

which is speckled with light spots that resemble a field of stars.⁴ The student's account, as interpreted by the audience, would suggest that Socrates, while plotting the course of the moon against the background stars, was led toward the starry gecko. Confused or astonished, he opens his mouth. The word κεχηνότος ("gaping") is commonly used to indicate eager expectation about an event or discovery (the γνώμην μεγάλην of which Socrates was deprived).⁵ Thus, the point of the joke, which is richly appreciated by Strepsiades (174), is that Socrates' seemingly brilliant observation of a new constellation is nothing more than the inability to recognize a gecko when he sees one, and to get out of the way of its falling excrement.⁶

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4. Ovid derives the gecko's name, *stellio*, from this striking feature (*Met.* 5.460–61): *aptumque colori / nomen habet variis stellatus corpora guttis*.

5. LSJ, s.v. χάσκω, 2.

6. I am grateful to my colleagues and friends, John Rauk and Philip Gorman, for their helpful comments and suggestions. I owe special thanks to my fourth-semester Greek students, whose curiosity and enthusiasm for Aristophanes led to these observations.

ΠΟΛΛΗ ΑΓΡΟΙΚΙΑ: RUDENESS AND IRONY IN PLATO'S *GORGIAS*

Plato's vivid mimesis of apparently trivial verbal interactions is often ignored in scholarly accounts. In the *Gorgias*, an examination of Socrates' manners, good or bad, and the way εἰρωνεία or irony functions in his confrontation with two different but equally refractory opponents will demonstrate the link between Socrates' convictions and his dialectical technique.¹ The social dynamics of courtesy and rudeness also help to explain and may even justify behavior by Socrates that has seemed rude to some and certainly is uncharacteristically aggressive and direct.²

Polus, characterized from the beginning as rude and cynical, is treated more severely than almost any other interlocutor in Plato; and, in the process of bringing him to heel, Socrates uses a particularly stinging sort of teasing. Callicles, who appears well-mannered in the beginning, is eventually subjected to an equally painful treatment, as Socrates pulls him through a lengthy refutation of his amoralist thesis. Because Callicles displays greater social sensitivity than Polus, and in particular because he is himself a master of ironic and parodic discourse, his duel with Socrates illuminates the mingling of mockery and seriousness in Socratic irony.

Polus begins (*Grg.* 461C4) by accusing Socrates of πολλή ἀγροικία ("complete crudeness") for having embarrassed Gorgias in the preceding argument. Ἀγροικία, being crude or "countrified" in behavior, as opposed to "citified" (ἀστεῖος), suggests a naïveté that leads one to violate the standards of polite intercourse. Socrates' reply

1. See Vlastos 1991, 21–29 on the historical development of the terms εἰρωνεία and irony. I will use "eironeia" or "eironic" (see discussion pp. 51–52 below) to distinguish the modern word from its Greek ancestor.

2. See Kauffman 1979 and later Arieti (1991, chap. 5; 1993). Arieti does not cite the article by Kauffman. Arieti argues that we see Callicles moving from friendliness and courtesy to surly rudeness; and this reaction is directly provoked by the rather cruel jibes directed at him by Socrates.

underlines Polus' rudeness, which is increased by his youth: "My dear Polus, that's just why we have friends and sons, so that, when we get older and trip up, you younger ones will be there to set us right" (461C5–7: ὦ κάλλιστε Πῶλε, ἀλλὰ τοι ἐξεπίτηδες κτώμεθα ἐταίρους καὶ υἱεῖς, ἵνα ἐπειδὴν αὐτοὶ πρεσβύτεροι γενόμενοι σφαλλώμεθα, παρόντες ὑμεῖς οἱ νεώτεροι ἐπανορθώτε. . .).³

Socrates' tone is ironic, even sarcastic; but it is one of the paradoxes of good manners, and a favorite theme of contemporary etiquette columns, that hardly anything is more rude than to draw attention to the social errors of others. An ironic response to rudeness permits the expression of hostility, while avoiding self-incrimination: a rebuke to rudeness must be expressed politely, if it is to be effective, just as a rebuke to anger should not reveal anger. We might compare the ostensibly courteous response to a boorish superior in Austen's *Pride and Prejudice*: "I do not pretend to equal frankness with your ladyship. *You* may ask questions that *I* do not care to answer." Austen's protagonist is younger and lower in rank than her adversary; her ironic flattery preserves these distinctions, while it marks the overstepping of her opponent. If recognized by the opponent, irony can be very irritating,⁴ since the ironist counters aggressive behavior but refuses to enter the conversation on the adversary's terms by responding in kind. The implied rebuke to the adversary's manners adds to the sting.

Modern terms such as "manners" (or *courtoisie* or *Höflichkeit*) derive from aristocratic standards later promoted for all classes. Probably as a result of the fluidity of class divisions, there is no explicit terminology in Greek traditional discourse for the rules of social behavior. In Attic texts, the concept of courtesy is distributed among a complex of terms. Some refer to moral behavior (the shame and modesty expressed by αἰδώς and αἰσχύνη),⁵ while others mark physical and social behavior (see terms like εὐσχημοσύνη⁶ and the opposition between "countrified" and "citified" behavior, discussed above, p. 50) that is clearly class-related. A third aspect is presented by charm and socially pleasing manners, covered by χάρις or the verb χαρίζεσθαι. Polus regards "pleasing" as an honorable aim of rhetoric, while Socrates treats the production of χάρις as a species of flattery, κολακεία.⁷ To be a flatterer is to carry pleasing too far, perhaps because one has lost shame, the moral component in Greek manners.

In his social interactions Socrates plays the role of an εἴρων, one who makes a pretense of ignorance and incapacity. G. Vlastos' analysis is useful but places too strong a break between older instances of eironeia and Socratic ones.⁸ The original practitioner of eironeia (ὁ εἴρων) is a liar, but a liar of a specific sort, since he is opposed to the ἀλαζών, or boastful liar: the latter pretends to do or know what he does not, while the former protests innocence and ignorance, covering his guilty

3. For Polus' age, cf. Socrates' jibe at 463E2, Πῶλος δὲ ὅδε νέος ἐστὶ καὶ ὀξύς.

4. See Vlastos 1991, 244–45, and Rutherford 1995, 78, "The irony itself infuriates some of his interlocutors." Cf. a similar point about eironeia in Arist. *Rhet.* 1379b30–31: it is καταφρονητικόν.

5. Williams 1993, 90–92 has shown that αἰδώς cannot be dismissed as composed of mere social shame alone.

6. See Ar. *Vesp.* 1210 and Michellini 1987, pp. 174–75, n. 170 on the significance of this term.

7. 463B1; cf. the discussion with Callicles 501C3, 503A6, etc. Χάρις, 462C7: rhetoric is experience in χαρίτος τινος καὶ ἡδονῆς ἀπεργασίας, also 502A8, 521A5. See also Nightingale 1995, 39–42 on Plato's rejection of the χάρις relation.

8. Vlastos 1991, chap. 2.

knowledge or his angry emotions with a mask of bland friendliness and simulated astonishment.⁹ The competitive patterns of Greek male social behavior favor the self-promotion of the ἀλαζών;¹⁰ and Socrates' peculiar manners mark him as a person very different from the Hellenic norm, even evoking societies such as modern Japan, where linguistic and behavioral standards require that ego be severely repressed rather than flaunted. Eironic self-depreciation is a trick to disarm opponents; and this is undoubtedly one of its functions in Socratic talk. But this tactic also permits Socrates to conduct an effective dialogue on his own terms, even with a rude, hyper-assertive opponent like Polus. Because Socrates says nice things that he does not mean, he could himself be mistaken for the flatterer (κόλαξ). He fails to fit the description for the same reason that he does not practice conventional eironeia: first, the "deceit" is ironic, and therefore transparent, if not to the opponent then to more knowledgeable internal spectators or to the reading audience; and second, Socrates' ironic eironeia is protreptic and thus linked to moral convictions that determine its use as a tool of argument.

By preserving the niceties of superficial courtesy and so muting any overtones of anger, the eironeia of Socrates assists the flow of dialogue. In a deeper sense, though, where manners and morals meet, it offers a remedy for the bad effects of vigorous elenctic argument. Through his eironic pose of inferiority, Socrates plays the role of and speaks for the losers in argument; and his reassuringly low posture has a protreptic effect, since it lessens the danger that beginners may abandon philosophy before they begin to learn. The question of behavior in argument is raised early in our dialogue in the discussion with Gorgias (457C4–458B3). Socrates then describes the excessive competitiveness (φιλονικεῖν, 457D4, E4–5) and resentment (φθόνος, 457D3) that can lead to bitter feelings, sometimes shamefully (αἴσχιστα) degenerating into mutual insults (λοιδορεῖσθαι, 457D5–6). Socrates proceeds only when he has obtained Gorgias' agreement that both of them would rather be refuted, if in the wrong. Both will recognize that the aim is truth rather than the desire to win (φιλονικία).¹¹ Socrates' description of the bad argument fits his encounters with Polus and Callicles, although Socrates' eironic politeness protects him from the "shameful" results. The idea that undergoing refutation can be a good thing is strongly confirmed both by Socrates' response to the attacks of his opponents and by the persistence with which he carries out their refutations.

D. Babut has shown that, by insisting on taking the dominant role of questioner, Polus provides an opening for a change of role by Socrates, who gradually moves into lengthier speeches and a more assertive dialogic stance.¹² Instead of posing queries that can subject Socrates to an effective elenchus, Polus sputters out indignant rhetorical questions,¹³ virtually forcing Socrates to be explicit in his condemnation

9. For contrast with the ἀλαζών, see Arist. *Eth. Nic.* 1108a21–22. Theophr. *Char.* 1.1–2: the εἰρων pretends to sympathize with defeated enemies and praises in public those he attacks in private. Socrates may well be accused of the former, and his exaggerated praise of opponents could easily make his enemies suspect the latter. (Earlier examples of the word seem to fit the pattern of pretended innocence, e.g., Ar. *Av.* 1210–11.)

10. See Theophr. *Char.* 23: he is a boaster who tells tall tales of his foreign travel and vast wealth.

11. 458A2–B1. On this topic, see Gadamer [1967] 1991, 44–51 on "Degenerate [i.e., eristic] Forms of Speech."

12. Babut 1992, 68–70.

13. E.g., 462C8–9: "Then rhetoric doesn't seem to you a fine thing, (since it is) capable of pleasing people?" See also 463D3, 466A4–5, 466A9–10, etc. Cf. Socrates' response at 466B1: is that a question, or the beginning of a speech?

of Gorgias' art. Socrates prefaces his response at 462E6 with an apologetic aside to the older man: "It may be a bit crude to speak the truth" (Μὴ ἀγροικότερον ἢ τὸ ἀληθὲς εἰπεῖν. . .), for fear that Gorgias may think that Socrates is ridiculing (διακωμωδεῖν) his occupation. The elaborate courtesy belongs to a more oblique strain of Socratic irony, while the reference to crudeness picks up Polus' opening accusation, while disproving it: Socrates has shown his good manners by avoiding open confrontation. The deprecating reference to ridicule again stresses the difference between the first and second interlocutors: Socrates has no inhibitions about making fun of Polus.

Socrates' treatment of Polus shows how annoying and stinging his ironic pretense of simplicity can be. When Polus makes an error in argument (466A7–8), Socrates corrects him, again harping on his youth with the teasing remark, "Don't you remember, Polus, at your age? What will you do later on?"¹⁴ Later, as Socrates attempts to establish one of his typically paradoxical distinctions,¹⁵ Polus begins to cry out in exasperation, "This man here (οὗτος ἀνὴρ, 467B1). . . ." The use of the demonstrative without the article is patently rude, as is the third-person reference. Polus seems not to complete his interjection¹⁶ because he is interrupted by Socrates, who irritatingly repeats the paradox and challenges, "So refute me" (ἀλλά μ' ἐλεγχε). At length, Polus bursts out, "What you say is shocking and monstrous" (σχέτλιά γε λέγεις καὶ ὑπερφυῖ); and Socrates responds, still teasingly, "Don't use insults, now." The ironist even rubs in his unpleasantness by adding a mimicry of the Gorgianic style: "ῶ λῶστε Πῶλε, to address you in your own manner."¹⁷ Such behavior technically escapes being rude only because Socrates can always play the εἴρων and claim that he is imitating Polus' manner out of sheer admiration: irony permits one to say and not to say something, that is, to be rude without taking responsibility for the rudeness.

At one point (470C4–8) Polus asks Socrates, "Wouldn't even a child prove that what you say is untrue?" Socrates, self-deprecating and polite as ever, replies, "My thanks to the child, and to you too,¹⁸ if you refute me and stop me from talking nonsense" (ἀπαλλάξῃς φλυαρίας).¹⁹ Again he repeats the challenge, "Spare nothing in your efforts to help a friend: refute me!" Earlier when Polus accused him of rudeness, Socrates also pretended to believe in Polus' good will in "setting him straight." Yet Socrates really does believe in the value of refutation. Proper role-playing would see the older man correcting the younger; and, in this reversed case, the pretended benefit could become a real one. The layers of irony are threefold: Socrates is friendly on the surface, hostile just below the surface, and—at a yet deeper level—working for Polus' well-being.

Just as Socrates appears incompetent and is really superlatively competent in argument, so the appearance of levity or naïveté in Socratic argument is deceiving on several levels. Irony and eironeia are much more than tactics to trick opponents: they may permit the statement of serious truths that might appear bathetic if introduced

14. τί τάχα δράσεις; See Dodds' commentary ad loc.

15. For the difficulty of the questions raised, see Vlastos 1991, 148–54.

16. See Dodds 1959, 234 on the break, and for the idiom; for the use of the demonstrative he cites Kühner-Gerth 1.629–30.

17. 467B11–C1; see Dodds 1959, 235.

18. Note the possible further suggestion that Polus and the παῖς may have age in common. At 471D6 Socrates refers back to "this argument with which a child could refute me."

19. Note this key rude term, used extensively by Callicles (n. 29, below).

“straight.”²⁰ T. A. Szlezák shows the repeated use of irony in Platonic texts, veiling and half-revealing philosophic truth. This characteristic creates an analogy between the author and his “Socrates”: both present the deeply serious under the mask of the casual and playful. An instance of this layered discourse occurs at a key point in Polus’ refutation. Socrates, in a tone that might be naïvely serious, maliciously teasing, or genuinely helpful, urges him to reply, “Don’t hesitate to answer, Polus. You won’t be harmed at all. Offer yourself bravely to the argument—as to a doctor, and answer” (475D5–7: μή ὀκνεῖ ἀποκρίνασθαι, ὦ Πῶλε· οὐδὲν γὰρ βλαβήσῃ· ἀλλὰ γενναίως τῷ λόγῳ ὥσπερ ἱατρῷ παρέχων ἀποκρίνου . . . : cf. *Hp. Mi.* 366E2–3).

The conclusions reached by Socrates and Polus justify Socrates’ argumentative technique. The experience of undergoing trial and sentence is shown to be parallel to medicine, in that legal punishment cures the unjust soul (478A1–B2) making us more sober and self-aware (σωφρονίζει, 478D6). Polus himself seems in fact to have undergone, at least in appearance, such a sobering up. He meekly and obediently follows the argument, no longer becoming angry, insulting Socrates, or trying to use ad hominem retorts. The discussion with Polus even reaches the conclusion that punishment, the cure for wrongdoing, is a good that one must seek for oneself and for everyone that one cares for.²¹ This claim, outrageous as it seems, provides a philosophic justification for Socrates’ harsh behavior: “caring for” someone may involve hurting rather than pleasing. But, if the dialogic analogue to judicial punishment is to succeed, it cannot be inflicted in anger or contempt: such emotions would place the punisher on the same level as the offender.

Callicles takes over as interlocutor obliquely and courteously,²² as he asks Chaerephon whether Socrates is joking (παίζει) in making such extreme claims or is serious (σπουδάζει, 481B6–7). The reference to joking is one of the marks that distinguish Callicles from his predecessor. Gorgias could not see that the joke was on him; Polus could, and was indignant; but Callicles is a joker himself. Typically enough, Socrates begins (481C5–482B4) with an elaborate punning joke about his and Callicles’ boyfriends, only to swerve into a deeply serious protreptic close. Callicles, recognizing only the rhetorical cleverness of somebody who pretends to disdain rhetoric,²³ responds to the perceived challenge. His long speech (482C4–486D1) reverses the normal mode of protreptic, in which it is the philosopher, usually an older man, who summons a younger man to a way of living that is different from and better than the traditional one.²⁴ The reversal has a comic aspect that fits Callicles’ lack of belief in Socrates’ seriousness, and qualifies the seriousness of his advice. Callicles, in his own display of *eironeia*, claims to be a friend,²⁵ thus ex-

20. See Vlastos 1991, 30–32, 240–43.

21. 480C5–D6. Socrates’ description of how one should endure judicial correction echoes his advice to Polus discussed above (480C5–7): μή ἀποδειλιᾷν ἀλλὰ παρέχειν μύσαντα εὐ καὶ ἀνδρείως ὥσπερ τέμνειν καὶ κτείνει ἱατρῷ.

22. Dodds 1959, 260.

23. 482C4–5 “You seem to swagger around in your speech like a regular mob-orator,” νεανιεύεσθαι ἐν τοῖς λόγοις ὡς ἀληθῶς δημηγόρος ὢν (see Dodds 1959, 264). Note that the verb νεανιεύεσθαι (literally, “act like a youth”) implies showing off but also suggests the age reversal in Callicles’ later arguments. For the meaning of words built on νεανίας, see Michelini 1994, pp. 221–22, n. 12.

24. See Babut 1992, 108–10; Gaiser 1959, 77–95.

25. 485E2–3 “I am reasonably friendly,” ἐπεικῶς ἔχω φιλικῶς—a very moderate claim. And 486A4–5, “Don’t be annoyed, for I will speak out of goodwill to you” (εὐνοίᾳ γὰρ ἔρῳ τῇ σῇ). Later (489E2–3), Socrates responds to a complaint about his teasing by throwing up to Callicles his *eironeia* in this speech: see n. 34, below, and McKim 1988, 40.

cusing his scolding tone; but some of what he says is neither polite nor friendly.²⁶ Callicles patronizingly rebukes Socrates for his charming but childish pastime of philosophy. In an older man like Socrates it is ridiculous (*καταγέλαστον*); in fact, like an affected lisp, it is inappropriate, unmanly, and worthy of blows.²⁷

Callicles repeatedly refers to the blows that Socrates deserves,²⁸ presumably because an adult who misbehaves by acting like a child should receive a child's punishment. Callicles treats Socrates much as Polus did. Both take the protreptic or Hesiodic tone of the superior in age, who attempts to "wise up" (*σωφρονίζειν*) a straying youth by sternly correcting his errors. In spite of his apparent courtesy, therefore, Callicles' reversed protreptic is a quintessential example of bad manners; and, in fact, his assumed good humor does not last very long. Callicles sounds much like Polus, when he bursts out, "This man (*οὗτος ἄνθρωπος*) won't stop blabbing nonsense! (*φλυαρῶν*). Aren't you ashamed to chop logic (*ὀνόματα θηρεύων*), Socrates, at your age?"²⁹ Socrates' response to these insults (489D7–8): "Give me my preliminary instruction more gently, or you may lose me as a pupil," (*ὃ θαυμάσιε πρότερόν με προδίδασκε, ἵνα μὴ ἀποφοιτήσω παρὰ σοῦ*) is a classic of mock-courtesy, since it plays upon the age reversal in Callicles' "instruction" of his elder. The rather arch tone is particularly annoying (as Callicles complains, 489E1); but the provocation was not on Socrates' side.

As in the encounter with Polus, Socrates is not playing his usual role: instead of refuting and questioning others, he is being put to the question and on very serious matters. Socrates was able to expose Polus' bad manners by twitting him with his youth; but Callicles extends the challenge, justifying the attempt to reverse roles by indicting Socrates' preoccupations as infantile. Since joking (*παίζειν*) means "to play the child," the role-reversal involves the questions of Socrates' seriousness, a question that Callicles raised at the beginning of their encounter and that goes to the heart of our understanding of Socratic irony. From the external or authorial point of view, Callicles' challenge is a way of motivating Socrates' movement from aporetic argument toward a vigorous moral protreptic of his own. From the internal or textual point of view, however, Socrates' more forthcoming and more severe manner is explained, and perhaps justified, by the rude and aggressively immoralist approach of his interlocutors.

Both Polus and Callicles value frankness, which may of course be another term for rudeness, a disregard for social restraints. Polus, who seems to have no concept

26. E.g., he accuses Socrates of "arguing like a thug" (483A2–3: *κακουργεῖς ἐν τοῖς λόγοις*). *Κακουργος* is a legal term for an offender who may be condemned without trial (see McDowell 1978, 147–49), and this specific contemporary application makes it quite a severe reproach. Note that Socrates casts this insult back at Callicles, 489B4, in a later refutation. The only other interlocutor to use this term is Thrasyarchus, who repeats it several times (*Resp.* 338D4, 341B1, etc.). Cf. the more polite and oblique remark of the annoyed Hippias (*Hp. Mi.* 373B4–5): *ἀλλὰ Σωκράτης, ὃ Εὐδিকে, αἶε ταράττει ἐν τοῖς λόγοις καὶ ἔουκεν ὥσπερ κακουργοῦντι*. Πανούργος, an apparently parallel term, had acquired different associations, see n. 37, below.

27. Alcibiades, the most glamorous boy of his era, whom Socrates has just confessed to be his own love object, was famous for his charming lisp, which was widely imitated (Plut. *Alc.* 1). The context of 485B7–C2 is tacitly sexual: the same coy behavior that would enchant Callicles in a boy would revolt him in an adult, whose sexual role should now be active, not passive.

28. 485C2. Callicles repeats this with explicit personal reference at D1–3: "When I see an older man still philosophizing and not quitting it, Socrates, that man seems to me to be overdue for a beating" (*πληγῶν μοι δοκεῖ ἤδη δεῖσθαι, ὃ Σώκρατες*, . . .).

29. 489B7 (cf. 486C7 and the repetitions of the *φλυαρία* insult in 490C8–D1, E4). See discussion in Babut 1992, 65–66, who uses the phrase as his title and cites complaints about Socrates' choice of (supposedly narrow) topics. For the demonstrative, see n. 16, above.

of social inhibition, naturally encourages Socrates to follow his example, urging him at 463A5, “Don’t be embarrassed on my account (μηδὲν ἐμὲ αἰσχυνθῆς).” Callicles, while superficially polite, has a firmer grasp of the philosophical basis for breaking through social convention and dismissing shame (τὸ αἰσχρόν, 483C3–8).³⁰ The theory of Plato’s antimoralists, Callicles here and Thrasymachus in the *Republic*, is reflected in their aggressive, not to say rude, verbal style: for them, shame (αἰδώς), the moral aspect of good manners, is merely a layer of social constraint that prevents frank admission of what “everybody really” knows at the more basic level of nature (φύσις). Callicles’ statement of his reversed morality is accompanied by much passionate, frank, and rude denunciation: moral concepts are mere decoration (καλλωπίσματα), unnatural human constructions, utter nonsense and worth nothing (φλυαρία καὶ οὐδενὸς ἄξια, 492C6–8).

On the surface, Callicles’ frankness (παρησία) is a guarantee of sincerity; but this appearance is deceiving. Confronted with the humiliating consequences of his theory of self-indulgence, Callicles not only retreats but even accuses Socrates of lacking shame (οὐκ αἰσχύνῃ) in “leading the argument toward that sort of thing” (494E7–8).³¹ By revealing Callicles’ unstated adherence to the very social norms he denounced,³² Socrates has shown that frankness does not guarantee sincerity.³³ The pose of the antimoralist is just that, for Socrates, sly and evasive as he is, never poses. In spite of Socrates’ enthusiastic praise for Callicles’ honesty and good will (487A–E), it later becomes clear that Socrates did not fail to recognize the eironeia behind Callicles’ pose of helpfulness;³⁴ and this in turn confirms that the praise was, as Callicles suspected, also a tactic of eironeia aimed at disarming an opponent. But this insincerity is not a cover for ill will, given Socrates’ stated belief that losing an argument may in fact be advantageous. Callicles’ assumption that Socrates was “playing” when he reached paradoxical moral conclusions matches his view of philosophy as a childish amusement. But Socrates’ playfulness, because it is ironic, is a mask for the deepest seriousness. In Socratic terms one cannot “win” without benefiting the interlocutor, and this means that an essential sincerity is inherent in the elenchus.³⁵

Callicles resists Socratic seriousness to the end, refusing to drop his competitive stance. At 499B4–8, when Callicles withdraws a key claim in his argument, he protests that he had only been playing (παίζων), and sneers at Socrates’ childish (ὥσπερ τὰ μεράκια)³⁶ demand for consistency. This tacit confession of defeat is necessarily

30. Cf. Kahn 1983, 97 and Szlezák 1985, 191–92 on the change in philosophical depth achieved by the change of interlocutors.

31. See discussion in Kahn 1983, 106–7.

32. From Dodds 1959, 11, 249 through more recent work by Kahn 1983, 96 and Babut 1992, 82, scholars have been struck by the importance of the theme of shame. See also McKim 1988, who has suggested that the evocation of this emotion in Callicles and Polus confirms the truth of Socrates’ belief that a right moral understanding is present in all of us, though obscured by error and corrupt ideas.

33. Note that, unlike “frankness” or “franchise,” παρησία, an absence of verbal constraint, does not imply a lack of deception and thus has more negative potential.

34. He tosses back Callicles’ response to his teasing at 489E1 (εἰρωνεύῃ) with μὰ τὸν Ζῆθον, ὦ Καλλίκλεις, ὃ σὺ χρόμενος πολλὰ νυνδὲ εἰρωνεύου πρὸς με.

35. See Gadamer [1967] 1991, 40, 58–59, Vlastos 1991, 113, and Szlezák 1985, 301 on sincerity as a basic requirement for successful elenchus.

36. Cf. Callicles’ repeated references in his mock-protreptic speech to philosophy and “youths,” 485A5, C4, D7.

painful for Callicles, because, if argument is treated as a game, winning matters a great deal. Eironeia comes to the rescue, providing a cover for Callicles' embarrassment, as Socrates enthusiastically plays along with Callicles' picture of him: "What a rascal (πανούργος) you are! You treat me like a child . . . and deceive me."³⁷ The familiar reversal into seriousness soon follows, as Socrates urges Callicles not to be playful (500B5–C4): what could be more serious than the question of how one should live? (ὄντινα χρῆ τὸν τρόπον ζῆν). Again, Callicles dodges the challenge to be sincere, agreeing to continue the discussion "in order to please (χαρίσσωμαι, 501C8) Gorgias." Callicles' empty politeness makes a mockery, both of the argument and of Socrates' repeated requests that Callicles honor the "friendship" between them by saying what he really thinks.³⁸ In exact parallel, the charm (χάρις / χαρίζεσθαι) of Gorgianic rhetoric makes a mockery of ethical concerns.³⁹

At 505C3, when Callicles balks at a key point in the argument, Socrates makes a significant remark that explicitly unites the subject matter of the argument with the dramatic situation of the dialogue: "This man won't allow himself to be helped,⁴⁰ though he is experiencing just what the argument is about, being punished" (οὗτος ἀνὴρ οὐκ ὑπομένει ὠφελούμενος καὶ αὐτὸς τοῦτο πάσχων περὶ οὗ ὁ λόγος ἐστί, κολαζόμενος). Again we may note the threefold ambiguity of the tone: layers of mock-naïveté and scathing satire cover a deep seriousness that pushes out of the frame of the dialogue toward the audience. Socrates' friendship for Callicles is not as superficially ironic as the young man thinks; but it does in fact preclude a socially "pleasing" encounter.⁴¹ Callicles' punishment is almost as painful for the reader as it manifestly is for Callicles. The dialogue limps on, punctuated by his witty or sulky refusals to continue and Socrates' persistent and mock-naïve insistence that he do so.

In the last part of the dialogue, Callicles is again drawn in, only to find that Socrates becomes more aggressive, taking the fight to Callicles' area of specialization, practical politics. J. A. Arieti thinks Socrates is being cruel when he challenges Callicles to show that he has ever improved any citizen (and apparently so does Callicles, 515B5).⁴² But Socrates is trying to perform a similar service for Callicles, since confronting his own errors would improve Callicles mentally and morally.⁴³ At 513D1–5 Socrates reminded Callicles of the conclusion reached earlier that contrasted two aims in caring for soul or body: the aim of pleasing the other (πρὸς ἡδονὴν ὀμιλεῖν), characteristic of pastry cooks and conventional politicians, was opposed to the aim of benefiting the other (πρὸς τὸ βέλτιστον), "not flattering (καταχαριζόμενον) but contending vigorously (in argument—διαμαχόμενον)." Again, the

37. 499B9–C2. Socrates' exclamation *ioῦ ioῦ* is expressive of a naïvely comic surprise, since it is usually reserved for moments of extreme excitement, cf. *Ar. Nub.* 543, 1493.

Πανούργος may originally have had a meaning very similar to *κακοῦργος*, but it seems to have softened through metaphorical and ironic usages. It is often associated with terms like *δεινός* or *σοφός*, which combine moral disapprobation with admiration, e.g., *Tht.* 176D2, *Phdr.* 271C2, *Euthyd.* 300D7, *Hp. Mi.* 365E4. *Meno* 80B8 is a joking reproach that is an almost exact doublet of the passage here.

38. See 499C3–4, 519E3. Cf. 487D4, E5–6. On the falsity of Callicles' friendship, see McKim 1988, 43.

39. See Kahn 1983, 83–84; Szlezák 1985, 192–93. On Callicles' use of *χαρίζεσθαι* here, see Nightingale 1995, p. 79, n. 58.

40. Polus (n. 16, above) used this rude form of address, as did Callicles (n. 29, above).

41. See Rutherford 1995, 156.

42. Arieti 1993, 211.

43. See Gaiser 1959, 19, 118–20, who argued that, because knowledge of one's ignorance is the aim of Platonic dialectic, experience of the elenchus itself is a key source of improvement.

argument about rhetoric provides norms that apply reflexively to the dialogue itself. Refutation and elenchus, behavior that on the surface looks like hostility, tempered by Socrates' polite *eironeia*, becomes a sign of sincere concern, real friendship, and the good will that should animate courteous behavior. Callicles' lack of sincerity expresses itself in the two extremes of flattery (*κολακεία*), the tactic of *eironeia* without irony, and "frank" or discourteous speech that, far from being truthful, is mere boastful *ἀλαζονεία* in argument (cf. 525A1–2). The courtesy of Callicles is only a mask to what Polus showed openly: arrogance, contempt, and *φιλονικία*.

The dialogue ends in a rather straightforward myth about the afterlife. In place of the esoteric doctrines or mathematical mysteries hinted at in some Platonic myths, this one tells its story of judgment with "the directness and vividness of (a) folktale."⁴⁴ When Socrates first raised these themes (493A5, D3), he rather apologetically anticipated that Callicles would reject this sort of naïve story-telling (*μυθολογεῖν*), a pose fitting his modest, ironic role. But, when Socrates ends his refutation of Callicles with a similar sort of tale, Callicles is no longer in a position to dismiss such stories out of hand. In telling the younger man a "story" (*μῦθος*, 523A2) that may seem like an old wives' tale, Socrates completes the reversal of Callicles' social stance, putting his opponent in the position of a child for whom moral understanding must be framed in clear and simple terms. Callicles has tried to frighten Socrates with grim scenarios of legal troubles. Now Socrates, imitating the old wife who relates tales of monsters and the terrible things that they may do to bad children,⁴⁵ explains that, after death, the curable are improved by their punishments, while the incurable become fearsome examples to others, turning them away from evil lives. "Those who are helped (*ὠφελούμενοι*) and who are sentenced by gods or by men are those whose crimes are curable. Yet their improvement (*ὠφελία*) comes through pain and suffering, both here and in Hades" (525B6–8: ὅμως δὲ δι' ἀλγηδόνων καὶ ὀδυνῶν γίγνεται αὐτοῖς ἡ ὠφελία καὶ ἐνθάδε καὶ ἐν Αἴδου, cf. 505C3). The pain Callicles has suffered during the "helpful punishment" of the elenchus may well be slight compared to that which he will suffer later on, in life or after death.

In his closing, Socrates avoids any hint of Hesiodic reproof, and instead moves into an energetic first-person plural mode offering to "make plans" with Callicles for a future approach to politics, based on their joint practice of virtue (527D2–3: ἀσκῶν ἀρετὴν . . . κοινῇ ἀσκήσαντες). Given their present state of ignorance, however, it would be shameful "to swagger about,"⁴⁶ as though we were something great . . ." (527D5–6). Socrates' self-depreciation, here as elsewhere, fulfills its function as an aid to his work of conversion. Rather than set himself up as "saved," Socrates offers to struggle along with Callicles, mitigating the sting of his triumphant close. But Callicles does not respond; and he hardly seems improved by his experi-

44. Dodds 1959, 373 and accompanying discussion; cf. Protagoras' remark: a *μῦθος* is an appropriate form of communication from elder to younger (*ὡς πρεσβύτερος νεωτέρους*, 320C3).

45. 527A5–6: Callicles may think it only the tale of an old woman (*γῆρας*). Cf. Socrates' reaction to the "bogeys," when Polus makes the same argument earlier (473D3) and Dodds' commentary (1959, 246) on *μορμολυττεῖσθαι*, using the threat of monsters used to frighten children into good behavior.

46. *νεανιεύεσθαι*, cf. Callicles at 482C4, and discussion in n. 23, above. Cf. Socrates' teasing repetitions at 508D1, 509A3.

ence.⁴⁷ Since we cannot see that he undergoes any conversion, should we assume that Callicles is intended, in the context of the dialogue as literary work, as an example, a warning to others?⁴⁸ Callicles remains a historical enigma, and we cannot tell. Socrates strives to the end to turn Callicles toward philosophy: “Let us follow this way of life . . . and not the other in which you trust and to which you call me. For it is worth nothing, Callicles” (527E6–7: ἔστι γὰρ οὐδενὸς ἄξιος, ὃ Καλλίκλεις). Socrates’ final words echo the close of Callicles’ great speech at 492C7–8 (φλυσία καὶ οὐδενὸς ἄξια); but he represses the rude word, φλυσία, of which his opponent is so fond. What may appear to be discourtesy in Socrates’ approach, his persistence in refutation and his stubborn refusal to let Callicles escape from his dialogic torment, can be interpreted as an expression of genuine good will that corrects the false benevolence of Callicles as it corrects his false ideas.

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47. Kauffman 1979, Arieti 1991, 1993.

48. Kahn 1983, 104 makes a parallel suggestion in saying that this part of the dialogue speaks to the reader over Callicles’ head.