeds without assumptions and seeks to verify all premises; it is the method for discerning differences and interconnections between things; and, it is Plato's method for teaching. Dialectic seeks, through questions and answers, to understand essence, to point the soul toward the rational. McKeon concludes:

> These characterizations of dialectic are not mutually inconsistent or successive stages of Plato's view of dialectic; they are, rather, dialectical phases of the use of a single method. Dialectic simultaneously defines terms, clarifies minds, and discovers truths about things: it occurs in ordinary discussion; it is the method of any science that treats the nature of things; it is the supreme science which lays the foundations of arts and sciences in being.[1]

The role of dialectic makes language central to Platonic epistemology.

Language derives much of its power from Plato's notion that, properly conceived, names imitate the properties of the thing they name. There are numerous passages in the dialogues which indicate that names should imitate their nominates. In the Timaeus, for example, Plato has Timaeus assert:

> And in speaking of the copy and the original we may assume that words are akin to the matter which they describe;

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[1] Richard McKeon, "Dialectic and Political Thought and Action," Ethics 65 (October 1954), p. 4. For other treatments of Plato's concept of dialectic, see F. M. Cornford, Plato's Theory of Knowledge, (New York: Liberal Arts Press, 1957), pp. 262-279; and Julius Stenzel, Plato's Method of Dialectic, trans. D. J. Allen, (London: Oxford Univ. Press, 1940).

> when they relate to the lasting and the permanent and intelligible, they ought to be lasting and unalterable, and, as far as their nature allows, irrefutable and invincible--nothing less. But when they express only their copy or likeness and not the eternal things themselves, they need only be likely and analogous to the former word (29b-c).[1]

It is important to note that this passage amounts to a prescription for the use of language. Plato believes that there are true, proper names for things which partake of the essence of that which they name. At the Republic 596a, Plato remarks: "we are accustomed to assume a single form (or character) for every set of things to which we apply the same name."[2] There is a similar passage in the Phaedo: "the name of the form is eternally applicable not only to the form itself, but also to something else, which is not the form but invariably possesses its distinguishing characteristic" (103a). In his analysis of the Theatetus, Cornford argues that "the conclusion Plato means us to draw is this: unless we recognize some class of knowable entities exempt from the Heraclitean flux and so capable of standing as the fixed meaning of words, no definition of knowledge can be any more true than its contradictory. . . . Without the forms, as Parmenides said, there can be no discourse."[3] Plato does not consider

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[1] Cornford translates these lines differently: "Concerning a likeness, then, and its model we must make this distinction: an account is of the same order as the things which it sets forth--an account of that which is abiding and unchangeable (so far as it is possible and it lies in the nature of an account to be incontrovertible and irrefutable, there must be falling no short of that); while an account of what is made in the image of that other, but is only a likeness will itself be but likely, standing to accounts of the former kind in a proportion: as reality is to becoming, so is truth to belief." Plato's Cosmology, (New York: Liberal Arts Press, 1957), p. 23. I believe the same conclusions are implicit in the Cornford translation.

[2] Cornford trans.

[3] Plato's Theory of Knowledge, p. 99.

the name to be identical with the thing; however, it is evident that Plato believes that the name should be a close likeness of the thing, sharing in the essence of the thing named. Thus for Plato, names are "correct" if they closely resemble the thing they name, and incorrect if they fail to do so. Richard McKeon argues much the same point:

> From letters and syllables, the lawgiver forms a sign and a name for each thing; and from names he compounds all the rest by imitation. When the nature of things is imitated by letters and syllables, the copy is good if it gives all that is appropriate, bad if it omits a little. . . .
> . . . . . .
> Discourse concerning the abiding and unshakeable should be, as far as possible, irrefutable and invincible; but accounts of that which is copied after the likeness of the model are themselves copies and possess only likelihood, for as Being is to Becoming, Truth is to Belief.[1]

When names imitate well, they point to the intelligible, when they imitate poorly, they point to the visible realm of appearance. The best, and most appropriate names, are names which are "likenesses" (eikons) of the things they name.[2]

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[1] Richard McKeon, "Literary Criticism and the Concept of Imitation in Antiquity," Modern Philology 34 (August 1936), pp. 8, 14. Plato distinguishes two types of imitation. That which Plato calls a "likeness" (eikon) "consists of a copy that conforms to the proportions of the original in all three dimensions" and gives "the proper colour to every part" (Sophist 235d). Names should be imitations of this type. Too often, however, names are imitations of the second sort, mere semblances (phantasma) "which only appears to be a likeness, but is not really so" (Sophist 236b).

[2] I believe this to be the point of the Cratylus, although interpretations of the dialogue vary. In the dialogue, Plato is attempting to refute the doctrine of Cratylus, that all names are properly given and, therefore, the nature of reality can be discovered from the study of names. It seems evident that Plato was concerned with the state of language as he found it. As handed down, language contained both correct and incorrect names. At 439c, Socrates assumes that the original name givers attempted to make names in the image of things, but were mistaken about the nature of reality, and, as a result, named incorrectly. Thus Socrates holds that one cannot discover the nature of being through the study of names. However, at the same time, Socrates seems to argue that, as far as possible, names

This, in turn, points to another of the functions of dialectic. Plato believed that names were able to influence an individual's perception of the world; language itself could orient its users to accept a particular set of beliefs about reality. Plato develops this position as an adjunct to the main argument of the Cratylus. At 411b-c, during a passage which attempts to arrive at some understanding of the etymology of names, Socrates is suddenly struck with a notion:

> I believe that the primeval givers of names were undoubtedly like too many of our modern philosophers who, in their search after the nature of things, are always getting dizzy from constantly going round and round and moving in all directions. And this appearance, which arises out of their own internal condition, they suppose to be the reality of nature; they think there is nothing stable or permanent, but only flux and motion, and that the world is always full of every sort of motion and change.

This idea is repeated later in the dialogue in the discussion with Cratylus who contends that all the received names have been correctly given. Socrates forces Cratylus to agree that the intelligible is permanent and unchanging while showing that the received language indicates that things

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[2] should imitate the things they name. At 435c, Socrates argues: "I quite agree with you that words should as far as possible resemble things, but I fear that this dragging in of resemblance, as Hermogenes says, is a shabby thing, which has to be supplemented by the mechanical aid of convention with a view to correctness. For I believe that if we could always, or almost always, use likenesses, which are perfectly appropriate, this would be the most perfect state of language, as the opposite is the most imperfect." Plato argues that a reformed language will still not allow the study of being (Cratylus 439a-b) because names are only likenesses of the things they name: it is far better, Plato argues, to study the things themselves. Even so, if language is to be free of deception, it is essential that names properly imitate being. For concurring views, see Raphael Demos, The Philosophy of Plato, (New York: Octagon Books, 1966); Raphael Demos, "Plato's Philosophy of Language," The Journal of Philosophy LXI (October 1964), pp. 595-610; and Gail Fine, "Plato on Naming," The Philosophical Quarterly 27 (October 1977), pp. 289-301. For opposing views, see J. L. Ackrill, "Demos on Plato," The Journal of Philosophy LXI (October 1964), pp. 610-613; and Richard Robinson, Essays in Greek Philosophy, (London: Oxford Univ. Press, 1969), chs. 2-3.

are always in flux and motion. Plato has Socrates comment, "Were we not saying that all things are in motion and progress and flux, and that this idea of motion is expressed by names?" (436e). Socrates is then able to argue that names are the source of the confusion about the nature of reality. At 439c, Socrates says:

> There is another point. I should not like to be imposed upon by the appearance of such a multitude of names, all tending in the same direction. I myself do not deny that the givers of names did really give them under the idea that all things were in motion and flux, which was their sincere but, I think, mistaken opinion. And having fallen into a kind of whirlpool themselves, they are carried round, and want to drag us in after them.

According to Plato, language creates a world view that ensnares its users. And to the extent that language does shape reality for its users, it has enormous power to influence. Therefore, Plato argues that dialectic be employed in order to make sure that names properly imitate the things they name. Plato notes:

> Then, as to names, ought not our legislator also to know how to put the true natural name of each thing into sounds and syllables, and to make and give all names with a view to the ideal name, if he is to be a namer in any true sense? . . . And who will be best able to direct the legislator in his work, and will know whether the work is well done, in this or any other country? Will not the user be the man? . . . And this is he who knows how to ask questions? . . . And how to answer them? . . . And him who knows how to ask and answer you would call a dialectician? . . . And the work of the legislator is to give names, and the dialectician must be his director if the names are to be rightly given (Cratylus 389d-390d).

The only genuine knowledge is, for Plato, knowledge of the intelligible forms. They are the only existents which can properly be judged as "true" because they are not subject to change (Republic 490b, 585b). Thus, truth is not judged according to correspondence with external reality. The only standard against which truth can be measured is the intelligible

form. This makes possible a distinction between falsehood in words and "essential falsehood" or falsehood in the soul (Republic 382c). Plato says that "the presence of falsehood in the soul concerning reality . . . is abhorred above everything" (Republic 382b)[1] because the soul itself is nourished on true being (Phaedrus 247d). However, falsehood in words is "only the embodiment or image of the previous condition of the soul, not pure unadulterated falsity" (Republic 382b).[2] Therefore, Plato concludes that spoken falsehood is not always hateful; it is, in fact, sometimes necessary to avoid essential falsehood within the soul (Republic 459c-d). The ability to correctly employ falsehood in words depends on knowledge of the intelligible, and is therefore reserved for those who have such knowledge (Republic 389b).

The relationship between language, knowledge, and truth is very complex in Plato. Knowledge of being is necessary to nurture the soul and to produce happiness and justice within the individual. However, the attainment of such knowledge depends on the proper disposition of the soul, the ability to discipline the appetites, and the ability to look beyond the spell cast by appearances to the intelligible. And, as Plato often comments, such achievements are beyond the capacity of most human beings. If so, it means that most human beings are condemned to live in ignorance, injustice, and at odds with truth. This problem leads to one of the central concerns in Plato: how can this human fallibility be overcome or ameliorated?

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[1] Cornford translation.

[2] Cornford translation.

Plato's answer to this dilemma is that if the individual is unable to control the appetites within her or his soul, then the state must undertake the responsibility. The state has a compelling interest in the welfare of the individual soul because Plato recognizes a fundamental identity between the health of the individual soul and the health of the state. The state is simply a larger version of the individual soul, complete with the same elements (parts) and motivations. In the Republic, for example, Plato argues that the search for justice in the state can best be conducted through a close examination of "the individual man" (Republic 434e). Thereafter, Plato concludes, "Is it not, then, impossible for us to avoid admitting this much, that the same forms and qualities are to be found in each one of us that are in the state?" (Republic 435e). At Republic 441a, Plato makes the link even more explicit: "Just as in the city there were three existing kinds that composed its structure, the money-makers, the helpers, the counselors, so also in the soul does there exist a third kind, this principle of high spirit, which is the helper of reason by nature unless it is corrupted by evil nurture?" Plato concludes, "Just too, then, Glaucon, I presume we shall say a man is in the same way in which a city was just" (Republic 441d). And, at the Republic 580, Plato argues: "Corresponding to the three types in the city, the soul is also tripartite. . . . The three parts have also, it appears to me, three kinds of pleasure, one peculiar to each, and similarly three appetites and controls." G. M. A. Grube concludes:

> He /Plato/ has already established /in the Republic/ three classes in the state and, since goodness in the individual is the same as in the state, he concludes that there must also be three parts of the soul. This parallel is not mere analogy to Plato, for he was deeply

> convinced of the close connexion between social and individual psychology.[1]

This relationship between the soul and the state indicates that there can be no distinction between individual and social welfare. What is good for the individual will be good for the state, and what is good for the state will be good for the individual. Justice and happiness in the individual occur, according to Plato, when the soul is ruled by reason and contemplates "the good itself" which Plato argues is central to all knowledge: "The objects of knowledge /the eternal forms/ not only receive from the presence of the good their being known, but their very existence and essence is derived to them from it, although the good itself is not essence but still transcends essence in its dignity and surpassing power" (Republic 509b).[2] The soul and the city are just in the same way, hence justice in the state will depend on a proper ordering of the elements of the state: it must be guided by reason and contemplate the good.

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[1] Plato's Thought, (London: Methuen, 1935), p. 130.

[2] Plato never really defines the "idea of the good." When introduced, the concept is described in such vague and general terms that Glaucon is led to remark, "Heaven save us, hyperbole can no further go" (Republic 509c). Perhaps the clearest explanation of Plato's concept has been formulated by Paul Shorey:

> In practice it is enough for the ordinary man to be "good" and to possess a working formula or definition of the virtues. But a philosopher must give a reason why it is "good" or desirable to be brave, chaste, etc. Such a reason rests ultimately on some final conception of the summum bonum--as pleasure, the development of character, utility, the realization of the will of God, or the survival of the fittest. Plato's doctrine of the idea of the good, then, is the affirmation that a philosophic statesman must (1) possess such a conception; (2) be able to prove, define, and defend it against all assailants; and (3) systematically and consistently deduce from it all his ethical teaching and political practice. . . . The idea of the good is . . . a regulative ideal for the construction of ethics, politics, and social science. (What Plato Said, p. 230.)

In order that the state be guided by reason, Plato argues that the philosopher must govern the state:

> Unless . . . either philosophers become kings in our states or those whom we now call our kings and rulers take to the pursuit of philosophy seriously and adequately, and there is a conjunction of these two things, political power and philosophical intelligence, while the motley horde of the natures who at present pursue either apart from the other are compulsorily excluded, there can be no cessation of troubles, dear Glaucon, for our states, nor, I fancy, for the human race either (Republic 473c-e).

The task of the philosopher is to govern the state according to the dictates of the intelligible, to bring the ambitious and appetitive elements of the state under the rule of reason. Plato says that the first task of the philosopher-king will be to "take the city and the characters of men, as they might a tablet, and wipe it clean--no easy task" (Republic 501a). Having accomplished that, the philosopher will attempt to make over the city (and the individuals who inhabit it) after the dictates of the intelligible realm of being with an eye to the good (Republic 501b). Just as reason makes harmonious the soul of the philosopher, the philosopher-king, through her or his power of reason, will make harmonious the elements in the state that will produce justice and happiness in the city and in the individual.

Justice within the state depends on a state composed of just individuals. However, most individuals are incapable of achieving the knowledge of being necessary to produce justice. R. K. Sprague has argued that, for Plato, good comes only from contact with the good and if there can be no direct contact, "then the contact may be indirect (as when the auxiliaries and artisans consent to be governed by the philosopher). . . ."[1]

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[1] Plato's Philosopher King, (Columbia, SC: Univ. of South Carolina Press, 1976), p. 93.

For the purposes of everyday behavior, true opinion is all that is necessary to guide the conduct of the multitude properly (Meno 97a-c). For those incapable of knowledge, persons whose cognition is limited to imitations, Plato makes sure that the imitations they respond to are "likenesses" (eikons) so that the opinions of the multitude are "correct." It is important that the multitude act as if they had knowledge, for when appetite or ambition come to rule the soul, "the result for it is that it does not find its own proper pleasure and constrains the others /other parts of the soul/ to pursue an alien pleasure and not the true" (Republic 587a).

Rhetoric is the instrument employed by the philosopher in her or his attempt to make over the polis and its citizens (Statesman 304). Because most citizens are incapable of achieving knowledge of the intelligible forms, the philosopher must persuade the common citizen to believe and to act as if he or she possessed knowledge (Laws 660a, 664a). Rhetoric is an imitative art (Gorgias 464b-465c) which produces opinion rather than knowledge. However, when rhetoric imitates being, that is, when it is used by the philosopher with knowledge of the intelligible, it should be used to produce "the conviction that would be most beneficial to a city" (Laws 664a). Because imitation (mimesis) appeals to the nonrational parts of the soul (Republic 604d), it is capable of reaching all human beings, and while all citizens are not capable of responding to reason, all can respond to imitation through rhetoric.[1] Hence, while rhetoric is not a

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[1] Plato believes that imitation (mimesis) has considerable power to influence human action. His critique of the poets in the Republic and the Laws is based on the assumption that the work of the poets tends to destroy the rational part of the soul while stimulating the irrational part (Republic 605b). Nevertheless, Plato does not condemn all imitation, but only that which tends to misrepresent the nature of the intelligible Forms. It is

method for discovering the nature of being, when properly employed, it can persuade individuals to act as if they had such knowledge. In brief, the aim of rhetoric is the production of the healthy soul by persuading the undisciplined soul to pursue its own proper pleasure (Phaedrus 270b). It follows, then, that the aim of rhetoric is the elimination of essential falsehood--falsehood in the soul: "To have been deceived and to be blindly ignorant /about realities/ and to have and hold the falsehood there /in the soul/, is what all men would least of all accept, and it is in that case that they loathe it most of all" (Republic 382b). It is important to recall Plato's distinction between essential falsehood and falsehood in words: the only standard against which rhetorical truth can be judged is, for Plato, the condition of the soul. Falsehood in words is not to be condemned if it produces truth in the soul (Republic 382c-d). This standard for truth produces a theory of rhetoric substantially different than those of Plato's contemporaries. Rhetoric, like everything else in the state, is constrained to produce justice in the soul. In Chapter III, I shall examine the kind of rhetoric that such constraints have produced.

Summary

Plato's ontology, epistemology, and axiology function to constrain his theory of rhetoric. Because only dialectic can initiate the process

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[1] precisely because imitation has such power to influence (for either good or evil) that Plato comments that the guardians, for example, should imitate "what is appropriate to them" (Republic 395c). Plato notes that human responses to imitations become almost "habitual" (Republic 395d) and seeks to insure that these types of responses are proper. Thus, for Plato, imitation becomes a powerful instrument for social control. For a discussion of the power of imitation, see Richard McKeon, "Literary Criticism and the Concept of Imitation in Antiquity." For a discussion of imitation and its relationship to rhetoric, see ch. 3.

of recognition which culminates in knowledge, rhetoric has no epistemic function for the philosopher, at least not in the traditional sense. For Aristotle, rhetoric was a method for understanding the probable and, thus, was accorded some status as a way of knowing. Plato utterly rejects this view, holding that opinion about the probable is no knowledge at all. Plato holds that most citizens are incapable of knowledge and are confined to opinion, true or false. For these people, rhetoric can take an active role in directing their choices to conform to what is right and correct.

If rhetoric is used in support of the good, that is, to lead to justice (dike) the masses will have indirect contact with the intelligible, and justice and happiness will prevail in the state and the individual. Unlike Aristotle, Plato demands that rhetoric be used in service of an a priori epistemology. Rhetoric is not indifferent to its conclusions, it is obliged to uphold a particular concept of justice. When rhetoric is used without knowledge of the intelligible, social order becomes fragmented. Aristotle's judgment that rhetoric may be employed skilfully in support of an unjust cause is completely foreign to Plato. The methods of persuasion cannot be divorced from the content of the persuasive message.

Finally, because the correct use of language is so important to knowledge, the use of rhetoric is rigidly controlled. Unlike Aristotle, who argues that all men may use rhetoric, Plato restricts its practice to those capable of using rhetoric properly. The correct use of rhetoric depends upon a prior understanding of the intelligible realm. For Plato, it is not enough for the rhetorician to know most of the facts. Rather, the rhetorician must have a comprehensive understanding of the intelligible before rhetoric can be used without creating more harm than good.

I have attempted to illustrate how Plato's assumptions about humanity, knowledge, and ethics work to shape his theory of rhetoric. These assumptions have produced the outlines of a rhetorical theory that is substantially different than the theory articulated by Aristotle. The differences between Aristotelian and Platonic rhetorical theory become most apparent after an analysis of Plato's uses for rhetoric in the polis. For that reason, I shall devote chapter III to a more thorough exploration of Plato's axiology and its implications for rhetoric.

Chapter III

Plato's Theory of Rhetoric

Plato's philosophy and especially his assumptions about human nature and knowledge led him to perceive a split between the real world of sensation and the ideal world apprehended through intellection. For Plato, the real world was morally and physically degenerate, and becoming more so, to the detriment of both the individual and society. Plato's solution was to make over the real world, to make it conform to the perfect order embodied in the intelligible forms. Plato believed that this ambition would require a fundamental reordering of society: the best citizens would have to be selected, educated, and trained to govern the multitude. The best of these "guardians" would become "statesmen" or philosopher-kings and would, with their knowledge of the intelligible forms (episteme), be charged with the duty to control cultural activities, rewrite the laws, direct choices about occupations, marriage, and matters of taste, educate the multitude (or control the multitude) to make proper choices, in short, to guarantee that everything in society contributed to the perfection of the state. Within this framework, Plato's ontology, epistemology, and axiology delimit for rhetoric an important, but restricted role in the dissemination of knowledge about the intelligible. Rhetoric is useful because knowledge of the intelligible is necessary to both individual happiness and social justice. For those without such knowledge, rhetoric can trigger within the soul the latent memory of the soul's journey through the world of the forms. Even where such memories are so submerged that

they are all but forgotten, rhetoric may persuade citizens to act as if they had such knowledge, which, for Plato's purposes, was sufficient for the multitude. These precepts form the boundaries of Plato's theory of rhetoric. In this chapter, I hope to arrive at a more complete description of the norms of Platonic rhetoric. It is here, in his axiology, that Plato departs most significantly from the canons of traditional rhetorical theory.

Definition of Rhetoric

While there are frequent references to rhetoric throughout the dialogues, Plato defines the term only twice. The first instance occurs in the Gorgias, and the passage is responsible for much of the confusion about Plato's theory of rhetoric. When questioned by Polus about his understanding of rhetoric, Socrates responds:

> the activity as a whole, it seems to me, is not an art /techikon/ but the occupation of a shrewd and enterprising spirit, and of one naturally skilled in its dealings with men, and in sum and substance I call it "flattery" /kolakeian/. Now it seems to me that there are many other parts of this activity, one of which is cookery. This is considered an art, but in my judgment is no art, only a routine and a knack. And rhetoric I call another part of this general activity, and beautification and sophistic--four parts with four distinct objects. . . . To the pair, body and soul, there correspond two arts--that concerned with the soul I call the political art; to the single art that relates to the body I cannot give a name offhand. But this single art that cares for the body comprises two parts, gymnastics and medicine, and in the political art what corresponds to gymnastics is legislation, while the counterpart of medicine is justice. Now in each case the two arts encroach upon each other since their fields are the same, medicine upon gymnastics, and justice upon legislation; nevertheless there is a difference between them. There are then these four arts which always minister to what is best, one pair for the body, the other for the soul. But flattery perceiving this--I do not say by knowledge but by

> conjecture--has divided herself into the guise of each of these parts, pretends to be that which she impersonates. And having no thought for what is best, she regularly uses pleasure as a bait to catch folly and deceives it into believing that she is of supreme worth. Thus it is that cookery has impersonated medicine and pretends to know the best foods for the body, so that, if a cook and a doctor had to contend in the presence of children or of men as senseless as children, which of the two, doctor or cook, was an expert in wholesome and bad food, the doctor would starve to death. This then I call a form of flattery, and I claim that this kind of thing is bad--I am now addressing you, Polus--because it aims at what is pleasant, ignoring the good, and I insist that it is not an art but a routine, because it can produce no principle in virtue of which it offers what it does, nor explain the nature thereof, and consequently is unable to point to the cause of each thing it offers. And I refuse the name of art to anything irrational. . . . To be brief then, I will express myself in the language of geometricians--for by now perhaps you may follow me. Sophistic is to legislation what beautification is to gymnastics, and rhetoric to justice what cookery is to medicine (463a-465c).

In this passage, Plato condemns rhetoric as it was practiced in the polis by Gorgias and his contemporaries, i.e., rhetoric that is based on sensation and is irrational because it can deliver no account of its methods or its effects. To this sort of rhetoric Plato denies the name "art" (techne). What is condemned at 465a is rhetoric as "empeiria" ("practice without knowledge of principles"). Dodds comments, "A techne differs from an empeiria in that it is based on a rational principle (logos), and can thus explain its procedure in every case."[1] The distinction between techne and empeiria is enough for Plato to condemn rhetoric as it was practiced; yet, at the same time, it suggests the possibility for

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[1] Plato, Gorgias, text and commentary by E. R. Dodds, (London: Oxford Univ. Press, 1959), pp. 228-9.

a techne of rhetoric which rises above a routine or a knack.[1] As is customary with Plato, the textual evidence is confusing and contradictory making it difficult to arrive at a definite conclusion. Yet there are two passages in the Gorgias which suggest that an "art" of rhetoric is a theoretical possibility. The first passage occurs at the Gorgias 503a-504d. There Plato suggests the possibility for a rhetoric that "is something fine--an effort to perfect as far as possible the souls of the citizens" (503a) and argues that the genuine rhetor, "the good and true artist, will bring to bear upon our souls the words he utters . . . his mind always occupied with one thought, how justice may be implanted in the souls of the citizens and injustice banished" (504d). But as Socrates describes this rhetoric, he concludes that no one has "ever seen a rhetoric of this kind" (503a). All that one can conclude from this passage is that rhetoric, like the state, had to be reformed before it could legitimately be practiced. Commentaries seem to support this interpretation. Thompson comments:

> A true political rhetoric, it is urged, must follow the analogy of other arts. It must have a definite object, and select its means and instruments intelligently and with an eye to that object. The craftsman . . . seeks to fashion his materials according to a particular type or form; and his work is done when he has so marshalled the parts that they constitute an orderly and consistent whole. In this order, when realized, consists the excellence of the work. In

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[1] Based on the line at 462e8, Dodds comments that the phrase, "'what I am going to describe', is the predicate. Plato leaves open the possibility (later developed in the Phaedrus) that there might be a kind of rhetoric to which his strictures do not apply" (p. 224). Of the lines at 463a ("Well then, Gorgias, the activity as a whole. . . ."), Dodds writes, "This sentence defines the whole of which rhetoric forms a part (not rhetoric itself, as Helmbold takes it). It is a 'pursuit which is not scientific. . . .'" (pp. 224-225). This is consistent with the distinction between rhetoric as empeiria and rhetoric as techne.

> the human body such order or excellence is called health; in the soul it is virtue. But the soul is the matter on which the rhetorical statesman operates: for rhetoric, as defined in the Phaedrus is a psychogogia dia logon /"winning of the soul through discourse," Phaedrus 261a/, and the art of Politic has already been pronounced to be a therepeia psyches /care for the soul/, sup. 464B. It is therefore the business of the rhetor or statesman (for the present purposes the two being identical) to make his hearers sober, just, and generally virtuous; and that not only by direct encouragement, but by the restraints of law.[1]

Dodds argues that in this passage,

> Socrates begins to develop the positive side of his moral and social doctrine, making use of the analogy between physical and moral health which was worked out at 477e-479e. The statesman must have a 'doctor's mandate' . . ., and must use it ruthlessly to restore the health of a sick society (such as that of Athens). We may see here the first indication of the authoritarian strain in Plato's thinking which was to find fuller expression in the Republic, and which grew on him with advancing years, culminating in the elaborate proposals of the Laws for 'conditioning' the masses.[2]

Commenting on 504d5, Dodds concludes,

> Socrates appears to contradict his earlier denial that rhetoric is a techne. But he is now contrasting the actual with the ideal, politics as it is with what politics might become if politicians were philosophers. Those who see the Phaedrus a 'correction' of the uncompromising views expressed in the Gorgias (Pohlenz 343) or 'a new stage in Plato's developing attitude to rhetoric' (Jaeger, Paideia, iii. 185) seem to overlook the present passage. The two dialogues certainly differ widely in emotional tone, but the implication of both is that the only true rhetor is Socrates himself.[3]

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[1] The Gorgias of Plato, text and notes by W. H. Thompson, (London: Whittaker, 1871; rpt. New York: Arno Press, 1973), p. 124.

[2] Dodds, p. 328.

[3] Dodds, p. 330. The suggestion that Socrates is the only true rhetor is also made by Alcibiades in his speech which concludes the Symposium (215e-216a; 222a). The notion that there may be only one practitioner of the

I infer that in the Gorgias Plato means to distinguish between rhetoric as empeiria, an irrational knack exemplified in fourth century practice, and rhetoric as techne, an art which at this point is entirely theoretical, whose practice has yet to be realized. This seems to me to be the only explanation which can unify the many contradictory passages in the text. This explanation gains plausibility when viewed against the conclusion of the Gorgias: Plato closes the dialogue with the admonition that rhetoric, and all the other arts, should be employed in the interests of justice (527c). Hence, it is my view that, in the Gorgias, Plato distinguishes between rhetoric as knack and rhetoric as art, although there is no systematic exploration of the nature of the "art" of rhetoric.

In the Phaedrus, Plato undertakes the systematic redefinition of rhetoric; he dismisses the practice of his contemporaries as a "knack that has nothing to do with art" (Phaedrus 260e) and in its stead offers his definition of the legitimate art (techne) of rhetoric. At 261a-b, Socrates asks Phaedrus:

> Must not the art of rhetoric /rhetorike/, taken as a whole, be a kind of influencing of the mind by means of words, not only in courts of law and other public gatherings, but in private places also? And must it not be the same art that is concerned with great issues and small, its right employment commanding no less respect when dealing with important matters than with unimportant? Is that what you have been told about it?

Phaedrus answers that, indeed, this is not what he has been told about rhetoric. Socrates' definition of the term extends rhetoric far beyond

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[3] techne of rhetoric is consistent with the ideas that I will develop later in this chapter. The "art" of rhetoric will come to depend on philosophical knowledge (episteme) and it is clear from the Republic that very few individuals possess such knowledge. Hence the number of rhetors is likely to be correspondingly few.

its traditional habitat in the law courts to the entire domain of influential discourse (261b). Socrates concludes:

> So contending with words /antilogike/ is a practice found not only in lawsuits and public harangues but, it seems, wherever men speak we find this single art, which enables people to make out everything to be like everything else, within the limits of possible comparison, and to expose the corresponding attempts of others who disguise what they are doing (261d-e).

W. H. Thompson, in his commentary to the Phaedrus, explains this passage as follows:

> The art of controversy is therefore not confined to oratory forensic or popular, but, so far as appears, it must be an art, if art it really is, applicable to all kinds of discourse without exception--an art capable of making any thing appear like any thing else within the limits of possibility, also of exposing every attempt on the part of an adversary to perform the same feat without detection. Socr. /sic/ proceeds to argue that a man who has this power must know whether one thing is like another or not: that in order to impose on others and to detect imposition in them, he must himself be undeceived. A science of truth is consequently implied in the science of seeming.[1]

There are a number of important points about rhetoric contained in these passages. First, rhetoric is persuasion, psychagogia, a method of influencing the soul by words. This definition is consistent with the view of rhetoric that emerges from the Gorgias. Rhetoric is an imitative art, the art of "seeming", which functions in the visible realm. The "knack" of rhetoric functions without knowledge of the intelligible, without knowledge of proper names, and, consequently, its representations of the intelligible are inaccurate and produce injustice within the soul and discord in the state. The art of rhetoric, by contrast, depends on knowledge

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[1] The Phaedrus of Plato, text and notes by W. H. Thompson, (London: Whittaker, 1868; rpt. New York: Arno Press, 1973), p. 97.

of the truth (Phaedrus 262a), knowledge of proper names (Phaedrus 263b), and functions to produce harmony in the soul and order in the state (Gorgias 504c).[1] Second, the scope of rhetoric, as described in the Phaedrus, is extremely broad, covering all attempts to influence through words. Hackforth confirms this view in his notes on the Phaedrus: "Rhetoric is at bottom persuasion, and persuasion is generically the same whatever be the mode of its expression, oral or written, poetry or prose."[2] For Plato, rhetoric encompasses most attempts to influence through language and, in this respect, he differs from conventional theorists. In the Republic, even musike would seem to come, at times, under the purview of rhetoric insofar as it is concerned with the development of tales designed to influence children.[3]

Rhetoric, for Plato, includes most persuasive discourse. In equating rhetoric and persuasion, Plato does not depart significantly from the wisdom of his contemporaries. However, in the scope and influence Plato assigns rhetoric, he goes far beyond the theory of his day. Furthermore, Plato believed that rhetoric as it was conventionally practiced was an illegitimate knack which harmed both its practitioners and its audiences. He recognized the pervasive force of this knack and was impelled to control it. In place of the illegitimate rhetoric, he sought to develop an

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[1] It is important to note that the "art" of rhetoric produces different effects than the semblance of an art--a legitimate art of rhetoric will result in lasting and harmonious effects within the soul (Gorgias 504c; Thompson, Gorgias, p. 125). Thus the art of rhetoric differs from the knack in attitude, methods, and effects.

[2] R. Hackforth, Plato's Phaedrus, (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1952), pp. 115-116.

[3] Republic 376e-377a; Laws 643c-d; 661c. For an explanation of the Greek use of the term "musike" see chapter 2.

"art" of rhetoric that was to be employed to further his own concept of individual and social welfare.

Norms of Use

Plato's reform of rhetoric goes hand in hand with his reform of society. It is part of a general reform of culture which is designed to order the world of sense after the intelligible order, the perfect order, expressed in the Forms. In the Republic and the Laws, for example, Plato proposes a general reform of culture and his reforms of rhetoric are part of that larger effort. Hence, Plato places limits on the use of rhetoric so that its practice will conform to the requirements for an art. These limitations have the force of law and are designed to prevent the abuse of the art.[1] Plato places two limitations on the use of rhetoric. First, Plato restricts the use of rhetoric to those who have knowledge of the intelligible (episteme) (Phaedrus 273d-e). For Plato, that knowledge depended upon the use of dialectic, which is the method by which the philosopher acquires knowledge of likenesses and comes to know the intelligible forms and the nature of the soul. Furthermore, because dialectic has the power to distinguish by types, it has the power to distinguish proper from improper names (Cratylus 389d-390d). Dialectic is also prior to diction for it is the method by which proper names are discovered. The necessity for a dialectic prior to rhetoric is discussed at length in the Phaedrus. In speaking of the constituents necessary for a scientific art of rhetoric, Plato argues that dialectic "confers the power to

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[1] See, for example, the language at the Republic 377c; 389d; 391d; 392a.

speak and to think" (Phaedrus 266b) and he has Socrates chastise the rhetoricians of his day for their failure to employ dialectic.[1] This defect apparently caused Lysias to make his unfortunate remarks about Love (266c).

Plato argues that the words must be employed univocally--the objects of the intelligible have proper names which must be employed in correct fashion (Philebus 59a-d; Laws 895d-896a). This point is also developed in the Phaedrus:

> there are some words about which we all agree, and others about which we are at variance. . . . When someone utters the word "iron" or "silver," we all have the same object before our minds. . . . But what about the words "just" and "good"? Don't we diverge, and dispute not only with one another but with our own selves? . . . Then the intending student of the art of rhetoric /technen rhetoriken/ ought, in the first place, to make a systematic division of words, and get hold of some mark distinguishing the two kinds of words, those namely in the use of which the multitude are bound to fluctuate, and those in which they are not. . . . And secondly, I take it, when he comes across a particular word he must realize what it is, and be swift to perceive which of the two kinds the thing he proposes to discuss really belongs to (Phaedrus 263b-c).

This passage foreshadows a similar passage in the Statesman in which Plato is concerned with finding the names for objects of the intelligible realm (285d-286e). Proper names are important because language affects the condition of the soul and, subsequently, the disposition of justice. In the Republic, Plato says that when imitations become habitual, they become second nature and settle into "the speech and the thought" (395d). Because

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[1] Socrates' criticism of the sophists is based both on ethical and effects criteria. Morally, the sophists who employ rhetoric without a prior dialectic are reprehensible because they know nothing of the intelligible and thus mislead their auditors. However, Socrates also argues that they are ignorant of the rules of the art of rhetoric, that their rhetoric is less effective than it could be if they engaged in prior dialectic. At 273a, Plato argues that the highest success is reserved for those who supplement rhetoric with dialectic.

language is a form of imitation, it is important that it imitate correctly.[1] The dangers of misconception caused by inaccurate names are enormous, as Plato argues at the end of the Cratylus (439c-440d). Inaccurate names have been responsible for the mistaken notion that all reality is in flux, that knowledge and morality are relative concepts, and for the subsequent decline in knowledge and morality. When used properly, however, names share in the essence of the Forms they name and can convey a sense of the Form to the ignorant. In this capacity, names become an instrument for securing justice.

In the Republic, when detailing his program for the education of the guardians, Socrates indicates that, "When anyone images badly in his speech the true nature of gods and heroes," such tales shall be censored.[2] At the Republic 381d, Socrates proscribes improper poetic imitation and at the Republic 387d-e Socrates controls eulogies for the dead. If everyone had knowledge of the intelligible, no censorship would be necessary, but in the absence of such knowledge, the use of rhetoric is reserved for those with episteme. If anyone else is to use rhetoric, he or she must do so within the limits set forth by the philosopher; that is, rhetoric must conform to the dictates of knowledge and must produce right opinion in an audience.[3] For Plato, such censorship is justified by the way that rhetoric has been misused to create injustice, e.g., by individuals such as Polus, Callicles, and Thrasymachus who maintain that justice is nothing

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[1] For a discussion of imitation and language in Plato, see chapter 2.

[2] The phrase "imaging in speech" reinforces that Plato sees a connection between words and things and that a knowledge of proper names is necessary to a techne of rhetoric.

[3] There are cases where the philosopher might use others as a mouthpiece. See, for example, Republic 377c; 380c.

more than the rule of the strong and would employ rhetoric to "put to death whomsoever they will, and deprive of their fortunes and banish from the state whomsoever it seems best" (Gorgias 466c-d).[2] Instead, Plato argues that if rhetoric is to be used at all, it must be used in support of a different concept of justice.

In the Republic, and elsewhere, Plato is concerned with establishing justice in both the individual and the state. For Plato justice is a concept grounded in nature, a quality of being. As such, justice for the individual and justice for the state are much the same thing. Moreover, there is a reciprocal relationship between the two: the just individual contributes to a just state while the just state nurtures justice in its citizens. The relationship is also interdependent: neither the just state nor the just individual can exist without the other. Justice, for Plato, is the order imposed on self and society by the rule of reason which alone discovers the nature of the intelligible. The key term in the definition is "order." Plato believes that the Forms exemplify a perfect order and that justice is nothing more than the realization of that order in the temporal world. Plato conceives justice to be a "universal principle pervading the life of all classes."[2] Plato explains the concept at length in the Republic:

> /Justice is the/ principle that it is right for the cobbler by nature to cobble and occupy himself with nothing else, and the carpenter to practice carpentry, and similarly all others. . . . But the truth of the

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[1] Plato has no quarrel with the methods--killing and banishing are legitimized at the Statesman 293d. Plato is concerned with the concept of justice as the rule of the strong, which he believes to be insufficient basis for such action.

[2] Paul Shorey, What Plato Said, (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1933), p. 223.

> matter was, as it seems, that justice is indeed something of this kind, yet not in regard to the doing of one's own business externally, but with regard to that which is within and in the true sense concerns one's self, and the things of one's self. It means that a man must not suffer the principles in his soul to do each the work of some other and interfere and meddle with one another, but that he should dispose well of what in the true sense of the word is properly his own, and having first attained to self-mastery and beautiful order within himself, and having harmonized these three principles /reason, spirit, appetite/ . and having linked and bound all three together and made of himself a unit, one man instead of many, self-controlled and in unison, he should then and then only turn to practice if he find aught to do either in the getting of wealth or the tendance of the body or it may be political action or private business--in all such doings believing and naming the just and honorable action to be that which preserves and helps to produce this condition of soul, and wisdom, the science that presides over such conduct, and believing the unjust action to be that which ever tends to overthrow this spiritual constitution, and brutish ignorance to be the opinion that in turn presides over this (443c-444a).

Justice in the individual is the ability to order one's own soul, to recognize one's own calling as dictated by the strongest tendency within the soul, and the discipline to stick to that task for which one's soul is best equipped. A just state recognizes that everyone is best suited for one particular task and enacts legislation to guarantee that society is so organized. As it turns out, justice is something far different than Polus, Callicles, or Thrasymachus had imagined. It is the very opposite of their concept that the just is "being able to do as one pleases." For Plato, nothing could be more destructive of justice.

Therefore, the second limitation that Plato places on the use of rhetoric is that it must always serve the end of justice. This is not surprising, for virtually all of Plato's efforts at social engineering are directed to this end. In the Laws, for example, Plato explains the ends of education by noting that "the sum and substance of education is the

right training which effectually leads the soul of the child at play on to the love of the calling in which he will have to be perfect, after its kind, when he is a man" (643c-d). Rhetoric, too, is permissible so long as it serves to make people just. This is precisely the difference between rhetoric as art and rhetoric as knack; the "moral artist" who has knowledge of justice functions to increase the quotient of justice in her or his hearers.

It is important, however, not to confuse "justice" with "truth." The two terms are not synonymous for Plato, and there are times when truth can be destructive of justice, for instance, when the truth does not create the proper effect and when it does not persuade people to act properly. Remember that, for Plato, the highest truth is measured by how precisely a thing corresponds to the perfect order found in the intelligible Form. Thus Plato is able to distinguish between "essential falsehood," which misrepresents the order found in the intelligible, and "falsehood in words," which is close to the modern concept of falsehood, when what is said does not correspond to observable reality. Falsehood in words may be useful when it results in truth in the soul. Plato consistently uses a medical analogy to make his point: just as a doctor will use falsehood to persuade a patient to undergo treatment, so the statesman might employ falsehood to persuade citizens to act justly. In the Republic, Plato says, "It seems likely that our rulers will have to make considerable use of falsehood and deception for the benefit of their subjects. We said, I believe, that the use of that sort of thing was in the category of medicine" (459c-d).[1] This is also why Plato allows censorship; nothing must interfere with the establishment of justice.

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[1] See also Republic 389b-c.

There is strong evidence that justice (dike), not truth, is the primary end of rhetoric. In the search for the ideal orator that occurs near the end of the Gorgias, Plato looks for a statesman (rhetor) who is preoccupied "with one thought, how justice may be implanted in the souls of the citizens and injustice banished. . ." (504d). Much the same point is made at the conclusion of the Gorgias, at which point Plato argues, "Rhetoric and every other activity should ever so be employed, to attain justice" (527c). This notion reappears in the Phaedrus. There Plato claims that it is the function of rhetoric to influence souls, "to implant such convictions and virtues as we desire" (270b). Thompson comments that what is remarkable about this passage "is the statement that the final cause of rhetoric is to improve the morals and institutions of a people."[1] The passages in Book II of the Republic in which Plato censors fables (mythoi), songs (odais), and other forms of discourse, are relevant here as well, for Plato censors in order to persuade citizens to act justly, that is, to persuade them to stick to their assigned tasks and roles. Rhetoric is used to maintain the social order. In the Statesman, Plato refers to rhetoric as the art that "persuades men to do what is right" (304a) and in the Laws, Plato is even more explicit:

> The youthful mind will be persuaded of anything, if one will take the trouble to persuade it. Thus he /the lawgiver/ need only tax his invention to discover what conviction would be most beneficial to a city, and then contrive all manner of devices to ensure that the whole of such a community shall treat the topic in one single and selfsame lifelong tone, alike in song, in story, and in discourse (664a).[2]

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[1] Thompson, Phaedrus, p. 123.

[2] These passages make it evident that Plato is far more concerned with the ends of rhetoric than with its methods, a concern which sets him apart from most theorists.

The end, of course, is the production of justice through inculcation of the belief that "an unjust life is not merely more dishonorable and despicable, but actually more unpleasant than a just and religious /life/" (Laws 663d). The requirement that rhetoric serve the end of justice helps to explain why its practice is limited to the philosopher. It is only the philosopher, whose soul is dominated by reason, who is able to apprehend the intelligible Forms and organize the state in such a way that its institutions nurture justice in the souls of its citizens.

These two limits on the practice of rhetoric, the need for knowledge and the requirement that rhetoric serve the end of justice, are obviously interdependent since knowledge is logically prior to the implementation of justice. However, by separating them here, I hope to have illustrated how dialectic, knowledge, and justice are considerations prior to the practice of rhetoric. For Plato, before there can be an art of rhetoric, the rhetorician must have acquired philosophic knowledge (episteme) based on a prior dialectic, and the rhetoric must be designed to further the moral end of justice. These parameters demark the boundaries of rhetoric developed as an art and separate it from the evil "knack" practiced by the sophists, and they have important implications for the nature and function of rhetoric within the state.

Types and Functions of Rhetoric

All rhetoric has one purpose for Plato: the inspiration of right conduct by persuading citizens to live and to act justly, in obedience to the divine order revealed in the intelligible Forms. Plato attempts to regulate conduct in two related ways. There is, initially, a rhetoric addressed to the citizens by the statesman and designed to influence directly

the conduct of the multitude. This form of rhetoric is equivalent to a command: citizens have no discretion with respect to its dictates. Second, there is a public, ceremonial, epideictic rhetoric whose aim is indirect influence through the creation of eulogies, myths, and models which serve to reinforce the basic values and beliefs of the audience. These are not distinct types of rhetoric, but mutually reinforcing aspects of the attempt to influence action through language. Nevertheless, by separating them for closer inspection, it is possible to gain a better understanding of the whole.

The Practice of Platonic Rhetoric

Plato is rather explicit about the function of rhetoric within the state. At the Statesman 304a-e the Athenian Stranger explains its role in society to the Young Socrates:

> The art of public speaking /rhetoreia/ . . . is closely allied to the kingly art. This last persuades men to do what is right and therefore takes its share in controlling what goes on in a true community. . . . the art which decides whether persuasion should or should not be used ought to control the operation of the art of persuasion itself. . . . Which is the art to which we must assign the task of persuading the general mass of the population by telling them suitable stories /mythologias/ rather than by giving them formal instruction?
>
> Young Socrates: I should say that it is obvious that this is the province to be assigned to rhetoric /rhetorike/. . . .
>
> Stranger: Oratory /rhetorikon/, it seems, has been quickly set apart from statesmanship. It is distinct from statesmanship, and yet its auxiliary.

This is Plato's clearest statement about the nature and function of rhetoric, and there are a number of important conclusions to be drawn from the passage. First, the passage reinforces what Plato says elsewhere about the prerequisites for the practice of an art (techne) of rhetoric.

Such an art must be concerned with justice, working to "persuade men to do what is right." Rhetoric is subordinate to the statesman's art, an art which requires philosophic knowledge and proceeds, through dialectic, to attain it (Statesman 285e-286b, 305e). Second, the purpose of this sort of rhetoric is evident: to control the actions of the populace by persuading them to do what is in the best interests of the state. Plato views this kind of rhetoric as a highly moral art, an art which corrects the deficiencies within the souls of those members of the community who are unable to govern their own souls and live justly and happily. While citizens are persuaded to act in what Plato considers to be the best interests of the state, it is important to remember that Plato believes that this rhetoric benefits the individual as well (Statesman 297d; Republic 409a-c). For Plato, the just life and the happiest life are the same. When the statesman persuades someone to act in the interests of the just state, the statesman also furthers individual happiness (Republic 580b; Laws 663-664). In this context, persuading citizens to "do what is right" simply means convincing the masses to keep to their proper tasks and functions: "that to do one's own business and not to be a busybody is justice" (Republic 433a). It is important to recognize the totalitarian element inherent in Plato's approach to rhetoric. Within Plato's ontology, the masses are presumed to be incapable of making the most basic choices about their needs and welfare; hence Plato would employ rhetoric to influence the choice of mates and station in life (Republic 414b-417b; Statesman 310b-c), to influence perceptions of pleasure (Laws 659d-661c), to influence the popular understanding of history, custom, and tradition (Menexenus, passim; Republic 377a-377e, 392b), in short, to control all aspects of community life. In order to accomplish these ends, Plato is

willing to use "falsehood in words," (sometimes translated as the "noble lie" though there seems little that is "noble" about it), or whatever means are necessary to accomplish the goal of having the society "treat the topic in one single and selfsame lifelong tone, alike in song, in story, and in discourse" (Laws 664a).[1] Whatever one assumes about Plato's motives, it is important not to underestimate the degree of control that Plato has in mind:

> The principle is this--that no man, and no woman, be ever suffered to live without an officer set over them, and no soul of man to learn the trick of doing one single thing of its own sole motion, in play or in earnest, but, in peace as in war, ever to live with the commander in sight, to follow his leading, and take its motions from him in the least detail--to halt or advance, to drill, to bathe, to dine, to keep wakeful hours . . . in a word, to teach one's soul the habit of never so much as thinking to do one single act apart from one's fellows, of making life, to the very uttermost, an unbroken consort, society, and community of all with all" (Laws 942b-c).[2]

At the Statesman 304c-d, Plato argues that rhetoric is the art which controls the persuasion of the masses "by telling them suitable stories" /mythologias/.[3] This links together a whole series of passages in the

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[1] For a thorough examination of the totalitarian aspects of Platonic thought, see Karl Popper, The Open Society and Its Enemies, Vol. I, 5th ed., (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1966).

[2] See Popper's discussion of this passage at page 103. Ronald Levinson (In Defense of Plato, cited in the addendum to the 1961 edition of Vol. I of The Open Society and Its Enemies) argues that this passage is intended to apply only to the military. Like Popper, I defer to Richard Robinson who says of this passage that, "It might be urged that Plato intended this to apply only to the military life of his citizens, and it is true that the passage begins as a prescription for army discipline; but by the end Plato is clearly wishing to extend it to all life; cf. 'the anarchy must be removed from all the life of all the men' (Laws 942d 1)" (cited in Popper, p. 342).

[3] The Greek term "mythologia" generally refers to "romance, fiction" and is derived from the root "mytholog-" which means, in general, "to tell mythic tales." For a discussion see H. G. Liddell and R. Scott, A Greek-English Lexicon, revised and augmented by H. S. Jones and R. McKenzie, (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 1977), p. 1151. In this category Plato would

Republic (377a, 377b-c, 380c, 382c-d, 389b-c, 392b-c, 414b-417b, 459c-d, 519e) and the Laws (659c-e, 660a, 661c, 663d-e, 663e-664a, 664b, 720d, 722b, 723a) in which Plato is concerned with the inspiration of right conduct through fables, stories, and the like. Indeed, Plato recognizes that the language of legislation requires a rhetorical component "to prepare the auditor of the legislator's enactments to receive his prescription, that is to say, his law, in a spirit of friendliness and consequent docility" (Laws 723a).[1] Rhetoric, in Plato's view, is useful for the creation of order (justice) when employed by the philosopher with knowledge of the intelligible (episteme). By creating a community linked together (through legislation) by persuasive language, Plato is able to impose the order revealed by the Forms on the ignorant multitude.

An offshoot of this rhetoric of control is ceremonial discourse, epideictic rhetoric, which seeks to praise and blame persons, ideas, or actions. In fact, there is little to differentiate epideictic discourse from the rhetoric just described. Like this rhetoric, ceremonial discourse fosters justice by influencing the actions of the populace. There are, however, two differences: ceremonial rhetoric attempts to instruct as well as to persuade, it attempts to show why certain people ought to be emulated or censured.[2] Second, ceremonial rhetoric appears in the traditional rhetorical garment--as a eulogy or an occasional speech--rather than clothed in the guise of poetry or myth.

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[3] include both the noble lie as well as "stories" constructed for the benefit of children and adults.

[1] This is not to argue that the previous rhetoric does not instruct, only that its purpose is not primarily directed toward instruction.

[2] The fact that the laws contain a rhetorical preamble indicates, I believe, the extent to which Plato relies on the art of rhetoric to render the public docile. The laws are little different than the mythologias: both are intended to have the same effect on the populace.

The primary purpose of much of ceremonial rhetoric is to recommend a particular life style to the audience, to establish a model which others may follow. Since most people in any state function, cognitively, at the level of belief (doxa), their intellects are governed by imitations. Hence Plato aims to give them sound models to imitate. In essence, he seeks to create a role in which the rhetor enacts his philosophy and becomes the embodiment of the ideas, attitudes, and values that Plato wishes the public to adopt.

Indirect references to ceremonial rhetoric are scattered throughout the dialogues, but there are few direct references to the art. Even so, the prominence of this sort of rhetoric in the dialogues, especially in the Menexenus which is almost completely given over to ceremonial rhetoric, establishes rather clearly its importance to Plato. Consequently, the Menexenus is a good place to begin an examination of Plato's ceremonial rhetoric.

Scholars have paid scant attention to the Menexenus, probably because its form and content have seemed enigmatic in comparison to Plato's other works. In the dialogue, Plato, who allegedly despised both the practice of rhetoric and of Athenian politics, composed a funeral oration praising Athens. Classicists have split over its interpretation, some describing it as dull satire while others have called it "one of the world's noblest and most inspiring utterances of essential patriotism."[1] Whatever one's interpretation, the dialogue reveals much about Platonic rhetorical practice.

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[1] For an example of the former interpretation, see Edith Hamilton, The Collected Dialogues of Plato, p. 186, and Dodds, p. 24. For the latter interpretation, see Shorey, p. 187.

In the dialogue, Socrates encounters Menexenus who is just returned from the Council where deliberations were taking place over who was to "speak over the dead." Socrates says that the speech should not be difficult for it is no great task to praise the Athenians in Athens. Menexenus challenges Socrates to compose such a speech himself, whereupon Socrates counters with an offer to reproduce a speech that Aspasia had composed. The balance of the dialogue is Socrates' recitation of Aspasia's funeral oration. While the Menexenus is rarely studied in modern times, Cicero reports that the Athenians "recited the Menexenus annually at their public burial ceremonies."[1]

Aside from what the dialogue is able to indicate about the nature of ceremonial rhetoric, two general comments may be made. First, whatever the intent of the dialogue, whether satirical or earnest, the points it makes are in a form which is unmistakably rhetorical. Charles Kahn notes, "Once it /the Menexenus/ is read . . . as a /political/ pamphlet, it can be recognized for what it is--perhaps the finest work of Greek oratory before Demosthenes."[2] Further, Plato re-emphasizes the close relationship between music and rhetoric; training in both is necessary to become an accomplished speaker (235e-236a).

Plato makes two points in the Menexenus. The first is about the need for ceremonial rhetoric, its function in the state and its uses for society. Plato has Socrates argue:

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[1] Charles Kahn, "Plato's Funeral Oration: The Motive of the Menexenus," Classical Philology LVIII (Oct. 1963), p. 229. Cicero's text reads, "it is customary to deliver /the Menexenus/ at Athens in an assembly in honour of those fallen in battle; which was so popular that it had to be read aloud every year . . . on that day" (Orator xliv. 151).

[2] Kahn, p. 232.

> There is a tribute of deeds and of words. The departed have already had the first, when going forth on their destined journey they were attended on their way by the state and by their friends; the tribute of words remains to be given to them, as is meet and by law ordained. For noble words are a memorial and a crown of noble actions, which are given to the doers of them by the hearers. A word is needed which will duly praise the dead and gently admonish the living, exhorting the brethren and descendants of the departed to imitate their virtue, and consoling their fathers and mothers and survivors, if any, who may chance to be alive of the previous generation (236d-237a).

That Plato's ceremonial oratory attempts to influence actions is evident from the fact that Plato would have the citizenry imitate the virtue of the dead. But ceremonial rhetoric also attempts to teach, to provide a model to "admonish the living." And this is precisely what Plato does in the Menexenus. After reciting a brief history of Athens, which is obviously and blatently inaccurate, Socrates provides the audience with an example of the kind of virtue the dead have demonstrated (246a-249d). Briefly, Socrates urges his auditors to surpass the dead in all that they have done, especially in virtue. He urges temperance, "neither lamenting overmuch, nor fearing overmuch" among both the living, who have lost children, and the dead, "if they have any knowledge of the living." He urges other panegyrists to represent both living parents and slain children in this manner in order to encourage temperance.

If Plato intends this last section of the dialogue as satire, it is very difficult to detect. Rather, he seems to be reinforcing a persistent theme about temperance, virtue, and justice, and he makes much the same point in the Republic:

> From every point of view, then, the panegyrist of justice speaks truly and the panegyrist of injustice falsely. For whether we consider pleasure, reputation, or profit, he who commends justice speaks the truth, while there is no

> soundness or real knowledge of what he censures in him who disparages it (589b-c).[1]

Ceremonial rhetoric is aimed at controlling no particular action; instead, it is meant to inform all action and to guide all conduct. In that sense, Plato's aim is educational, though admittedly in a doctrinaire sense.

The second point to be gleaned from the Menexenus concerns the use of "falsehood in words" to create "justice (truth) in the soul." As mentioned, in the Menexenus Plato takes considerable liberty with Athenian history. Among other things, Plato characterizes the Athenian constitution as an "aristocracy" when in fact it was a limited democracy (238c-d), misrepresents the events surrounding the battle at Marathon, and insists on Athenian hostility to Persia when, in fact, "the Persian fleet was commanded by an Athenian admiral, and the terms of peace were dictated by the King himself."[2] In distorting the historical record, Plato is representing things not as they were, but as they should have been. The lies are consistent with Plato's perspective on human ontology and axiology. Plato redefines the nature of government to make it closer to his ideal; in recounting the Battle of Marathon, he develops a favorable association between Athens and Sparta; and, in revising the history of the relations between Athens and Persia, he intends to illustrate how the state should adopt a single, consistent, and lasting policy and to chastise Athenians for their recent departure from this principle.[3] Thus, in the Menexenus,

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[1] This passage assumes the prerequisites for rhetoric discussed earlier. It is also indicative of Plato's concern for ends over means, as the first sentence demonstrates (the emphasis here is mine). This helps to explain the deliberate falsehood in the recitation of Athenian history which will be discussed shortly.

[2] Kahn, p. 226.

[3] Kahn, pp. 226-228.

Plato illustrates how the lie is to be used to inspire right conduct. Charles Kahn notes:

> The Gorgias defines true rhetoric as the art of changing the desires of the citizens in accord with what is right and good, in order to make them better men (517b). If the Menexenus is an exercise in Platonic rhetoric, the liberty it takes with history must be designed not to hold the past and its admirers up to ridicule, but to exhort men of the present to be worthy of this nobler version of their history.[1]

Deception in words is designed to create unity within the soul and within the state, it is a medicinal tonic designed to remedy the ills of the spirit. From this perspective, Plato's phrase in the Republic, "From every point of view the panegyrist of justice speaks truly," acquires additional meaning. Any method is condoned as long as it serves doctrinaire ends. Thus the Menexenus becomes reminiscent of Winston Smith's attempts to keep pace with the vicissitudes of history in George Orwell's 1984.

It is important to note that Platonic rhetoric, whatever its form, is not concerned with choice making, the evaluation of probability, or the construction of valid argument. Platonic rhetoric has as its sole aim the regulation of conduct by eliminating choice, dismissing probability as the basis for action, and by the censorship of contentious argument. The only legitimate use for rhetoric, within Plato's reconstructed state, is the dissemination of doctrine. Virtually all expression in the state, be it song, story, history, myth, panegyric, or oratory, is to serve this end. Through rhetoric, Plato hopes to render the elements of the state into a harmonious whole, self-perpetuating, eternal, and perfect. Obviously, expression which disputes this doctrine is a danger to society

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[1] Kahn, p. 225.

and everyone in it, and for that reason it is not permitted. In this sense, Plato can be considered the originator of the modern art of propaganda.

Methods

Plato is far less concerned with the means used in the rhetorical art than he is with the ends toward which rhetoric is directed. This focus on ends instead of means is perhaps the most distinctive element of Platonic rhetorical theory and it serves to differentiate it quite clearly from Aristotelian theory. Hackforth draws a similar conclusion in his commentary on the Phaedrus:

> The actual catalogue of technemata, and their assignment to this or that technographer or orator, are of little importance; the object of mentioning them, apart from mild satire, is merely to substantiate the complaint that current theory and practice are concerned with nothing more than the antecedents of a true art of rhetoric; in particular, what is wanting is the knowledge of the right audience or the right occasion for making use of this or that style, this or that device, and the power to combine different elements of speech into a balanced and effective whole.[1]

Perhaps Plato's willingness to accept the traditional devices of rhetoric led many commentators to assume that Plato was merely preparing the way for Aristotle. What they fail to understand is that for Plato the techniques involved in the practice of rhetoric are a very minor part of the art. That is the reason, I think, that Plato has very little to say about the actual methods of rhetoric; they are unimportant compared to the preparation that precedes the speech. In a passage already cited, Plato says that it is not difficult for the speaker "to tax the invention" and "contrive all manner of devices" to persuade youthful minds of anything at all

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[1] Hackforth, p. 143.

(Laws 664a).[1] Even so, there is one aspect of Plato's approach to rhetoric that deserves comment.

Unlike Aristotle, Plato does not depend primarily upon argument to achieve persuasion. If human beings were rational, they would not need to be persuaded by others. Instead, Plato depends primarily on the force of imitation to persuade. Like Aristotle, Plato seems to recognize that imitation is an immensely powerful motivating force. Unlike Aristotle, Plato seems to give it far more significance as a form of rhetorical persuasion.[2] According to Plato, imitation is persuasive because it transcends all types of soul. Robinson argues, "however rational soul may be in theory, contact with the bodily /i.e., sensations/ is liable to influence it for harm. This is seen to be true as early as the Phaedo, where even the poetic soul can end 'by thinking to be true whatever the body says is true.' (83d6)."[3] Plato is particularly concerned with dramatic imitation because dramatic imitation is the imitation of life, and from

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[1] Plato's most extended discussion of the methods surrounding the use of rhetoric occurs in the Phaedrus (260-276) and is, for the most part, unremarkable.

[2] McKeon argues, "to confuse rhetoric and poetics would in his /Aristotle's/ system be a Platonizing error. He, himself, distinguished the two disciplines sharply: only two of the six parts of tragedy--thought and diction--are properly treated in rhetoric; and only one of them--thought--receives the same treatment in Aristotle's Rhetoric and Poetics." ("Literary Criticism and the Concept of Imitation in Antiquity," p. 30.)

[3] T. M. Robinson, Plato's Psychology, p. 138. See also Phaedo 65c. Even the most philosophical of human beings can be influenced by imitations, as is clear from the Republic. Plato constructs myths for the Guardians as well as for the masses (for example, the Myth of Earthborn at the Republic 414d). The philosopher differs from the ordinary person in her or his ability to discriminate among imitations, to recognize those which are "proper," and to discard those which are not. But even for a philosopher, the danger of succumbing to an improper dramatic imitation is so great that Plato seeks to control drama rigidly. It is for this same reason that rhetoric is so strictly controlled.

it are drawn important lessons concerning conduct and virtue. For that reason, Plato seeks to control imitation in order to guarantee that nothing improper becomes the object of imitation. He argues in the Republic, for example:

> If, then, we are to maintain our original principle, that our guardians released from all other crafts, are to be expert craftsmen of civil liberty, and pursue nothing else that does not conduce to this, it would not be fitting for these to do nor yet to imitate anything else. . . . Or have you not observed that imitations, if continued from youth far into life, settle down into habits and second nature in the body, the speech, and the thought? (395b-d).

Indeed, Plato seems to believe that because imitation is such a powerful persuasive force it must be strictly controlled. There are two parallel passages from the Republic and the Laws which indicate the depth and the consistency of Plato's conviction. In the Republic, Plato argues:

> If a man, then, it seems, who was capable by his cunning of assuming every kind of shape and imitating all things should arrive in our city, bringing with himself the poems he wished to exhibit, we should fall down and worship him as a holy and wondrous and delightful creature, but should say to him that there is no man of that kind among us in our city, nor is it lawful for such a man to arise among us, and we should send him away to another city, after pouring myrrh down over his head and crowning him with fillets of wool, but we ourselves, for our soul's good, should continue to employ the more austere and less delightful poet and taleteller, who would imitate the diction of the good man and would tell his tale in the patterns which we prescribed in the beginning, when we set out to educate our soldier (398a-b).

When asked if tragic poets will be allowed to visit the city, Plato replies in the Laws:

> Respected visitors, we are ourselves authors of a tragedy, and that the finest and best we know how to make. In fact, our whole polity has been constructed as a dramatization of a noble and perfect life; that is what we hold to be in truth the most real of tragedies. Thus you are poets, and we also are poets in the same style, rival artists and rival actors, and that in the finest of all

> dramas, one which indeed can be produced only by a code of true law--or at least that is our faith. So you must not expect that we shall lightheartedly permit you to pitch your booths in our market square with a troop of actors whose melodious voices will drown out our own, and let you deliver your public tirades before our boys and women and the populace at large--let you address them on the same issues as ourselves, not to the same effect, but commonly and for the most part to the very contrary. Why we should be stark mad to do so, and so would the whole community, if you could find one which would let you do as you are now proposing, until its magistrates had decided whether your compositions are fit to be uttered and edifying to be heard by the public or not (817b-d).

Plato's objections to poetic imitation are well known, and they are of the same nature as his objections to rhetoric; both poets and rhetors imitate appearances rather than realities, producing injustice in the individual and the state.

Because dramatic imitation is so powerful, and because it must be controlled, it becomes the principal instrument for rhetorical persuasion. I make this claim based both on the text and the context of the dialogues. There are two important textual references linking poetic and rhetoric. The first occurs at the Gorgias 502c-d. In describing tragic poetry, Socrates calls it "rhetorical /rhetoreyein/ public speaking," and concludes: "So now we have found a kind of rhetoric /rhetoriken/ addressed to such a public as is compounded of children and women and men, and slaves as well as free; an art that we do not quite approve of, since we call it a flattering one" (502d). In this passage, rhetoric and poetic are tied together. Subsequently, Socrates goes on to explore the possibility of an art (techne) of rhetoric. Because rhetoric and poetic are censured on the same grounds, I take it that if there can be an art of rhetoric, there can also be an art of poetic, as is clear from the passages cited from the Republic and the Laws. What is important, in this passage from the Gorgias,

is the fact that rhetoric and poetic are seen as identical. This relationship is confirmed in a passage from the Statesman. There, Plato argues that rhetoric is the art which controls the use of mythologia. For Plato, it is evident that rhetoric is a broad art which subsumes poetic. Hence one of the resources of rhetoric is poetic and the devices of poetry are an integral part of the rhetor's art. Contextually, the dialogues themselves contain many examples of myth used in a persuasive, that is, rhetorical, fashion. The myth of the earth born, the myth of the cave, and the myth of Er are central to the Republic; myth is central to the argument of the Gorgias, the Phaedrus, the Timaeus, and other Platonic works. It seems evident that Plato considered dramatic imitation to be an important persuasive device, an essential element of rhetoric. In this respect, Plato differs from most of the classical rhetoricians and establishes a much broader context for the practice of rhetoric.

Summary

Hackforth concludes that for Plato, rhetoric is the art of "recommending what is true."[1] As long as this is understood in its peculiar Platonic sense, it is an adequate summary of the essence of Platonic rhetoric. Truth, for Plato, is simply proper imitation of the intelligible forms; hence, rhetoric becomes the art of recommending Platonic doctrine, by any means possible.

Plato thought the rhetoric of the assemblies and the courts to be a mere knack. The art of rhetoric, according to Plato, should concern itself with all persuasive discourse wherever it occurred in society. Hence

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[1] Hackforth, p. 122.

Plato removed rhetoric from its traditional context and made it the master art which controlled all attempts to persuade through language, including myth, poetic, history, song, and oratory. Plato's conception of rhetoric was far broader than that of his contemporaries and is probably much closer to our modern concept of the term.

Plato thought rhetoric to be a pervasive influence within society and he attempted to limit its use to those circumstances in which the rhetor had knowledge of the intelligible Forms (episteme). This meant that the science of dialectic was always temporally and logically prior to the art of rhetoric. Rhetoric was not an art, Plato thought, unless it could be used with episteme to create justice in the individual and the state. Justice meant preservation of a social order based on Platonic doctrine, a social order in which all change was arrested and society was patterned after the perfect order expressed in the intelligible forms. Since the multitude, left to their own capacities, were incapable of episteme, and were by nature unjust, it fell to the art of rhetoric to persuade the multitude to act as they ought. To accomplish its ends, rhetoric could use any available methods, ranging from rational argument, to myth, to lies. Methods were unimportant so long as they furthered the doctrinal ends. The rhetorician was expected to serve as a model for the rest of the populace. Because he or she had knowledge of the Forms, employed dialectic, and discovered proper names, her or his actions and speech could serve as a guide for all to emulate.

Hence Plato's rhetoric differs from Aristotle's in a number of important ways. Where Aristotle assumed that human beings could be persuaded because they were rational, Plato thought the opposite; it was precisely because most souls were dominated by the appetites that Plato thought human

beings could be persuaded by imitations. Aristotle thought rhetoric to be epistemic, at least insofar as it was useful in discovering the nature of the probable. For Plato, rhetoric was useful only insofar as it served an a priori epistemology and communicated the knowledge discovered by dialectic. When rhetoric pretended to become an epistemic instrument, it became a dangerous knack that fostered degeneration of the soul and the state. Where Aristotle saw rhetoric as a method that contributed to choice-making, Plato saw it as a method to eliminate choice, a method by which the statesman could persuade the multitude to conform to the dictates of doctrine. Where Aristotle saw rhetoric and poetic as separate arts, Plato thought poetic to be a branch of rhetoric.

To recapitulate, the defining characteristics of Platonic rhetorical theory which have emerged from this study are: (1) a broad definition of rhetoric which encompasses all forms of persuasive speech; (2) a reliance on an a priori epistemology to inform the content of rhetoric; (3) a doctrinaire, in-group rhetoric which aims to further specific, discoverable, and significant moral ends; (4) a close relationship between rhetoric and poetic in which dramatic imitation becomes an important persuasive force; (5) an emphasis on social control, censorship, and doctrinal conformity derived from an anti-egalitarian ontology; (6) dialectic as the essential method for rhetorical invention; and (7) a necessary relationship between hermeneutics and epistemology because names share in the essence of the things they name. While Platonic rhetorical theory has proved historically less popular than the rhetoric of Aristotle, it has proved to be influential nevertheless. And it is important to detail the nature of that influence because of the totalitarian tendencies present within this approach to rhetoric. In subsequent chapters, I shall explore the nature and extent of that influence.

Chapter IV

Cicero and the Platonic Tradition

Cicero has long been considered the most influential of the Roman rhetorical theorists.[1] In his history of medieval rhetoric, James Murphy describes Cicero's influence in that age:

> Saint Augustine's De doctrina christiana, the first truly medieval treatise on the communicative arts, is based on Augustine's professional experience as a teacher of Ciceronian rhetoric in the public schools of his day. All the early encyclopedists . . . assume that Cicero is the prime exampler. Boethius does the same. Alcuin draws on the rhetoric of Cicero for doctrines of kingly behavior to recommend to Charlemagne. . . . Indeed, there is hardly a major medieval writer who does not mention Cicero whenever there is occasion to speak of discourse. From Thomas Acquinas to Petrarch and Boccaccio, Cicero is praised and quoted both for his eloquence and his philosophy. . . .[2]

Ralph Micken, in his introduction to Cicero's De Oratore, arrived at a similar estimate of Cicero's importance, noting that, "he dominated the thinking on eloquence and persuasion of practically all the scholars of the Medieval Age and Renaissance and, hence, provides the main connection between the ancient and modern world."[3] In the twentieth century, Cicero's scholarly credentials have been called into question, but even

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[1] George Kennedy, Classical Rhetoric, (Chapel Hill: Univ. of North Carolina Press, 1980), p. 90.

[2] James Murphy, Rhetoric in the Middle Ages, (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1974), p. 107.

[3] In Cicero on Oratory and Orators, trans. J. S. Watson, (Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois Univ. Press, 1970), p. xliii.

this reevaluation of Cicero's thought has not diminished his historical importance.

Much of what was known of Greek thought in the Middle Ages was known through the work of Cicero, and, for that reason, Cicero continues to be an important figure in the history of rhetoric, occupying a strategic position between the classical and modern world. If Plato were to exert any substantial influence on later rhetorical theorists, elements of his theory of rhetoric would have to be preserved in the work of Cicero. For that reason, it is essential to examine Cicero's work for evidence of Plato's influence.

Scholars have frequently concluded that Plato exerted little or no influence on the rhetorical thought of Cicero[1] and that Cicero synthesized ideas drawn from Aristotle, Demosthenes, Lysias, and Isocrates.[2] There is much merit in this view; Cicero was profoundly affected by the work of Aristotle and Isocrates. However, Cicero was also an admirer of Plato and, even if he never became a full-fledged Platonist, he did borrow a number of his ideas. It is my contention that although Plato was not the most influential of Cicero's mentors, Plato did exercise an important influence on Cicero's philosophic and rhetorical thought. An examination of Cicero's works on rhetoric may clarify the extent to which he was influenced by Plato.

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[1] See, for example, William Sattler, "Some Platonic Influences in the Rhetorical Works of Cicero," QJS 35 (April 1949), pp. 164-169. Sattler concludes that Plato exercised no appreciable influence on the work of Cicero. George Kennedy in his recent text, Classical Rhetoric, argues that Aristotle was an important influence but makes no mention of Plato (pp. 90-100).

[2] Murphy, p. 8, n. 14; Micken, pp. xlii-xlv. See also, Cicero, Ad Marcum Brutum Orator, text, introductory essay, and notes by J. E. Sandys, (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1885; rpt. New York: Georg Olms Verlag, 1973), pp. lxviii-lxxiii.

Cicero was a great admirer of Plato, both as a philosopher and rhetorician. Cicero's dialogues are full of praise for Plato. In De Oratore, he writes:

> Who put the final polish on the education of Dio of Syracuse in every department of learning? was it not Plato? and it was that same teacher not only of eloquence but also of wisdom and virtue who instigated Dio to win freedom for his native land and equipped him with weapons for the task (III. xxxiv. 139).[1]

In the Brutus, Cicero asks: "Where will you find a writer of greater richness than Plato?" (xxxi. 121). In the same dialogue, he endorses Demosthenes' comment that an audience of Plato alone is as good as "a hundred thousand" (li. 191). In the Orator, Cicero calls Plato "magnificent" (ii. 5) and confesses:

> I am aware that I often seem to be making original remarks when what I am saying is very old but generally unknown; and I confess that whatever ability I possess as an orator comes, not from the workshops of rhetoricians, but from the spacious grounds of the Academy. There indeed is the field for manifold and varied debate, which was first trodden by the feet of Plato. By his discussions and those of other philosophers, the orator has been severely criticized but has also received assistance--for all richness of style and what may be called the raw material of oratory is derived from them. . . (iii. 12).[2]

Cicero concludes that "Plato was, in dignity and grace, easily the first of all writers or speakers . . ." (xix. 62). Obviously, these statements

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[1] Cicero, De Oratore, trans. E. W. Sutton and H. Rackham, Two Volumes, (Cambridge: Harvard Univ. Press, 1968). All translations are from this edition unless otherwise noted.

[2] Cicero, Brutus, Orator, Brutus trans. G. L. Hendrickson, Orator trans. H. M. Hubbell, (Cambridge: Harvard Univ. Press, 1971). All translations of the Brutus and Orator are from this edition. This passage is not, as Sattler claims, a reference to the New Academy. Aside from the direct reference to Plato, it is clear from the text that the praise is aimed at Plato himself. Sandys, in his commentary, notes that the emphasis of the passage is on the service Plato rendered to the rhetoricians (p. 14).

do not prove that Plato influenced Cicero, but they demonstrate that Cicero knew of Plato and admired his work.

It is evident that Cicero was familiar with a number of Platonic dialogues. In the Orator, he quotes from the Menexenus and the Phaedrus and refers to another dialogue that may be either the Symposium or the Timaeus. We have Cicero's word that he studied the Gorgias "diligently" while in Athens (De Oratore I. xi. 47), and Cicero produced a translation of the Timaeus shortly after the publication of the Orator.[1] That Cicero was familiar with the Republic is evident from De Oratore I. lii. 224-225 where Cicero has Antonius make fun of Plato's concept of justice when applied to the Roman courts. Sandys argues that Cicero was also familiar with the Phaedo and the Philebus and that he may have been familiar with the Symposium and the Parmenides.[2] Thus, Cicero was acquainted with Plato's most important ideas about rhetoric and justice through his familiarity with the Gorgias, the Phaedrus, and the Republic. He had encountered Plato's epideictic oratory in the Menexenus, and he had access to Plato's ideas on language and the cosmos through the Timaeus. Cicero's references to the dialogues of Plato are further evidence that they made a lasting impression.

In addition, Cicero's dialogues contain important dramatic hints about their Platonic origins. In the opening scene of De Oratore, Cicero writes:

> Scaevola, after taking two or three turns, observed, "Crassus, why do we not imitate Socrates as he appears in the Phaedrus of Plato? For your plane-tree has suggested this comparison to my mind, casting as it

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[1] Sandys, pp. 11-12.

[2] Sandys, pp. 11-12. Hubbell attributes Cicero's words at Orator iii. 10 to the Symposium 211a while Sandys attributes the passage to the Timaeus which Cicero is known to have read.

> does, with its spreading branches, as deep a shade over this spot, as that one cast whose shelter Socrates sought--which to me seems to owe its eminence less to 'the little rivulet' described by Plato than to the language of the dialogue. . ." (I. vii. 28).

The dramatic scene represented is similar to that of Plato's Phaedrus. Both dialogues place the interlocutors in a sylvan setting to discuss the relationship between philosophy and rhetoric. The dramatic and substantive similarity points directly to Plato and is, I take it, an indication that Cicero means to consider some of the same ideas. The Brutus opens with a similar allusion: Cicero comes upon Brutus and Atticus who urge him to discourse about orators, "when they first made their appearance, and who, and of what sort they were" (v. 20). Brutus argues that whatever else is to be said about orators, "no one can be a good speaker who is not a sound thinker. Thus whoever devotes himself to true eloquence, devotes himself to sound thinking. . ." (vi. 23).[1] Cicero reaffirms the words of Brutus and proposes that, in order to be comfortable, the group sit down and take up the subject. The dialogue continues: "This was agreeable to them, and we sat down on the lawn near the statue of Plato" (vi. 24). Dramatically, the scene of the dialogue assumes great importance: Plato stands in silent witness to all that is said. Immediately thereafter, Brutus and Cicero, proponents of different rhetorical styles (the focus of a tremendous controversy), testify to the importance of a philosophical orientation toward rhetoric. Presumably, with Plato as witness, the audience is to take the philosophic spirit of the dialogue seriously. The Orator, while not strictly a dialogue, also opens with a reference to Plato: Cicero invokes the Platonic Ideas in an effort to

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[1] Hendrickson comments, "Prudentia is here used in the meaning of philosophy. It represents the point of view set forth in de Oratore, that the ideal orator must be a philosopher" (p. 34).

search for the perfect orator. Cicero's own standards and the dramatic testimony of his dialogues strongly suggest some Platonic influence.

Plato's Influence on Cicero

At the outset, I wish to emphasize that the claims I shall make about Cicero are extremely limited. Cicero was a confirmed eclectic; he borrowed ideas from many sources without necessarily accepting the various doctrines behind the ideas. I shall not attempt to argue that Cicero was a Platonist or that his theory of rhetoric fully replicates Plato's rhetorical theory. Rather, I shall attempt to show that some of the important aspects of Plato's theory of rhetoric are preserved in the words of Cicero, making Plato's views available for later rhetorical theorists. With this limitation in mind, I posit two areas of similarity between Cicero and Plato: (1) Cicero and Plato hold similar notions of human ontology and epistemology which lead to (2) the establishment of similar prerequisites for the use of rhetoric.

Ontological and Epistemological Similarity

Cicero seems to share most of Plato's conceptions of human nature. For Cicero, the essence of the human being is contained in the immortal soul, which animates the body.[1] The soul is divided into parts which compete for dominance (On the Commonwealth I. xxxvii, IV. i). When the soul is governed by the better part, reason, the soul finds happiness; when the soul is governed by its opposites, the pleasures of the body, the soul

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[1] Cicero, On the Commonwealth, trans. with notes and introduction by G. H. Sabine and S. B. Smith, (New York: Liberal Arts Press; rpt. of 1929 edition), VI. xxiv.

atrophies and is unhappy. Thus, every human being has a soul with conflicting appetites and desires, and in order to become truly happy, the conflicting desires must be harmonized and subjected to the rule of reason. In concluding On the Commonwealth, Cicero writes:

> Be assured that only this body of yours, and not your real self, is mortal. For you are not the mere physical form that you appear to be, but the real man is the soul and not that physical body which men can point to. Know, then, that your true nature is divine, if indeed it is a divine principle which lives, feels, remembers, and foresees, and which rules, guides and activates the body beneath its sway, even as the supreme god directs the universe. And as the world, which is in part mortal, is stirred to motion by God Himself, who lives forever, so the frail body is quickened by an immortal soul.
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> For whatever possesses the power of ceaseless movement is eternal. On the other hand, whatever imports movement to other things and is itself set in motion by external objects must end its life when its movement ends. Accordingly, only that which moves with self-originating motion never ceases to be moved, because it is never abandoned by itself; and it is, moreover, the source and beginning of motion for all other things that move. Beginning has no source, since all things arise from beginning, while beginning itself can spring only from itself. For that which took its beginning from something else could not be a beginning. If, then, beginning is never born, neither does it ever die. For beginning, if destroyed, will never itself receive new life from another source, nor will it create anything else from itself, since all things must arise from a beginning. Thus, it follows that the beginning of movement is derived from that which moves with self-originating motion and which can neither be born nor die. Otherwise, the whole heaven and the universe would collapse and stand still and would never receive any impulse by which they might again be stirred to motion.
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> Since, therefore, it is clear that whatever is self-moving is eternal, who will deny that this power has been given to soul? For everything that is stirred to movement by external forces is lifeless, but whatever possesses life is moved by an inner and inherent impulse. And this impulse is the very essence and power of soul. If, then, the soul be the only thing which is self-moving, assuredly it is not created but is eternal. Train it in the noblest ways! Now the noblest concerns of the soul have to do with the security of your country, and the soul which is employed and disciplined in such pursuits will fly more speedily to this abode, its natural home. This journey

> it will make the swifter, if it looks abroad, while still imprisoned in the flesh, and if, by meditating upon that which lies beyond it, it divorces itself as far as may be from the body. For the souls of men who have surrendered themselves to carnal delights, who have made themselves as it were slaves of the passions, and who have been prompted by lust to violate the laws of gods and men, wander about near the earth itself after their escape from the body, and do not return hither until they have been driven about for many ages (VI. xxxiv-xxvi).

Cicero's account of the nature of the soul parallels Plato's description at the Phaedrus 245, and many of the same points are made in each passage: the soul is immortal because it is self-moved, the soul is composed of noble and base parts which compete for dominance, the soul is nurtured when it keeps to the pleasures of its noblest element. Thus, according to Cicero, "reason is the best part of the soul; and so long as it is lord, there is no place for the lusts, for anger, or for any irrational impulses" (On the Commonwealth I. xxxviii). Because no one is more wretched than a person whose soul is dominated by "the lusts of the flesh" or "the angry passions" (On the Commonwealth I. xxxviii),[1] human beings are susceptible to persuasion because of the need to harmonize the discord within the soul.

From Cicero's account in On the Commonwealth, it is impossible to discern the precise role of reason within the soul. In this account of the nature of the soul, Cicero does not directly invoke the intelligible realm of the forms. All that can be said directly from this dialogue is that Cicero recognizes that the study of philosophy is necessary for reason (III. iii). Furthermore, there is a brief passage in which Cicero describes "right reason" as "unchangeable and eternal" (III. xxii), so that a bifurcation between the realm of sense, which arouses the appetites, and the

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[1] Sabine and Smith argue that these passages are meant to recall Plato. See note 104, p. 144 and note 105, p. 191.

realm of reason, which engages the mind, is at least suggested in the text. Yet there are other passages in Cicero's works which invoke the Platonic forms directly. In De Oratore, for example, Cicero has Crassus argue:

> And in my own view the great men of the past, having a wider mental grasp, had also a far deeper insight than our mind's eye can achieve, when they asserted that all this universe above us and below is one single whole, and is held together by a single force and harmony of nature; for there exists no class of things which can stand by itself, severed from the rest, or which the rest can dispense with and yet be able to preserve their own force and everlasting existence.
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> But if this appears to be too vast a theory for the senses or the thought of human beings to be able to grasp it, there is also the truth enunciated by Plato, which you, Catulus, have undoubtedly heard, that the whole of the content of the liberal and humane sciences is comprised within a single bond of union; since, when we grasp the meaning of the theory that explains the causes and issues of things, we discover that a marvellous agreement and harmony underlies all branches of knowledge (III. v. 20-vi. 21).

In this passage, Cicero argues for a class of existents which can be known only through the mind's eye and which explains the "causes and issues" of those things that are the basis of human knowledge. This passage is reinforced by a similar argument which Cicero develops to open the Orator. Searching for the "perfect orator," Cicero outlines his method:

> Consequently in delineating the perfect orator I shall be portraying such a one as perhaps never existed. Indeed, I am not inquiring who was the perfect orator, but what is that unsurpassable ideal which seldom if ever appears throughout a whole speech but does shine forth at some times and in some places, more frequently in some speakers, more rarely perhaps in others. But I am firmly of the opinion that nothing of any kind is so beautiful as not to be excelled in beauty by that of which it is a copy, as a mask is a copy of a face. This ideal cannot be perceived by the eye or ear, nor by any of the senses, but we can nevertheless grasp it by the mind and the imagination. . . . with our minds we conceive the ideal

> of perfect eloquence, but with our ears we catch only the copy. These patterns of things are called ideai or ideas by Plato, that eminent master and teacher both of style and of thought; these, he says, do not "become"; they exist for ever, and depend on intellect and reason; other things come into being and cease to be, they are in flux and do not remain long in the same state. Whatever, then, is to be discussed rationally and methodically, must be reduced to the ultimate form and type of its class (ii. 7-iii. 10).

It appears that for both Cicero and Plato, the objects of reason are the intelligible forms. In the theories of both Plato and Cicero, there is an explicit link between ontology and epistemology. If the soul is to become strong, harmonious, and happy, it must be freed from the distractions of the body and ordered by reason. The only genuine knowledge for Plato, and the most perfect form of knowledge for Cicero, is that which concerns "the ultimate form and type of its class," because it is that knowledge which brings the soul into harmony and which is the cause of human happiness. And, like Plato, Cicero is faced with the problem of two kinds of knowledge, one genuine, the other a mere semblance.

I can find no satisfactory answer to this problem in Cicero. While it is clear that there are two types of knowledge, it is not clear how genuine knowledge is attained and why it is attained only by some individuals. There seems to be an essential link between language and reason. In On the Commonwealth, Cicero argues:

> And when reason found men employing uncouth sounds and using utterance imperfect and confused, she distinguished and classified these inarticulate sounds and assigned certain words to certain things as their symbols. Thus with the most agreeable tie of speech she bound together men who had hitherto been solitary. Likewise, reason discovered a few letters by which all the apparently infinite variety of sounds might be indicated and expressed, that

> men might communicate with their absent fellows. . . (III. ii).[1]

This passage recalls Plato's description of language in the Cratylus and implies a necessary link between language and epistemology, language as a way of knowing. If the rhetor is to attain knowledge, however, the method employed must be dialectic, not rhetoric. At De Oratore II. lxxxvii. 356-357, Cicero writes:

> the efficacy of the whole of this science, or perhaps I should say pseudo-science, of rhetoric, is not that it wholly originates and engenders something no part of which is already present in our minds, but that it fosters and strengthens things that have already sprung to birth within us. . . .[2]

Rhetoric is a method for disseminating, rather than attaining, knowledge. In order to attain knowledge, the rhetor must study philosophy and employ its method, dialectic. In De Oratore, Cicero recommends that the orator study the Peripatetic or Academic schools of philosophy which he identifies with Aristotle and Plato (III. xviii. 67). He concludes, "if you have grown to love that glorious and supreme ideal, that thing of beauty, the perfect orator, you are bound to accept either the modern dialectic of Carneades /whom Cicero identifies as a descendant of the Academy at De

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[1] This passage is supported by another in which Cicero argues that "cities located on the sea are subject to certain corrupting influences and to moral decline, for they are affected by alien forms of speech and by alien standards of conduct" (On the Commonwealth II. iv). The argument that "alien speech" is corrupting tends to support a necessary link between knowledge and language.

[2] There may be a link between memory and knowledge in Cicero, similar to Plato's concept of anamnesis but the evidence is sketchy. Aside from this passage in which a link is implied, there is a line in On the Commonwealth (IV. i) where Cicero argues that "the mind both perceives the future and remembers the past." Smith and Sabine note that, "This is probably a reference to the divine nature of the soul evidenced by its superiority to time" (p. 229). This claim is supported by Cicero's text at VI. xxiv, cited on p. 6 of this chapter. But this evidence is not definitive, hence it is impossible to say with any certainty that Cicero either accepted or rejected Plato's theory here.

Oratore III. xviii. 67-68/ or the earlier method of Aristotle" (III. xix. 71-72). In the Orator, he writes:

> Surely without philosophical training we cannot distinguish the genus and species of anything, nor define it nor divide it into subordinate parts, nor separate truth from falsehood, nor recognize "consequents," distinguish "contradictories," or analyse "ambiguities" (iv. 16).

Sandys argues that "the whole of this sentence refers to the dialectic branch of philosophy." Cicero follows this method in his treatise, On the Commonwealth (I. xxiv) and recommends its practice throughout his work (Brutus xli. 152-153, De Oratore I. xli. 186-xlii. 190, Orator xxxii. 115-xxxiii. 118). However, in spite of Cicero's call for an education in philosophy and dialectic, it appears that the dialectic he recommends is more Aristotelian than Platonic. Unlike Plato, Aristotle thought dialectic to be the method by which the scientist could discover and test probable conclusions in an impartial fashion.[1] Yet, in spite of the incompatibility of Platonic and Aristotelian dialectic, Cicero seems to retain elements of each, though he seems more indebted to Aristotle than Plato. The tension in Ciceronian dialectic is well illustrated in a passage from De Partitione Oratoria:

> You now have had set before you all the departments of oratory, that is those which have sprung from our famous school, the Middle Academy. Nor can they be discovered or understood or employed without the aid of that school;

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[1] See, for example, E. M. Cope, An Introduction to Aristotle's Rhetoric, p. 90; Richard McKeon, "Dialectic and Political Thought and Action," Ethics 65 (October 1954), p. 8, p. 30, n. 27. Plato would have rejected Aristotle's contention that dialectic serve to discover knowledge of the probable or that dialectic could be used impartially. For Plato, dialectic was the art of freeing the rational part of the soul from the opinions engendered by sense and for discovering the nature of true being. And for Plato, dialectic was used in order to discover truth, not for impartial disputation. That kind of practice is specifically censured in the Republic (538d-539d).

> for the actual process of division, and those of defining and distinguishing the two different meanings of an ambiguous statement, and knowing topics of arguments and bringing the actual process of argument to a conclusion, and discerning what things are to be assumed in a line of argument and what consequence follows from these assumptions, and distinguishing and differentiating true from false and probable from untrustworthy statements or censuring bad assumptions or bad conclusions, and treating the same topics either with close analysis, as to those who are termed dialecticians, or with broad exposition, as befits an orator, all come under the exercises mentioned and are part of the science of subtle disputation and copious oratory (xl. 139).[1]

The first part of the passage seems to echo Plato on dialectic with its emphasis on defining and distinguishing (Cratylus 389, Phaedrus 263b, 265d-266b) while the later part of the passage seems to refer back to Aristotle's discussion of dialectic in the Topics (101b1-5; 104a3-105a25). The only explanation suggested by commentators for these contradictory tendencies is McKeon's remark that Cicero "used the dialectic of the New Academy to reconcile the doctrines of the philosophers, and he proposed to return 'wisdom' to the close connections with 'eloquence,' and therefore to its influence on the lives of men" in order to "bring philosophy down from the skies and to give it a place in the habitations and cities of men."[2]

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[1] Trans. H. Rackham, (Cambridge: Harvard Univ. Press, 1968).

[2] Richard McKeon, "Dialectic and Political Thought and Action," p. 8. The difference between Ciceronian and Platonic dialectic may also be due to the different cosmological and epistemological status that Cicero accords the forms. At the close of the Orator, Cicero writes he and Brutus may arrive at different, but equally true, conceptions of the ideal orator. Further, Cicero admits that the ideal orator "might be different at different times" (lxxi. 237-238). Sandys says here, "Thus the ideal in oratory turns out to be something very far from the permanent and unchanging . . . it is not 'objective' but 'subjective,' and as such it has no claim to be a true ideal in Plato's sense of the term." I confess I do not know what to make of this passage. Given the supporting passages in Cicero's account of the soul in On the Commonwealth, his account of the nature of

Whatever the nature of Ciceronian dialectic, what emerges is Cicero's belief that rhetoric is not a method for discovering knowledge, that philosophy is the source of all genuine eloquence. And whatever the nature of knowledge and dialectic it is also evident that Cicero believes that few are capable of attaining knowledge. In On the Commonwealth, Cicero argues:

> nature has contrived to make the men who are superior in courage and ability rule over the weak, and the weak willing to submit themselves to the best. This perfect relationship has been overthrown, according to the partisans of aristocracy, by the false notions that prevail about human excellence. For, as few men possess excellence, so few are able to recognize and judge it (I. xxxiv).

Shortly thereafter, Cicero paraphrases Plato's account of the tyranny of democracy at the Republic 562ff (I. xlii-xliv). Those whom Cicero calls "the weak" are unable to discipline the appetitive elements within their souls, and "because they can in no way be appeased or satisfied, there is no crime to which they do not drive those whom their enticements have ensnared" (VI. i). Those with genuine knowledge are able to tame the appetites so that reason guides the soul (VI. xxiv), while those without such knowledge are condemned to a wretched existence. Like Plato, Cicero takes the position that the soul is fragmented into competing elements, that happiness depends on the harmony of these elements, a harmony produced only through knowledge. And, like Plato, Cicero argues that such knowledge is possessed only by a few.[1]

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[2] knowledge in De Oratore, and his method of procedure in the Orator, I am tempted to argue that this is a kind of necessary concession to humility and broad-mindedness that one often finds in a conclusion. It seems to me that Cicero is attempting to avoid charges of dogmatism (though he does assert that his conception of the ideal orator seems "most like the truth"). But even if all this is granted, it does raise serious questions about Cicero's adaptation of Plato's philosophy.

[1] This is reflected in the discussion of Cicero's condemnation of poetry, below.

Prerequisites for Rhetoric

For Cicero, as for Plato, the intelligible forms have axiological significance. The statesman, by the power of his reason, is constrained to make over the state so that the multitudes do not harm themselves and the state by their uncontrolled appetites. In On the Commonwealth, Cicero argues:

> Similarly the goal set before the ideal ruler of the commonwealth is the happiness of his citizens; and he strives to make them secure in their resources, rich in wealth, great in renown, distinguished in virtue. This is the task--the greatest and noblest in human life--that I would have the governor carry through to completion (V. vi).

And again:

> He has in fact scarcely more than this single duty--for it includes nearly everything else--that he should never abandon the study and contemplation of himself; that he should challenge others to imitate him; and that by the nobility of his mind and conduct he should hold himself up to his fellow citizens as a model. For, as in the music of lyre and flute and as even in singing and spoken discourse there is a certain melody which must be preserved in the different sounds--and if this is altered or discordant it becomes intolerable to the ears of the connoisseur--and as this melody is made concordant and harmonious in spite of the dissimilar sounds of which it is composed, so the state achieves harmony by the agreement of unlike individuals, when there is a wise blending of the highest, the lowest, and the intervening middle classes in the manner of tones. And what musicians call harmony in song is concord in a state (II. xlii).[1]

Cicero regards the state and the soul to be analogous (I. xxxviii).[2] Just as the soul is immortal when it is nourished by reason, so the highest goal of the state is to endure, preserved by reason (III. iv). Just as the

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[1] Sabine and Smith, p. 194, n. 114, argue that this is a reference to Republic 443d.

[2] See Sabine and Smith, p. 144, n. 104.

individual soul is rendered harmonious by reason, the state can be made permanent and harmonious by the statesman. Sabine and Smith conclude:

> (1) In principle human society is based upon the rational nature of man which is akin to universal reason; (2) reason in the wise man has dominion over the passions and perturbations of the soul which are like wild beasts when uncontrolled; (3) the wise man who has reduced his own soul to harmony is the only fit ruler of the state; (4) as the soul is a harmony when ruled by reason, so the state is a harmony of its various classes united by justice.[1]

Cicero seems to be consciously emulating Plato in this regard. In a letter, he writes, "Moreover, in a matter affecting the state, I could not but mark the inspired words in the writings of my master Plato 'as are the leaders in a commonwealth, so are the citizens apt to be' (Laws 711c)."[2]

Of course, the method by which the statesman renders the state harmonious is rhetoric. While the multitude may be incapable of attaining wisdom, they can be delighted and controlled through the medium of rhetoric. In De Oratore, Cicero argues, "there is to my mind no more excellent thing than the power, by means of oratory, to get a hold on assemblies of men, win their good will, direct their inclinations wherever the speaker wishes, or divert them from whatever he wishes" (I. vii. 30).[3] While rhetoric does not have the power to discover knowledge, it can be used to inspire right conduct in society. Cicero considers rhetoric to be the broad art of persuading citizens to act according to the dictates of

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[1] P. 191.

[2] The Letters to His Friends, Vol. 1, trans. W. Glynn Williams, (Cambridge: Harvard Univ. Press, 1965), I. ix. 12.

[3] Compare, in Plato, Statesman 304, Laws 663-664, and Laws 720d-723a.

wisdom. In De Oratore, Crassus, who speaks for Cicero,[1] has his position summarized by Antonius thus: "Now our friend Crassus seems to me to delimit the range of the orator, not by the bounds of the art concerned, but by the wellnigh infinite extent of his own talent. For by his verdict he even handed over to the orator the helm of statesmanship" (I. xlix. 214). And further:

> For, while nearly all the other arts can look after themselves, the art of speaking well, that is to say, of speaking with knowledge, skill and elegance, has no delimited territory, within whose borders it is enclosed and confined. All things whatsoever, that can fall under the discussion of human beings, must be aptly dealt with by him who professes to have this power, or he must abandon the name of eloquent (De Oratore II. ii. 5, emphasis mine).

In this respect, Cicero preserves the rather broad scope for rhetoric that was implicit in Plato. Cicero continues the close association between rhetoric and poetic, arguing that the two arts are closely allied (Orator xx. 68; De Oratore I. xvi. 69-71).

Like Plato, Cicero believes that if rhetoric is used without knowledge, it is capable of great harm. Therefore, throughout his works, he calls for a rhetoric based on wisdom. This represents a considerable retreat from the standards Plato established for rhetoric, although many tendencies toward similar standards are present. However, Cicero is as harsh as Plato in his treatment of the poets:

> By their clamorous approval and applause, the people mould the character of the poets according to their will--as if the public were some great and wise master whose praise is all-sufficient. But when poets are so highly extolled, what darkness they bring into the soul! What fears they incite! What passions they enkindle! They present debauchery and adultery in a

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[1] See Sutton and Rackham, Intro. to De Oratore, p. xiii.

> pleasing manner; they rehearse varied forms of deception; they teach theft, robbery, and arson. Every example of evil which exists, or has existed, or can be imagined, they lay before the eyes of the illiterate rabble. No heavenly conflagration, no flood, no earthquake has spread devastation among men comparable to the ruin which poets have brought upon morality (On the Commonwealth IV. ix).

And Cicero concludes, "though our law of the Twelve Tables had established capital punishment for only a very few offenses, it was deemed necessary that in this small number should be included also the offense of making pasquinade or composing a song which was defamatory or libellous. It was an excellent law. For our modes of life ought to be subjected to the decisions of magistrates and the processes of law rather than to the fancies of poets" (IV. x).

It is the function of all the arts to "direct the soul toward excellence."[1] When the poets speak without knowledge, they are condemned. So too are ignorant rhetoricians. In On the Commonwealth, Cicero argues: "I, at least, feel that a man who directs his eloquence to corrupt ends really does more harm than one who corrupts a judge by money, because, while no honest man can be seduced by money, he may be corrupted by a specious plea" (V. ix). I believe that this is the reason for the oft-cited passage with which Cicero opens De Inventione:

> For my part, after long thought, I have been led by reason itself to hold this opinion first and foremost, that wisdom without eloquence does too little for the good of states, but that eloquence without wisdom is generally highly disadvantageous and never helpful. . . . And if one had to choose between them, for my part, I should prefer wisdom lacking in the power of expression to talkative folly (I. i).[2]

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[1] Sabine and Smith, p. 241.

[2] Sandys renders the passage, "the study of the things of heaven will give the mind a loftier tone, so that when he turns to the things of earth all his langauge and his thoughts will acquire a fresh elevation and grandeur" (p. 123). Philosophy invests expression with eloquence, providing a pragmatic reason for the orator to study philosophy.

Cicero reduces Plato's preconditions for the use of rhetoric (that the rhetor have philosophic knowledge, that rhetoric serve the end of justice, and that the rhetor engage in a prior dialectic) to the single requirement that the rhetorician study philosophy. This claim is repeated throughout Cicero's works.

Aside from the axiological reasons, there are practical reasons for the rhetor to know and serve philosophy. Cicero thought that there was a necessary relationship between philosophical knowledge and eloquence. Plato's words in the Phaedrus, "your artist must cultivate garrulity and high flown speculation; from that source alone can come the mental elevation and thoroughly finished execution of what you are thinking" (270a), are echoed by Cicero in the Orator: "it is desirable that the oratory should have a subject worthy of a cultivated audience before he considers the language or style of expression. It is also desirable that he should not be ignorant of natural philosophy either, which will impart grandeur and loftiness" (xxxiv. 119). Earlier in the Orator, Cicero refers back to the same passage in the Phaedrus: "no one can discuss great and varied subjects in a copious and eloquent style without philosophy" (iv. 14).[1] If the speaker is to achieve the full measure of eloquence, he must have

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[1] Cicero refers here to the relationship between Pericles and Anaxagoras described at the Phaedrus 269e. (See Hendrickson and Hubbell, p. 314, n. a.) Cicero continues, "in Plato's Phaedrus Socrates says that Pericles surpassed other orators because he was a pupil of Anaxagoras, the natural philosopher. From him Socrates thinks that Pericles learned much that was splendid and sublime, and acquired copiousness and fertility, and--most important to eloquence--knowledge of the kind of speech which arouses each set of feelings" (Orator iv. 15). The link between philosophy and eloquence is also supported by Cicero's belief that Demosthenes, whom Cicero regarded as the most accomplished orator the world had yet produced, derived much of his talent from the study of Plato. While the letter upon which Cicero bases his claim is now regarded as a forgery (Sandys, p. 17, Hendrickson and Hubbell, p. 108), what is important is Cicero's belief that such a relationship existed.

studied philosophy which alone can develop the full range of rhetorical talent. The objects of the intelligible infuse language with a unique power; they elevate rhetoric from the vulgarity of the empirical realm. Insofar as possible, therefore, the rhetor should strive to imitate the intelligible through language to achieve the greatest possible eloquence.

Cicero argues that if the rhetor is to become eloquent, he must study philosophy. That study will employ the method of philosophy, (mostly Aristotelian) dialectic, and will impart to the rhetor knowledge of the forms. With this wisdom, the statesman can persuade the multitude to act according to the dictates of reason. In this limited sense, Cicero reproduces the prerequisites for rhetorical practice established by Plato. It must be remembered, however, that Ciceronian standards represent a considerable retreat from the standards established by Plato. For Plato, fulfilling the prerequisites was an absolute precondition for the use of rhetoric, while for Cicero, they represented a standard for the best practice. Where Plato would demand that the rhetor have philosophic knowledge of his subject, aim to achieve justice in the state and the individual, and employ dialectical investigation in preparing his speech, Cicero does not expect to find all of these qualities in any single orator. While Cicero hopes that these qualities will be present in any rhetorician, he is realistic enough to expect to find them only among the best.

Summary

Cicero is a pivotal figure in the Platonic tradition. In the previous chapters, I have outlined Plato's main contribution to rhetorical theory. If, as I have postulated, all rhetorical theory is founded on claims about human ontology, epistemology, and axiology, then there should be significant similarities in these areas between Cicero and Plato.

Plato and Cicero share an important assumption about human ontology. Each assumes that all human beings are born with an a priori knowledge of the intelligible but because of conflict within the soul, few attain knowledge. The process of acquiring knowledge, therefore, requires that the individual awaken the knowledge stored within the mind. The process of becoming educated is not so much one of acquiring new information as one of learning to use the information that one already possesses to the best advantage. Human beings are persuadable, for Cicero, because they seek such knowledge; they seek to quell the disquiet within the soul. Human beings respond to rhetoric because it is able to accomplish this end. Of course this means that, for Cicero as for Plato, rhetoric is an extremely broad art which encompasses all forms of persuasive speech. While both Cicero and Plato distrust poetry because it tends to inflame the passions instead of cultivating reason, both see a close link between rhetoric and poetic because poetic is a source of delight and, thus, an important means of persuasion.

This ontological similarity leads to similarities in epistemology. Both Plato and Cicero hold that knowledge is logically and temporally prior to human beings and is not to be discovered or awakened through sensory investigation. Rather, knowledge depends on philosophic investigation of the intelligible forms, on the method of philosophy, dialectic. Only the study of philosophy could yield an account of the intelligible. Thus Cicero argued that "philosophy is essential to a full, copious and impressive discussion and exposition of the subjects which so often come up in speeches and are usually treated meagrely, whether they concern religion, death, piety, patriotism, good and evil, virtues and vices, duty, pain, pleasure, or mental disturbances and errors" (Orator xxxiii. 118).

If the rhetorician is to speak wisely on such matters as these, he must study philosophy because, as Cicero argues, rhetoric has no power to engender or produce any thing of itself that did not previously exist within the understanding of the speaker. Rhetoric is not a method of discovering knowledge, but of making such knowledge accessible and of securing agreement with its dictates.

For both Plato and Cicero, rhetoric has an axiological function: it must be used to promote the well being of society. Philosophic knowledge is necessary for the welfare of states, but without rhetoric, it has little hope of actualization. Rhetoric gives impetus to the truth discovered by philosophy. Cicero's demand that the rhetor study philosophy and Plato's prerequisites for the practice of rhetoric aim to insure that rhetoric is used only to further the best interests of society.

However, Cicero is a problematic figure who does not fit neatly into the Platonic tradition. While he seems to accept many of Plato's positions, he is skeptical that philosophy can, by itself, discover truth which is both intellectually and morally compelling. If such a truth could be discovered, it could not be demonstrated to be true according to any logical scheme. In the realm of human affairs, this meant that probability became the basis for human action in the empirical world. Hence Ciceronian dialectic aimed at discovering rules of inference, definition, and classification, but did not pretend to discover immutable truth which could compel intellectual assent. For this reason, Cicero is able to adapt a good deal of Aristotelian and Isocratean rhetorical theory to his purposes as well. Yet Cicero is a pivotal figure because his works preserved many of Plato's ideas. Through the work of Cicero, medieval and modern theorists, even those without access to classical texts, became acquainted with essential elements of the Platonic rhetorical tradition.

Chapter V

Augustine, Fénelon, and the Platonic Tradition

As described by Plato, rhetoric was an extremely broad art, encompassing all persuasive language. Furthermore, because speech imitated human thought, it was a very powerful art--proper imitation through speech provided a facsimile of knowledge while improper imitation caused the degeneration of both the individual and the state. Hence, Plato believed that rhetoric had to be carefully regulated in order to ensure that it was used only to support the universal good. Practiced properly, rhetoric was one way that the statesman could produce order and happiness in the state. For Plato, the proper use of rhetoric demanded that rhetoric and language be governed by philosophy which alone could provide insight into the forms, permanent and enduring, that were the only source of genuine knowledge. The forms were knowable only through intellection: lying dormant within the memory, they could be brought to full consciousness through dialectic. Dialectic, an art of language, discoverd and assigned proper names to the forms, names which shared in the essence of the forms themselves. These names, when used by the rhetorician, were persuasive because of their accurate imitation of the forms: lofty thought infused human speech with supernatural eloquence. Therefore, the rhetorician depended upon the philosopher for both the material and the language of rhetoric. And for Plato, rhetoric should never draw its conclusions indifferently. The consequences of any attempt at persuasion were simply too important to permit such detachment.

Cicero continued important aspects of Platonic rhetorical theory. Rhetoric still served an a priori epistemology which was discovered and understood through the methods of philosophy. Cicero clearly articulated the purposes Plato established for rhetoric: teaching and entertainment, in addition to persuasion, were legitimate functions of the art. And, as might be expected from the foregoing, Cicero preserved rhetoric as the broad art, closely allied with poetic, of persuasion through language. In spite of these important similarities, however, Platonic rhetorical theory was diluted considerably by Cicero. The Platonic forms had lost much of their epistemic and axiological status--no longer did they command intellectual and moral obedience. The link between language and reality was lost, and Cicero's prescriptions for the rhetor took on the quality of advice rather than retaining the imperative status which Plato had given them. As a result, the tradition which emerged from Cicero was weaker than the theory articulated by Plato. In spite of this fact, later theorists were to move closer to, rather than further from, Plato's original theory of rhetoric, due largely to the force of Christianity which had the power to command both intellectual and moral assent from its adherents. Christian theology, when combined with Greek philosophy, created circumstances in which Platonic rhetorical theory could prosper.

Greek Philosophy and Christian Theology

Greek philosophy, from the time of Pythagoras and culminating in the works of Plato, anticipated many of the concerns and ideas which were to characterize Christian theology in the centuries immediately following the death of Cicero. Plato's notion of an intelligible world of perfect and enduring Forms, directed by the idea of the Good, from which the soul

derived what knowledge it had of virtue and justice, was especially attractive, not only to early Christian theologians but to later students of Plato's philosophy for whom the theological implications promised a fulfillment missing in life since the demise of the Olympian deities.[1] Platonists postulated a spirit of the One which unified and directed the cosmos and prepared the Greek mind for the advent of Christianity. The early theologians of the Church, Clement and Origen, grew up in a culture in which:

> All the traditions, pagan and Christian, were reinterpreted to make them acceptable to the men of the new age. They began to remember that it had been Plato who made the world of the soul visible for the first time to the inner eye of man, and they realized how radically that discovery had changed human life. So, on their way upward, Plato became the guide who turned their eyes from material and sensual reality to the immaterial world in which the nobler-minded of the human race were to make their home.[2]

As neoplatonist thinkers such as Plotinus began to reinterpret the works of Plato in theological terms, Platonic cosmology came to resemble early Christianity. A brief review of the thought of Plotinus reveals the extent of the similarity:

> The centre of all existence is the One, the First or the Absolute, which Plotinus identified with the Good of Plato, and which is the God who is beyond all being. From the One's self-knowledge emanates Intelligence, called the Logos or the Word, containing the immaterial Ideas--the Platonic Forms--of all created things. From the Logos again imitates the World Soul. These three, the One, the Logos and the World Soul, form a triad. The external universe, as we experience it, owes its being to the imposition of the divine ideas on matter, which is the bare receptacle of forms, the 'subject of energy viewed by

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[1] Werner Jaeger, Early Christianity and Greek Paideia, (London: Oxford Univ. Press, 1961), pp. 44-46.

[2] Jaeger, p. 46.

> abstraction as existing apart from the energy which gives it meaning and existence. It is not "material"; it is that intangible all-but-nothing which remains when we abstract from an object of thought all that makes it a possible object of thought.' The human soul, lowest and last in the hierarchy of spiritual beings, has yet a memory of its divine origin, and the life of man should be a liberation from the fetters of this earthly life and a flight to the one--a way of ascent and ecstasy for the few capable of it, and a way of discipline and purgation for the many, who are incapable of the higher way.[1]

Plotinus, and his biographer Porphyry, were to exert enormous influence on the development of Christianity and the thought of St. Augustine. Christianity provided substance for the revival in the arts and sciences that had been occasioned by the growing popularity of Neoplatonist doctrine. Jaeger notes, for example, that "we have in the fourth century A.D., the age of the great fathers of the church, a true renaissance that has given Greco-Roman literature some of its greatest personalities, figures who have exercised a lasting influence on the history and culture of later centuries down to the present day."[2] From the standpoint of rhetorical theory, this was an immensely important development because it tended to combine the best elements of the classical education with the new theology.[3] Rhetoric, especially, was to benefit from its association with Christianity, which rescued rhetoric from the doldrums of the second sophistic. Perhaps more importantly, for the first time since Cicero, Platonic epistemology was combined with rhetorical theory. Even if Plato himself had seen no use for rhetoric, the neoplatonic Christians, requiring

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[1] Gerald Bonner, St. Augustine of Hippo, (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1963), pp. 80-1.

[2] Jaeger, p. 75.

[3] Jaeger, p. 125.

a means by which to popularize the Logos, seized rhetoric as an instrument of instruction and conversion.[1]

In spite of the obvious utility of rhetoric for Christian theology, in the second and third centuries A.D., all aspects of secular culture were being reexamined for possible conflicts with Church doctrine. It was felt by some that secular literature diverted attention from Scripture, recommended lifestyles contrary to Christian precepts, and somehow, subtly, worked to poison the spirit.[2] Rhetoric came under attack because of the excesses of the second sophistic; philosophy was suspect both for its tendency toward skepticism and for the primacy assigned reason over faith. In the midst of this controversy, Augustine came to Christianity.

It is known that, prior to his conversion, Augustine taught Ciceronian rhetoric.[3] Through Cicero, Augustine acquired a taste for philosophy, and it was through Cicero that Augustine first became acquainted with the works of Plato.[4] It is thought that Augustine had no firsthand acquaintance with the writings of Plato; the knowledge he had came from the works of Cicero, from Latin translations of Plato, and from the neoplatonist, Plotinus.[5] Yet Plato was perhaps the single greatest influence, aside from Scripture, on the thought of Augustine.

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[1] See Jaeger's account of the letter of Clement of Rome to the Corinthians, pp. 12-26.

[2] James Murphy, Rhetoric in the Middle Ages, (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1974), pp. 48-50.

[3] Murphy, pp. 47, 62.

[4] Bonner, p. 73.

[5] Karl Jaspers, Plato and Augustine, trans. R. Mannheim, (New York: Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich, 1962), p. 69.

There is no doubt that Augustine adopted a Platonic epistemology.[1] Essentially, he viewed Christianity as the fulfillment of Platonic metaphysics. Ronald Nash describes the Platonic elements of Augustinian epistemology:

> The most obvious analogy at this point is Plato's doctrine of the form of the Good. In what may be his most difficult thought to interpret Plato referred to the form of the good as the highest form /Nash uses the term "form" loosely--Plato explicitly denies that the idea of Good is a form. See the Republic 509b/. He spoke of it as the cause of the other forms. The latter become known only insofar as they were illumined by the idea of good. As Augustine interpreted the form of the good as God, this reminded him of the relationship between his God and the eternal truths. God is the eternal and immutable cause (in the sense of ontological ground) of the forms and the cause (in the sense of the efficient cause) of the spatio-temporal world patterned after the forms. The forms or rationes aeternae are thus eternal truths and must not be confused with the particular things that are said to be true, but the eternal truths must also be distinguished from the truth that is God.[2]

Augustine adopts Plato's distinction between the empirical world and the intelligible realm of the forms but does not share Plato's disdain for the sensible because such knowledge is necessary for practical action in the world. However, to comprehend the sensible world fully, it is necessary to know the forms after which sensible objects are patterned. Implicitly, such an epistemology produces a theory of rhetoric which takes its material from the intelligible realm and uses it to achieve practical ends in the empirical world. Augustine's division of reality and knowledge into intelligible and empirical realms necessitates a rhetoric which is informed by the intelligible but works in the empirical world. This produces a

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[1] B. Darrell Jackson, "The Theory of Signs in St. Augustine's De Doctrina Christiana," in R. A. Markus ed. Augustine, (New York: Doubleday, 1972), p. 128.

[2] The Light of the Mind, (Lexington: Univ. of Kentucky Press, 1969), p. 23.

rhetoric in the Platonic tradition--very similar to the rhetoric which emerges from Cicero's Orator. Jackson places Augustine in the tradition of Plato and Cicero when he argues, "if rhetors had followed the best of Cicero, as Augustine does in De doctrina IV, instead of the worst (namely, De inuentione /sic/)," rhetors would be well versed in both language and logic.[1] When Augustine came to the Church and joined the controversy over the utility of secular learning, he came with a sound classical education, with a background in both Neoplatonic philosophy and Ciceronian rhetoric. The interaction of these aspects of Augustine's training informs his De doctrina Christiana, a treatise on the discovery and teaching of Christian doctrine (I. 1. 1.; IV. 1).[2]

Augustinian Rhetoric

Augustine's rhetoric has been labeled "Ciceronian" because he spent his early years as a teacher of Ciceronian rhetoric.[3] Yet, in many respects, Augustine's theory of rhetoric is closer to Plato's theory than

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[1] Jackson, p. 117.

[2] Augustine, De doctrina Christiana, trans. D. W. Robertson, Jr., (New York: Library of Liberal Arts, 1958). All quotations are from this translation unless otherwise noted.

[3] Even if Augustine were a strict Ciceronian, he could not have escaped the Platonic influence on Cicero, especially as he was familiar with De Oratore and the Orator. Augustine did borrow from Cicero, but in the service of his own theory of rhetoric, which he constructed to suit his unique goals. Augustine's theory of rhetoric resembles Plato's, not so much because he was intimately familiar with Platonic doctrine, but because, sharing Plato's epistemology, his rhetoric could not differ substantially. Whenever rhetoric is pressed to serve an a priori epistemology, the theory of rhetoric which emerges has to resemble Plato's. The extent and significance of the resemblance depends, of course, on a number of other factors, including the theory of language, the ethical implications of the prior doctrine, the amount of control exercised over the rhetorician, etc.

was Cicero's. This is not unexpected because Augustine thought he had found, in Christian theology, the full and complete articulation of Plato's philosophic ideals. In Augustine's scheme, rhetoric merely shifted from the service of the ideal state to the service of the kingdom of God, a shift which proved considerably less difficult than the transition from the ideal state to the Roman courts. In most respects, Augustine seems to develop precepts directly suited to the task he set for the rhetor: to make the intelligible world of God known to humanity. His theory of rhetoric is his own; the fact that he synthesizes material from Cicero and Plato places Augustine's theory of rhetoric in the Platonic tradition.[1]

The Nature of Rhetoric

Augustine nowhere specifically defines what he means by "rhetoric," but there are indications that he considers rhetoric to be "the art of persuasion," broadly conceived. In order to accomplish his ends, the rhetor may "reason," "instruct," "exhort," "rebuke," or use "whatever other devices are necessary to move minds" (IV. 4. 6). Aside from the

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[1] Perhaps the clearest statements about Augustine's understanding of Plato occur in De civitas Dei. In Book VIII, Augustine spends 20 chapters comparing various facets of Platonic philosophy both in relation to pagan philosophy and to the doctrines of Christianity. Though Augustine differs with Plato in some respects (most of which are relatively minor, from a philosophical perspective), he concludes:

> "this, then is the reason for preferring the Platonists to all other philosophers. While the others consumed time and talent in seeking the causes of things, and the right ways of learning and living, the Platonists, once they knew God, discovered where to find the cause by which the universe was made, the light by which all truth is seen, the fountain from which true happiness flows" (VIII. 10).

See Saint Augustine, The City of God, 3 vols., trans. Gerald G. Walsh and Grace Monahan, (New York: The Fathers of the Church, 1952).

usual stock of commonplaces and figures contained in the repertoire of any rhetorician, Augustine would have the rhetor borrow from the poets. For Augustine, the methods and manner of poetry are integral to rhetoric. He takes Scripture to be the supreme example of eloquence; it is the model after which human eloquence is fashioned. And Scripture, says Augustine, is full of figurative language: figures and tropes, allegory, etc., are all found in Scripture and are a source of considerable ambiguity (III. 5. 9). In order to resolve that ambiguity, the rhetor must understand the resources of ambiguity. This means that the rhetor must undertake a hermeneutic analysis in order to uncover the essential meaning of Scripture (III. 27. 38). Furthermore, hermeneutics has an epistemic function: it is a way of knowing the intelligible realm. Throughout this process, the rhetor is interested not only in the matter, but the style of Scripture. In part, hermeneutic analysis will be literary in nature. Insofar as Scripture is an example of rhetorical eloquence, the rhetor will necessarily borrow some of its literary devices when speaking to a worldly audience. Augustine makes a special point, for example, of commending rhythmic closings when used moderately (IV. 20. 41). Thus poetic was instrumental to both the process of invention, in which knowledge is derived from Scripture, and to the process of rhetorical construction. In the Platonic tradition, rhetoric and poetic are both arts of persuasion designed to inculcate right conduct. They share many of the same ends and methods and, while not precisely identical, they are, nevertheless, closely related.

Functions of Rhetoric

Augustine succinctly described the function of the rhetor. He wrote that:

> The expositor and teacher of the Divine Scripture, the defender of right faith and the enemy of error, should both teach good and extirpate the evil. And in this labor of words, he should conciliate those who are opposed, arouse those who are remiss, and teach those ignorant of his subject what is occurring and what they should expect (IV. 4. 6).[1]

Rhetoric was useful in communicating Scripture to those unable to understand the Word and in impelling those who know Scripture to act in accordance with its dictates. Rhetoric does this in three ways: through instruction, through delight, and through persuasion. By instruction, Augustine simply means didactic teaching; delight refers to the pleasure that accompanies language and the truth it reveals. Persuasion is used here to mean "moral guidance" in the sense than an audience may be assisted in "putting what they know into practice" (IV. 4. 6). Accomplishing these ends constitutes the "obligation" of the Christian rhetor, the rhetor is obliged to inculcate the lessons of Scripture.

Augustine is concerned that all human beings live in accord with the commands of Scripture. In this sense, all Christian rhetoric attempts to influence the actions of people. Nevertheless, "instruction should come before persuasion. And perhaps when the necessary things are learned, they may be so moved by a knowledge of them that it is not necessary to move

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[1] Gavigan has these lines:

> It is an obligation of the commentator and teacher of the Sacred Scriptures, the defender of the true faith and the conqueror of error, both to teach right and to correct wrong. Accordingly, this work of speaking obliges him to win over opponents, to arouse the negligent, and to inform the ignorant of what is happening now and of what they should look for (IV. 4. 6).

Christian Instruction (De doctrina Christiana), trans. John J. Gavigan, (New York: Cima Publishing Co., 1947). Gavigan conveys the sense of duty implicit within Augustine's charge to the Christian rhetor, though I believe the same points to be implicit in the Robertson version.

them by greater powers of eloquence" (IV. 12. 28). However, Augustine is not sanguine about the prospect of the multitude understanding complex interpretations of Scripture. He writes:

> Yes, it is a great and difficult achievement for the mind to behold these truths, even though it has reached a state of peaceful tranquility. Consequently, those who are too intent upon earthly generation cannot possibly conceive of these matters. And to the darkness of their ignorance they further add smoke, which they are incessantly raising up by their daily wrangling and strife. Having spent their souls upon sense pleasures, they are like dampened pieces of wood in which the fire cannot give forth bright flames, but only smoke (17. 20).[1]

This greatly complicates the business of teaching. Augustine recommends that everything in a speech teach something directly, by imparting information, or indirectly, by serving as a model. In its use of models, Augustine's rhetoric is particularly reminiscent of Plato's and Cicero's. For an ignorant audience, a model can be more useful than direct instruction (IV. 9. 23). In addition, to simplify matters further, Augustine recommends that the rhetor adopt colloquial forms of expression, rather than relying on formal Latin. As Augustine remarks, "What benefit is a purity of speech which the understanding of the hearer does not follow? . . ." (IV. 10. 24).[2]

In both form and substance, rhetoric is intended to teach. Scripture, for example, is a teaching tool insofar as it commends itself as a model of eloquence (IV. 5. 7). Just as Scripture is a model of eloquence, so the rhetor should serve as a model of eloquence for his audience (IV. 3.

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[1] The Christian Combat, trans. Robert P. Russell, (New York: Cima Publishing Co., 1947).

[2] De doctrina Christiana, Gavigan trans.

5). This is one of the reasons for the close alliance between poetry and rhetoric. The ambiguity of poetic is a helpful device; it leads the mind from the contemplation of the particular to the abstract, a necessary process if the mind is to free itself from the particulars of the empirical realm to comprehend the timeless ideas of the intelligible. Augustine derides those who would admit no figurative component to language: "There is a miserable servitude of the spirit in this habit of taking signs for things, so that one is not able to raise the eye of the mind above things that are corporal and created to drink in eternal light" (III. 5. 9). Augustine realizes that a certain amount of "healthful obscurity" contributes to greater understanding (IV. 8. 22). The orator does not cultivate obscurity for its own sake, but seeks to understand the inherent ambiguity of Scripture. In all human speech, the primary objective is clarity: subtlety is reserved for God. Augustine's maxim is that "He who teaches should avoid all words which do not teach" (IV. 10. 24). The rhetor is to be the living embodiment of the word of God, so that both conduct and speech serve as examples of the Scriptural commands. In essence, the rhetor attempts, through words and actions, to live the dictates of Scripture in the temporal community "so that he offers an example to others, and his way of living may be, as it were, eloquent speech" (IV. 29. 61). The life of the Christian rhetor is intended as an epideictic oration in praise of Scripture. Augustine's rhetoric in this respect is similar to Plato's: the Christian rhetor and the philosopher-king are both expected to be models in word and deed for the communities they lead.

When teaching fails to result in correct action, greater powers of persuasion are necessary because "men may act and still not act in accordance with what they know" (IV. 12. 27). Above all, Augustine wishes to

guide human action so that Christians do not act in a manner contrary to the dictates of Scripture, just as Plato attempted to regulate life in his Republic. The attempt to persuade borders on an attempt to control the actions and the beliefs of the Christian community. Augustine remarks, for example, that:

> When what is being taught must be carried out, and when the teaching occurs for that very reason, we are uselessly persuaded of the truth of what is said and uselessly pleased by the very manner in which it is said, if we do not learn it in such a way that we practice it. Therefore, the Christian orator, when he is urging something that must be put into practice, must not only teach in order to instruct, and please in order to hold attention, but must also persuade in order that he may be victorious (IV. 13. 29).[1]

As with Plato, there is an element of compulsion in Augustinian philosophy. The rhetor has a duty to persuade the community to act properly. Persuasion is viewed as a type of compulsion, an irresistible force which will inculcate a desire for correct action. When words fail, Augustine does not hesitate to resort to coercion. In a letter to Vincentius, Augustine explains how he arrived at this position:

> Originally my opinion was, that no one should be coerced into the unity to Christ, that we must act only by words, fight only by arguments, and prevail by force of reason, lest we should have those whom we knew as avowed heretics feigning themselves to be Catholics. But this opinion of mine was overcome not by the words of those who controverted it, but by the conclusive instances to which they could point /from both personal experience and Scripture/.[2]

Augustine argues that the combination of "salutary fear" and "wholesome instruction" work to "break the bonds of evil custom."[3] Hence, Augustine's

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[1] Gavigan translation.

[2] The Letters of Saint Augustine, Vol. 1, edited and trans. Marcus Dodds, (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1872), Letter 93 (V. 17).

[3] Letter 93 (I. 3).

justification for the use of force is that "the bad will of man may receive right guidance. . . . Therefore, those we love are not to be cruelly abandoned without restriction to their own evil will, but, when possible, they are to be restrained from doing evil and forced to do good."[1] The purpose of persuasion is to restrain evil and foster the good. Essentially, this is what Augustine attempts in The City of God. Like Plato, he sought to save mankind by making the real resemble, as much as possible, the ideal.[2] However, insofar as people refused to think and act correctly, that goal was impossible. Etienne Gilson notes, "The City of God, however, could tolerate but one /theology/, namely, the one whose acceptance guaranteed its unity as well as its very existence. Whoever is at variance with this doctrine breaks the bond of the City."[3] Hence it became the duty of the Christian rhetor to ensure uniformity of thought and action. John Figgis concluded, "The State is to use force. That is its duty. It is to extend the province of the Kingdom of God on earth."[4] In De doctrina Christiana, Augustine explains the implications of this duty to persuade, to compel belief and action:

> Just as the listener is to be delighted if he is to be retained as a listener, so also he is to be persuaded if he is to be moved to act. And just as he is delighted if you speak sweetly, so is he persuaded if he loves what you promise, fears what you threaten, hates what you condemn, embraces what you commend, sorrows at what you maintain to be sorrowful; rejoices when you announce something

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[1] Letters, v. 4, trans. Wilfried Parsons, (New York: Fathers of the Church, 1955), letter 173 (to Donatus).

[2] The City of God, 3 vols. trans. D. Zema and G. Walsh; intro. Etienne Gilson, (New York: The Fathers of the Church, 1950). See especially book XIX.

[3] Gilson, intro. to The City of God, p. lxx.

[4] The Political Aspects of S. Augustine's 'City of God,' (Gloucester: Peter Smith, 1963), p. 78.

> delightful, takes pity on those whom you place before him in speaking as being pitiful, flees those whom you, moving fear, warn are to be avoided; and is moved by whatever else may be done through grand eloquence toward moving the minds of the listeners, not that they may know what is to be done, but that they may do what they already know should be done (IV. 12. 27, emphasis mine).[1]

Just as in Plato, there is a totalitarian element in the rhetoric of Augustine.[2] While it is evident that Augustine prefers instruction, the ability to direct the actions of the audience seems to be the ultimate test of eloquence.

The ability to delight the audience, to entertain them, is useful primarily as an adjunct to teaching and moral suasion. None of the goals of rhetoric can be accomplished if the rhetor is not heard and heard willingly. The task of delighting the audience is simplified by the fact that to hear the Truth of Scripture is delightful in itself. The resources of delight are found in Scripture: they include many poetic and dramatic devices such as allegory, metaphor, and irony. However, it is evident that the manner of speech is important only as an adjunct to the primary tasks of rhetoric, instruction and persuasion.

Augustine combines all of these functions (instruction, persuasion, and entertainment) in every speech (IV. 26. 56). All rhetoric should simultaneously teach, delight, and inculcate moral behavior; above all else, rhetoric should direct human attention to the Scripture. And there is the same kind of singleness of purpose here that manifests itself in

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[1] Compare Plato's passage at Laws 664a where the entire community will treat topics in precisely the same manner. Augustine's goal here seems to be a similar type of doctrinal uniformity.

[2] Augustine does not go as far as Plato--there is no evidence that he would condemn anyone to death (and in Letter 133 he urges clemency for Donatists convicted of murder). Nevertheless, he does sanction banishment, deprivation, and beating.

the kind of censorship found in Plato: all Christian rhetoric must serve the tenets of Church doctrine, all other expression is forbidden. According to Augustine, "we are bound to hold firmly this rule, 'If any preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed'" (VII. 23).[1] There can be no toleration of doctrinal error for such error condemns the soul of human beings. This conviction is behind his attempts to root out the heresies of the Donatists, the Pelagians, and the Manichaeans, among others. Gilson concludes:

> In choosing its own truth, heresy acts as a destructive force, aroused by the devils, to destroy from within the City of God at the exact moment when, by the grace of God, it was beginning to triumph over its enemies from without. Thence did the Church, the incarnation of the City of God on earth, derive the imperious duty of doctrinal intolerance. . . .[2]

Such censorship is implicit in the admonitions of De doctrina Christiana. Augustine argues that the orator should speak of nothing but "the just, and holy, and good. . ." (IV. 15. 32). Similarly, he asserts:

> Among our orators, however, everything we say, especially when we speak to the people from the pulpit, must be referred, not to the temporal welfare of man, but to his eternal welfare and to the avoidance of eternal punishment, so that everything we say is of great importance (IV. 18. 35).

At The City of God XVIII. 51, Augustine asks, "how many would-be converts are driven into perplexed hesitancy because of heretical dissension, while the foul mouthed find in heretics further pretext for cursing the Christian name, since these heretics at least call themselves Christian." Because heretics threaten basic Christian beliefs, Augustine sought, first

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[1] Letter 93.

[2] Intro. to The City of God, p. lxx.

to restrain their expression and, second, to punish them that they might recant their heresy and be brought back within the faith.[1] Augustine says to the imprisoned Donatus:

> We compel you to come in. He who is compelled is forced to go where he does not wish to go, but when he has entered, he shares willingly in the banquet. Therefore, you must restrain that wicked and rebellious mind of yours so that, in the true Church of Christ, you may find the life-giving banquet (Letter 173).

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[1] It should be noted that compulsion apparently applies to everyone outside the Church as well as those within it, though Augustine seems to be of two minds about this. In Letter 173, he explains: "Surely, the more complete the fulfillment, the greater the authority exercised by the Church, not only to invite but to compel men to goodness. This is what the Lord wished to convey by that incident, for, in spite of possessing full power, He chose, instead, to commend humility. He showed this quite clearly in the parable of the wedding feast, in which, after the invited guests had been notified and had refused to come, the servant was told: 'Go out into the streets and lanes of the city and bring in hither the poor and the feeble and the blind and the lame. And the servant said to his lord: It is done as thou has commanded and yet there is room. And the lord said to the servant: Go out into the highways and hedges and compel them to come in that my house may be filled.' Notice how of the first to come it says: 'Bring them in'--it does not say 'compel'--thus indicating the beginnings of the Church while it was still growing to the point where it might have the strength to compel. Accordingly, since it was fitting that when the Church had been strengthened with His strength and greatness, men should be compelled to come in to the feast, the words were afterward added: 'It is done as thou hast commanded and yet there is room' and he said: 'Go out into the highways and hedges and compel them to come in.'" In this letter, Augustine is replying to the objections against compulsion advanced by a Donatist heretic, but the arguments in the reply are not exclusively limited to heretics. In Letter 193, Augustine reminds the heretics of "the Testament made with the sanction of Divine law to the fathers, in which it was written, 'In thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed. . .'" (V. 19). In The City of God, Augustine argues, "When the promised Holy Spirit came down upon the faithful, each one of them was empowered to speak the languages of all nations--a very great miracle and a very greatly necessary one--to show that the Catholic Church was to be one throughout all nations and was so destined to speak in the tongues of all" (XVIII. 49). Yet the Church had no means to compel assent outside the civil authority and it is not clear to what extent Augustine would employ civil authority for the task of compelling non-believers (as opposed to heretics). Jaspers comments that Augustine's belief in the authority of faith "culminates in the coercion of those of different belief" (p. 79). Certainly in later years, Augustine's authority was used to coerce non-believers into the faith, although Augustine would have objected to their methods of coercion, if not to the fact of coercion itself.

Prerequisites for the Use of Rhetoric

Rhetoric functions for Augustine as it does for Plato. Both theorists hold that rhetoric is a moral art, designed to make the world over in the image of the intelligible. Rhetoric is to be used for this end alone. Not surprisingly, given the constraints under which rhetoric functions, Augustine places preconditions on the use of rhetoric similar to those which Plato established. Plato demanded that the rhetor engage in a prior dialectic in order to attain philosophic knowledge (episteme) and that all rhetoric serve the end of justice. Augustine has but one precondition for the use of rhetoric: rhetoric must serve the Truth revealed in Divine Scripture (IV. 2. 3; IV. 5. 7). To that end, the rhetor is commanded to know Scripture, a call equivalent to Plato's demand for philosophic knowledge. Books I through III of De doctrina Christiana are dedicated to precisely this end, supplying the rhetor with methods for understanding Scripture.

For Augustine, there are two paths to Wisdom: the authority of Scripture and faith in union with reason. Faith and reason are complementary modes of cognition. Knowledge of God is implicit within the soul of each human being:

> As for all those things which we "understand," it is not the outward sound of the speaker's words that we consult, but the truth which presides over the mind itself from within, though we may have been led to consult it because of words. Now He who is consulted and who is said to "dwell in the inner man," He it is who teaches us, namely, Christ, that is to say, "the unchangeable Power of God and everlasting wisdom." This is the Wisdom which every rational soul does indeed consult, but it reveals itself to each according to his capacity to grasp it by reason of the good or evil disposition of his will (De Magistro XI. 38).[1]

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[1] De Magistro, trans. Robert Russell, (Washington: Catholic University of America Press, 1968).

Through the act of faith, belief in God, God assists the operation of reason: "God will be at hand and will enable us to understand what we have believed" (The Free Choice of the Will, I. 2. 5).[1] Reason is the process by which the intuitive knowledge of God is brought fully to consciousness, a process similar to the Platonic doctrine of anamnesis (Confessions X. 17-24).[2] Karl Jaspers notes that, for Augustine, "The truth rested unknown within me; made attentive, I draw it from my previously hidden and still unfathomable inwardness."[3]

Human beings, confronted with the imperfection of the soul, can also arrive at the truth by way of authority: the Holy Scripture. Human reason is imperfect because the human soul is imperfect; however God has forseen this difficulty and given human beings the divine authority of Scripture. Augustine supplies this account of his own conversion:

> Sometimes I believed this more firmly, sometimes more weakly, but I always believed both that Thou dost exist and that Thou dost take care of us, though I remained ignorant both of what should be thought concerning Thy substance and of what way might lead, or lead one back, to Thee. Thus, since we were too weak to discover the truth by clear reasoning, and because, as a result, we had need of the authority of the holy Scripture, I had already started to believe that Thou wouldst never have granted such high authority to that Scripture, unless Thou hadst willed that we believe in Thee through it and that we seek Thee through it (VI. 5. 8).

Through faith and through the Grace of God, human beings come to know the

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[1] Trans. Robert Russell, (Washington: Catholic Univ. of America Press, 1968).

[2] Confessions, trans. Vernon Bourke, (New York: The Fathers of the Church, 1953).

[3] Karl Jaspers, Plato and Augustine, trans. R. Mannheim, (New York: Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich, 1962), p. 69. Emphasis in original.

intelligible truth: "the will of man alone is not enough, if the mercy of God be not also present--then neither is the mercy of God enough, if the will of man be not also present" (Enchiridion, IX. 32).[1] Augustine took as his motto the verse, "By grace you have been saved through grace" (Enchiridion, IX. 30). Human beings may use reason in support of Scripture, to interpret difficult passages and to resolve ambiguities, but the authority of Scripture is superior to reason because the authority of Scripture is divine, absolute (De doctrina Christiana, III. 13. 29). Faith allows divine illumination to reveal the truth of God, implicit within each human soul, activating the power of reason. This power is reinforced by the authority of divine Scripture. Hence, faith, reason, and authority are essential to Wisdom.

Though Augustine does not demand that the Christian rhetor engage in dialectic prior to his use of rhetoric, his hermeneutics act as a functional equivalent. Both Plato and Augustine believe that the content of knowledge is permanent and prior to human cognition. Plato's insistence on a prior dialectic was, in fact, a demand that the rhetor know the intelligible before speaking. For Plato, the intelligible was incarnate in the soul and the method for penetrating the intelligible was dialectic whose aim was the production of a logos, an "account" of the intelligible. For Augustine, however, the intelligible was incarnate both within the human soul and within Holy Scripture. There was a Logos, an infallible account of the intelligible and the method for understanding that account was textual exegesis or hermeneutics. For Augustine, hermeneutics aimed at understanding the intelligible and was logically prior to rhetoric

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[1] Trans. Bernard Peebles, (New York: Cima Publishing Co., 1947).

because it informed the content of rhetoric. Augustine opens De doctrina Christiana with the words, "There are two things necessary to the treatment of the Scriptures: a way of discovering those things which are to be understood, and a way of teaching what we have learned" (I. 1. 1). In the first three books, Augustine discussed ways of "ascertaining the meaning," and in book four, he deals with methods of instruction (De doctrina Christiana, IV. 1. 1). Thus both Plato and Augustine hold that rhetoric, in itself, is not an epistemic instrument. Rather, rhetoric depends on other arts, namely dialectic or hermeneutics, to discover and inform its content.

Methods

Like Plato, Augustine is not much concerned with the methods of eloquence, arguing that no one ever became eloquent because he knew and applied the rules while speaking (IV. 3. 4). Instead, Augustine follows Cicero and Plato, holding that eloquence is a product of wisdom. James Murphy refers to this concept as the "Platonic rhetorical heresy." This, Murphy explains, "depends upon the belief that the man possessed of truth will ipso facto be able to communicate the truth to others."[1] If this be heresy, Augustine is certainly guilty of it. He argues that, "a man speaks more or less wisely to the extent he has become more or less proficient in the Holy Scriptures" (IV. 5. 7). Augustine expends considerable effort showing that Scripture is not only wise, but preeminently eloquent as well (IV. 7. 11-21). To the rhetor who seems to lack eloquence,

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[1] Murphy, p. 60. Murphy argues that Augustine avoids this error, though it is difficult to determine how Murphy arrives at this conclusion in light of the evidence of the text.

Augustine advises extensive quotation from Scripture so that "he who is inferior in his own words may grow in a certain sense through the testimony of the great" (IV. 5. 8). Indeed, Augustine argues that Scripture is the ultimate source of true eloquence (IV. 5. 8).

Augustine does not mean to suggest that rhetoric is a worthless art; indeed, he is attempting to rescue it from those who would abandon it entirely. Rather, the analysis suggests that Murphy is mistaken when he refers to the Platonic rhetorical heresy. Plato, Cicero, and Augustine do not assume that, because the truth conveys the power to communicate, rhetoric is unnecessary. Rather, they hold that words derive a special power (or persuasive force) from the truth which makes rhetoric all the more compelling. Language participates in the truth, shares some of the power of the intelligible realm, and from that participation, derives greater power to persuade. The art of rhetoric is the art of investing language with the power of the intelligible, choosing words, phrases, figures, and stories which are powerful because they are linked to the ideas they describe. For Plato, because words partake of the things they describe, each form having a proper name, the dialectician functions as a namegiver and arbiter of language use. For Augustine, Scripture was literally the thought of God, the divine Logos, an immutable record of the intelligible, from which the rhetor was advised to borrow liberally. To say that eloquence depends on wisdom is to argue that the rhetor should invest her or his language with the properties of the transcendent reality. Kenneth Burke has argued, for example, that the words used to describe objects in the supernatural world, the world of religion, carry with them a majesty or "magic" which is derived from the objects they

describe.[1] In linking eloquence to wisdom, Plato, Cicero and Augustine are, in fact, offering a methodological prescription to the rhetor, a prescription concerning correct diction. Words linked to the intelligible, to the ideal, will be more persuasive than language drawn from the empirical realm of sensation.

Summary

Augustine is closer to Plato than was Cicero, even though he had little direct knowledge of his work. McKeon writes that, "Augustine was able to repeat and extend Cicero's account of the development of the New Academy from the dialectic of Plato and to give continuity to the Academic concern with eternal truths."[2] Because Augustine did not share Cicero's skepticism, his theory of rhetoric was very close to Plato's original. Augustine shares some of Plato's ontological assumptions: because all human beings are not capable of understanding truth, it is necessary that they be instructed through rhetoric. George Kennedy concludes, "ordinary men follow their feelings and habits, and for them to be taught the truth, it is necessary not only to make use of logical reasoning, but to arouse their emotions. Here is the realm of rhetoric. . . ."[3]

Augustine would have rhetoric teach the a priori truth revealed in Scripture. Knowledge of Scripture is beyond sensation, immutable and knowable only through reason aided by divine illumination and authority, it is

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[1] The Rhetoric of Religion, (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1969), pp. 1-31.

[2] Richard McKeon, "Dialectic and Political Thought in Action," p. 8.

[3] George Kennedy, Classical Rhetoric, (Chapel Hill: Univ. of North Carolina Press, 1980), p. 151.

the Christian counterpart of Plato's intelligible Forms. The knowledge of Scripture is certain, it is the divine Logos, intellectually and morally compelling. Augustine employed the art of hermeneutics to penetrate the meaning of Scripture, making it the fundamental equivalent of Platonic dialectic. Rhetoric itself had no epistemological function. Rather, rhetoric was employed to communicate the truth of Scripture.

Rhetoric was conceived to serve a high moral purpose--the inculcation of true belief and the instigation of right conduct. Kennedy writes, "The function of Christian eloquence in Augustine's system is to convert belief into works, to impel the faithful to the Christian life."[1] In order to accomplish this end, rhetoric could instruct, delight or persuade. For Augustine, rhetoric is a broad art that is more concerned with ends than means: rhetoric is just if it serves Scripture. That rhetoric which does not serve Scripture is subject to censure.

De doctrina Christiana was enormously influential in its own time and in later centuries. Its immediate contribution was the salvation of secular learning from charges of heresy. Murphy concludes that the work is "doubly important," because it established rhetoric as a useful tool within the Christian community and because it established rhetorical precepts which were important in their own right.[2] Describing its historical importance, Murphy writes:

> The importance of Saint Augustine's De doctrina christiana has long been recognized. Charles Sears Baldwin in 1928 asserted that the book "begins rhetoric anew" after centuries of sophistry. Sister Therese Sullivan in 1930 applauded it for returning to the doctrina sana of Cicero as a base for Christian preaching. Writers of the

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[1] Kennedy, p. 157.

[2] Murphy, p. 61.

> 1950's found in the work "a Christian theory of literature" or a foundation of medieval preaching theory.[1]

D. W. Robertson argues,

> On Christian Doctrine exerted an enormous influence throughout the Middle Ages. It formed the basis for the De institutione divinarum et secularium letterarum of Cassiodorus, and whole sections of it were incorporated in the De clericorum institutione of Rabanus Maurus. In the twelfth century it provided the inspiration for the Didascalicon of Hugh of St. Victor, and it contributed the organizing principles to Sententiae of Peter Lombard. The spiritual interpretation of Scripture, whose methods it establishes, continued to flourish well into the seventeenth century.[2]

The works of Cicero and Augustine constitute the foundation of the Platonic rhetorical tradition, Cicero with his immense influence of secular education and Augustine with his influence on Christian preaching.

Fénelon and the Platonic Tradition

In the period between Augustine's De doctrina Christiana and Peter Ramus' Dialecticae Libri Duo which appeared in 1556, there was very little progress in rhetorical theory. Indeed, in the eight centuries between the composition of Augustine's work and the first medieval tracts on preaching, most texts either ignored rhetoric or confined themselves to simplistic summaries of Cicero and Augustine.[3] Many reasons have been advanced for the atrophic state of rhetorical theory, one of the most important was the lack of any legitimate social role for deliberative or forensic oratory.

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[1] Murphy, p. 61.

[2] Robertson, p. xii.

[3] For an exposition of the development of medieval rhetorical theory, see James J. Murphy, Rhetoric in the Middle Ages, (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1974); George Kennedy, Classical Rhetoric, (Univ. of North Carolina Press, 1980), pp. 120-194; and W. S. Howell, Logic and Rhetoric in England, 1500-1700, (New York: Russel & Russel, 1961), pp. 3-145.

Medieval institutions did not typically assign rhetoric an important role in policy formulation or in the adjudication of questions of fact and value. Rhetoric did survive within the Christian church, but little effort was made to articulate its theory or principles until the dawn of the thirteenth century.[1] At that time, a number of tracts on the theory of preaching were circulated, works which were to dominate rhetorical theory for the next three hundred years.[2] Typically, the medieval sermon was divided into six parts (opening prayer, introduction of theme, theme or statement of a Scriptural quotation, division of the theme, development of the elements of the division, conclusion) in which the preacher was charged with inventing and arranging the arguments necessary to arrive at the conclusion.[3] This sort of practice harkens back to De inventione, the Rhetorica ad Herennium, and De doctrina Christiana.

The first major break with the precepts of classical rhetorical theory occurred as a result of the work of Peter Ramus. Ramus, who considered himself to be an Aristotelian,[4] was troubled by what he perceived as redundancy in the subject matter of the liberal arts. Howell describes the Ramistic perspective toward logic and rhetoric: "As Ramus looked at the scholastic logic, the traditional rhetoric, and the conventional grammar of his day, he was troubled by what seemed to him to be a redundancy and indecisiveness. . . . was it strictly required that both logic

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[1] Murphy, p. 300.

[2] Murphy, p. 311 ff.

[3] Murphy, p. 325, 342-355.

[4] W. S. Howell in François Fénelon, Dialogues on Eloquence, text, trans. and intro. by W. S. Howell, (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1951), p. 8. All quotations and pagination are from this edition.

and rhetoric offer this training, as they did when each of them sought to teach the doctrine of invention?"[1] Ramus thought not and attempted to reform their treatment so that each art dealt only with its essential subject matter. To accomplish this end, Ramus formulated the principles which have come to be known as the laws of truth, justice, and wisdom.[2] Howell calls these laws "the very heart of his program of reform:"

> The law of truth is that any statement employed as a principle in any art or science must be universally true--its predicate must be valid for every case comprehended within its subject. The law of justice is that any statement employed as a principle in any art or science must have as predicate the parts that are essential to each other and to the subject. . . . The law of wisdom is that any statement employed as a principle in any art or science must be reciprocal. Its subject and its predicate, that is, must be interchangeable, one possessing neither more nor less generality than the other.[3]

When these laws were applied to the arts of logic and rhetoric, Ramus concluded that the essential concern of logic was disputation and that its method, dialectic, was "the system of concepts which not only regulated and explained disputation, but also could be used to indoctrinate young men in the high calling of the truth seeker."[4] Thus logic was given charge over that part of rhetoric that had formerly been concerned with invention and arrangement.[5] Ramus "ordained that rhetoric should offer training in style and delivery, and that style should be limited to the

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[1] Logic and Rhetoric, p. 147.

[2] Howell, Dialogues, p. 8; Logic and Rhetoric, p. 151.

[3] Howell, Dialogues, pp. 8-9.

[4] Howell, Dialogues, p. 10.

[5] Howell, Logic and Rhetoric, p. 148.

tropes and the schemes, with no help whatever from grammar. . . ."[1] Memory was dismissed from the program of the liberal arts.[2]

Ramus' work achieved great popularity in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.[3] But in the early sixteenth century a reaction against Ramistic principles began to appear. In the Church, Ramistic principles made rhetoric little more than a search for an eloquence that was superficial and ornamental.[4] In logic, Antoine Arnauld sought to free the art from its Ramistic constraints with the publication of his Port Royal Logic in 1662,[5] and a similar effort was made by Bernard Lámy in his Port Royal Rhetoric which attempts a synthesis of the concepts of Ramus and Arnauld.[6] Nevertheless, the influence of Ramus was still a powerful force. The Ramists, "in confining the theory of rhetorical style to the tropes and figures, had in fact defined effective expression as unusual expression, and had made the quest for good style a quest for every linguistic mode that offers any contrast to ordinary patterns of speech."[7] It was against this background, and in reaction to the precepts formulated by Ramus and his followers, that Fénelon composed his Dialogues on Eloquence.

Fénelon's Dialogues were composed circa 1679 and published in 1718, three years after the author's death. Fénelon occupies a significant

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1 Howell, Logic and Rhetoric, p. 148.

2 Howell, Logic and Rhetoric, p. 148.

3 Kennedy, Classical Rhetoric, p. 212.

4 Howell, Dialogues, p. 24.

5 Howell, Dialogues, pp. 25-32.

6 Howell, Dialogues, pp. 32-37.

7 Howell, Dialogues, p. 37.

position in rhetorical theory, and, indirectly, has contributed significantly to modern rhetorical theory. In the seventeenth century, when rhetoric was in danger of being reduced to the study of figures and tropes, Fénelon's Dialogues provided an effective counterpoint to this tendency. Howell argues:

> In the long perspective of history, Fénelon's Dialogues on Eloquence appear not only as an effective counterstand against Ramus' neo-scholastic theory of communication but also as the first modern rhetoric. It may seem inconsistent to stress the modernity of the Dialogues after saying that they are directed against Ramus and they derive their basic principles from Plato, Cicero, and Saint Augustine. . . . Like Saint Augustine, Fénelon began rhetoric anew, not by repudiating ancient doctrine, but by objecting to the rigid routines which Ramus had derived from the ancients, and by going on from there to select from ancient doctrine those insights which had never lost their modernity. . . . the Dialogues are indisputably the best statement we have of his /Fénelon's/ rhetorical theory, and the earliest statement we have of what may be said to have become the dominant modern attitude towards rhetoric.[1]

As a preacher, Fénelon was concerned with developing a theory of rhetoric for the Christian preacher. But his concerns were broader than this: to develop a theory of rhetoric that was applicable to all forms of persuasive speech.[2] As Howell indicates, Fénelon drew his theory from Plato, Cicero and Augustine. Hence, the Dialogues are an appropriate source to determine whether or not there is a continuing Platonic tradition in rhetorical theory.[3]

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[1] Howell, introduction, pp. 44-46.

[2] Howell, introduction, p. 1.

[3] It is important to note than Fénelon identifies Plato, Cicero, and Augustine as the important theorists in the history of rhetoric. When Fénelon argues, for example, that rhetoric is a moral art which aims at influencing the souls of its auditors, he says, "Do you wish to hear Cicero speak with the voice of Plato on this matter? He will tell you that the basic effect

Fénelon's Theory of Rhetoric

Fénelon's debt to Plato is immediately evident; he is Platonic both in terms of his outlook and his theory of rhetoric. The first dialogue, for example, opens with a scene borrowed from the Phaedrus: B (the appellations chosen for the interlocutors in the Dialogues are borrowed from the first three letters of the alphabet) has heard a preacher who seems to him supremely eloquent. A bids B repeat the speech, just as Socrates had Phaedrus repeat the speech of Lysias. And, like Socrates, when A has heard a summary of the speech, he does not think it is a fine speech at all and proceeds to lead a discussion about the nature of genuine eloquence. In the course of the discussion, A repeats the program of

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[3] of utterance must only be its tendency towards moving the hidden energies which nature has put into men's hearts" (p. 87). Further, this passage seems to view knowledge as latent within each human being, and rhetoric as the agency through which to awaken the mind to such knowledge. In describing Plato, Fénelon calls him "the most eloquent writer of antiquity" (p. 65) and recommends that Plato's principles be employed to analyze the nature of eloquence (p. 65). According to Fénelon, Plato developed a genuine theory of rhetoric in the Gorgias and Phaedrus, a theory which Fénelon argues is repeated in the works of Cicero (pp. 82-83). Throughout Dialogues One and Two, Fénelon invokes Plato and Cicero as the authorities for his prescriptions. In Dialogue Three, which is concerned primarily with preaching, the primary authority is Augustine, and Fénelon shows how Augustine's advice in De doctrina Christiana IV conforms to the rhetorical precepts set forth in the first two dialogues.

It is also instructive to consider Fénelon's opinion of other classical theorists. Fénelon is not much impressed with Aristotle's Rhetoric, calling it inferior to On the Sublime and noting that, "Although very good, the Rhetoric contains many dry precepts--precepts which are more curious than useful in practice" (p. 64). Of Isocrates, Fénelon says: "/He/ is a lifeless speaker who meant only to polish his thoughts and to give melody to his utterances. He had but a low conception of eloquence, and he reduced it almost entirely to the arrangement of words." Howell writes, "Fénelon constructed the Dialogues so as to make Isocrates the symbol of false eloquence with Plato, Cicero, and Saint Augustine arrayed on the other side" (p. 6), and he concludes, "Fénelon's indebtedness to Plato and Cicero is explicitly acknowledged in the course of the conversation between his three agents; and his use of the dialogue form may be considered an added compliment to these two authorities" (pp. 3-4).

education that Plato established in the Republic, concedes the wisdom of the critique of rhetoric found in the Gorgias, and recommends the union of philosophy and rhetoric as complementary and interdependent arts (pp. 57-76). Dialogues Two and Three are similarly indebted to Plato, Cicero, and Augustine.[1]

The Nature of Rhetoric

Fénelon considers rhetoric to be a very broad art, the art of persuasion in all contexts and circumstances (pp. 61-62). He emphasizes Plato's notion that rhetoric and poetic are interdependent arts with the same purpose. Both C and A agree that, "poets are also orators, because poetry is by rights persuasive. Unquestionably they both have the same

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[1] Dialogue Two opens with the assumption that "in order to make an orator, we must choose a philosopher, that is, a man who knows how to establish the truth" (p. 89). From this premise, the interlocutors conclude with Cicero that "philosophy and eloquence must never be separated; for the knack of persuading, without knowledge and wisdom, is pernicious; and wisdom, without the art of persuasion, is not capable of winning men and putting goodness in their hearts" (pp. 89-90). This directly echoes the opening to Cicero's De Inventione. In the balance of the dialogue, Cicero's concept of rhetoric as "teaching, delighting, and persuasing" is developed. A argues at page 92 that "all eloquence can be reduced to proving, to portraying, and to striking." The rest of the dialogue is consumed with a discussion of style and memory. Dialogue Three attempts to tie Augustine's De doctrina to the philosophy of Plato and the rhetorical precepts of Cicero (p. 124 ff.). Arguing that the ultimate source of wisdom is Scripture, Fénelon concludes that all sound Christian rhetoric is based on a thorough understanding of Scripture. George Kennedy has also commented on the link between Fénelon's Dialogues and the work of Plato and Augustine. In Classical Rhetoric (pp. 224-225), he wrote, "/In Book I/ A has laid the foundation for an identification of Plato's philosophical orator with the Christian preacher of Augustine. In Book 2 this identification is carried forward. . . . In Book 3 he returns in greater detail to preaching. The argument is built on what Augustine says in his De Doctrina Christiana." In this chapter, I shall attempt to show how Fénelon weaves together the elements of Platonic rhetorical theory found in Plato, Cicero, and Augustine and I shall not consider the specific arguments of the various Dialogues specifically. For a discussion of the argument of the Dialogues, see Howell's introduction to the Dialogues, pp. 6-46.

end" (p. 94). A gives further indication of the breadth of rhetoric:

> All the arts which consist in melodious sounds, or in movements of the body, or in the use of language--in a word, music, dancing, eloquence, poetry--were devised only to express the passions and to inspire them in every act of expressing them. By such means as these, mankind wished to impress great thoughts upon the human soul and to bring to men lively and striking pictures of the beauty of virtue and the ugliness of evil. Thus all these arts appeared to be for pleasure, but were in reality among the ancients a part of their deepest striving for morality and religion (p. 68).

The only recognizable difference between the arts of rhetoric and poetic is that poets achieve "a certain ecstasy" which gives them more latitude in expression than the orator (pp. 94-5). Nevertheless, A concludes, "there is no eloquence at all without poetry" (p. 94). As authority for this position, Fénelon cites both Cicero (pp. 84, 95) and Plato (pp. 68-71). The rhetor must be well versed in the other arts as well. Fénelon concludes with Cicero and Plato that, "The speaker . . . ought to have the subtlety of dialecticians, the knowledge of the philosopher, something close to the diction of poets, and the voice and gesture of the finest actors" (p. 84). Furthermore, the rhetor is expected to know Scripture (Dialogue III, passim) and music (p. 115). Fénelon gives rhetoric both a broad scope and an important mission: eloquence, he says, is "the art of persuading men and making them better" (p. 65).

Functions of Rhetoric

As with Plato, Cicero, and Augustine, Fénelon has rhetoric serve an a priori epistemology. This should not be surprising given Fénelon's strict interpretation of the Bible. He writes, "One finds all truths and every particular of morality within the literal meaning of the sacred Scripture" (p. 151). The problem for the rhetor, then, is one of discovering and

explicating the meaning of Scripture, rather than one of developing probable arguments. For Fénelon, the truth is revealed in Scripture, and it is incumbent on the rhetorician to know that truth. A argues, "The most essential trait of a preacher is to be instructive. But he must be well instructed in order to instruct others. On the one hand, he must perfectly understand the full meaning of Scriptural utterances; on the other, he must know precisely the capacity of the soul to which he speaks" (p. 121). As did Plato, Cicero, and Augustine, Fénelon places preconditions on the use of rhetoric. Because the truth has been revealed, is knowable, and is morally and intellectually compelling, rhetoric must be used in the service of that truth. To that end, Fénelon requires that the rhetor know philosophy (pp. 71, 83) and dialectic (p. 84). He says:

> If you have only applied yourself to the preparation of particular subjects, you are reduced to paying off in the currency of aphorisms and antitheses; you treat only the commonplaces; you utter nothing but incoherencies; you sew up rags not made for each other; you do not show the real principles of things; you are restricted to superficial and often false arguments, you are incapable of showing the full extent of the truth (p. 85).

It is characteristic of rhetoric in the Platonic tradition that its use be restricted to the service of a transcendent principle of grave axiological importance. Fénelon considers rhetoric to be a moral art with one legitimate end: "the speaker's aim must be to instruct and to make men better" (p. 73). This means that rhetoric "must urge justice and the other virtues by making them attractive" (p. 62). The aim of rhetoric is not only persuading people of the truth, but guiding them to correct action. Thus the purpose of rhetoric is "the guidance and regeneration of people's morals" (p. 76). Any rhetoric which has another purpose is not legitimate and not to be condoned. Speaking of eulogy, A argues:

> A man must speak only to instruct. He must praise the great only that he may teach their virtues to the people in order that he may induce the people to imitate them, in order that he may show glory and virtue to be inseparable. Thus it is necessary to exclude from a eulogy all vague, excessive and fawning praise; and to leave there not one of the sterile thoughts that carry no instruction to the listener (pp. 73-4).

Similarly, Fénelon "would also curtail . . . all exercises of the mind which would not serve to make the soul healthy, strong, and beautiful as it became virtuous" (p. 67). There is the same singleness of purpose for rhetoric that requires censorship: like Plato, Fénelon would ban all activity, including poetry, which did not serve the interests of the intelligible (p. 71). Ultimately, rhetoric aims at impelling the multitude to think and act correctly.

Methods of Rhetoric

Fénelon's prerequisites for rhetoric were aimed at ensuring that rhetoric was used to guide conduct toward the good. He required that the rhetor have personal knowledge of the transcendent principle, that this knowledge be acquired before the rhetor speaks, and that the rhetoric itself be fully informed by the knowledge of the transcendent principle.

For Fénelon, rhetoric has three resources: proving, portraying, and striking (p. 92). To portray is to cause the audience to visualize things "in so lively and concrete a way that the listener imagines himself almost seeing them" (pp. 92-3). To prove is to demonstrate through argument. To strike is to move to action. This tripartite division is derived from Cicero and Augustine (p. 92) and echoes Platonic theory. Underlying all of this, however, is the need to instruct and direct the audience. It seems characteristic of the Platonic tradition that rhetoric is intended

primarily for instruction. Plato, Cicero, Augustine, and Fénelon take a rather dim view of the intelligence of the typical audience. Fénelon, for example, holds that "three-fourths of the congregation . . . are ignorant of those basic rudiments of religion which the preacher presumes them to know" (p. 122). Further, conviction is not sufficient by itself; the audience must not only learn the truth, they must learn to love it and enact it in their everyday conduct (p. 89). The end of rhetoric is the supervision of behavior, to impel citizens to "strive always towards the public good" (p. 67) in an effort to make the temporal world more closely resemble the spiritual realm. Because the end of rhetoric is "to reform men's behavior" (p. 76), the desire to direct action is very much a part of Fénelon's theory of rhetoric.

For Plato and Cicero, the intelligible forms are the source of knowledge and eloquence. Dialectic is the method through which the rhetor secures knowledge and invests rhetoric with eloquence. For Augustine and Fénelon, Scripture is the source of wisdom and hermeneutics is the method by which the rhetor comes to know Scripture. Because the successors of the apostles are not "miraculously inspired" they "have need to prepare themselves and to fill themselves with the doctrine and spirit of the Scripture in order to compose their discourses" (p. 130). Fénelon, like Augustine, expends much effort attempting to prove that the Scriptures are eloquent. He concludes, "a subject like that of religion furnishes high thoughts above all, and arouses the largest feelings. These are the things which produce true eloquence" (p. 135).

For Fénelon, wisdom produces eloquence; the words of Scripture are inherently more persuasive because they are linked with the true and the immutable. It is not a faint hope that in speaking the truth, eloquence

will result; rather, it is a methodological principle. Fénelon explains: "if we do not give an exact interpretation of all parts of the Gospel, we must at least choose from it the words containing those truths that are most important and best suited to the needs of the people" (p. 149). Language has a power which it derives from the objects to which it refers. Language is most persuasive when it refers from the intelligible realm and is used in the empirical.

Summary

Fénelon's Dialogues confirm the continuing presence of a Platonic tradition in rhetoric. Earlier, I concluded that the major elements of Platonic rhetorical theory included a broad definition of rhetoric, encompassing all aspects of persuasive speech; a close relationship between rhetoric and poetic in which dramatic devices emerge as a significant persuasive force; an a priori epistemology aimed at high moral ends; an emphasis on social control derived from an anti-egalitarian ontology, dialectic (or hermeneutics) as the essential method for rhetorical invention; persuasion as a form of teaching which seeks to inculcate doctrine and guide action; and a necessary link between wisdom (knowledge of the intelligible) and eloquence because language shares the power of the thing named. As is evident from the foregoing discussion, Fénelon's Dialogues develop all of these positions.

Chapter VI

Weaver and the Platonic Tradition in Rhetoric

In the seventeenth century, Fenelon composed his Dialogues on Eloquence to undermine the influence of mechanistic theories of rhetoric which attempted to divorce substantive concerns from rhetoric and limited rhetoric to the study of delivery and style. Though not entirely successful (the elocutionary movement achieved some influence in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries), Fenelon kept alive the union of philosophy and rhetoric that began with Plato. Richard Weaver has continued that tradition in the twentieth century. Weaver's Platonism is evident in such essays as "The Phaedrus and the Nature of Rhetoric,"[1] and Haskell and Hauser comment that, "Weaver's Platonism goes without question. . . ."[2] In a sense, Weaver is essential to the tradition because he grounds rhetoric in the doctrines and methods of moral philosophy. There is some danger, I think, in identifying Platonic rhetoric too closely with either Christian oratory or secular education: the one makes it a narrowly

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[1] Richard Weaver, "The Phaedrus and the Nature of Rhetoric," in The Ethics of Rhetoric, (Chicago: Henry Regnery, 1953), pp. 3-26.

[2] Robert E. Haskell and Gerard A. Hauser, "Rhetorical Structure: Truth and Method in Weaver's Epistemology," The Quarterly Journal of Speech 64 (October 1978), p. 233, n. 5. The authors go on to note that, "Weaver is Platonic insofar as he adheres to a doctrine of essence that is made manifest through language" (p. 236). Weaverian scholars are sometimes offended by those who label Weaver a Platonist. Even so, there is little doubt that in matters of rhetorical epistemology, Weaver writes in the Platonic tradition.

doctrinal rhetoric while the other reduces it to triviality.[1] In saying that Weaver grounds rhetoric in moral philosophy, I am only arguing that, like Plato, Weaver viewed rhetoric as indispensable to working out problems and conflicts that inhere when human beings gather to form communities. Although it is clear that Weaver is familiar with much of Plato's work, there is no indication that his devotion to Plato is mechanical or slavish. Weaver illustrates the vitality of Platonic rhetorical theory by demonstrating the relevance of the Platonic ideal to contemporary rhetorical problems.[2]

Weaver on the Nature of Rhetoric

For Weaver, rhetoric is the moral art that moves human beings toward the good through language. Rhetoric begins with knowledge of the ideal and energizes it in the realm of human action. For this reason, Weaver argues:

> Rhetoric should be considered the most humanistic of the humanities. It is directed to that part of our being which is not merely rational, for it supplements the rational approach. And it is directed to individual men in their individual situations, so that by the very definitions of the terms here involved, it takes into account what science deliberately . . . leaves out.[3]

What science leaves out, according to Weaver, is the concept of humanity grounded in culture, circumstance, and history. Rhetoric is advisory in

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[1] Kenneth Burke, The Philosophy of Literary Form, 3rd ed., (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1973), pp. 191-220.

[2] Weaver's popularity as a rhetorical theorist (Haskell and Hauser, p. 233, n. 1) indicates that his rhetorical theory is taken seriously by many contemporary scholars.

[3] Weaver, "Language is Sermonic," in Johannesen, et al., eds., Language is Sermonic, (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1970), p. 206.

the sense that it helps people evaluate moral choices in an attempt to order reality. For this reason, all rhetoric contains visions of order. Weaver notes that rhetoric "is an art of emphasis embodying an order of desire."[1] Rhetoric does not treat all choices equally. It aims to discriminate among them, to evaluate them, and persuade people to choose correctly. Hence Weaver, like Plato, argues:

> Rhetoric inevitably impinges upon morality and politics; and if it is one of the means by which we endeavor to improve the character and the lot of men, we have to think of its methods and sources in relation to a scheme of values.[2]

Like Plato, Weaver maintains the broad scope of rhetoric: rhetoric "consists of truth plus its artful presentation. . . ."[3] In discussing "The Power of the Word," Weaver establishes two categories of linguistic resources: poetical and logical. Poetical resources include literature and rhetoric. Under logical resources, Weaver includes logic and dialectic.[4] Logic and dialectic combine to establish truth, poetic serves to clothe it in artful expression. Plato observed in the Gorgias that rhetoric and tragedy were the same art, and Weaver makes a similar observation in the Ethics of Rhetoric. While Weaver does not argue that rhetoric and tragedy are the same, they are, like rhetoric and dialectic, interdependent:

> Without rhetoric there seems no possibility of tragedy, and in turn, without the sense of tragedy, no possibility of taking an elevated view of life. The role

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[1] "Language is Sermonic," p. 211.

[2] "Language is Sermonic," pp. 211-212.

[3] Ethics of Rhetoric, p. 15.

[4] Ideas Have Consequences, p. 165. Weaver's categories do not accurately reflect his own views, for he argues elsewhere that rhetoric is a synthetic term which encompasses both logic and poetic.

> of tragedy is to keep the human lot from being rendered as history. The cultivation of tragedy and a deep interest in the value-conferring power of language always occur together. The Phaedrus, the Gorgias, and the Cratylus, not to mention the works of many teachers of rhetoric, appear at the close of the great age of Greek tragedy. . . . Tragedy and the practice of rhetoric seem to find common sustenance in preoccupation with value, and then rhetoric follows as an analyzed art.[1]

Rhetoric is the art of moral persuasion, the art which gives urgency to truth. Characteristically, Weaver has a very broad conception of rhetoric; all language has a rhetorical component, and rhetoric includes all forms of expression which are designed to influence. Presumably, all poetic would be included under the rubric of rhetoric, while dialectic and logic, in their purely formal aspects, would be excluded because of their indifference to truth and their irrelevance to concrete situations.[2] This broad view rescues rhetoric from the twin dangers of focusing too narrowly either on logic or on adornment. At the same time, theorists who share a Platonic rhetorical perspective recognize that many forms of expression influence human beings about moral choices and that to ignore any of these forms is to ignore an important dimension of rhetoric.[3] This theoretical perspective gives the art breadth and prevents it from becoming merely a set of formal techniques.

Preconditions for the Use of Rhetoric

Plato was perhaps the first to conceive of rhetoric so broadly that it encompassed virtually all persuasive uses of language. But while Plato

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[1] Ethics of Rhetoric, p. 23, n. 19.

[2] See "The Cultural Role of Rhetoric," in Visions of Order, (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State Univ. Press, 1964), pp. 55-72.

[3] Both Plato and Weaver seem to consider music to be an important form of rhetoric. Compare Republic 424c and Ideas Have Consequences, p. 87.

gave rhetoric unrestricted fields of application, he restricted its actual practice by establishing strict preconditions for its use, affecting what could be said, how it should be said, and who might say it. Both impulses ran counter to the practice of Plato's contemporaries who wanted to confine rhetoric to the courts, the forum, or public ceremonies. One of the most striking features of the Platonic perspective is the tendency to define rhetoric broadly and then to establish narrow limits for its application. These restrictions are positive injunctions which proscribe the use of rhetoric except under the conditions specified in theory. They are qualitatively different from admonitions which merely precede a compendium of rhetorical rules.[1] One of the ways in which Weaver aligns himself with the Platonic rhetorical tradition is by establishing preconditions for the moral and legitimate practice of rhetoric.

Language, Dialectic, and Rhetoric

Weaver holds that reality is ultimately noetic. Permanent reality, the realm of being, lies beyond the particulars of sensation and can be apprehended only through the intellect. Weaver contends that the Western retreat from ideals to pursue sensation is responsible for the decline of morality and the retreat from knowledge. He comments:

> The believer in truth, on the other hand, is bound to maintain that the things of highest value are not affected by the passage of time; otherwise the very concept of truth becomes impossible. In declaring that we wish to recover lost ideals and values, we are looking toward an ontological realm which is timeless.[2]

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[1] The Rhetorica Ad Herrenium, trans. and intro. by Harry Caplan (Cambridge: Harvard Univ. Press, 1954), is an example of this type.

[2] Ideas Have Consequences, p. 52. See also, Visions of Order, pp. 24, 126. Perhaps the clearest statement of Weaver's beliefs is contained in "Language is Sermonic," pp. 201-225.

Like Plato, Weaver attempts to establish the primacy of ideas over the transitory perceptions of the senses. To argue that the realm of being is known only through mind is to argue, in effect, that it can only be known through a logos which transcends the empirical realm of sensation. The resulting logos, which is predicated on the assumption that names participate in the essence of the things named, differs substantially from theories of language in vogue today.[1]

Weaver argues that names, properly conceived, ought to participate in the reality which they describe. Definitions, for example, should reflect the permanent nature of the essence which they define. Weaver confesses his belief that there is "a divine element in language" and adds, "To discover what a thing is 'called' according to some system is the essential step in knowing, and to say that all education is learning to name rightly . . . would assert an underlying truth."[2] Language is the method by which the intelligible realm becomes known to human beings: "knowledge of the prime reality comes to man through the word; the word is a sort of deliverance from the shifting world of appearances."[3] Because names reveal being and are the constituents of knowledge, they have truth value, a natural correctness. The inevitable consequence of such a belief is the doctrine that some names are more correct than others. Names are inherently linked to their ontological referents, and to break that link is to destroy the possibility of knowledge.

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[1] For an alternate, "modern" perspective, see C. K. Ogden and I. A. Richards, The Meaning of Meaning, (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, 1923).

[2] Ideas Have Consequences, p. 149.

[3] Ideas Have Consequences, p. 149.

Language is a kind of vault in which a community stores its knowledge, preserving that which has been learned. Knowledge, however, is prior to humanity while language is not. The link between knowledge and language is memory.[1] The human mind is somehow imprinted with the knowledge of being; it remains for a person to bring that knowledge to consciousness. Like Plato, Weaver holds that all knowledge is gathered through a process of re-cognition. He writes:

> Any person, it seems, can be driven back to that knowledge which comes to him by immediate apprehension, but the very fact of his possessing such knowledge makes him a participant in the communal mind. . . . I suspect that this is evidence supporting the doctrine of knowledge by recollection taught by Plato and the philosophers of the East.[2]

Language is the record of memory, a result of the collective process of recognition. That is the reason for Weaver's belief that "language . . . appears as a great storehouse of universal memory" and his insistence that names have "a logical correctness."[3] Memory is the process by which latent knowledge is brought to consciousness. For Weaver, an attack on memory is "an attack upon mind."[4]

The proper use of language is essential to knowledge; the word is the concrete sign of the ideal.[5] For that reason, rhetoric cannot employ just any words. The linguistic choices of the rhetorician must be informed, reflecting the intelligible. Because rhetoric must employ correct names,

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[1] See ch. 2 for an account of how memory functions for Plato.

[2] Ideas Have Consequences, p. 157.

[3] Ideas Have Consequences, pp. 158, 168.

[4] Visions of Order, p. 43.

[5] Ideas Have Consequences, p. 158.

it depends on the art of naming which Plato and Weaver term "dialectic." In the Ethics of Rhetoric, Weaver argues: "Any piece of persuasion, therefore, will contain as its first process a dialectic establishing terms which have to do with policy."[1] Implied in the foregoing statement is the notion that dialectic is the art of correct naming, of finding the term which best expresses the essence of the thing. Weaver explains the nature and role of dialectic in an essay entitled, "The Power of the Word:"

> The most important fact about dialectic is that it involves the science of naming. The good dialectician has come to see the world as one of choices and he has learned to avoid that trap fatal to so many in our day, the excluded middle. It is not for him a world of undenominated things which can be combined pragmatically into any pattern. . . . Until the world perceives that "good" cannot be applied to a thing because it is our own, and "bad" to the same thing because it is another's, there is no prospect of realizing community. Dialectic comes to our aid as a method by which, after our assumptions have been made, we can put our house in order. I am certain that this is why Plato in the Cratylus calls the giver of names a lawgiver; for a name, to employ his conception, is "an instrument of teaching and of distinguishing natures." But if we are to avoid confusion, the name-maker who is lawgiver cannot proceed without dialectic: "And the work of the legislator is to give names, and the dialectician must be his director if the names are to be rightly given." Plato sees here that namegiving and lawgiving are related means of effecting order. Actually stable laws require a stable vocabulary, for a principal part of every judicial process is definition, or a decision about the correct name of an action. Thus the magistrates of a state have a duty to see that names are not irresponsibly changed.[2]

Weaver believes that names reveal a speaker's ontology and can persuade an audience to share that perspective. Language is sermonic, Weaver writes,

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[1] P. 17.

[2] Ideas Have Consequences, p. 168.

because at the moment of naming, "we have given impulse to other people to look at the world, or some small part of it, in our way."[1] Dialectic, with its ability to define, is the method employed by the rhetorician to assure that the vocabulary of the rhetor correctly describes reality.

Weaver's first prerequisite for rhetoric, then, is that it be based on a prior dialectic. In Visions of Order, Weaver argues "States and societies cannot be secure unless there is in their public expression a partnership of dialectic and rhetoric. Dialectic is abstract reasoning upon the basis of propositions; rhetoric is the relation of these terms to the existential world. . . ."[2] The interdependence of dialectic and rhetoric is common to all rhetorical theories formulated in the Platonic tradition and is one of the most important elements in that tradition because it forces rhetoric to adopt the outlook and the methods of philosophy. There is a vast difference between this and, for example, Isocrates' notion of a liberally educated rhetor, a difference which Fénelon was anxious to stress. Rhetoricians in the Platonic tradition demand not only an educated rhetor, but a rhetor who remains a philosopher. In calling for dialectic to precede rhetoric, Weaver is calling for the adoption of the dialectical method, as well as the philosophic outlook which has traditionally accompanied the method.

Knowledge and Rhetoric

For Weaver, the term "knowledge" can only be applied to that which is essential, permanent, and unchanging. These ideas have ontic status

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[1] "Language is Sermonic," p. 224.

[2] P. 56.

and axiological implications. Weaver is careful in his use of the term and is quick to specify its meaning: "Naturally everything depends on what we mean by knowledge. I shall adhere to the classic proposition that there is no knowledge at the level of sensation, that therefore knowledge is of universals, and that whatever we know as a truth enables us to predict."[1] Because rhetoric is a moral art, one which deals with the proper ordering of human values, the rhetorician cannot be ignorant of the intelligible. The axiological significance of the ideal requires the partnership of dialectic and rhetoric. While dialectic has the power to reveal knowledge, it has no ability to actualize it in the social realm. Weaver writes,

> States and societies cannot be secure unless there is in their public expression a partnership of dialectic and rhetoric. Dialectic is abstract reasoning upon the basis of propositions; rhetoric is the relation of the terms of these to the existential world in which facts are regarded with sympathy and are treated with that kind of historical understanding and appreciation which lie outside the dialectical process.[2]

Rhetoric depends upon dialectic, but dialectic and knowledge depend equally upon rhetoric.[3] Those in possession of knowledge have an obligation to their fellow citizens and to the state, an obligation to reform society so that it more closely conforms to the ideal. "Rhetoric . . .tries to bring opinion into closer line with the truth which dialectic pursues."[4] Weaver's "doctor of culture" is, in this sense, very similar to Plato's philosopher-king. Neither is permitted to lead a life of tranquil contemplation; they

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[1] Ideas Have Consequences, p. 12.

[2] Visions of Order, p. 56.

[3] Ideas Have Consequences, pp. 161-5.

[4] Visions of Order, p. 70.

are of the state, and the knowledge they possess carries with it social obligations. The rhetor "is a teacher and a moral teacher at that. He cannot avoid being this if he uses words which will move men in a direction which he has chosen."[1]

Like Plato, Weaver makes rhetoric dependent upon knowledge. Without knowledge of the ideal, the rhetorician has no basis upon which to recommend one choice rather than another. But knowledge has a reciprocal obligation; to improve the lot of humanity. If the rhetor is forbidden to speak until knowledge has been attained, then he is compelled to speak when it has been realized. So rhetoric is simultaneously concerned with the propagation of truth and the proper ordering of values. For this reason, Weaver writes:

> Rhetoric at its truest seeks to perfect men by showing them better versions of themselves, links in that chain extending up toward the ideal, which only the intellect can apprehend and only the soul can have affection for. This is the justified affection of which no one can be ashamed, and he who feels no influence of it is truly outside the communion of minds. Rhetoric appears, finally, as a means by which the impulse of the soul to be ever moving is redeemed.[2]

Justice and Order

The end of rhetoric is the creation of order and hierarchy. It aims to reduce the confusion and purposelessness caused by a fixation on sensation and its method, empiricism. These seek to break down order by invoking the concept of "equality." Equality is destructive because it is at odds with the ideal. It makes popularity, instead of wisdom, the criterion for choosing leaders, and it parcels out duties, obligations, and

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[1] Visions of Order, p. 67, emphasis mine.

[2] Ethics of Rhetoric, p. 25.

rewards without regard for individual merit. The end of an equalitarian society is simple "activity," motion without purpose. The very notion destroys order and hierarchy.

Like Plato, Weaver holds that "wisdom and not popularity qualifies for rule."[1] Equality denies the authority of superior wisdom and threatens to break society apart. Thus it is the task of the rhetorician, steeped in knowledge and virtue, to impose order on a fragmented society. Weaver says:

> Finally, we must never lose sight of the order of values as the ultimate sanction of rhetoric. No one can live a life of direction and purpose without some scheme of values. As rhetoric confronts us with choices involving values, the rhetorician is a preacher to us, noble if he tries to direct our passion toward noble ends and base if he uses our passion to confuse and degrade us. Since all utterance influences us in one or the other of these directions, it is important that the direction be the right one, and it is better if this lay preacher is a master of his art.[2]

In place of equality, Weaver would impose a natural order, based on the hierarchies established in the intelligible realm. Weaver's concept of order is, therefore, close to Plato's: each believes that rhetoric should establish a natural order resulting in social justice. In Ideas Have Consequences, Weaver explains:

> There can be no equality of condition between youth and age or between the sexes; there cannot be equality even between friends. The rule is that each shall act where he is strong; the assignment of identical roles produces first confusion and then alienation, as we have increasing opportunity to observe. Not only is this disorganizing heresy busily confounding the most natural social groupings, it is also creating a reservoir of poisonous envy.[3]

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[1] Ideas Have Consequences, p. 65.

[2] "Language is Sermonic," p. 225.

[3] Ideas Have Consequences, p. 42.

An "organic" social order based on a natural hierarchy of values would, according to Weaver, allow each person to go about her or his business, content in a web of stable relationships.[1] Without such an order, Western society is threatened with destruction.

Therefore, Weaver demands that rhetoric be used to establish order and justice in society. This singleness of purpose manifests itself in an intolerance for other forms of rhetorical expression. The only legitimate rhetoric is one which attempts to actualize the ideal. In Plato, this resulted in censorship; the philosopher-king controlled both the manner and matter of expression. Weaver never goes to this extreme, although the same tendencies are present. Obviously, Weaver's demands for a philosophical rhetoric limit the scope of rhetorical practice. In this vein, Weaver readily admits that wisdom is not a common commodity within the state. And because "uninformed expression is ever tending toward ignorance," presumably the only legitimate expression will be that of the educated.[2] Similarly, Weaver threatens to expose forms of expression that endanger the community. He writes:

> There is a sentimental poetry, and it will have to be exposed (not censored, certainly; for to omit criticism of it would deprive us of our fairest chance to combat the sentimental rhetoric of the student's environment). There may be poetry vicious in nature, and that, too, will have to be taught for what it is.[3]

The passage is evidence of an impulse toward censorship so that Weaver has to justify his position against censorship because it seems a logical consequence of the views he propounds. Once truth and error are convincingly

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[1] Ideas Have Consequences, p. 43.

[2] Ideas Have Consequences, p. 25.

[3] Ideas Have Consequences, p. 166.

separated and labeled, there is no reason to tolerate error. And while Weaver condemns censorship, he seems to urge its practice: "vicious poetry will be taught for what it is." The statement is admittedly ambiguous, but it suggests that education will be doctrinal, allowing little freedom of interpretation. And insofar as Weaver controls both what is taught and how it is taught, his program of education differs little from the one Plato advocates in the Republic.

Weaver's preconditions for the use of rhetoric, that the rhetorician engage in a prior dialectic, that the rhetorician possess knowledge, and that rhetoric be used in support of order and justice, parallel those established by Plato. These theories presuppose similar assumptions about human ontology, epistemology, and axiology, resulting in a close correlation between their respective theories of rhetoric. The preconditions for rhetoric are the most important aspect of Weaver's theory.

Types of Rhetoric

Weaver describes two types of rhetoric: an order-producing rhetoric and an order-maintaining rhetoric which is epideictic in nature.

Order-producing rhetoric attempts to sort out choices connected with questions of policy. It serves functions similar to those of the public rhetoric described in Plato's dialogues. Having arrived at a concept of order through the process of dialectic, order-producing rhetoric attempts to actualize that hierarchy in the existential realm. In the Ethics of Rhetoric Weaver notes: "there is a branch of dialectic which contributes to 'choice or avoidance,' and it is with this that rhetoric is regularly found joined. Generally speaking, this is a rhetoric involving questions

of policy. . . ."[1] The rhetorician attempts to superimpose the ideal pattern on empirical reality, to recreate society with the intention of promoting the welfare of the state. This rhetoric deals with fundamental values which lie at the heart of any social organization. It is much broader than the Aristotelian concept of deliberative rhetoric which deals primarily with the political problems of the constituted state. Both Plato and Weaver seek to inject order, justice, and goodness into the very essence of the state. Weaver explains:

> The education of the soul is not a process of bringing it into correspondence with a physical structure like the external world, but rather a process of rightly affecting its motion. By this conception, a soul which is rightly affected calls that good which is good; but a soul which is wrongly turned calls that good which is evil. What Plato has prepared us to see is that the virtuous rhetorician, who is a lover of truth, has a soul of such movement that its dialectical perceptions are consonant with those of the divine mind. Or, in the language of more technical philosophy, this soul is aware of axiological systems which have ontic status. The good soul, consequently, will not urge a perversion of justice as justice in order to impose upon the commonwealth. Insofar as the soul has its impulse in the right direction, its definitions will agree with the true nature of intelligible things.[2]

Weaver ultimately argues that, "Rhetoric is advisory; it has the office of advising men with reference to an independent order of goods and with reference to their particular situation as it relates to these."[3] The rhetorician attempts to inculcate "true nature of intelligible things" in those unable to fathom the intelligible. Order-producing rhetoric does more than present dialectical truth, it energizes the propositions of dialectic by

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[1] Ethics of Rhetoric, p. 16.

[2] Ethics of Rhetoric, p. 17.

[3] "Language is Sermonic," p. 211.

placing them in a historical context and applying them to concrete problems. Rhetoric, for Weaver, is an art of emphasis.[1]

Order-producing rhetoric is necessary when there is fundamental disagreement within society about its methods, goals, and directions. Order-producing rhetoric asserts that it has discovered truth and attempts to base social order on that truth. It offers an escape from uncertainty and nominalism[2] which ultimately lead to chaos.

Weaver does not discuss epideictic rhetoric at length because he sees little possibility of its realization in the modern world. Epideictic rhetoric, which attempts to reinforce shared values, depends on a stable social order. According to Weaver, the West has been in a state of ever increasing confusion since the Middle Ages, causing the decline of epideictic oratory. Given a stable social order, however, epideictic rhetoric can become a powerful force for the preservation of values and the maintenance of order. In an essay entitled "The Spaciousness of Old Rhetoric," Weaver explains his position:

> The object of an oration made on the conditions obtained a hundred years ago was not so much to "make people think" as to remind them of what they already thought (and again we are speaking comparatively). The oratorical rostrum, like the church, was less of a place for fresh instruction than for steady inculcation. And the orator, like the minister, was one who spoke from an eminent degree of conviction.[3]

Epideictic rhetoric is addressed to mind and memory and is relatively unconcerned with particulars.[4] As a conservator of value and guardian of

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[1] "Language is Sermonic," pp. 204-208.

[2] The doctrine that names for abstract things have no corresponding real existence.

[3] Ethics of Rhetoric, p. 172.

[4] Ethics of Rhetoric, p. 178.

order, the epideictic orator speaks for "corporate humanity"[1] to celebrate the values, the hierarchy, which bind society together.

Methods

Weaver is not concerned with the traditional methods of rhetoric. In evaluating Edmund Burke, for example, Weaver writes:

> . . . he /Burke/ has left many wonderful materials which /conservatives/ should assimilate. His insights into human nature are quite solid propositions to build with, and his eloquence is a lesson for all time in the effective power of energy and imagery. Yet these are the auxiliary rhetorical appeals. For the rhetorical appeal on which it will stake its life, a cause must have some primary source of argument which will not be embarrassed by abstractions or even by absolutes. . . . Burke was magnificent at embellishment but of clear rational principle he had a mortal distrust.[2]

The essence of rhetoric is not embellishment, audience adaptation, energy, or imagery. Rather, rhetoric depends upon dialectic and poetic to supply its premises. Weaver, like Plato, is indifferent to technemata.

From Weaver's perspective, poetic, including literature and drama, is one of the primary sources for both knowledge and imagination. In the Ethics of Rhetoric, for example, Weaver describes the "true rhetorician as a noble lover of the good, who works through dialectic and through poetic or analogical association."[3] The emphasis upon poetic as a means of persuasion reappears with Weaver. In "Language is Sermonic," he commends the dramatic recreation used by Daniel Webster in the trial of John Francis Knapp:

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[1] Ethics of Rhetoric, p. 182.

[2] Ethics of Rhetoric, p. 83.

[3] Ethics of Rhetoric, p. 18.

> By depicting the scene in this fulness of detail, Webster is making it vivid, and "vivid" means "living." There are those who object on general grounds to this sort of dramatization; it is too affecting to the emotions. Beyond a doubt, whenever the rhetorician actualizes an event in this manner, he is making it mean something to the emotional part of us, but that part is involved whenever we are deliberating about goodness and badness.[1]

Poetic (and by extension, all of literature, for Weaver argues that "rhetoric operates at the point where literature and politics meet"[2]) is the very stuff of persuasion, the device by which a fragmented community is made whole.

The poetic element in language has the power to unify human beings--the power of drama is a universal form of transcendent experience. For this reason Weaver concludes, "Poetry offers the fairest hope of restoring our lost unity of mind."[3] Plato distrusted poetry precisely because it was a universal form of experience which had the remarkable ability to enchant minds. Plato was among the first to recognize the tremendous persuasive force of poetic and to demand that poetry assume moral responsibility for its ontological and axiological content. Weaver takes a similar position. Poetic is an indispensable tool for persuasion. It is the one form of persuasion which offers the possibility of showing "that there are ways of feeling about things which are not provincial either in space or time."[4] Hence, the essential methodological concern of the rhetor is to discover and exploit the poetic resources of langauge.

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[1] "Language is Sermonic," p. 219.

[2] "Language is Sermonic," p. 225.

[3] Ideas Have Consequences, p. 166.

[4] Ideas Have Consequences, p. 166.

There are two other points to be made about method which derive from the logical resources of language. The first has to do with what Weaver calls the noblest form of argument, argument from definition: "he is making the highest order of appeal when he is basing his case on definition or the nature of the thing."[1] Argument from definition is special because it persuades human beings to act correctly and instructs them about the real nature of things. "This is but getting people to see what is most permanent in existence, or what transcends the world of change and accident. The realm of essence is the realm above the flux of phenomena, and definitions are of essences and genera."[2] Argument from definition is necessarily an argument for order, and by extension, for justice. It attempts to reveal the intelligible in an effort to persuade human beings to live according to the order manifested therein. In ranking argument from definition above other forms of argument, Weaver is making an axiological distinction. Argument from definition is morally superior to the other forms of argument because, by revealing essence, it reveals knowledge, order, and justice. Weaver says, "Argument from definition involves a philosophy of being. . . . Such genera appear the very organon of truth."[3] Other methods of argument diminish rhetoric as a moral art. When Weaver argues that "concentration upon definition produces a strongly legalistic speech,"[4] he means that in the same spirit in which Plato composed the Laws, i.e., that laws should codify the order of the intelligible.

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1 "Language is Sermonic," p. 212.

2 "Language is Sermonic," p. 212.

3 Ethics of Rhetoric, p. 87.

4 Ethics of Rhetoric, p. 99.

There are three other broad categories of argument, acceptable to the extent that they are able to reveal essence. Of the three, Weaver prefers argument by analogy or metaphor because, as he explains, "the user of analogy is hinting at an essence which cannot at the moment be produced."[1] The position is reminiscent of Plato's use of myth and metaphor. Weaver argues that the cosmos itself is a vast system of essences in an analogical relationship. Argument from analogy reasons from the more to the less known.[2] Argument from cause and effect and argument from authority are lower forms of argument because they are based on sensation. Arguments based on authority are justifiable only "when they are deferential toward real hierarchy," that is, when they are based on the testimony of an authority who has knowledge of the intelligible.[3] The distinction is important because it establishes a distinction, similar to Plato's, between the noble and base rhetorician and the noble and base forms of rhetoric. The noble rhetorician is a moral artist who knows the truth and acts according to that truth; the base rhetorician is the one who argues from expedience, basing argument on sensation and circumstance. In a footnote to "Language is Sermonic," Weaver explains the distinction:

> If I have risked confusion by referring to "rhetoricians" and "rhetorical speakers," and to other men as if they were all non-rhetoricians, while insisting that all language has its rhetorical aspect, let me clarify the terms. By "rhetorician" I mean the deliberate rhetor: the man who understands the nature and aim and requirements of persuasive expression and who uses them more or less

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1 "Language is Sermonic," p. 213.

2 "Language is Sermonic," p. 214.

3 "Language is Sermonic," p. 216.

> consciously according to the approved rules of the art. The other, who by his membership in the family of language users, must be a rhetorician of sorts, is an empirical and adventitious one; he does not know enough to keep invention, arrangement, and style working for him. The rhetorician of my reference is thus the educated speaker; the other is an untaught amateur.[1]

The noble rhetorician is concerned with the physical and spiritual well being of the audience. By arguing from definition and analogy, the rhetor increases the dignity of the audience by appealing to their highest capacity, the "capacity to apprehend what exists absolutely."[2]

Finally, consistent with the Platonic tradition, Weaver views language which describes the intelligible as invested with a special power and eloquence. This is one reason that so little attention is given to the methods of producing eloquence: wisdom is thought to produce an eloquence of its own. Weaver shares this view: "both usage and speculation agree on the rhetorical quality of nouns. The noun derives its special dignity from being a name word, and names persist, in spite of all the cautions of modern semanticists, in being thought of as words for substances."[3] Hence, Weaver argues that "language must have some connection with the intelligential world." A grammar which has been properly constructed, that is, one based on the intelligible, reveals the genuine nature of, and the relationships in, reality. The assumptions that human beings bring to the use of language, as Plato demonstrated in the Cratylus, reveal their metaphysical orientation. A language based on nominalism will deceive its users about the true nature of reality just as a language

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1 "Language is Sermonic," p. 222.

2 "Language is Sermonic," p. 213.

3 Ethics of Rhetoric, p. 127.

based on the permanence of ideas will lead humans toward an understanding of the intelligible.

Summary

It is a long way from Plato to Weaver and yet, of the theorists examined, Weaver is one of those whose views are closest to Plato. Weaver's Platonism is rather obvious and has provoked scholarly comment.[1] Yet there are two aspects of Weaver's Platonism which deserve note here. First, independent of all the other scholars examined, Weaver's work establishes the fact of a Platonic tradition in rhetoric. Weaver demonstrates that a theory of rhetoric can be developed from a Platonic epistemological and axiological perspective. Weaver's theory of rhetoric is moral and practical, in Platonic terms, and establishes Platonic rhetorical theory as a continuing force in rhetorical scholarship.

Second, Weaver confirms the essential elements of the Platonic rhetorical tradition which had emerged from the analyses of Plato, Cicero, Augustine, and Fenelon. For Weaver, as for the others, rhetoric is a moral art which attempts to inspire correct action. Weaver shares Plato's epistemology and, as a result, rhetoric does not discover the truth but is used to buttress truth established through dialectic. Hence rhetoric is dependent on prior dialectic, a dialectic which attempts to discover and name the forms which inhabit the intelligible realm. Rhetoric makes knowledge public in order to produce order and justice in society. What is striking about Weaver is not that his rhetorical theory is reminiscent of Plato's but that it duplicates Platonic rhetorical theory in so many

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[1] See, for example, Haskell and Hauser, passim.

respects. I take this as confirmation that there is a continuing Platonic tradition. That theorists throughout the history of rhetorical scholarship have shared so many of the essential aspects of the Platonic perspective establishes the existence of a rhetorical tradition distinct from that established by Aristotle.

Chapter VII

Conclusions

The substance and implications of Plato's theory of rhetoric have been much misunderstood. When Plato's theory of rhetoric has been noticed, it has been sanitized to make its less appealing elements seem benign. Plato's rhetoric entails a body of ethical principles against which societies in the West have fought for the last 200 years and yet, Plato has a way of beguiling the spirit, perhaps because one wants so much to admire him. Critics who seem to understand Plato's theory arrive at very odd judgments about it. Though recognizing that Plato would use rhetoric for "social control," to "communicate moral and metaphysical truths," and to maintain "the political order," Edwin Black concludes:

> When, in recent history, we find the clamorous spirit of fanaticism at large in the world, sustained by rhetorical discourse; when we contemplate the undiminished and undiminishing potential for savagery latent in all men, waiting to be triggered by suasive language; and when we observe the Sophists of our time, rationally discredited but thriving still, we may begin to suspect that, after all, Plato was even wiser than we had thought.[1]

If Plato's theory is to be fully understood, it is necessary to place his theory in its proper context and to examine the implications of that theory. In what remains of this study, I shall attempt to place Plato's theory in perspective and to examine some of the implications of his theory.

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[1] Edwin Black, "Plato's Theory of Rhetoric," p. 374.

I have argued throughout this study that rhetorical theory develops out of prior conceptions of ontology, epistemology, and axiology. Differing philosophical assumptions produce different theories of rhetoric. By juxtaposing Platonic and Aristotelian philosophical assumptions, one can determine the extent to which Platonic rhetorical theory differs from conventional theory.

From the perspective of Platonic ontology, human beings are persuadable because they respond to the imitative properties of language. Plato considers all language to be an imitation of reality and the quality (or correctness) of language depends on the quality of the imitation.[1] Rhetoric persuades because of its ability to imitate truth. Imitation is not a rational process, rather it engages the appetitive part of the soul. Imitations are always inferior to the reality that they represent and may deceive the soul about genuine reality, causing an individual to confuse appearance and reality. Plato's position is developed in Book X of the Republic:

> /It is/ . . . obvious that the nature of the mimetic poet is not related to this better part of the soul and his cunning is not framed to please it, if he is to win favor with the multitude. . . . This consideration, then, makes it right for us to proceed to lay hold of him and set him down as the counterpart of the painter, for he resembles him in that his creations are inferior in respect to reality, and the fact that his appeal is to the inferior part of the soul and not to the best part is another point of resemblance. And so we may at least say that we should be justified in not admitting him to the well ordered state, because he stimulates and fosters this element in the soul, and by strengthening it tends to destroy the rational part, just as when in a state one puts bad men in power and trusts the city over to them and ruins the better sort (605a-c).

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[1] See the discussion of Plato's Cratylus in ch. II. See also, Richard McKeon, "Literary Criticism and the Concept of Imitation in Antiquity," p. 8.

The danger of imitation is that it tends to subvert the rational part of the soul and strengthen the appetitive element, causing the individual to abandon the search for truth (Republic 395d). However, in spite of its dangers, Plato does not intend to eliminate all imitation from the state. Instead, he hopes to harness imitation to the service of philosophy. Imitation is most harmful when it proceeds without knowledge of truth: then it is likely to produce phantasms which have little in common with reality. Because of this defect, Plato censures the rhetoric practiced by the Sophists in the Gorgias. However, when imitation is based on genuine knowledge, sound imitations, eikons, which closely resemble reality, serve as approximations of reality for those unable to attain knowledge directly.[1]

For Plato, most human beings do not have the capacity for rational thought. While knowledge is latent within each human soul, the process of bringing that knowledge to consciousness is long and rigorous. So difficult is the process that Plato argues that "mind is the attribute of the gods and of very few men" (Timaeus 51e).[2] The rational part of the soul must rule the appetites if an individual is to attain knowledge. Yet, this element is least developed in most human beings and, for that reason, rationality cannot be said to be a universal human characteristic. Imitation, however, generates a response in every human soul because it is not a rational process.

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[1] McKeon, "Literary Criticism and the Concept of Imitation in Antiquity," pp. 14-15.

[2] See also Republic 493e-494a, Laws 689a-e, and Laws 918d.

Plato's ontology differs markedly from Aristotle's. For Aristotle, human beings can be persuaded because they are rational creatures. Aristotle believes that rationality is a uniquely human attribute; hence all human beings are capable of responding to rational discourse. From an Aristotelian perspective, rhetoric is most perfect when it is concerned with demonstration. The ideal rhetoric is constructed along an analogy to the process of scientific demonstration. While rhetoric does not pretend to discover scientific knowledge, it does generate insight into the probable. Its methods, the rhetorical syllogism (enthymeme) and the rhetorical induction (example), are designed to evaluate probable conclusions and to aid human beings in the process of rational judgment. This difference between Aristotelian and Platonic theory is crucial. If one assumes that human beings are capable of discovering knowledge about the probable and discriminating among choices, as does Aristotle, rhetoric assumes an important role in gathering information, assessing choices, and in recommending alternatives. Deliberative rhetoric becomes an important method for dealing with social problems, and freedom of expression is regarded as essential to the success of deliberation.

For Plato, there is no deliberative rhetoric, in the Aristotelian sense. Rhetoric serves an a priori truth, revealed through dialectic, and is designed to communicate that truth, by whatever means, to an ignorant public. Rhetoric is designed to limit, rather than to enhance, choice making. To the same end, rhetoric is limited in scope to that which properly imitates reality. Free expression is detrimental to both rhetoric and society. In essence, the Platonic and Aristotelian ontologies represent divergent assumptions about human nature and human social organization. The Platonic position leads to what Sir Karl Popper has labeled, "the closed society"

(totalitarianism), while the Aristotelian position embodies the assumptions maintained by open, democratic societies.[1]

Plato's ontology makes freedom of thought dangerous and freedom of expression impossible. It relieves human beings of the obligation to assume responsibility for their decisions and for their conduct. Instead, one has the duty to keep to one's place, to understand one's proper niche in society and to remain in that role. The citizen, unable to trust her or his intellect, turns for guidance to a leader able to understand the intelligible truth. In this capapcity as intellectual and moral leader, the philosopher-king has the power to employ lies, propagandistic tales (which were to be endlessly repeated from cradle to grave), and physical force, including banishment and death, in order to create a totally harmonious society in which all citizens believed in the same things and whose actions conformed to those beliefs.

Plato's philosophy culminated in a theory of rhetoric with inherent tendencies toward repression. It is a doctrinaire, authoritarian rhetoric which depends on censorship, denies the possibility of argument, and reserves the right to use rhetoric for the philosopher-king (and her or his surrogates). This tendency is present, to a greater or lesser extent, in the work of all of the theorists writing in the Platonic tradition. Repressive

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[1] The Open Society and Its Enemies, Vol. 1, (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1966), ch. 10. Popper argues that Aristotle, as Plato's disciple, also propounds a philosophy which leads to totalitarianism (p. 70 ff.). To be sure, aspects of Aristotelian political philosophy are anti-egalitarian and repressive. However, Popper fails to consider the humanizing force of Aristotelian rhetoric. In fact, because Aristotle assumes human beings are rational creatures and that political knowledge is only approximate, the Aristotelian polis is bound to be far more open than Platonic society. When Aristotle argues that deliberative rhetoric is the noblest form of rhetorical expression (Rhetoric 1354b25), the "fittest" form of expression for a citizen, he gives citizens far more freedom than Plato would have condoned.

elements are least evident in the work of Cicero (in spite of his condemnation of the poets) because Cicero is not fully committed to the position that rhetoric is an instrument for the communication of doctrinal truth (Orator lxxi. 237-238). Totalitarianism is present to a greater extent in the work of Augustine and his followers,[1] who believe that rhetoric is an instrument to make human beings "docile" (De doctrina Christiana IV. 4. 6) so that they may be influenced to think and act according to the dictates of Scripture. While Augustine does not condone the use of lies, he views rhetoric as an instrument of compulsion, a nonviolent method by which to pursue the doctrine of compelle intrare.[2] Like Plato, Augustine's ultimate purpose is to purify knowledge, to communicate it to the multitude, and to compel them to act according to doctrinal dictates. To accomplish these ends, virtually any methods are justifiable.[3]

These same tendencies are present in the work of Fénelon and in the work of Richard Weaver. Fénelon recommends that "the people . . . never see or hear anything which does not serve to strengthen the laws and to inspire virtue" (p. 71). At another point, he demands that society be organized so that citizens "strive always towards the public good" (p. 67). To that end, he recommends that "all exercises of the mind which would not serve to make the soul healthy, strong, and beautiful" be curtailed (p. 67),

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[1] The work of Augustine was used to justify the Inquisitions conducted by later officials of the Church. See Roland Bainton, Christendom, vol. 1, (New York: Harper and Row, 1966), p. 218.

[2] John Figgis, The Political Aspects of S. Augustine's 'City of God', p. 79.

[3] In fairness, Christians did not use the same methods to compel heretics that Plato might have sanctioned.

a prohibition which includes "any of the sciences or any of the arts which serve only for pleasure, for amusement, and for curiosity" (p. 67). The object is to instruct people and make them better by directing their conduct (pp. 73, 76). In Richard Weaver, there is much the same anti-egalitarian sentiment.[1] Justice for Richard Weaver is much the same as it was for Plato: order. Weaver believes that there are natural hierarchies and that it is each person's duty to keep to her or his place within that hierarchy.[2] Because Weaver believes that "uninformed expression is ever tending toward ignorance," the impulse toward censorship is present.[3] According to Weaver, there is right and there is wrong; the right should be taught, the wrong exposed.[4] These matters are apparently beyond debate.

I do not hold that Plato developed this theory of rhetoric out of great anti-humanitarian sentiment, nor do I believe that Cicero, Augustine, Fénelon, or Weaver were insincere in their conviction that they were saving humanity from terrible injustice. In fact, the sincerity of the motives of these theorists makes this rhetoric all the more dangerous because even the most vicious appeals seem to ring with humanitarian overtones. I suspect, though I have done no systematic investigation to confirm this conclusion, that this is the reason for the presence of so many medical metaphors within these theories of rhetoric.[5] The cruelty of cautery is

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[1] Ideas Have Consequences, p. 42.

[2] Ideas Have Consequences, p. 43.

[3] Ideas Have Consequences, pp. 25, 166.

[4] Ideas Have Consequences, p. 166.

[5] See Susan Sontag, Illness as Metaphor, (New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 1977), ch. 9.

justified by the humane purpose of the branding iron. Plato refers to his noble lie as a kind of "medicine" (Republic 459d), Augustine proposes to save the body by amputating the rotten limb, Fénelon says rhetoric ought "to burn, to cut to the quick . . . and to effect cures by the bitterness of remedies and the serverity of the regimen" (p. 81), and Weaver attempts to impose his "doctor of culture" on society to cure its spiritual ills. The authority of the physician-figure provides a convenient rationale for citizen-patients to abandon their responsibility for choice and to commit themselves to the care of the physician-rhetor. The defense that these authors hated tyranny and were seeking the good for their subjects demonstrates only that zealous pursuit of the greatest good carries with it the danger of the greatest evil. Whenever rhetoric becomes a vehicle to communicate a truth that confers moral obligations upon its hearers, there is danger that the process by which the end is sought will render the end itself unattainable: the lie in pursuit of truth is ultimately self-defeating. Karl Popper concluded, "Plato thus became, unconsciously, the pioneer of many propagandists who, often in good faith, developed the technique of appealing to moral, humanitarian sentiments, for anti-humanitarian, immoral purposes."[1]

Ultimately, that which prevents the abuse of rhetoric is the assumption that rhetoric is a process for coming to know and understand the nature of the contingent. When rhetorical discourse is viewed as part of the process of understanding, of coming to know, rather than as a means for communicating dogma, it is logically impossible to curtail expression, to avoid argument,

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[1] The Open Society and Its Enemies, vol. 1, p. 199.

to censor thought, or to compel belief and action. It is the method, not particular conclusions, that is important. But whenever there is doctrinal certainty, these assumptions are threatened. If truth is certain, there is no room for dispute, no reason to tolerate error. Rhetoric becomes a means to communicate an understanding, and it is the doctrine that is important, not the method by which it is inculcated. Within the Platonic tradition, doctrine will always be more important than method, and for that reason, Platonic rhetoric will ever tend toward repression.

Implications and Suggestions for Further Research: The Platonic Tradition in Rhetoric

The Platonic Tradition and the Theory of Rhetoric

Plato continues to be important in rhetorical theory because, consciously or not, rhetorical theorists and public speakers conceive of and practice rhetoric from a Platonic perspective. Individuals and institutions concerned with the preservation and transmission of doctrine (in a variety of social settings) have developed theories of rhetoric which are Platonic because of their insistence that rhetoric is a tool for inducing the uninformed masses to respond to messages in a prescribed manner. If this sort of rhetoric is to be properly understood, it is necessary to identify contemporary theorists and practitioners who espouse Platonic positions.

The definitive characterisitcs of Platonic rhetorical theory are: (1) a broad definition of rhetoric which encompasses all forms of persuasive language; (2) a reliance on an a priori epistemology to inform the content of rhetoric; (3) rhetoric aims to further specific, discoverable, and significant moral ends; (4) reliance on dramatic imitation as an important persuasive force; (5) an emphasis on social control, censorship, and doctrinal conformity derived from an anti-egalitarian ontology; (6) dialectic

as the essential method for rhetorical invention; and (7) a necessary relationship between hermeneutics and epistemology. Once these identifying characteristics are seen to be present in any rhetorical theory, a strong case can be made that the theory is Platonic in origin.

To illustrate the applicability of Platonic rhetorical theory to contemporary practice, I shall argue that the rhetorical theory informing many political campaigns proceeds from Platonic assumptions. It is not necessary to show, nor is it my contention, that most or all political rhetoric is Platonic.[1] Platonic theory usually does not announce itself but has, nevertheless, become an important part of campaign theory.

At times, descriptions of the art of political campaigning make unflattering assumptions about the audiences to which political discourse is addressed. Modern campaign technicians sometimes assume that the primary purpose of rhetoric is to arouse emotion because they believe audiences are incapable of responding to reason. Ontologically, they split humanity into at least two groups: those capable of reason who develop rhetorical discourse to persuade those who are incapable of reason. And this leads directly to the hierarchical classification of beings that is a familiar part of Plato, with each segment of humanity having its proper role and station. Murray Edelman, for example, has written:

> The reaction of large publics to leaders is rarely a simple, rational judgment that the leader can get his followers what they want and therefore should be followed. Governmental leaders have tremendous potential capacity for evoking strong emotional responses in large populations. When an individual is recognized as a legitimate leading official of the state, he becomes a symbol of some or all the aspects of the state: its capacity for benefitting or hurting, for threatening and reassuring.[2]

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1 See, for example, Jeff Greenfield, Playing to Win, (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1980).

2 The Symbolic Uses of Politics, (Chicago: Univ. of Illinois Press, 1964), p. 73

The reason for this is, according to Edelman, that "large numbers of people in our society . . . see and think in terms of stereotypes, personalization, and oversimplifications . . . they cannot recognize or tolerate ambiguous and complex situations. . . ."[1] These lines are reminiscent of Plato: like Plato, Edelman believes that the public "responds to the cues furnished by . . . actions and speeches, not to direct knowledge of the facts."[2] This implies, of course, that there is an objective body of facts that can be known without regard to public discourse. The anti-democratic sentiment is, I believe, equally evident. Edelman assumes the existence of a body of knowledge to which most people cannot respond.

Once the audience is described in anti-egalitarian terms, the scope of political rhetoric is narrowly limited. If one abandons Aristotle's assumption that all citizens are capable of judging political discourse, rational argument gives way to rhetoric designed to "threaten" or "reassure." These views are not confined to Edelman; Dan Nimmo brings the same perspective to his analysis of American political campaigns:

> In any campaign the vast majority ignore all but the most general issues. They may, for example, feel that nuclear superiority over the Soviet Union is desirable, but know little about the subtleties of ending nuclear testing, constructing an anti-ballistic missle system, or securing nuclear non-proliferation treaties. And they often rally behind a slogan symbolizing American success. . . .[3]

Nimmo reports that the target audience for political messages is "'moderately

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[1] Edelman, p. 31.

[2] Edelman, p. 172.

[3] The Political Persuaders, (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1970), p. 22.

more sophisticated and somewhat better informed than that of a generation ago' but 'passive and incurious about the world'--one in sum, that 'because it is not particularly interested in many subjects and issues, . . . will apparently accept what it is told about them /politicians/ more or less trustingly.'"[1] And again, "Politicians employ numerous techniques to adjust to the demands of video-campaigning. These techniques are usually based on an appeal to the tastes, rather than the convictions, of Americans, for television advisers are convinced that personalities and not issue stands or political parties win votes."[2] In fairness to Edelman and Nimmo, both purport only to describe the current state of campaign theory, and Nimmo, at least, is aware of the danger implicit in this approach to campaigns.[3] However, expert description quickly becomes conventional wisdom in the pragmatic world of politics. Nowhere is this revealed more clearly than in Joe McGinniss' description of Richard Nixon's campaign for the presidency in 1968.[4]

Documents secured by McGinniss reveal the extent of the contempt that some campaign technicians have for the electorate. William Gavin, one of Nixon's chief media advisers, described voters this way:

> Voters are basically lazy, basically uninterested in making an effort to understand what we're talking about--even though they're interested in politics and feel a proprietary sense about the office of the Presidency. It takes an effort of will to make the mind move in linear logical paths. . . .[5]

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[1] Nimmo, p. 118, citing Robert MacNeil, The People Machine, (New York: Harper and Row, 1968), pp. 198, 222.

[2] Nimmo, p. 141.

[3] Nimmo, pp. 193-199.

[4] The Selling of the President, 1968, (New York: Pocket Books, 1970).

[5] Reprinted in McGinniss, p. 224. Emphasis in original.

Gavin advised Nixon to "break away from linear logic" and "present a barrage of impressions." In a few lines buried in a memorandum, Gavin reiterated the essence of Platonic rhetorical theory: people are not capable of rational thought, therefore rhetoric is an instrument by which one manipulates the masses to secure some predetermined end. There is no ethic of means, only results matter. At another point, Gavin comments:

> reason requires a high degree of discipline, of concentration; impression is easier.
>
> reason pushes the viewer back, it assaults him, it demands that he agree or disagree; impression can envelop him, invite him in, without making an intellectual demand, or a demand on his intellectual energies. he can receive the impression without having to think about it in a linear structured way. when we argue with him we demand that he make the effort of replying. we seek to engage his intellect, and for most people this is the most difficult work of all. the emotions are more easily aroused, closer to the surface, more malleable.[1]

McGinniss notes that this philosophy was central to the Nixon media strategy in 1968: "In 1967, he /Raymond Price, another Nixon media adviser/ began with the assumption that, 'the natural use of reason is to support prejudice, not to arrive at opinions.' Which led to the conclusion that rational arguments would 'only be effective if we can get the people to make the emotional leap, or what the theologians call (the) 'leap of faith'.'"[2]

As I have demonstrated, these assumptions about human nature are central to Platonic rhetorical theory. This elitist perspective makes it necessary for the rhetor to "shape" the truth for the ignorant, lazy, uninformed masses. If the populace is unable to understand argument, unable to digest information and draw probable deductions from it, then political rhetoric

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[1] Reprinted in McGinniss, p. 199.

[2] McGinniss, p. 30.

must lose its deliberative character. If such assessments are correct, the resulting rhetoric would have little interest in the truth and would exhibit few of the characteristics that are commonly identified with rational argument.

And, not surprisingly, content is viewed as relatively unimportant in much of contemporary political rhetoric. What is seem as essential is the style and form of the message, a position in some ways similar to Plato's belief that the lawgiver "need only tax his invention to discover what conviction would be most beneficial . . . and then contrive all manner of devices" to ensure the result (Laws 664a). Nimmo contends that "Election campaigns are fought not 'on the issues' but on themes."[1] The result, according to Nimmo, is that:

> The speeches are not designed to change people's minds or even to give an in-depth view of the candidate's position. The function of discussing issues is more latent than manifest. By quoting facts and details on a variety of issues the candidate leaves the impression that he possesses the knowledge, sophistication, and acumen to hold public office. Indeed, rather than trying to communicate the content of his speech to his audience, he may purposely talk above them and create the aura that he is prepared to deal with highly complex matters. . . . In sum, the candidates endeavor to communicate not substance, but style and image in their speeches.[2]

Because "television advisers are convinced that personalities and not issue stands" win elections, Nimmo concludes that even political debate has become corrupted to the service of image creation. Debates, Nimmo writes, are not arguments on the issues, but confrontations of images."[3] Within

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[1] Nimmo, p. 55.

[2] Nimmo, pp. 119-120.

[3] Nimmo, p. 158.

the framework of the modern political campaign, truth is viewed as a negotiable commodity, something created to suit the demands of an occasion. Nimmo observed that the new technology "introduces not only the possibility but indeed the likelihood of systematic deception in electoral politics."[1] More disquieting is the rationale that events and images can be created to reflect the way things should have been, even if history bears little resemblance to the reconstructed ideal. Raymond Price, author of the opinion that people use reason to justify prejudice, wrote in a memo for the Nixon (1968) campaign:

> Let's leave realities aside--because what we have to deal with now is not the facts of history, but an image of history. The history we have to be concerned with is not what happened, but what's remembered, which may be quite different. Or, to put it another way, the historical untruth may be a political reality.[2]

Price might have added that a political untruth may as easily become a historical reality. What is important is the creation of the "correct" image (much as Plato attempted to inculcate "correct" belief) without regard for substance. This perspective, according to Price, "suggests that we take the time and money to experiment, in a controlled manner, with film and television techniques, with particular emphasis on pinpointing those <u>controlled</u> uses of the television medium that can <u>best</u> convey the <u>image</u> we want to get across. . . ."[3] If one begins with Plato's assumption that any methods are justified to secure social welfare, such behavior may be necessary and just. And this assumption is made by influential campaign theorists;

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[1] Nimmo, p. 195.

[2] Reprinted in McGinniss, p. 203.

[3] Cited in McGinniss, p. 31. Emphasis in original.

it is implicit in Nimmo's definition of a campaign as, "The activities of an individual or group . . . in a particular context . . . designed to manipulate the behavior of a wider number of people (the audience) to his advantage."[1]

The democratic political system, however it may function, is founded on opposite assumptions; that it is the electoral process itself that is valuable. Through the electoral process ideas are tested and refined and the authentic character (ethos) of a candidate emerges. It is the electoral process which is deemed inviolate in election statutes, campaign regulations, and in constitutional provisions guaranteeing access to the media and the ballot. But while our laws seek to secure the integrity of the political process, campaign technicians attempt to undermine the integrity of the process at every turn. To his credit, Nimmo describes the problem in some detail:

> But when a candidate uses opinion surveys and image advertising to give the appearance of being the leader of a popular movement, he is a captive not only of the movement but of the technicians as well. He becomes a manufactured, contrived, "personality" contending with rival "personalities" for public office. . . . Elections are approached neither as conflicts between parties nor as confrontations of principle. They are viewed instead as contests of personalities, and even more basically, they offer a choice between the sophisticated engineers working on behalf of these personalities.[2]

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[1] Nimmo, p. 10.

[2] Nimmo, p. 197. This campaign strategy cannot be defended on pragmatic grounds. In the 1968 presidential campaign, Nixon's technicians converted a large early lead in September into a narrow victory in November. Emmet John Hughes noted that Nixon "began his 1968 campaign with . . . /a/ lead of 16 per cent recorded in August--and he barely missed losing it." ("The Politics of the Sixties--From New Frontier to New Revolution," rpt. in Karlyn Kohrs Campbell, Critiques of Contemporary Rhetoric, (Belmont: Wadsworth, 1972), p. 201). This approach persists not because it is successful (as Plato discovered to his dismay at Syracuse) but because it is perceived as less risky to political candidates than other available strategies. Even in image campaigns, however, voters tend to look for issues. See, for example, Steven Chaffee, "Presidential Debates--Are They Helpful to Voters?", Communication Monographs 45 (November 1978), pp. 330-346; and Jeff Greenfield, Playing to Win, pp. 41-44.

Plato will remain an important figure in contemporary rhetorical theory as long as campaign rhetoric embraces Platonic assumptions. Much more investigation will be necessary to clarify the apparent contradiction between the assumptions of our institutions and those implicit in our campaign rhetoric. But it is essential, in any such investigation, to recognize the extent to which both theory and practice depart from conventional theory. Platonic campaign rhetoric is not merely an aberration from the norm or a response to new technology or to the changing tastes and demands of the electorate. Rather, this rhetoric is another manifestation of the Platonic tradition, which, as a matter of theory, embraces elitism, rejects argument, communicates doctrine, censors discussion, and seeks to eliminate dissent.

The advantages of examining political rhetoric from this perspective are heuristic. For example, from a Platonic perspective, television is not a cause, but a symptom of rhetorical "malaise." After all, television is nothing more than an efficient mechanical device for the propagation of images. It is an instrument that Plato would have understood, condemned, and used in much the same way that it is now being used: to promulgate images of a reality that the audience is deemed incapable of judging. By nature, television is neither anit-intellectual nor anti-egalitarian; it only becomes so in the hands of technicians who bring such assumptions to their work.

By looking for signs of Platonism in political rhetoric and in other varieties of contemporary discourse, it is possible to arrive at a better understanding of the rhetors who employ such discourse and to better understand the rhetorical theory itself. It may be that contemporary rhetorical theory bears little relationship to the theory authored by Plato.

But it may be that much of contemporary rhetorical theory, especially that theory developed in response to the pragmatic needs of the market and social institutions, is closer to the Platonic tradition than we have understood.

The Platonic Tradition and the Practice of Rhetoric

There are numerous examples, aside from contemporary political rhetoric, that suggest Platonic influence on the theory and practice of rhetoric. Two examples in the United States, the rhetoric of the Puritans and the rhetoric of Huey Long, show traces of Platonic characteristics. These examples illustrate the significance of Platonic rhetorical theory and demonstrate the need for continued research.

The Puritans

Much of Puritan theology and rhetoric is reminiscent of the Platonic tradition in rhetoric. If a link can be established between the two, it would represent an important step toward understanding the evolution of rhetorical forms. Not only would such a connection establish some continuity in the evolution of Platonic theory, it might also serve to explain the subsequent development of American rhetoric. Whatever else has been said about the Puritans, they were enormously influential; enough so that Perry Miller and Thomas Johnson have written, without exaggeration, that, "without some understanding of Puritanism . . . there is no understanding of America."[1]

In matters of ontology and epistemology, there is little doubt that the Puritans borrow from Plato. The Puritans believed that in any society, most citizens were not wise enough to interpret Scripture properly and

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[1] The Puritans, vol. 1, (New York: Harper and Row, 1938), p. 1.

reserved that task for the learned clergy. Thomas Hooker, a Puritan leader in Connecticut, said, "I can speak it by experience, that the meaner ordinary sort of people, it is incredible and unconceivable what Ignorance is among them."[1] Such ignorance did not prevent the discussion of Scripture; indeed, the Puritan community was noted for its long and complex discussions on obscure matters of theology. Nevertheless, the final authority rested with the clergy and rank and file Puritans were expected to know their place and to keep to it. Ebenezer Pemberton of Massachusetts claimed that Scripture:

> Intends that we keep within the line and place, that providence has set us . . . We must not without God's call quit our post, thrust our selves into anothers province, with a conceit that there we may best serve, and promote the good of the world. But herein observe the will of God by keeping to the service that belongs to our station, which providence has made our peculiar business. Thus every man is to serve his generation by moving in his own orb; and discharging those offices that belong to that order that the government of heavan has assigned him to.[2]

Within the Puritan community, there were at least two conditions that the soul could experience: some were saved, infused with grace, and capable of leading the community in matters both spiritual and temporal. Others were unregenerate, lacking grace, and could be improved by learning but could never arrive at a complete understanding of Scripture. It is grace, Miller and Johnson argue, that is responsible for the "spark, the quickening insight, the subtle and inward genius which makes all the difference between the men who see and understand and know, and ordinary men who live from hand to mouth, never pierce below surface meanings, and never achieve self-mastery and direction."[3] It is the duty of the former to lead the

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[1] Cited in Miller and Johnson, p. 12.

[2] Cited in Miller and Johnson, p. 19. Emphasis in original.

[3] Miller and Johnson, p. 53.

latter, the duty of those who apprehend Scripture with the heart and the head to lead those who have achieved only an intellectual understanding. The result was a hierarchical society very close to the kind Plato described in the Republic:

> Puritanism appears, from the social and economic point of view, to have been a philsophy of social stratification, placing the command in the hands of the properly qualified and demanding implicit obedience from the uneducated; from the religious point of view it was the dogged assertion of the unity of intellect and spirit in the face of a rising tide of democratic sentiment suspicious of the intellect and intoxicated with the spirit.[1]

The likeness between Puritanism and Platonism is not coincidental. Miller and Johnson report that "Plato serves as an authority for the principles of society, subordinated of course to the Word of God, but agreeing with it nevertheless. . . ."[2] Ontologically, the Puritan concept of humanity is very close to Plato's; in matters of epistemology, the link is even closer.

The Puritans were much taken with the thought of Peter Ramus and employed his logic ruthlessly in their interpretation of Scripture.[3] And while I have argued that the Platonic tradition was continued by Fénelon, who wrote in opposition to Ramus, it was also continued by Ramus himself. The Puritans believed Ramus to be a Platonist, and believed that he brought

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[1] Miller and Johnson, p. 19.

[2] Miller and Johnson, p. 23.

[3] For an alternate perspective on the Puritans and the influence of Peter Ramus see E. E. White, Puritan Rhetoric, (Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois University Press, 1972), pp. 15-20. White argues that the Puritans were Aristotelian in their use of rhetoric.

new life to Platonic thought. Miller and Johnson note:

> Of course the "Platonic" conception of a world built upon ideas or exampla in the mind of God was part and parcel of the Christian tradition, and Puritans held it as much because of Augustine as because of Ramus; but since they already entertained the fundamental belief, Ramus' logic was all the more acceptable to them.[1]

Of Ramus, and his influence on the Puritans, Miller and Johnson write:

> Truth therefore becomes for the Ramist, and through him for the Puritan, clear eyed perception of immutable essences, beauty becomes correspondence to them, virtue becomes conformity to them. The method of discovering them is inward; they exist not only in nature but in the human intelligence, and though much study and caution are necessary in deriving them from the mind, since the mind is corrupted by sin, and the rules of logic must always preside over the formulating of them, still the soul contains an intuitive knowledge of the eternal truths, which truths also govern the world. . . .
> . . . . . .
> There can be no doubt that this way of thinking is a species of Platonism. It is a method for establishing the preexistence of ideas, or of a divine pattern, to which the world roughly conforms and by which all movement and contingency are to be explained. The Ramean logic might be said to be one of the several forms in which Platonism was revived in the Renaissance and enlisted in the humanists' and theologians' battle with scholasticism.[2]

As with the Platonists, the process of acquiring knowledge becomes a process of drawing insight from the mind with the aid of divine grace. Scripture is taken as the absolute record of Truth which is to be understood through grace and reason, both of which emanate from God.

The regenerate civic leader in Puritan society had temporal as well as spiritual responsibilities. Just as Plato would not let the philosopher live a life of contemplation, so the regenerate leader could not retreat from the temporal world. Instead, the leader, guided by wisdom, saved by

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[1] Miller and Johnson, p. 31, n. 1.

[2] Miller and Johnson, pp. 31, 37-39.

grace, was to establish a new covenant with God, a covenant which would ensure the spiritual and social welfare of the community. Edmund Morgan, in his biography of John Winthrop, described the nature of the responsibility conferred upon the leader:

> Legislative power was lodged not in the people but in a select group, where, according to his reading of the Bible, it belonged. . . . Rulers, however selected, received their authority from God, not from the people, and were accountable to God, not to the people. Their business was to enforce the nation's covenant with God. . . . So long as he did his duty, his authority was absolute, and, regardless of any errors of judgment he might make, the people were obliged to submit. Indeed, anything less than submission would be rebellion against the authority of God.[1]

Within this framework, rhetoric had little epistemological significance. Ramean logic robbed rhetoric of any methodological concern it might have with content: rhetoric was simply the business of communicating the truth revealed through dialectic. It was the business of rhetoric in the Puritan community to persuade the citizens to uphold the covenant. Or, more specifically, rhetoric was charged with approximating the experience of grace for the unregenerate so that they might achieve a fuller understanding of Scripture. William Ames, whose theology text was used at both Yale and Harvard, described the duty of the preacher:

> Men are to be pricked to the quick, that they may feele in every one of them that the Apostle saith, namely that the Word of the Lord is a two edged sword, that pierceth into the inward thoughts and affections, and goeth through unto the joyning together of the bones and marrow. Preaching therefore ought not to be dead, but lively and effectuall, so that an unbeliever coming into the Congregation of the faithfull he ought to be

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[1] The Puritan Dilemma, (Boston: Little, Brown, and Co., 1958), pp. 94-95.

> affected, and as it were digged through with the very hearing of the Word, that he may give glory to God.[1]

In matters of ontology, epistemology, and axiology Puritan rhetoric proceeds from assumptions similar to those developed by Plato. Human souls exist in hierarachies according to their ability to receive grace and understand truth; while all seek truth, not all can attain it. This threatens their spiritual welfare and the welfare of the community. Hence it is the business of rhetoric to persuade the ignorant to uphold the covenant.

With the advent of the eighteenth century, Puritan customs began to change, Puritan thought lost some of its doctrinal purity, and, in response, Puritan rhetoric also began to change. In part, this was due to the decline of Ramus as a leading intellectual figure. But as the Puritans turned from Ramus, they were greatly influenced by a new European tract on preaching, François Fénelon's Dialogues on Eloquence. As I have argued, Fénelon is thoroughly Platonic in his treatment of rhetoric; hence, when the Puritans rejected Ramus for Fénelon, they moved closer to Plato. Fénelon's influence is described by Miller and Johnson:

> As the second quarter of the century approached, nearly all tastes that may be labeled Puritan were rapidly adapting themselves to the English modes. No work on style was exerting more universal influence than Fénelon's Dialogues on Eloquence, wherein the archbishop of Cambray averred that he thought "the whole Art of Oratory may be reduc'd to proving, painting, and raising the Passions"; it should reach the heart, not merely stir the imagination. His point of view found ready adherents among the coming generation, and to the extent it was adopted indicates that the earlier Puritan feeling--that consciousness of style should be concealed--was undergoing change.[2]

Throughout the early evolution of Puritanism in America, Puritan rhetoric

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[1] Miller and Johnson, p. 67.

[2] Miller and Johnson, p. 76.

was substantially influenced by the Platonic tradition. And Puritan ideas, in turn, affected the rhetorical practice of subsequent political leaders.

Huey Long

Huey Long founded the Share Our Wealth movement in the 1930's, promising a return to prosperity through a new covenant with God. There is some evidence that Huey Long spoke in the traditions of the Puritans and Plato. First, Huey Long used rhetoric to communicate the a priori truth of Scripture to his audience. Long said that America's economic problems would not be solved until the political realm was patterned after the spiritual realm, until God's truth became humanity's law:

> But the Scripture says, ladies and gentlemen, that no country can survive, or for a country to survive that nothing should be held permanently by any one person, and that 50 years seems to be the year of jubilee in which all property would be scattered about and returned to the sources from which it originally came, and every seventh year debt should be remitted. Those two things the Almighty said to be necessary--I should say He knew to be necessary, or else he would not have so prescribed that the property would be kept among the general run of the people.[1]

And again, emphasizing the authority of Scripture, Long remarks:

> The Pilgrim fathers had a contract that they would keep the word of the Lord. The Bible commanded them that at the end of seven years that they ought to remit all debts, and they ought to see that the wealth was redistributed, so none would have too much, and none would be too poor.[2]

To ignore the truth of Scripture is to court disaster. For Huey Long and the Puritans, knowledge carries with it the moral imperative to reform society or suffer the consequences of supreme disobedience:

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[1] Huey Long, Congressional Record, 78:4 (March 1934), p. 3451.

[2] Huey Long, Congressional Record, 79:3 (March 1935), p. 2833.

> If this principle born of the Creator when he placed the first man on earth, reaffirmed by Christ and the Apostles, and which was made a part of this country from the day that the Pilgrims first landed, is now to be cast aside . . . the common run of mankind cannot escape calamity unless the wealth of the land is redistributed.[1]

Long aims to transplant the wisdom and authority of Scripture into American politics; by imposing Scriptural authority on the secular order, Long reestablishes the covenant with God: "There was once a country in exactly the same shape as America is today. God's prophet was there and applied the laws as God has prescribed them. If you would just recognize that God is still alive, that His law still lives, America would not grope today."[2]

Together these passages reveal epistemological and ontological similarities in the rhetoric of Huey long and rhetoric in the Platonic tradition. For both, knowledge is an understanding of the intelligible truths that lie beyond the reach of human sensation, truths that are immutable, truths that are politically and morally compelling, and which are understood by very few. Consequently, from the Platonic perspective, the rhetor is placed in the position of communicating a private wisdom to an uneducated audience, a posture which Long adopts in the passages just cited. Rhetoric is used to transmit doctrine and to maintain order. Because the order is morally compelling, the methods by which it is achieved are of little concern.

In keeping with the Platonic tradition, Huey Long was far more concerned with results than he was with methods. While Governor of Louisiana, he was

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[1] Huey Long, Congressional Record, 79:7 (May 1935), p. 8042.

[2] Huey Long, Congressional Record, 79:1 (January 1935), p. 792.

known to introduce forty bills before the legislature for passage in five days. The hearing for any one bill lasted slightly over two minutes and Long appeared as the sole witness.[1] Where bills might arouse controversy, T. Harry Williams reports that Long simply "resorted to deception to pass them."[2] When asked about his methods, Long commented:

> They say they don't like my methods. . . . Well, I don't like them much either. I really don't like to get up before the legislators the way I do. I'd much rather get up before the legislature and say, 'Now this is a good law; it's for the benefit of the people, and I'd like for you to vote for it in the interest of public welfare.' Only I know that laws ain't made that way. . . . The end justifies the means.[3]

The anti-egalitarian sentiment is obvious; the distrust of individual decision making, the use of rhetoric as a means to establish a preordained order, and the preoccupation with ends are all characteristic of the Platonic tradition. The pattern is unmistakable: the ontology, epistemology, and axiology implicit in the rhetoric of Huey Long point to the Platonic tradition and indicates the need for continued research.

Conclusions

The evidence pointing to the presence of a Platonic tradition is, I believe, compelling and demonstrates the continued significance of the classical traditions in rhetoric for contemporary rhetorical theory. Classical conceptions of the theory and practice of rhetoric remain important because they inform contemporary formulations of the art, as this study intends to illustrate. Platonic thought, even if unrecognized or imperfectly

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[1] T. Harry Williams, Huey Long, (New York: Bantam Books, 1969), pp. 776-777.

[2] Williams, p. 781.

[3] Williams, p. 786.

understood, has been so much a part of rhetorical theory that it is impossible to escape its influence.

If theorists are to understand contemporary rhetorical theory and practice, it is important to identify and understand theoretical statements which make Platonic assumptions. Platonic rhetoric is not simply an offshoot of Aristotelian theory or a celebration of the superiority of philosophy. Rather, it represents an entirely different way of conceptualizing the art and, concomitantly, implies different methods, goals, and strategies. Furthermore, it is necessary to locate and identify examples of rhetorical discourse which make Platonic assumptions about audiences and rhetoric. Because Platonic rhetoric tends toward repression, enlightened criticism is essential. More importantly, however, effective criticism should result in a more complete understanding of Platonic rhetoric and its place within the universe of rhetorical theory.

Appendix

A Note on Sources

Thomas Conley has persuasively written of the problems that attend the interpretation of classical texts when working through translations.[1] Translations are never simply neutral renditions of a text; they are, instead, interpretations, and sometimes polemical interpretations at that. Hence it is naive to assume that any translation reveals the precise meaning or the subtle shadings of any classical text. This problem is particularly acute when dealing with a writer of Plato's depth and complexity. However, unless a translation is woefully incompetent or unacceptably "loose," it is possible for a translation to convey the general sense of an author's argument. While a translation lacks the style, wit, and nuance of meaning of an original, an acceptable translation will convey, more or less adequately, the main currents of an author's thought.

Therefore, I have attempted to rest my arguments on the general sense of Plato's texts and not on the particular rendering of a word, phrase, or passage. My aim has been to outline the major tenets of Platonic, Ciceronian, and Augustinian theory rather than a minute investigation of their components. Furthermore, I have attempted to eliminate idiosyncratic interpretations or readings by looking to a number of translations and commentaries for important passages. Using standard translations, supplemented

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[1] Thomas Conley, "The Greekless Reader and Aristotle," QJS 65 (February 1979), pp. 74-79.

by commentaries and critical analyses, I have attempted to base my argument on translations that have been widely accepted for scholarly purposes. Where translators disagree about a passage, I have so noted. These procedures are insensitive to the full range of Plato's meaning, but I believe that his main ideas have been reproduced without too much distortion. Nevertheless, the argument must stand or fall on the evidence I have mustered. For that reason, I have listed the major sources consulted in the preparation of the argument so that others can scrutinize the same materials.

Plato

I have relied most extensively on the translations in The Collected Dialogues of Plato, edited by Edith Hamilton and Huntington Cairns.[1] Unless otherwise indicated in the notes, all cited passages are from the translations in this volume. On passages of great importance to the thesis, several works were consulted. I shall discuss the most important sources consulted in the interpretation of each dialogue.

Sources Consulted

Gorgias. All quoted passages are from the translation by Woodhead in the Great Dialogues of Plato. The following sources provided valuable assistance:

> Plato. Gorgias. Text and notes by E. R. Dodds, (London: Oxford Univ. Press, 1959). Where controversy arises, generally I have followed Dodds. This work remains the most authoritative modern version of the Gorgias.

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[1] The translations in this volume have been employed by scholars including T. M. Robinson in his work, Plato's Psychology. On his authority, I take these translations to be "standard" readings of Plato.

Plato. Gorgias. Trans. and notes by Terence Irwin, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1979). This work came to my attention too late for me to incorporate it into my argument. However, Irwin's translation generally agrees with Woodhead's version and Irwin's notes on critical passages, particularly those beginning at 462 and at 502 agree with the stance that I have taken.

Plato. Gorgias. Trans. W. R. M. Lamb, (Cambridge: Harvard Univ. Press, 1975).

W. H. Thompson, (ed). The Gorgias of Plato. Text and notes by W. H. Thompson, (1871; rpt., New York: Arno Press, 1973). Lamb described this (in 1932) as "the best modern edition of the Gorgias." I found Thompson's notes to be especially helpful, and particularly on matters of rhetorical theory, Thompson's comments are without equal. On the whole, I prefer Dodds because he has the advantage of recent Platonic scholarship to aid him. Nevertheless, Thompson's work remains valuable.

Phaedrus. Quoted passages are from the translation by R. Hackforth. Other sources that proved helpful include:

R. Hackforth, (ed). Plato's Phaedrus. Trans. and notes by R. Hackforth, (London: Oxford Univ. Press, 1952). I found Hackforth's notes to be highly valuable. I believe this to be the best general interpretation of the work.

W. H. Thompson, (ed). The Phaedrus of Plato. Text and notes by W. H. Thompson, (1868; rpt., New York: Arno Press, 1973). A highly useful work.

G. J. A. DeVries. A Commentary on the Phaedrus of Plato, (Amsterdam: A. M. Hakkert, 1969).

Plato. Phaedrus. Trans. H. N. Fowler, (Cambridge: Harvard Univ. Press, 1971).

Republic. Most quoted passages are from Shorey's translation of the text. I have also made extensive use of the translation by F. M. Cornford. Other sources:

F. M. Cornford. The Republic of Plato. Trans., notes, and intro. by F. M. Cornford, (London: Oxford Univ. Press, 1945).

Paul Shorey. What Plato Said, (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1933). This contains a long analysis of the Republic.

R. K. Sprague. Plato's Philosopher King, (Columbia, S.C.: Univ. of South Carolina Press). Helpful in understanding Plato's political philosophy.

Werner Jaeger. Paideia. Vol. II, (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1943). About one-half of this volume is devoted to an analysis of the Republic.

Laws. Quoted passages are from the translation by A. E. Taylor. Helpful sources include:

Leo Strauss. The Argument and the Action of Plato's Laws, (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1975).

The Laws of Plato. Text, intro., and notes by E. B. England, (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1921). A very useful commentary.

Plato. Laws. Trans. R. G. Bury, (London: William Heinemann, 1926).

Theatetus. All quoted passages are from the translation by F. M. Cornford. I found the following resources useful:

F. M. Cornford. Plato's Theory of Knowledge, (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Co., 1935). A good analysis and commentary on the Theatetus and the Sophist.

Plato. Theatetus. Trans. John McDowell, (London: Oxford Univ. Press, 1972).

Sophist. Quoted passages are from the translation by F. M. Cornford. In addition to Cornford's Plato's Theory of Knowledge, the following sources were especially helpful:

Richard Bluck. Plato's Sophist: A Commentary. Ed. by Gordon Neal, (Manchester: Univ. of Manchester Press, 1975). A useful counterpoint to Cornford's analysis.

Paul Seligman. Being and Not-Being: An Introduction to Plato's Sophist, (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1974).

Timaeus. The quoted passages are from the Jowett translation (4th ed). I also employed: F. M. Cornford. Plato's Cosmology, (New York: The Liberal Arts Press, 1957). A useful translation and commentary.

Statesman. Quoted passages are from the translation by J. B. Skemp. In addition, I relied on:

Jacob Klein. Plato's Trilogy, (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1977). Contains a useful analysis of the Statesman, Theatetus, and Sophist.

Lewis Campbell (ed). The Sophistes and Politicus of Plato. Text and notes by Lewis Campbell, (1847; rpt., New York: Arno Press, 1973). This is still one of the best English commentaries on the Statesman.

Miscellaneous. I found the following sources useful in interpreting dialogues not discussed at length in my argument:

R. G. Bury (ed). The Symposium of Plato. 2nd ed., (Cambridge: W. Heffer, 1973). A good commentary on the Symposium and a useful analysis of the various speeches with some helpful comments on rhetorical theory.

Robert Sternfeld and Harold Zyskind. Plato's Meno: A Philosophy of Man as Acquisitive, (Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois Univ. Press, 1978).

Aristotle

Rhetoric. All quotations are from the translation by W. Rhys Roberts. Other useful works include:

E. M. Cope. An Introduction to Aristotle's Rhetoric, (1867; rpt., New York: Georg Olms Verlag, 1970).

E. M. Cope and J. E. Sandys. The Rhetoric of Aristotle. Text and commentary by E. M. Cope; revised and edited by J. E. Sandys, 3 vols., (1877; rpt., New York: Georg Olms Verlag, 1970). Together, these are the definitive English works on the Rhetoric.

Miscellaneous. All other translations are from Richard McKeon, ed., The Basic Works of Aristotle, (New York: Random House, 1941). Other useful works:

Aristotle. The Nichomachean Ethics. Trans., notes, and commentary by H. H. Joachim, (London: Oxford Univ. Press, 1951).

Ernest Barker. The Politics of Aristotle, (London: Oxford Univ. Press, 1946).

Cicero

Sources I found most useful include:

De Inventione. Ed. and trans. H. M. Hubbell, (Cambridge: Harvard Univ. Press, 1949).

Brutus, Orator. Ed. and trans. G. L. Hendrickson and H. M. Hubbell, (Cambridge: Harvard Univ. Press, 1971).

De Oratore. Ed. and trans. E. W. Sutton and H. Rackham, (Cambridge: Harvard Univ. Press, 1967).

On the Commonwealth (De re publica). Trans., notes, and intro. G. H. Sabine and S. B. Smith, (1929; rpt., New York: Library of Liberal Arts, ND).

John Edwin Sandys. Marcus Tullius Cicero Ad M Brutum Orator. Text and notes by J. E. Sandys, (1885; rpt., New York: Georg Olms Verlag, 1973). A very useful commentary on the Orator.

J. S. Watson (ed). Cicero on Oratory and Orators. Intro. Ralph Micken, (Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois Univ. Press, 1970). Contains Watson's translations of the Brutus and De Oratore.

Augustine

De doctrina Christiana. I have relied primarily on the translation by D. W. Robertson (On Christian Doctrine, (New York: The Library of Liberal Arts, 1958)) although I have made some use of the translation produced by John J. Gavigan (Christian Instruction, (New York: Cima Publishing Co., 1947)), which incorporates some of Sister Mary Terese Sullivan's references into the annotations on Book IV. Gavigan's translation of Book IV is based on Sullivan's text. In general, the Gavigan translation conveys a stronger sense of authority and command; the sense of "ought" is more emphatic. Even so, Gavigan and Robertson translate crucial passages similarly.

Miscellaneous. All other quotations from Augustine are from the series of translations produced by the Fathers of the Church, except for the translation of letter 93 which is taken from: The Works of Aurelius Augustine: The Letters of Saint Augustine, Vol. 1. Ed. and trans. Marcus Dods, (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1872).

Fénelon

I have relied entirely on the edition of Fénelon's Dialogues on Eloquence, edited, translated, and introductory essay by W. S. Howell, (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1951). This is the best and most recent translation available in English. Howell's version proceeds from a careful reconstruction of the original French text, which had been corrupted by printer's errors and by the errors of subsequent commentators. Howell's knowledge of rhetorical theory is reflected in his perceptive introductory essay and in the extensive notes which he employs to supplement the text.

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