

The Sophistic Cross-Examination of Callicles in the *Gorgias*

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Throughout Socrates' cross-examination of him in the *Gorgias*, Callicles complains about Socrates' sophistic tactics: he accuses Socrates of pouncing on a small verbal slip (489b7-c1), of being ironic (489e1), of deliberately misrepresenting his views (490c9-d1, 491a1-3), of talking rubbish (490e4), of being a 'mob orator' (δημηγόρος, 494d1), of using sophistic tricks (497a7), of talking more rubbish (497a9),¹ of asking petty, worthless questions (497b7-8), of being a bully (βίαιος, 505d4), and of being competitive (φιλόνικος, 515b5).² Generally, these charges have not been taken very seriously.³ After all, Socrates tells us in the *Apology* that his interlocutors became angry when he refuted them (21e, 22e-23a). Further, Socrates insists that he is not simply seeking victory over Callicles (*G.* 515b); instead he is attempting to convince him to live a just and temperate life engaged in philosophy (493c-d, 494a, 513c-d). Socrates' failure to persuade Callicles (513c), one might argue, merely shows the limitations of the Socratic method: even with the best of methods, one cannot hope to convince an uncooperative interlocutor who is intent on viewing dialectic as a competitive activity.⁴ I want to explore another possibility: perhaps Callicles is right, and Socrates does behave like a Sophist, violating the very principles of persuasion that he advocates in the *Gorgias*.

If true, this interpretation of Socrates' cross-examination of Callicles would be significant; for Socrates' cross-examination of Callicles has traditionally been viewed as a paradigm of the Socratic method.⁵ I suspect that many commentators have resisted, as I have, the thought that Callicles might be right; for the behavior that he attributes to Socrates seems absolutely incompatible with 'Plato's conception of his master's character and activity as a philosopher'.⁶ When we dis-

¹ See note 42 below.

² My translations of passages from the *Gorgias* are based on Irwin 1979. However, I depart significantly from it at some points. See, e.g., p. 40 below.

³ See, e.g., Thompson 1871, 108 note to 497a7, and 109 note to 497b7-8; Irwin 1986, 68; 1979, 186 note to 489b-c, 189 note to 490d-e, 202 note to 497a-c, and 233 note to 515b.

⁴ Coventry 1990, 179. Dodds 1959, 352 note to 513c5 suggests that Plato is attempting to show that 'basic moral attitudes are commonly determined by psychological, not logical reasons'. Irwin 1986, 70 draws a different conclusion; he denies that Socrates is even attempting to persuade Callicles. But if this is right, we need to explain why Socrates claims that persuasion is his goal.

⁵ See, e.g., Vlastos 1983a, 50-55; Kahn 1983, 97-121; and Irwin 1986, 59-74. Irwin suggests that this exchange represents the Socratic method at its best.

⁶ Vlastos 1991, 147. Vlastos makes this claim in response to the different allegation that Socrates

cover the motive behind Socrates' temporary transformation, however, it will be clear that it serves to reinforce Plato's representation of Socrates as the model of the virtuous philosopher.

To make a case for this interpretation, we must first determine the nature of sophistic cross-examination.

I. Sophistic Cross-examination

Originally the word 'σοφιστής' referred quite generally to anyone seeking wisdom (σοφία); as such, it is suitably applied to Socrates (*Eu.* 9a; *G.* 453b). Herodotus refers to Solon and Pythagoras as σοφισταί (i 29, iv 95), Aristotle calls the Seven Sages σοφισταί (fr. 5), and Plato has Protagoras refer to Homer and Hesiod, along with musicians and painters, as σοφισταί (*Pr.* 316d-e). But by the late fifth century, 'σοφιστής' was used more narrowly to refer to a professional class of itinerant teachers, usually of non-Athenian origin, who came to Athens to teach her ambitious young men what they needed to know in order to be successful in politics (*Pr.* 318e-319a). Protagoras was the most famous Sophist of this sort.⁷ In Plato's *Protagoras*, he claims to teach his students the skills required for success in their households and in the public arena (318e-319a). Yet Socrates' young friend, Hippocrates, assumes that Protagoras' skill is simply to make his students clever speakers (312d). In the *Gorgias*, Socrates initially distinguishes Sophistry from rhetoric (*G.* 465c), but later he says that 'the Sophist and the rhetor are the same, or close and very similar' (520a6-7).⁸ In fifth century democratic Athens, a key to political power was the ability speak well in the law-courts and in front of the Assembly; so it is not surprising that those who promised to teach the skills required for political success gave rhetoric a central place in their curriculum (*G.* 449a, 454b, 456a-c, 466b, 484c-486d; *M.* 95b-c).

Many Sophists taught the ability to construct long, polished speeches (see *Pr.* 320c-328d, 334a-c; *HMa.* 286a-b; *Soph.* 225b), but some also taught a method of cross-examination, very similar in form to Socrates' method.⁹ Plato indicates that Protagoras was equally competent at long speeches and at cross-examination (*Pr.* 329b, 334e-335c), and he has other Sophists make the same claim to dual rhetorical expertise (*G.* 447b, 449c, 461d-462b; *Eud.* 272a-b, 273c-d). There is some evidence in the Platonic dialogues that there was more than one method of cross-examination that the Sophists used and taught. In the *Gorgias*, we see Polus, a follower of Gorgias, applying techniques of cross-examination that Socrates identifies as suitable for the law-courts (471e). Since the Sophists promised to

cheats when he cross-examines Polus. Here I shall remain neutral on the complicated question whether Socrates' cross-examination of Polus is sophistic or Socratic.

⁷ Henceforth, I will refer to this sort of sophist as a Sophist (capital S).

⁸ Callicles himself is inclined to distinguish Sophists from rhetors. Some Sophists claimed to be able to teach virtue in addition to the art of speaking (*La.* 186c; *Pr.* 318a, 318e-319a, 328b-c, 348e-349a; *G.* 460a; *M.* 91b, 95b; *Eud.* 276d). Callicles has contempt for so-called teachers of virtue, but very much values rhetorical skill (*G.* 519e-520b).

⁹ Indeed Diogenes Laertius reports that Protagoras introduced the Socratic manner of discussion (DK 80A1).

teach their students strategies for success in law-courts (*G.* 452e, 454b; *Eud.* 272a, 273c), one would expect that training in methods of courtroom cross-examination would be part of their instruction.¹⁰ But, in addition, in the *Euthydemus*, Plato represents a Sophistic practice of cross-examination known as 'eristic', that is explicitly distinguished from practices pursued in the courts (272a, 273c).

Whatever form of rhetoric a Sophist applies, he need not be overly concerned with the truth; in fact, a concern with the truth may hamper a rhetor's ability to be persuasive (*Tht.* 173a). While a rational argument might come in handy in some cases, Socrates indicates that, for the rhetor, a more dependable tool is flattery (κολακευτική). Flattery appeals to the emotions, fears, appetites, prejudices, and vanity of the audience, and thus provides its members pleasure and gratification at the thought of agreeing with the rhetor. So important is flattery to certain forms of rhetoric, that Socrates claims that the whole of it is simply a form of flattery.¹¹ We can see the role that such flattery can play in cross-examination, when we look at Polus' cross-examination of Socrates in the *Gorgias*. Here Socrates testifies that suffering justice is always better than being unjust; for the unjust person is wretched (469a-c). To refute these claims, Polus asks Socrates to consider the example of the Macedonian tyrant Archelaus (470d). According to Polus, it is clear that this rich and powerful man who has gotten away with great injustices is the most enviable of all Macedonians (471a-d). If he is, then injustice does not make one wretched and Socrates is wrong. As Socrates points out, Polus' strategy is ideal for the courtroom (471e). Polus appeals to common desires for wealth and power that provide the basis for the common judgment that Archelaus is happy. The effect of this appeal to common judgment is two-fold: first, it flatters those (like the members of the jury) who might share it, and second, it discredits anyone (like Socrates) who would contradict it. As Polus points out, Socrates cannot persist in contradicting common opinion without running the risk of appearing ridiculous to those listening. For this reason, Polus comments, Socrates counts as 'refuted' simply because he says things that no one else would say (473e). The Sophist Hippias makes a similar appeal to common opinion when he explains to Socrates how to *avoid* refutation during cross-examination. Socrates worries that he might be refuted if he were to adopt Hippias' view, but Hippias assures him that this would be impossible: 'How could you be refuted (ἐλεγχθείης), Socrates, when you say what everyone thinks, when everyone who hears you will testify (μαρτυρήσουσιν) that you're right?' (*HMa.* 288a2-4). If someone were to attempt to refute a common opinion, Hippias predicts, he would appear ridiculous to the audience (288b).

The Sophists' technique of appealing to common opinion in order to persuade an audience of the insincerity or unreliability of an opponent is no doubt effec-

¹⁰ For testimony about the use of cross-examination in Athenian trials, see *Lys.* xii 25, xiii 30-32, xxii 5; *Isaios* xi 5, *Dem.* xlvi 10.

¹¹ *G.* 464b-465e. Here Socrates says that all of rhetoric is a form of flattery, but later he recognizes the possibility of a different sort of rhetoric that could serve a valuable function (503a).

tive. But an opponent can also be discredited if he appears to contradict his own prior testimony. For example, through cross-examination at his trial, Socrates challenges the sincerity of Meletus' claim that Socrates is a corruptor of youth, by showing how this charge conflicts with Meletus' other views about corruption and impiety (*Ap.* 24d-28a). For a Sophistic rhetor, it is just as effective to get a hostile witness to appear to contradict himself even if he does not.¹²

As we shall see below, the goals of those practicing eristic are distinct from those engaged in courtroom cross-examination, but the techniques learned when practicing the one would be useful to those practicing the other. In the *Euthydemus*, Socrates describes a conversation that he and others had with certain Sophists, the brothers Euthydemus and Dionysodorus. The brothers are famous for their expertise in the fighting arts: they are skilful combatants in armor; and they can deliver and compose, and teach others to deliver and compose, the sort of speeches that are given in law-courts (272a, 273c). But recently they have lost interest in these fighting arts and have focussed their energies on perfecting the only one remaining—eristic, an art that they claim allows them to be the 'finest and quickest teachers of virtue alive' (273d8-9). To see how eristic works, it is useful to look in some detail at the brothers' tactics.

Socrates asks the Sophists to convince the young Cleinias 'of the indispensability of philosophy and the practice of virtue' (275a5-6). The brothers agree only on the condition that Cleinias is prepared to answer their questions (275c). Cleinias is said to be familiar with conversations that proceed by question and answer (275c), but he proves to be no match for the Sophists. Euthydemus asks Cleinias whether those who learn are wise or ignorant (275d). Although his first reaction to this question is to blush, Cleinias is encouraged by Socrates to give an answer: those who learn are wise (276a). Euthydemus then asks him whether teachers exist, and Cleinias agrees that they do. He also concedes that when he was learning from a teacher, he did not yet know what he was being taught. Finally, Cleinias agrees that when he lacked knowledge he could not have been wise; rather he was ignorant (276b). But Euthydemus suggests that these last concessions imply that 'it is ignorant people who learn, not wise people', contrary to what Cleinias said at the beginning of this exchange. Before Cleinias can respond, Dionysodorus hits him with another question, 'Now, Cleinias, when the writing-teacher was dictating, was it the wise or the ignorant children who learned it?' (276c). Cleinias responds, 'The wise.' Dionysodorus points out that this answer is contrary to the answer he conceded to Euthydemus.

Socrates later explains to Cleinias that the Sophists' arguments take advantage of the ambiguity of the word *μανθάνειν*, 'to learn' (277e). When one speaks of 'those who learn', one might be referring either to those who are about to learn or to those who have successfully completed the learning process. The former are ignorant of what they are about to learn; the latter are wise with regard to the object learned. When Cleinias answers Euthydemus' first question, 'Are those

¹² See Protagoras' 'refutation' of Socrates (*Pr.* 339c-e).

who learn, wise or ignorant?', he initially hesitates, apparently aware of the ambiguity of the question. His answer reflects his conclusion that Euthydemus was asking about those who succeed in learning. Consequently, Euthydemus designs his later questions to fix the meaning of 'μανθάνειν' in such a way that 'those who learn' refers to those who are about to learn. With its meaning specified in this way, Cleinias must concede that it is the ignorant, rather than the wise, who learn. But when Dionysodorus joins in, he changes the context of the question, so that it appears that he is asking about those who succeed in learning. With the context determined in this way, Cleinias answers as he did at the very beginning of the exchange, that it is the wise, rather than the ignorant, who learn.

As Dionysodorus explains to Socrates, 'All of our questions are traps' (276e5), and the trap into which Cleinias falls is giving answers that are at least verbally contradictory.¹³ When this happens, the answerer is said to be 'refuted'.¹⁴ If Cleinias is aware of the ambiguity in the term 'μανθάνειν', then his answers to the Sophists' questions are merely verbally contradictory, and reflect no genuine contradiction in Cleinias' beliefs.¹⁵ To an untrained person listening to this rapid exchange, however, Cleinias would appear foolish—seeming to contradict himself twice within less than thirty seconds. For this reason, this eristic technique of questioning could be very useful for discrediting an opponent in the courtroom.

We can see a further courtroom use for eristic tactics when we examine the brothers' cross-examination of Socrates. Rather than trying to discredit Socrates by reducing him to verbal inconsistency no matter which of a pair of contradictions they endorse, the brothers try to show how Socrates' answers to their questions can be manipulated to provide support for absurd philosophical views. In a courtroom, such techniques could be used to get a witness to appear to support one's own position no matter how hostile to this position he believes himself to be. Socrates begins the exchange as a hostile witness: he denies what the brothers want to show, namely, that, if he knows anything, then he is omniscient. When Euthydemus asks Socrates whether he knows anything, Socrates concedes that he knows lots of unimportant things. From this, Euthydemus concludes that Socrates is in possession of knowledge (293c). Socrates suggests that it would be more accurate to say that he is in possession of knowledge *of something*, but Euthydemus dismisses this qualification as irrelevant. Euthydemus then seeks to prove to Socrates that, if he knows something, then he knows everything. Socrates resists this suggestion, claiming that there are many things that he does

¹³ I will use the phrase 'verbal contradiction' to refer to the relation that exists between, for example, sentences of the form 'a is F' and 'a is not-F', even when 'F' has a different meaning in the two sentences. The phrase '*mere* verbal contradiction' will refer to those sentences that are only verbally contradictory, and not genuinely contradictory (i.e., not contradictory when the meaning of the terms is analyzed).

¹⁴ Generally it is *the answerer* who is said to be refuted (*Eud.* 275e, 295a, 303d, 304d), but sometimes it is his *answer* that is said to be refuted (*Eud.* 272a, 287c).

¹⁵ If Cleinias is not aware of the ambiguity in the term 'μανθάνειν', then Cleinias has committed himself to propositions that are genuinely contradictory. For discussion, see Aristotle *SE* 170b19-30.

not know. But Euthydemus attempts to prove his thesis indirectly, by arguing that Socrates' claim, that he knows some things and does not know others, reduces to a contradiction.

Euthydemus first suggests that an implication of Socrates' claim, that there are some things that he does not know, is that he does not possess knowledge (293c). Socrates again objects that it would be more accurate to say that he does not possess knowledge *of something*, and Euthydemus again dismisses his qualification:

'So if you do not possess knowledge of something, then you do not possess knowledge.'

'Of that, my friend,' I said.

'Nonetheless,' he said, 'aren't you still not possessing knowledge?' (293c6-8)

Before Socrates can respond to this question, Euthydemus reminds Socrates of the claim that he had attributed to him earlier: 'But you just said that you were in possession of knowledge' (293c8). According to Euthydemus, then, Socrates' claims that he knows some things and that he does not know others imply that Socrates possesses knowledge and that he does not possess knowledge. But this is a contradiction: no one can both be and not be in the possession of knowledge at the same time, in the same respect (293d).¹⁶ Consequently, if Socrates knows something, he must know everything. Socrates has conceded that he knows something. Therefore, he knows everything.

Socrates is a very reluctant participant in this exchange. He attempts to qualify his answers to reflect more accurately his own beliefs, and never concedes the answers that Euthydemus attributes to him. Nevertheless, Euthydemus grabs the partial answers that he puts into Socrates' mouth, fallaciously draws his own conclusions, and declares himself a victor. Like courtroom cross-examination, eristic is a highly competitive, aggressive exchange of questions and answers, usually between two people.¹⁷ Although it would appear that, in the case of both courtroom cross-examination and eristic, one's questions are directed primarily at one's interlocutor, in fact, they are designed to have an impact on the audience of the exchange. This is quite obvious in the case of courtroom cross-examination, but it is no less true in the case of eristic. Although Euthydemus and Dionysodorus claim that their goal is to persuade Cleinias to pursue virtue, it is clear that their real concern is to persuade their audience, by entertaining tricks, that they have refuted him. Since it is the judgment of the audience that is of sole importance in both of these cases, it does no harm, and often a great deal of good, to claim that one's interlocutor's view has absurd consequences even if it does not, and to get him to appear to contradict himself even if he does not. The brothers' ability to reduce a witness to verbal contradiction would be useful in the courtroom, but in this situation the applications of these techniques would not be

¹⁶ Notice that the whole point of Socrates' qualifications was to show that he did not possess knowledge and lack knowledge *in the same respect*.

¹⁷ In the *Euthydemus*, the brothers sometimes gang up on their opponent: when one is having difficulties, the other intervenes.

indiscriminate. In a courtroom, one attempts to discredit only those witnesses who are hostile, and only those claims of hostile witnesses that count against the case that one is attempting to make. In contrast, when one is practicing eristic, one's goal is to reduce one's interlocutor to verbal contradiction no matter who he is or what he says (*Eud.* 272b, 275e). Unlike courtroom cross-examination, eristic is a game (278b); but it is a game that teaches one how to be persuasive in court. It is difficult to identify a *method* of eristic; rather, as Vlastos 1983a, 31n14 comments, eristic requires 'a set of methods—a whole bag of tricks...'. Among the brothers' devices are various types of fallacious arguments, misleading questions, insincere answers, verbal abuse, irrelevance, and distraction. Further devices that provide pleasure to audiences, and which are therefore useful to the Sophistic rhetor, are clever turns of phrase, appeals to mass opinion, and ridicule—either of one's opponent or of his view.

II. Socratic Cross-examination

Socratic cross-examination and Sophistic cross-examination are superficially the same. Both proceed by question and answer, and, in both cases, the answerers often find themselves giving contradictory answers to the questions asked. Nonetheless, there are significant differences between them.

Sophistic cross-examination is a competitive activity between a questioner and an answerer, in which the sole object for the questioner is the refutation of the answerer and the sole object for the answerer is the avoidance of refutation. In contrast, when Critias objects to Socrates' efforts to refute him in the *Charmides*, Socrates replies that he is attempting to refute Critias for the same reason that he would attempt to refute himself: namely, to discover the way things are (166c-d). Consequently, he suggests that it is a matter of complete indifference to him who is being refuted: 'Never mind whether it is Critias or Socrates who is being refuted' (166e2). One might suspect that this is a particularly ingenious ploy on Socrates' part to keep his opposition off-guard. But very often in the dialogues, when Socrates has taken the role of the questioner, the thesis that is examined¹⁸ has not been proposed by Socrates' current interlocutor. Sometimes Socrates and his interlocutor examine a thesis that one of them has heard or read (*Ch.* 161b-c; *Lys.* 214a-b, 215c, 216c). Other times, Socrates takes joint responsibility for a given thesis (*Lys.* 212d, 213c-d, 216c, 218a-219b, 222b-e). And, on other occasions still, Socrates subjects his own thesis to examination, and finds that he cannot maintain it without contradiction (*Eu.* 11e-12d; *Lys.* 219b-220e; *Pr.* 361a-b; *HMa.* 293e-294e, 295e, 297e). If Socrates is attempting to construct a Sophistic

¹⁸ When Socrates is engaged in cross-examination, he sometimes speaks of propositions being examined (*Ap.* 24c; *La.* 189e; *Pr.* 333c; *G.* 495a), and sometimes of people (*Ap.* 23c, 28e, 29e, 33e, 41b-c; *G.* 514b, 515b). This, despite Brickhouse and Smith's claim that 'Socrates does not say that he examines what people say or even what they believe; he says he examines *people*' (Brickhouse and Smith 1994, 13). My own view is that the examination of propositions is prior to the examination of people: an examination of a person simply consists in an examination of his beliefs. (Correspondingly, a refutation of a person simply consists in a refutation of one or more of his beliefs.)

refutation of his interlocutor on these occasions, then he is exceptionally inept.

Not only are Socrates' tactics incompatible with Sophistic goals, but Sophistic tactics cannot be used to achieve the goals that Socrates professes. Socrates says that he questions others in order to test their claim to knowledge (see *Ap.* 21c; *Eu.* 4e, 9b; *Ch.* 166c-d; *L.* 189e-190c; *G.* 472c-d), to persuade them to be as virtuous as possible (*Ap.* 30b, e, 31b5, 36c; *Cr.* 48e; *L.* 181d; *Pr.* 352e; *G.* 493c-d, 494a; *Eud.* 278a), to determine whether a particular proposition is true (*Eu.* 6d, 7a, 9a; *Ch.* 161c, 162e, 166d, 175d; *L.* 194a-b; *Lys.* 212a-b; *HMi.* 369d; *Pr.* 384a, 360e-361a; *G.* 458a, 464a), to inquire into the way things are (*L.* 194a; *Ch.* 165b, e, 175b, d, e, 176a; *G.* 457d), and to gain knowledge (*Eu.* 9a; *G.* 453b). Sophistic tactics are designed to achieve Sophistic refutation, and Sophistic refutation occurs when the answerer gives an answer that verbally contradicts his answer to the original question, whether or not these answers reflect genuinely contradictory beliefs. But being Sophistically refuted is no evidence of ignorance (*Th.* 172e-173b). As Aristotle observes, 'Sophistic refutations..., even though they deduce the contradictory of [an interlocutor's] thesis, do not make clear whether he is ignorant; for even men of knowledge are entangled by these arguments' (*SE* 169b27-29). Further, although Euthydemus and Dionysodorus claim to be able to persuade their interlocutors to pursue virtue, it is hard to see how being forced into merely verbal contradictory statements inclines one to virtue. In fact, in the *Apology*, Socrates claims quite explicitly that rhetorical success in a courtroom often requires an abandonment of one's concern for virtue (38d-e). And finally, it is difficult to see how being either party in a Sophistic cross-examination could help one to move any closer toward moral knowledge (*Eud.* 277d-e, 278b-c, 283b-c; *Th.* 167d-168a).

Unfortunately, the fact that Sophistic cross-examination is worthless as a tool for achieving the goals that Socrates professes is not sufficient to show that Socrates' method of cross-examination is different from Sophistic cross-examination. Socrates may be dishonest about his goals, or naïve about what is required to achieve these goals. It is clear that some of the Sophists were a bit disingenuous when they claimed to teach virtue (*G.* 460a, 461b-c; *M.* 95c). Since the Sophists' claims about the benefits of their teaching are doubtful at best, it is not so clear that we should take Socrates, the accused Sophist, at his word. Socratic cross-examination may serve only to achieve Sophistic refutation, and not the goals that Socrates claims that he targets. To determine whether Socratic cross-examination is indeed mere Sophistry, we must look in some detail at Socrates' actual procedure when he is claiming that he is testing for moral knowledge, or exhorting to virtue, or inquiring for the sake of moral knowledge.¹⁹ Fortunately, it is not necessary to examine all forms of Socratic cross-

¹⁹ Socrates' use of cross-examination to test claims to wisdom is universally recognized (*Ap.* 20c-23e). Its function as a method of inquiry is recognized by some, but denied by others. Exhortation to virtue is a function of the Socratic method that is often ignored. A recent exception is Brickhouse and Smith 1994, 23-27. Other commentators who mention exhortation to virtue as a function of the Socratic method include Dodds 1959, 22; Gulley 1968, 23, 45-46, 59; and Woodruff 1987, 83. I

examination here. Our primary aim is to assess the accuracy of Callicles' claim that Socrates behaves like a Sophist when he cross-examines him. Since Socrates claims to be exhorting Callicles to a life of virtue, it is necessary to compare Sophistic cross-examination only to the sort of cross-examination that Socrates generally applies when he claims his immediate goal is to persuade his interlocutor to pursue virtue and knowledge.

In the *Euthydemus*, Socrates refers to his practice of persuasion as a 'protreptic' to the practice of virtue (275a).²⁰ Because he believes that moral knowledge is necessary and sufficient for virtue and that one can gain moral knowledge through philosophical inquiry (282c-d), he also refers to this practice of persuasion as a protreptic to philosophy—an inspirational prelude to the sort of moral inquiry we find in many of the early and transitional dialogues (278c-d, 282c-d). There are undoubtedly some protreptic elements in many cross-examinations found in the early and transitional dialogues, but in the *Gorgias* and *Euthydemus*, there are long exchanges in which Socrates suggests that his immediate and primary aim is to persuade his interlocutor of the importance of moral knowledge and virtue to happiness.²¹ Socrates' strategy for persuasion will vary depending on the personality and prior convictions of his interlocutor.²² As is the case in the *Euthydemus*, if an interlocutor either has no strong prior convictions or is already sympathetic to Socrates' view, but not yet entirely convinced, Socrates' job is relatively simple: he need only construct an argument from premises his interlocutor accepts for the conclusion he wants to reach. But when Socrates faces antagonistic interlocutors, as in the *Gorgias*, he must first destroy the many possible underpinnings²³ of their opposing viewpoint before he can begin his positive argument for his own position.

In the *Gorgias*, Socrates faces three increasingly hostile interlocutors who either practice, or support the practice of, rhetoric—Gorgias, Polus, and Callicles. Gorgias and his followers are convinced that rhetoric is the centerpiece of an active political life, the sort of life they believe is best; philosophy, Callicles

believe that Socrates' approach to cross-examination varies, depending on whether he is testing for moral knowledge, exhorting to moral knowledge, or inquiring. I have examined Socrates' procedures for testing and seeking moral knowledge in Gentzler 1994 and 1995.

²⁰ Vlastos argues that the Socratic method has been abandoned altogether in the *Euthydemus* on the ground that all instances of the Socratic method are 'adversarial' and Socrates' cross-examination of Cleinias in the *Euthydemus* is not (Vlastos 1983b, 57-58; 1988, 100-102; and 1991, 107-131). I argue against the cogency of this criterion in Gentzler 1994, n16.

²¹ In light of Vlastos' influential view that the *Euthydemus* is a later dialogue than the *Gorgias*, the reader might be surprised that I consider these dialogues together in order to get a unified picture of Socratic protreptic. While I disagree with Vlastos' argument for the relative dating of these dialogues, my order of presentation does not indicate that I dispute his conclusion. I think that the two dialogues were written very close in time, and I remain agnostic on the question of their relative dating. For useful discussion of the difficulties involved in answering this question, see Hawtry 1981, 4-11 and Dodds 1959, 22-23.

²² The personal nature of the Socratic method is explored in Coventry 1990.

²³ He does not have to destroy every logically possible underpinning in order to persuade an interlocutor to change his view, only those that are taken seriously by his interlocutor.

says, is like mumbling—suitable only for boys (484c-485e). It soon becomes clear that Socrates believes that rhetoric, at least as it is practiced by Gorgias and Polus, does not play any role in, and in fact is antithetical to, the best sort of life (462e-466a; see also 510e-511c). The best life, according to Socrates, is a just and temperate life in which the practice of philosophy, 'the real political craft' (521d), plays a central role. To convince his interlocutors that they are wrong and that he is right, not only must Socrates provide a strong positive case for his own point of view, in addition he must first expose the flaws in their defense of a life that gives a central role to Sophistic rhetoric.

In order to do this, it is important for the Sophists to gain some insight into the difference between the philosophical practice of Socratic cross-examination and their own Sophistic styles of cross-examination. For this reason, Socrates is unusually self-conscious about his method of cross-examination, and he often pauses to explain to his interlocutor why he proceeds as he does. Although Socrates suspects that he knows how Gorgias would answer a particular question about rhetoric, he lets Gorgias answer for himself (454b). Socrates explains that this is his standard procedure:

I ask questions so that the discussion will proceed to its conclusion in good order, not on your behalf, but so that we won't get used to surmising and premature snatching at what each of us says, and so that you can proceed to your conclusion as you want to on your assumption. (454c1-5; see also 453b-c)

Not only does Socrates hesitate to put words in his interlocutor's mouth, but at one point, Socrates suggests that Gorgias might want to reformulate his answer since, being open to obvious objections, it probably does not adequately express his view (450e). By proceeding in the way that he does, Socrates aims to examine the best case that his interlocutor can make for his view. This is important for the purposes of persuasion. As we have seen from our examination of eristic in the *Euthydemus*, it is fairly easy to trip up an opponent either by putting words into his mouth or by asking misleading questions. Although someone subjected to such abuses might be confused at the end of the conversation, he will be no more likely to alter his convictions; for his convictions are never genuinely challenged. If Socrates is to persuade his interlocutors to pursue a life devoted to the acquisition of moral knowledge and virtue, he must first destroy the best case his interlocutor can offer for an alternative way of life.

In order to complete a genuine refutation of an interlocutor's view, Socrates explains, one must bring one's interlocutor 'to witness' against himself:

But if I can't produce you, all alone by yourself, as a witness agreeing on the things I'm talking about, I think that I have achieved nothing of any account in what our discussion is about. And I don't think you'll have achieved anything either unless I, all alone, bear witness for you, and you let all the others go. (472b6-c4)

When one witnesses against oneself, one says things that imply the negation of

the view one is endorsing. But this is not enough; if such a refutation is to challenge one's convictions, one's statements must accurately reflect one's beliefs. Although it is a necessary condition for being refuted that one witness against oneself, it is not sufficient. It is possible to accept what is in fact an unsound argument for the negation of one's true belief, and so witness to its negation; but this belief does not count as refuted, on Socrates' view, because no true belief is ever refuted (473b; *Eud.* 287e). So, in order to be genuinely refuted, not only must one witness to the negation of one's belief, but also one must be moved to give such testimony by an argument that is sound.²⁴ Once Socrates' opponent is refuted, Socrates can begin the positive stage of protreptic through which he shows his interlocutors that their own beliefs provide positive support for the Socratic thesis.

Although Socrates constructs a positive argument for his thesis during his cross-examination of Callicles, Socrates does not follow his standard method, or so I will argue below. A genuine example of the positive stage of Socratic protreptic can be found in the *Euthydemus*.

²⁴ This claim may be surprising. After all, Socratic cross-examination is generally referred to as 'the elenchus', and, while it is true that 'ἐλεγχος'/'ἐλέγχειν' does not necessarily mean 'refutation'/'refute', the majority of the occurrences of these words in Plato's early and transitional dialogues have precisely this meaning. (Clear exceptions are *Pr.* 331e1 and *Eud.* 288e5 where 'ἐλέγχειν' must mean 'prove' rather than 'disprove'. Controversial cases are *L.* 189b2; *Pr.* 331c5-d2, *G.* 474a4, 486c4, 8; and *Ph.* 85c5.) Since, the objection continues, most Socratic cross-examinations do not necessarily result in sound arguments against an interlocutor's thesis, then, despite my suggestion to the contrary, Socrates cannot understand refutations as necessarily involving sound arguments. I agree with this analysis of the general meaning of the word 'ἐλεγχος' in the Platonic dialogues, and I agree that most Socratic cross-examinations do not result in sound arguments against an interlocutor's thesis. When Socrates is using cross-examination to test his interlocutor's claim to knowledge, he often remains neutral on the truth-value of the theses to which his interlocutor commits himself (see the many examples cited by Stokes 1986, 1-36). For example, when Socrates cross-examines his interlocutors in order to determine whether they have knowledge, all that he needs to do in order to reveal his interlocutor's ignorance is to reveal certain contradictions in his belief-set, or show that his interlocutor cannot give an account of some F-ness, or show that he cannot meet some other constraint that Socrates puts on knowledge. (For a defense of this claim, see Gentzler 1995). But I do not call all such cross-examinations 'elenchoi' (refutations), and Plato does not either. In fact, as Vlastos 1983a, 28 notes, 'only in modern times has "elenchus" become a proper name' for Socratic cross-examination. While it is true that in the *Gorgias*, Socrates is the main instigator of ἐλεγχος—Socrates challenges others to refute him (467b2, 482b2, 504c6, 506a3), and he himself is described as attempting to refute others (457e3, 458a3-5, 461a3, 462a4-5, 467a1, 9, 475e7, 527b3)—in most cases, not Socrates, but others (sometimes described as 'eristics' or as practicing 'eristic' (*Lys.* 211b8; *Eud.* 272a8; *M.* 75c9)) are described as 'refuting', 'seeking to refute', or 'challenging another to refute them' (*Ap.* 23c4, 39c7, d1; *Lys.* 211b7; *Eud.* 272b10, 275e6, 286e1, 2, 6, 287c1, e5, 295a6, 303d4-5, 304d1-2; *Pr.* 347e7; *G.* 464a1, 470c4-5, d1-2, 471d6-7, 473a10-11, b9, d2-3, e2-4, 471e2-4, 7, 473b7, 11; *HMa.* 287e3, 288a2,3 b1, 289e4, 304d2; *HMi.* 363a3; *M.* 75d2.) As I have argued above, Socrates views the so-called *elenchoi* performed by Sophists as bogus refutations, precisely because they reveal nothing about the truth of the propositions under consideration (*G.* 462e-466a, 510e-511e; *Eud.* 277d-e, 278b-c, 283b-c; *Th.* 167d-168a). Genuine refutations, as Socrates understands them, are difficult to perform, and so it is not surprising that he would be reluctant to describe himself as having succeeded in refuting an interlocutor's thesis.

The brothers Euthydemus and Dionysodorus had claimed to be able to convince Cleinias of the value of 'philosophy and the practice of virtue' (275a6). Instead, as we saw above, by leading him through fallacious arguments, they tied Cleinias in verbal knots and forced him to give verbally contradictory answers to the questions they asked. In order to get the brothers to straighten-up and be serious, Socrates offers to give an 'amateurish' example of the sort of protreptic he has in mind (278d5).

Socrates opens his protreptic cross-examination of Cleinias in the *Euthydemus* with the question: 'Doesn't everybody want to do well (εὖ πράττειν)?' (278e3). But before Cleinias can answer, Socrates asks some further questions that make it very hard for Cleinias to answer Socrates' first question with anything other than 'yes': 'Or is this question one of those that I feared are most ridiculous (καταγελάστων)? For it is foolish (άνόητον), no doubt even to ask such things. For who doesn't want to do well?' (278e2-6). Aristotle suggests that it is difficult to persuade through a method of question and answer because, in order to do so, one must get an interlocutor to accept the premises of an argument for a particular proposition. If one asks an interlocutor what he believes, as opposed to telling him what he should believe, it is always open to an answerer not to accept the premises of the argument one is attempting to construct (*SE* 172a15-21). So, Aristotle advises, in order to persuade through cross-examination, one should pick questions such that the desired answers are supported by the opinions of the wise and the majority (*Top.* 104a3-8).²⁵ Socrates seems to be applying this strategy here at the very beginning of his protreptic cross-examination of Cleinias, and to pursue it when he asks his next question:

Well then... given that we want to do well, the next question is how do we do well? If we had many good things? Or is this an even sillier question (εὐηθέστερον) than before? For it is clear (δῆλον) that this is so, I suppose. (279a1-4)

Cleinias again agrees. Socrates moves on to ask Cleinias what sort of things are goods, but, before he can answer, Socrates remarks that the answer to this question is obvious as well: 'we don't seem to need any particularly distinguished personage to give us an answer to this one either, do we? Everyone (πᾶς) would tell us that wealth is good. Right?' (279a6-7). After Cleinias agrees, Socrates rattles off a list of others goods that 'everyone' acknowledges: health, good looks and adequate physical characteristics generally (278a-b). When he gets agreement from Cleinias, Socrates adds to the list the 'clear goods': good birth and power and honor in your own country (278b).

One might conclude by this point that Socrates is not simply applying Aristotle's sound advice of appealing to premises that one's interlocutor will find uncontroversial. Rather, it might seem that, through vulgar appeals to mass opinion, Socrates is pressuring the insecure Cleinias to answer in a particular way.

²⁵ In fact, Aristotle says in the *SE* that it is impossible to persuade through question and answer. Here, it seems, he is being overly pessimistic; in the *Topics*, he is less so.

Ashamed to admit that he has unconventional views, Cleinias may simply be answering in a way that he believes will be generally acceptable. This concern is put to rest, however, by Socrates' next question:

Have we left out any good things? What about temperance, justice and bravery? What, by the god, do you think (ἡγήσῃ σὺ).
Cleinias: would we correctly class these as good or not? I mean, someone²⁶ might dispute with us. How does it seem to you (σοὶ δὲ πῶς δοκεῖ)? (279b4-8)

Socrates makes it clear here that he is genuinely interested in getting Cleinias to answer according to his own beliefs. He appealed to mass opinion not to pressure Cleinias into answering in a particular way, but in order to support his assumption that Cleinias has certain beliefs and to get these questions out of the way. When Socrates comes to more controversial questions, he pauses to remind Cleinias to answer according to his own opinion. Cleinias agrees that the virtues that Socrates mentions also count as good (279b-c), and then allows Socrates to add wisdom to the list of goods (279c).

In the end, Socrates' protreptic in the *Euthydemus* is a success: Cleinias is persuaded to pursue philosophy. In both the *Gorgias* and the *Euthydemus*, when he is doing protreptic, Socrates is sensitive to the convictions of his interlocutors. He hopes to persuade them to endorse a virtuous life engaged in philosophy, by showing them how their own beliefs support this life and fail to support any other sort of life. Because different interlocutors have different prior convictions, Socrates' strategy will vary. But one thing always remains the same: Socrates attempts to convince his interlocutor to pursue philosophy by, as he puts it, getting them to 'witness' to its value. To do this, he need not appeal to indisputable propositions that logically entail the thesis he is hoping they will accept. Some of the concessions that Cleinias makes during the course of the Socratic protreptic are undeniably controversial,²⁷ and Socrates himself does not seem to have been overly impressed with the case that he made during his cross-examination of Cleinias for the thesis that good fortune need not be added to a list of goods necessary for happiness (280b). But despite the clear limitations of Socrates' protreptic arguments, I doubt very much that Plato wishes us to infer that in Socratic protreptic anything goes—false premises, fallacious arguments, rhetorical tricks, and so forth. Socrates' goal in the *Apology* was to convince the jury to do what is just and acquit him, but he refused to use questionable means to achieve this end. Instead, he presents himself as someone who always speaks what he believes to be the truth, even if this honesty conflicts with his immediate goal (17b, 34c-35d). When Socrates is attempting to convince others of the truth of a particular thesis, he does not want them to come to the right conclusion for the wrong rea-

²⁶ Namely, someone like Polus and Callicles. Polus disputes the suggestion that justice plays an important role in the best sort of life, and as we shall see below, Callicles would dispute the suggestion that temperance and justice play a role in the best life. Neither would question the importance of bravery.

²⁷ I discuss this exchange in much more detail in Gentzler n.d.

sons. Rather he tries to persuade his interlocutors by asking them questions whose answers *both* of them will accept.²⁸ Whether or not *we* would agree, in the end, to go along with their admissions, it seems clear that Socrates does not believe that his interlocutors have conceded to him any proposition that is false. Socrates may not have offered his interlocutors conclusive arguments for the concessions that they make, but such arguments are not always necessary for the purposes of protreptic. Since Cleinias is said to have been familiar with discussions that proceed by question and answer (*Eud.* 275c), there is some reason to believe that Cleinias was already familiar with Socrates' methods and convinced that he ought to practice philosophy. But when Socrates meets opponents who are less sympathetic to his views, as in the *Gorgias*, he finds it necessary to offer arguments for propositions that friendlier interlocutors would willingly concede. In the *Euthydemus*, Cleinias' acquiescence is an advantage: it allows Socrates to proceed straight-away to the serious business of philosophical inquiry. When they turn to philosophy in earnest, he and Cleinias can seek arguments that are more conclusive.

It is clear, then, that Socratic protreptic is different from Sophistic cross-examination. Sophistic cross-examination aims at the persuasion of those observing the cross-examination; Socratic protreptic aims at the persuasion of a single interlocutor. Sophists use flattery, ridicule, misrepresentation, appeals to common opinion, and logical tricks in order to achieve their ends; when he is engaged in protreptic, Socrates uses his interlocutor's own beliefs as premises in an argument for the proposition he wants his interlocutor to accept. The Sophist need not be worried about the truth-value of any proposition nor the validity of his interlocutor's reasoning. In contrast, Socrates aims at truth and provides his interlocutor with some rational (if not decisive) grounds for accepting the proposition in question.

With these contrasts in mind, we are now in a position to assess Callicles' characterization of Socrates' cross-examination of him.

III. Socrates' Cross-Examination of Callicles

Contrary to Socrates, Callicles believes that the person who defies legal justice with impunity leads the best sort of life (*G.* 483d-484c). He defends this thesis by appealing to a distinction between legal and natural justice. 'Justice by law', on Callicles' view, is the result of the collective efforts of the masses. Inferior and weak by nature, the masses are satisfied to receive an equal share. They call such equality 'justice', blaming and punishing those who attempt to receive more than an equal share (483b-c). But what is really just, 'just by nature', is for the superior man to break out of the chains of legal justice and to take what he can get (483d-484c). So, Callicles urges, if Socrates knew what was good for him, he would give up philosophy, acquire those rhetorical skills that are necessary for

²⁸ Socrates and Cleinias are often said to 'agree' in their acceptance of the propositions they consider (*Eud.* 279a-b, e, 280b, 281a-b, e).

political success, and start living like a real man (485e-486a).

Socrates responds to Callicles' advice with effusive flattery: 'I suppose that having happened upon you, I have happened upon a god-send... I know that if you agree with what my soul believes, then that is the very truth' (486e2-3). Socrates often draws his interlocutors into conversation by appealing to their sense of their own wisdom (see, e.g., *Ion* 523d, *Pr.* 337d, *HMa.* 281b-c). However, Socrates' praise of his interlocutors is never as unrestrained as it is here, and, at one point in his encomium to Callicles, one finds the sequence, αὐτῶν αὐτὸς αὐτῷ ἐναντία λέγειν ἐναντίον (*G.* 487b4), that recalls the repetition of closely related words in Polus' earlier highly stylized praise of Gorgias.²⁹ It is possible that this parallel is just a coincidence,³⁰ but in light of other aspects of Socrates' cross-examination of Callicles that we shall examine below, it is reasonable to wonder whether Socrates is adopting a Sophistic rhetorical style from the very beginning of his conversation with Callicles.

When Socrates begins his cross-examination of Callicles, he asks him whether the following account serves as an accurate reformulation of his view about the dictates of natural justice: 'the superior man should remove by force what belongs to the inferior men, and...the better man [should] rule worse men, and...the finer man [should] have more than the baser man' (488b3-5). Callicles agrees that this is his view, but Socrates points out that it is not altogether clear whom Callicles has in mind when he speaks of the superior man:

Do you call the stronger men superior, and should the weaker man listen to the stronger?... Or is it possible to be a better man, but inferior and weaker, and superior but more wretched?... Define this very thing for me clearly, are the superior and the better and the stronger the same, or different?
(488c2-d3)

Socrates might be interpreted as asking Callicles more than one question in this passage: (1) whether 'superior', 'better', and 'stronger' are co-extensive, and (2) whether the properties of being superior, being better, and being stronger are the same.³¹ But Callicles is undeterred by this ambiguity, and answers decisively: 'Yes. I'm telling you clearly that they're the same' (488d4). Socrates then asks Callicles whether 'the many' are not then superior to any individual because, as a

²⁹ Polus' words are these:

There are many crafts among men, Chaerephon, found by experience from experience; for experience makes our age follow craft, inexperience chance. Various men in various ways share in various of these crafts, and the best men in the best. Among the best is Gorgias here, and he shares in the finest of the crafts. (*G.* 448c4-8)

According to Dodds 1959, 192 note to 487b4, the peculiarities of Polus' style 'mark it as either a quotation or a parody...the style is in any case Gorgian to the point of grotesqueness'. Compare also Protagoras' speech at *Pr.* 334a-c.

³⁰ So suggests Dodds 1959, 282 note to 487b4

³¹ See Irwin 1979, 184-185 note to 488bc, for a discussion of the ambiguity of Socrates' questions.

matter of fact, they do have power over, and are therefore stronger than, every individual (488d). Once more, Callicles' answer is clear: 'How could this not be true?' (488d8). Socrates goes down the line, identifying 'the many' with the superior, with the better, and with those who are fine by nature; and, in each instance, Callicles agrees without hesitation (488d-e). But since, on Callicles' view, the many declare that everyone should receive an equal share (489a), it follows from Callicles' concessions that what is just by nature (that the superior have power over the inferior) is also just by law (that everyone has an equal share) (488e-489b).³²

³² This first argument against Callicles is merely *ad hominem*: Socrates does not agree with all of the premises of the argument that he constructs against Callicles' view. I cannot, however, accept Irwin's suggestion that Socrates does not endorse even the conclusion of this argument:

Socrates has sometimes wrongly been taken to endorse democracy, in this passage, as just by nature... But he is simply showing the inconsistency in Callicles' position, not endorsing the conclusion. The conclusion would require him to endorse oligarchy and tyranny as equally just, and to admit that the verdict of the Athenian court on him was just. But there is no reason to suppose that he would agree to any of this. (Irwin 1979, 186 note to 488a-489a; Irwin's view is endorsed by Kraut 1984, 205n32.)

I agree with Irwin's suggestion that, in this passage Socrates does not endorse democracy, the view that the people should rule, but I do not agree that Socrates is attempting *merely* to show 'the inconsistency in Callicles' position'. Instead, as I see it, Socrates is attempting to show Callicles how the opposition that he draws between what is just by law and what is just by nature, on the basis of which Callicles charged Socrates with committing the fallacy of equivocation in his argument against Polus, is indefensible. If Socrates does not accept the conclusion of this argument against Callicles, then Callicles' charge of equivocation is left standing. Further, this conclusion is endorsed explicitly by Socrates:

Then it's not only by law (νόμῳ) that doing injustice is more shameful than suffering it, or that having an equal share (τὸ ἴσον) is just, but also by nature (φύσει). And so it looks as though you aren't speaking the truth in what you said before, or denouncing me correctly, when you say that law and nature are opposed, and that I realize this and make mischief in discussions... (489a8-b4).

In addition, we have independent reason to attribute to Socrates the view that the just by nature and the just by law are not opposed. As the 'Laws' remind Socrates in the *Crito*, Socrates has always maintained the view that 'virtue and justice are worth most of all among men, along with what is lawful (τὰ νόμιμα) and the laws (οἱ νόμοι)' (53c7-8). If Socrates believed that the just by nature and the just by law were opposed, he could not reasonably maintain this view. In the *Hippias Major*, Socrates declares that, 'whenever anyone who is attempting to propose a law is mistaken about the good, he also makes a mistake about legality and law (νομίμου τε καὶ νόμου)' (284d6-7). Hippias points out that this doctrine is contrary to ordinary language (284e), but Socrates dismisses the views of the many and concludes, 'but those who know, anyway, hold that in truth, the more beneficial a thing is, the more lawful (νομιώτερον) it is for all human beings... And the facts are and remain as those who know suppose' (286e5-9). On Socrates' view, true law is consistent with what is truly good. It is unlikely, then, that Socrates does not accept the conclusion of his *ad hominem* argument against Callicles: what is truly just by law is also truly just by nature. Despite Irwin's suggestion, the conclusion that the just by nature and the just by law are the same implies nothing about who should rule, and it most certainly does not support the Athenian verdict against Socrates, a verdict that the personified 'Laws of Athens' admit was unjust from their own perspective (*Cr.* 53b-c, 54b-c). Given his account of what is just by law, it would seem that Socrates is committed to some version of egalitarianism—

Callicles refuses to accept this conclusion, and suggests that Socrates' tactics for reaching it were illegitimate: 'This man will not stop this rubbish (φλυαρῶν). Tell me, Socrates, aren't you ashamed to be chasing after words, at your age, and thinking it a bit of luck, if someone makes a verbal slip?' (489b7-c1). In particular, he reminds Socrates that he had identified the better and the superior, and that this identification has the implication that, no matter how strong they are collectively, 'a rabble of slaves' is undeserving of goods (489c). Socrates interprets Callicles as objecting to his earlier identification of the superior with the stronger (489d), and Callicles accepts this interpretation.³³ To Callicles' objection that Socrates was preying on an innocent verbal slip, however, Socrates defends his method of questioning. He says that he suspected that Callicles did not really mean to identify the superior with the stronger, but since he did not want to put words into Callicles' mouth, he asked him to clarify his views in his own terms (489d). Callicles accuses Socrates of being ironic (489e), but Socrates' explanation is reasonable, and at this point we do not have sufficient grounds to doubt his word. Furthermore, as he did when he was cross-examining Gorgias, Socrates allows Callicles to take back his answer. This leniency is also important for the purposes of protreptic, I argued earlier, because, to persuade someone to change his mind, it is necessary to defeat the best defense that he can offer for his current views. In this case, it seems, Callicles is more committed to the distinction that he draws between what is just by nature and what is just by law than he is to his answer that the superior, the better, and the stronger are the same. So, Socrates is right to allow Callicles to retract this answer, and begins again to challenge Callicles' defense of the life of the rhetor.

Presumably, in order to help Callicles to clarify his position, Socrates asks him whether, when he speaks of the superior men, he has in mind the more intelligent men (τοὺς φρονιμωτέρους), and Callicles eagerly agrees that he does (489e). After further questioning, Callicles affirms: 'Yes, that's what I'm saying. For this is what I think the just by nature is—that the man who is better and more intelligent should rule over the lower men, and have more than them' (490a7-9). But then Socrates asks Callicles an odd question:

What exactly are you saying now? If many of us are all together in the same place as now, and hold a lot of food and drink in common, and we are people of all sorts, some strong, some weak, but one of us is more intelligent about food and

not to the view that everyone is equal, a view that Socrates would no doubt reject (see *Ap.* 31c-32a; *Cr.* 49c-d; *La.* 184e)—but, perhaps, to the view that everyone is equally entitled to genuine goods, or to whatever he has in mind when he speaks of 'geometrical equality' later at 508a.

³³ One might think that Callicles' slip was not with the identification of the superior with the stronger, but rather with the identification of the hordes with the stronger. After all, when Callicles earlier spoke of the superior as stronger, he was speaking of stronger individuals, not stronger collectives of individually weak individuals (*G.* 483b-484a). But if Callicles' only account of the superior and better is in terms of strength, then he has no reason to prefer the individually stronger person to the even stronger collection of individually weak people, and he is thus right to reject the identification of the superior with the stronger.

drink, being a doctor, while it's likely that he is stronger than some and weaker than others—won't this man, since he's more intelligent than us [about food and drink], be better and superior in this area?... Then is he to have more food than us, because he is better? (490b1-c2)

Socrates suggests that a possible interpretation of Callicles' position is that the person who is more intelligent with respect to a particular sort of thing should have more of that sort of thing (Irwin 1979, 188). We cannot, at this point, accuse Socrates of putting words into Callicles' mouth, since he allows Callicles the opportunity to reject this interpretation of his view. Rather, it seems that Socrates is applying a common and legitimate technique for getting an interlocutor to clarify his position.³⁴ He offers an interpretation of it, which, if not the most charitable, is at least consistent with what his opponent has said so far. In many cases, this strategy will provoke one's opponent to come up with an account of his position that rules out the implausible interpretation.

Socrates' questions do provoke Callicles: 'You talk about food and drink and doctors and a lot of rubbish. But I'm not talking about that' (489c8-9). But instead of requesting that Callicles explain exactly what he does mean, as we might expect if Socrates were attempting to discover Callicles' real view, Socrates does a surprising thing. He asks Callicles whether he is still committed to the thesis that the more intelligent man is superior, and moreover he demands that Callicles answer with a simple 'yes' or 'no' (490d). This request in itself is not objectionable: in certain contexts, it can prevent an interlocutor from avoiding the question.³⁵ But when a 'yes' or 'no' answer to a question could be ambiguous, as it would be to Socrates' next question, such a demand is unreasonable. After Socrates receives an affirmative answer to his first question, he asks Callicles whether he is still committed to the view that the better man should get more (490d). At this point, Callicles is put in an awkward position. This is still Callicles' view, but a positive answer might be viewed as support for Socrates' interpretation of it. So, rather than answering 'yes', Callicles answers 'no', adding the qualification, 'not more food and drink' (490d6).³⁶

By this point, it should be clear that Callicles does not mean that the more intelligent about Xs should receive more Xs. Presumably, he believes that the more intelligent should receive more goods, but it is not yet apparent what Callicles' theory of good is. Perhaps in a playful attempt to provoke Callicles to artic-

³⁴ Socrates applies this technique in *Laches* 192e.

³⁵ This is a function of a similar request that Socrates makes of Polus (*G.* 475e).

³⁶ Aristotle notes that such qualified answers are perfectly appropriate (*SE* 160a19-28). But elsewhere he also observes that to be forced to give such an answer puts one at a rhetorical disadvantage:

A fourth [good occasion for using interrogation] is when it is impossible for [one's interlocutor] to meet your question except by an evasive answer. If he answers 'True, and yet not true', or 'Partly true and partly not true', or 'True in one sense but not in another', the audience thinks he is in difficulties, and applauds his discomfiture (*Rh.* 1419a13-17).

ulate his theory of the good, Socrates attributes to Callicles the following view: 'I see—but perhaps more cloaks? Should the best weaver have the biggest cloak and go around dressed up in the most and finest clothes?' (490d7-9). Callicles again says that this is not what he means; but Socrates, who by now cannot seriously believe that he is revealing to Callicles genuine implications of his view, keeps it up: 'Then clearly [!] the most intelligent and best in that area should take more shoes. Perhaps the shoemaker should walk around wearing the bigger and the most shoes?' (490e1-3). Socrates does not quit until he has offered Callicles one last inanity:

Well, if you're not talking about that sort of thing, perhaps it's something like this: for instance, a farming man, intelligent and fine and good about the soil, he's the one, I presume who should take more seeds and should use the most possible seeds on his own soil. (490e5-8)

It is one thing to show someone that his view has ridiculously absurd consequences; but it is another thing altogether to ridicule a position by misrepresenting its implications as absurd. The one technique reveals to one's interlocutor that he has good reason to reject his view. The main effect of the other, as Aristotle reports Gorgias observing, 'is to kill one's opponent's earnestness' (*Rh.* 1419b4-5). If Socrates is attempting to ridicule Callicles' opinion, then he has departed from his preferred method and has adopted the sort of techniques applied by rhetors like Polus (*G.* 473e-474b). If Socrates were merely attempting to provoke Callicles to articulate his view more carefully, one would expect his reaction to be different when he finally gives Callicles the opportunity to do so.

Callicles claims that all along he has meant that the superior are those who 'are intelligent about politics, about how to govern well, and not only intelligent, but also brave, and capable of fulfilling what they intend—and who don't slacken because of softness of soul' (491b1-4). But, rather than thanking Callicles for his explanation, Socrates chastises him:

I accuse you of never saying the same about the same things. Previously you were defining the better and superior men as the stronger, then as the more intelligent, now again you've come bringing something else. Some kind of braver men are what you call the superior and the better men. Come on, my friend, tell me once and for all, just who do you call the better and superior—better and superior in what? (491b7-c5)

Callicles is certainly not very capable when it comes to articulating his position; but from all that he has said so far, it seems clear that he believes that those who are superior are strong, intelligent about politics, *and* brave. It is understandable, then, that, when Socrates asked him the distinct questions, (1) whether the superior are stronger, and (2) whether the superior and the stronger are the same, Callicles answers in the affirmative. Callicles could easily think that to say 'no' would be to answer contrary to his belief that the superior are stronger. But he soon realizes that he misspoke when he *identified* the superior with the stronger,

and he takes back this answer. When Socrates asked him whether he believes that the superior men are intelligent, he also agreed. Again, this seems to follow from his view that the superior are strong, intelligent about politics, and brave. Indeed, when his answer is ridiculed by Socrates, Callicles adds that he believes that the superior are both intelligent about politics and brave. Callicles' answers conflict with one another only if each is an attempt to offer a complete account of what being a superior individual consists in. Since Socrates' questions do not obviously call for this sort of answer and since it is apparent that this sort of interpretation of Callicles' answers is inaccurate, Socrates' charge of inconsistency seems unfair. Like Euthydemus and Dionysodorus, Socrates seems content to have driven Callicles into merely verbal contradiction.

When, in response to Socrates' accusation of inconsistency, Callicles repeats his last account of whom he has in mind when he speaks of the naturally superior, rather than examining this account, as we should expect if Socrates were applying his characteristic method, Socrates abruptly asks him whether the man that he admires rules himself (491d).³⁷ Callicles twice complains that he does not know what Socrates is talking about (491d6, 9).³⁸ In response, Socrates explains that he has in mind what 'the many' call 'being temperate' (491d), and Callicles explodes in response. On Callicles' view, those who are called 'temperate' are enslaved fools. The man who knows how to live lets his appetites become as great as possible and has the bravery and intelligence to fulfill them (491e-492a). In short, Callicles maintains, 'luxury (τρυφή), intemperance, and freedom, if it is well supplied, this is virtue and happiness' (492c4-6). Socrates approves of Callicles' audacious honesty, and encourages him to continue to be forthright 'so that it will really become clear how we should live' (492d5).

Apparently to persuade Callicles that he is wrong to reject temperance, Socrates first presents Callicles with two allegories comparing souls to jars (492e-493c, 493d-494a); but Callicles remains unimpressed (493d, 494a-b). He rejects Socrates' alternative images of happiness, on the ground that they exclude the pleasure that is to be obtained through the satisfaction of appetites (494a-b). Having gotten nowhere with his allegories, Socrates returns to cross-examination. He asks Callicles what he thinks about those who spend all of their time satisfying an overwhelming urge to scratch themselves (494c). Callicles, at first, is outraged by the example: 'How absurd you are Socrates—a regular mob orator (ἀτεχνῶς δημηγόρος)' (494d1). A person who is absorbed in scratching hardly fits Callicles' ideal of the strong, intelligent, and brave man of political action. Regardless, Callicles feels compelled to acknowledge this itchy fellow's claim to happiness (494d). This concession is a mistake, since it allows Socrates to attribute to him unrestricted hedonism, the view that the good is to be identified with pleasure (494d), that Socrates goes on to refute in two separate arguments

³⁷ The abruptness of this shift in Socrates' questioning is noted by Kahn 1983, 102.

³⁸ I view these complaints as sincere. Later, however, Callicles denies that he understands what Socrates is talking about when he finds himself in trouble (497b, 505c) simply in order to put an end to the conversation.

(495c-497d, 497e-499b). Why, then, does Callicles agree that the scratcher is happy?

Plato gives us every reason to believe that, in this instance, Callicles was manipulated into making this concession. Before introducing his example of the perpetual scratcher, Socrates gives Callicles the following warning: 'mind you don't slacken from shame' (494c5-6). This by itself is insignificant, but after Callicles expresses his contempt for the perpetual scratcher, Socrates urges him to change his mind by once again appealing to his ideal of the brave, shameless individual, and then pushing him to reconsider his judgment: 'You see that's how I shocked both Polus and Gorgias, and made them ashamed. But you certainly won't be shocked or ashamed—you're brave. Now just answer (ἀλλ' ἀποκρίνου μόνον)' (494d2-5). Callicles takes the bait. It would be shameful to hold up a person who scratches himself all day as an instance of happiness; but since Callicles is shameless, he will not shrink from doing so. Unfortunately, the claim that the scratcher is happy, in addition to being shameless, is contrary to Callicles' ideal of the strong, intelligent, brave man of political action. Callicles misspeaks, not in order to avoid saying something shameful, but rather in order to prove to Socrates his own shamelessness.

My suggestion that Callicles has been baited into conceding the scratcher's claim to happiness is supported by Callicles' attitude toward the unrestricted hedonism that both he and Socrates believe follows from this concession. Callicles explicitly states that, if he says that unrestricted hedonism is true, he is speaking contrary to his real views (495a). This seems like an accurate statement, since, as Socrates goes on to demonstrate, unrestricted hedonism is incompatible with Callicles' elitist contempt for anyone who does not meet his ideal of the strong, intelligent, and brave man of political action (497e-499b). Socrates urges Callicles to speak frankly, but in the same breath, he reminds Callicles for the *third* time that the scratcher is shameful (495b). Unable to resist the challenge to endorse shameless doctrines, Callicles reaffirms his commitment to counting the scratcher happy and to the identification of pleasure and the good (495b-c). However, after Socrates completes his refutation of unrestricted hedonism, Callicles reminds Socrates that he was only joking when he endorsed it and chides Socrates for taking him seriously (499b).

It would be inaccurate to claim that on no level does Callicles believe that he is committed to counting the scratcher happy and to unrestricted hedonism. On Callicles' view, those whom 'the many' call 'temperate' are slavish fools, afraid to seize what they can out of life. But since Socrates had identified self-rule with temperance (491d), Callicles' contempt for temperance leads him to deny that the ideal life could include any restraint on appetite (491e-492a). This rejection of self-restraint, in turn, lends some support to the identification of happiness with the pleasure that results from the satisfaction of any appetite (494c). The fact remains, however, that a commitment to unrestricted hedonism is *not* required for a rejection of temperance as the many understand it. Callicles might have rejected temperance, but conceded that his ideal man will sometimes need to

restrain some of his appetites so that his desires for power, fame, and wealth, for example, can be satisfied most effectively. The fact that Callicles does not immediately reject self-rule as an attribute of his ideal man, but does so only after Socrates identifies self-rule with temperance (491d-e), suggests that, if Callicles had thought more carefully about his position, he would not have rejected all restraint of appetite. But even if Callicles wishes to insist that the ideal man imposes no restraints on his desires, it still would not follow that, on Callicles' view, the scratcher is happy and that unrestricted hedonism is true. As Callicles explicitly states, the best man is brave, intelligent, and motivated by great desires (491e-492a). Callicles does not explain whether these desires are great in the sense of being particularly insistent and demanding, or whether they are great in the sense of being extravagant—desires for great things. But the fact that he holds up the life of Xerxes the Great King as an ideal (483d-e) and the fact that he mentions luxury in his account of what happiness and virtue consist in (492c) indicate that he believes that the desires of the best man are great in both senses. Although, on Callicles' view, the perpetual scratcher cannot be disqualified from being happy because of his intemperance and lack of self-rule, he would fail to count as happy both because of the triviality of the desire that serves as his sole source of motivation and because of his lack of the other qualities that Callicles believes are necessary for happiness.³⁹

Callicles is not very astute and is easily confused. He has thought out neither the implications of his position nor the logical relations it bears to similar views. For this reason he is very suggestible, but also particularly difficult to persuade that he is wrong. He is always prepared to believe that some other defense of his position is possible. Consequently, unless Socrates helps Callicles to clarify his position and to discover the weaknesses of its best defense, he will be unsuccess-

³⁹ Irwin 1979, 206 suggests that, even if unrestricted hedonism is not necessary to defend Callicles' rejection of justice by law, Callicles is insincere when he claims that he did not seriously endorse it: 'for he has not vindicated his rejection of temperance if his unrestricted hedonism is not accepted'. I have tried to show that, although Callicles does not 'vindicate' his rejection of temperance, he does not need unrestricted hedonism to do so. In a later paper, Irwin suggests that, not only does Callicles' rejection of temperance depend on a commitment to unrestricted hedonism, but so too does his rejection of justice by law:

Callicles pretends that he was not serious in his previous endorsement of hedonism...., though Socrates took great pains to make sure that he was. But his pretense is useless. Hedonism was introduced as a defence of Callicles' objections to conventional justice and its restraint of desires. Having rejected hedonism, he has no other defense of his objections (Irwin 1986, 69).

Of course, I would reject Irwin's suggestions (1) that Socrates 'took great pains' to make sure that Callicles was genuinely committed to unrestricted hedonism, (2) that this theory was introduced 'as a defence of Callicles' objections to conventional justice', and (3) that his rejection of justice by law ('conventional justice') does depend on a commitment to unrestricted hedonism: Socrates himself shows that the grounds for his rejection of conventional justice are *incompatible* with unrestricted hedonism. Nonetheless, other commentators view unrestricted hedonism as central to Callicles' position. Kahn 1983, 76 believes that unrestricted hedonism is so central to Callicles' position, that the game is over once this thesis is refuted. See also Santas 1979, 256-257.

ful at convincing Callicles to abandon it. It is significant, then, that Socrates makes little effort to get at the heart of Callicles' position and that, despite Callicles' protests, pushes him into accepting a view that is in fact incompatible with his position.

At the end of Socrates' first refutation of hedonism, there is another curious exchange. Callicles complains about Socrates' 'petty and worthless' questions (497b7). This may be only sour grapes at the prospect of being refuted, or it may indicate Callicles' awareness that the questions leading to a refutation of unrestricted hedonism do not really get at the heart of his position. In any case, Gorgias intervenes with the comment, 'What difference does it make to you? Anyhow, it isn't for you to estimate [the] value [of Socrates' questions], Callicles.⁴⁰ Do allow Socrates to refute however he wishes' (497b8-10). This remark would be appropriate if Callicles and Socrates were involved in a competitive debate whose winner is determined by the opinion of the audience or of designated judges; but it is inappropriate if Socrates is applying his characteristic method of persuasion. For Socratic protreptic to be effective, it is essential that his interlocutor understand the value and import of his questions. This is why Socrates exerts so much effort during his cross-examination of Gorgias to explain and justify his procedure of questioning. It is understandable that Gorgias might assume that Socrates is engaged in a Sophistic competitive display: this is the sort of activity with which he was most familiar (456a-457c). But if Socrates were not engaged in this sort of activity, one would expect him to dispute Gorgias' assumption and seek to explain to Callicles why he asks the questions he does. The fact that Socrates lets Gorgias' comment stand provides further support for the view that, on this occasion, he has abandoned his characteristic method.

By the time that Socrates turns to Callicles' view that some pleasures are better and others are worse (499b), Callicles has lost all of his fighting spirit and merely goes along with Socrates, conceding whatever he says for the sake of getting the argument over with: 'I'm going along with you, to let the discussion progress for you, and to gratify Gorgias here' (501c6-7). With only one exception (503a), Callicles agrees with every suggestion that Socrates makes (499d-501c) until Socrates asks the question 'What is it that comes to be in the soul from structure and order?' (504c1-3). At this point, Callicles draws the line, and asks Socrates to answer his own question. After Socrates reviews the propositions that Callicles conceded to him, and adds some further assumptions of his own, he concludes that the temperate and just man possesses all of the virtues and lives the best sort of life, and that the person who lacks temperance and justice is miserable (507d-e). Despite the 'iron and adamant arguments' (509a) that Socrates claims that he has given for his view, he ends the dialogue, without convincing Callicles of the value of the virtuous philosophical life (513c).

Other commentators have noticed that Socrates has departed from his characteristic method by the end of the dialogue. Socrates explicitly says that in the end

⁴⁰ For a defence of this rendering of this phrase, see Dodds 1959, 313 note to 497b8.

he has been forced by Callicles' lack of cooperation to give long speeches like a mob orator (519d-e).⁴¹ Our investigation of Socrates' cross-examination of Callicles has revealed, however, that from beginning to end Socrates violates his principles of protreptic. Rather than being concerned solely with 'the man with whom [he is having] a discussion, whoever he may be' (474a7-8), Socrates ridicules and misrepresents Callicles' view. But most importantly, Socrates fails to abide by the first rule of protreptic: to insure that his interlocutor has answered sincerely and after due consideration. When Socrates cross-examined Cleinias in the *Euthydemus*, and when he cross-examined Gorgias in the *Gorgias*, he stuck to the letter of this rule. When Cleinias hesitated to accept a proposition that Socrates asked him to consider, Socrates showed him how his other beliefs supported the acceptance of this proposition. When Gorgias answered in a way that seemed not to reflect his real views, Socrates let him take back this answer. These concessions to the interlocutor are important for the purposes of protreptic, because, unless an interlocutor is genuinely convinced that he has no defense of his view, and, unless he is convinced that his own views commit him to the alternative Socratic thesis, protreptic is bound to fail. While it is true that Socrates repeatedly urges Callicles to speak sincerely (495b, 500b-c, 501d-e), he is happy to accept Callicles' answers, even when Callicles announces that these answers do not reflect his own opinion.

IV. The Superiority of the Philosophical Life

But why would Socrates deliberately violate the principles of protreptic which he has articulated, and use a method that he believes is shameful (*G.* 464e, 503a)? Callicles asks him this same question, and we get a clue to the solution of our puzzle from Socrates' response:

C: I don't know what Sophistic tricks you are using, Socrates.

S: You know, Callicles, but you are playing the simpleton. Just go a bit farther.

C: Why do you keep talking rubbish (τί ἔχων ληρεῖς)?⁴²

⁴¹ Coventry 1990, 184n29, for example, comments: 'in an imperfect world ... dialectic... may become [self-defeating], in that confrontation with an obdurate interlocutor may necessitate a compromising of its principles'.

⁴² In the manuscripts, a version of this line is put into the mouth of Socrates, as 'ὅτι ἔχων ληρεῖς'. But, as Dodds 1959, 312 note to 497a9 comments, in this form, it makes little sense. (He also suggests that it is out of character for Socrates to make such an abusive remark. Since, on my view, much that Socrates says in this exchange with Callicles is out of character, I cannot put much weight on that consideration.) I follow Badham, who, substituting 'τί' for 'ὅτι', puts the line in Callicles' mouth (Badham 1855, 730; cited and followed by Dodds 1959, and followed by Zeyl 1987, 72). Dodds 1959, 312 remarks: 'Badham's correction is the easiest transcriptionally; but it may be urged against it that Callicles' outburst is badly timed, since in the immediately preceding sentence there is nothing to provoke it' There is, however, something to provoke Callicles. When Callicles asks Socrates about his Sophistry, Socrates simply responds enigmatically and urges him to continue. It is not surprising, then, that Callicles attempts to get Socrates to explain himself by complaining in even harsher terms against Socrates' tactics. See Dodds' useful discussion of the problems attending other ways of handling this line (1959, 312-313).

S: So that you will know how wise you are to admonish
(*νοῦθετεῖς*) me... (497a7-b1)

As we saw above, during the course of his cross-examination of Gorgias, Socrates goes out of his way to explain that he is not using illegitimate tactics to win the argument (450e, 453c, 454b-c, 457c-458b). In contrast, when Callicles here accuses Socrates of using Sophistic tricks, Socrates replies that Callicles knows what it is all about. Indicating that he is really at a loss, Callicles explicitly asks Socrates why he is talking rubbish, and once again, Socrates does not deny Callicles' charge, but explains that he is behaving this way in order to show Callicles how wise he is to admonish (*νοῦθετεῖν*) him.

Only twice before in the *Gorgias* does Socrates use the word '*νοῦθετεῖν*' to refer to Callicles' admonishment of him (488a4, b1). On these occasions, Socrates is referring to Callicles' criticism of his pursuit of philosophy. It might be thought that, when Socrates says that he is going to show Callicles how wise he is to admonish him, Socrates is saying simply, though ironically, that, during the course of this cross-examination, he is going to prove that the philosophical life is superior to the life that Callicles advocates and that therefore Callicles is not *at all* wise to admonish Socrates for pursuing it. The fact that Socrates ends the dialogue with the conclusion that the just and temperate life engaged in philosophy is to be preferred might support this suggestion (527e). But an appeal to this positive argument does not address Callicles' particular question why Socrates is using Sophistic tricks. To see how Socrates' remark is an answer to this question, we must look more closely at Callicles' earlier admonishment.

On Callicles' view, single-minded devotion to philosophy is a bad idea, because philosophers 'turn out inexperienced...in the speech they should use in meeting men in public and private transactions' (484d4-5) and cannot protect themselves in a court of law. To prove his point, Callicles asks Socrates to consider a hypothetical case:

suppose someone arrested you, ...and threw you into jail,
claiming you were doing injustice when you were doing none;
you know you'd have no idea what to do with yourself; you'd
be dizzy, you'd gape, not knowing what to say; you'd go into
court, to face some inferior wretch of an accuser, and you'd be
put to death if he wanted the death penalty for you. Now how
can this be wise, Socrates? (486a7-b5)

According to Callicles' prediction, since Socrates has spent all of his life pursuing philosophy, he will be at the mercy of any more worldly and skilful rhetor who wants to make trouble for him. To persuade a jury, Sophistic rhetorical techniques are required.

By the end of the *Gorgias*, it is clear that Callicles is wrong to suggest that Socrates might be successfully prosecuted due to his lack of rhetorical skill. Socrates' cross-examination of Callicles proves that he can apply Sophistic rhetorical techniques if he is so inclined. If Socrates is ever faced with a false accuser and declines to use these techniques, this will be due, not to his inability,

but to his belief in their shamefulfulness. Indeed, when Socrates finds himself in just such a situation, he explains:

Perhaps you think that I was convicted for lack of such words as might have convinced you, if I thought I should say and do all I could to avoid my sentence. Far from it. I was convicted because I lacked not words but boldness and shamelessness and the willingness to say to you what would be most pleasant for you to hear from me, lamentations and tears and my saying and doing many things that I say are unworthy of me but that you are accustomed to hear from others. (*Ap.* 38d3-e2)

When Callicles first admonishes Socrates, he suggests that those who practice and praise philosophy late into their lives do so, not because it is still really valuable for them, but because they are inferior at other activities:

For it happens as Euripides says: 'Each of us shines in and strives for it, devoting the greatest part of his life to it, where he finds himself best'. And whatever he is inferior in, he avoids it and abuses it, praising the other thing, from goodwill to himself, supposing that this way he is praising himself. (*G.* 484e4-485a3)

Here Callicles indicates that he would be inclined to dismiss any attack that Socrates might make on Sophistic rhetoric and any argument that he might give in defense of philosophy. On Callicles' view, the fact that Socrates spends most of his life doing philosophy can only mean that he is inferior at other pursuits, and at Sophistic rhetoric in particular. It is only natural, Callicles thinks, that Socrates would praise the philosophical life and condemn a life that requires the use of Sophistic rhetoric, even if he believes that the latter is in fact superior to the former. By demonstrating that he is a competent rhetor, capable of Sophistic tricks when the situation demands it, Socrates provides him with evidence that he has embraced the just and temperate life engaged in philosophy, not because he is incapable of applying the techniques of the Sophistic rhetor for unjust ends, but because he genuinely believes that the just and temperate life engaged in philosophy is the best life of all. Further, by becoming the target of Sophistic techniques, Callicles gains first-hand experience of their value: as he complains, they are rubbish. In these ways, Socrates puts himself in a better position to persuade Callicles through his own method of protreptic when he meets him again. As Socrates predicts to Callicles, 'If we consider these same questions often and better (*βέλτιον*), you'll be convinced' (513c8-d2).⁴³

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