

If he were speaking in English, 'opportunity' would be the tactful word to use. We might understand Nicias more easily if he had said that Sicily provided his men with a *prophasis* to desert.

There are passages in the historians and orators which describe how festivals sometimes provided opportunities or 'cover' for lawless or violent behaviour, and sometimes the word *πρόφασις* is used in these descriptions. Demosthenes (24.26) says that Timocrates took advantage of the Panathenaic festival, when the Boule was not in session, to organise an irregular piece of legislation, ἐπὶ τῇ τῶν Παναθηναίων προφάσει. He also recalls how Charicles seized the opportunity of a festive procession to assault his hated enemy with a whip, thinking that this act of *hybris* would be dismissed as permissible drunken rowdiness, τὴν ἐπὶ τῆς πομπῆς καὶ τοῦ μεθύειν προφασιν λαβών (21.80).

An attempt at a political *coup* usually needs a *prophasis* of this kind if it is to have any chance of succeeding. One may equally well call it 'cover', 'pretext', or 'opportunity'.

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PLATO, PHAEDRUS 263b6

Οὐκοῦν τὸν μέλλοντα τέχνην ῥητορικὴν μετιέναι πρῶτον μὲν δεῖ ταῦτα ὁδῶ διηρησθαι, καὶ εἰληφέναι τινὰ χαρακτῆρα ἑκατέρου τοῦ εἶδους, ἐν ᾧ τε ἀνάγκη τὸ πλήθος πλανᾶσθαι καὶ ἐν ᾧ μή (Phaedrus 263b6–9).¹ To the best of my knowledge the soundness of the first six words of this sentence (Οὐκοῦν . . . μετιέναι) has never been questioned, yet to accept them as they are in the manuscripts means to close one's eyes to the direction of the argument.

At 260d5–9 rhetoric personified and allowed to plead its case makes the 'big' statement that anyone learning how to speak would do well to know the truth about his subject but that even if he knows it he would not be able *ἄνευ ἐμοῦ*, i.e. without the aid of rhetoric, *πειθεῖν τέχνη*. From that point on the issues are whether rhetoric justly claims to be a *τέχνη*, what territory it covers and how the procedure of someone practising it *τέχνη* may differ from that of one for whom it is an *ἄτεχνος τριβή* (see 260e3–5). Even if rhetoric engages in *ἀπάτη* (261a6ff.) and proves e.g. one and the same thing to be both just and unjust (261c5ff., d3f.), success will be with *ὁ τέχνη τοῦτο δρῶν* (c10); witness Zeno of Elea, a master in such arguments *λέγοντα τέχνη* when he makes the same things appear like and unlike or one and many (261d6–9). To judge shrewdly what kind of subjects deceive people more easily (261eff.) the rhetorician himself must have a firm grasp of the truth: *λόγων ἄρα τέχνην, ᾧ ἐταίρε, ὁ τὴν ἀλήθειαν μὴ εἰδώς, δόξας δὲ τεθηρευκώς, γελοῖαν τινά, ὡς ἔοικε, καὶ ἄτεχνον παρέξεται* (262c1ff.). Focusing on the difference between *ἄτεχνον* and *ἐντεχνον*, Socrates and Phaedrus now begin to examine the speech of Lysias and the two delivered by Socrates himself on the subject of *ἔρως*. In Lysias' speech the very first sentences present a shocking *ἄτεχνον* (262e5f.): he fails to define *ἔρως*, although this subject is clearly one of those on which people are *εὐπαταητότεροι* (263b3). By

¹ R. Hackforth, *Plato's Phaedrus* (Cambridge, 1952) renders *ἑκατέρου τοῦ εἶδους* by 'the two kinds of words'. At 263a6ff. Socrates does come forward with a distinction between *ὀνόματα* that mean the same to everybody and others of more controversial meaning. However, considering the reference to *διανοεῖσθαι* at a7 and the application made to *ἔρως* at c7, I prefer to understand 'two kinds of things' or 'of subjects'. Against the introduction of *ὀνομάτων* by conjecture at a2 (instead of *τοιούτων*) W. J. Verdenius has rightly protested (*Mnemosyne* ser. 4, 8 [1955], 243).

contrast the speeches of Socrates, inspired as he continues to maintain by the deities of the dialogue's setting, are far *τεχνικώτερα* (263d5); for in both of them *ἔρως* has been carefully defined before the question whether a lover or a non-lover should be preferred is investigated.²

The sentence at the beginning of this paper (263b6 ff.) is a part of the transition from the *ἄτεχνον* in Lysias to the features that make Socrates' speeches far superior in point of *τέχνη*. In *πρῶτον μὲν δεῖ ταῦτα ὁδῶ διηρηθῆναι* κτλ. (263b7–9) Socrates specifies methodical equipment which guarantees this superiority. Yet to distinguish the speaker who proceeds correctly from the bungler the words *τὸν μέλλοντα τέχνην ῥητορικὴν μετιέναι* are too pale and weak. The development of thought which we have traced suggests that we need *τὸν μέλλοντα τέχνην ῥητορικὴν μετιέναι*.³ If further support for the change is needed we may look at 270e1, where in a comparable argumentation the phrase *τόν γε τέχνην μετιόντα ὅτιοῦν* is used to distinguish anyone proceeding on the right *μέθοδος* from the uninstructed amateur. In fact *ὁδῶ*, as used in 263b6, denotes 'methodical' procedure (see above), and since in this meaning *ὁδός* represents a variation of *τέχνη*, both words should logically be in the same case. The corruption was almost inevitable if one considers how frequently Greek writers use *ῥητορικὴ* as an adjective modifying *τέχνη*.

The discussion about the true nature of rhetoric continues a good deal longer in the *Phaedrus*, and it would be easy to show that *τέχνη* remains a key concept in the sections where the organic unity of the *λόγος* and the right handling of rhetorical psychology are examined. Fortunately there is no need to present all relevant passages. Plato's own words at the conclusion of the arguments suffice: *Οὐκοῦν τὸ μὲν τέχνης τε καὶ ἀτεχνίας λόγων περί ικανῶς ἐχέτω* (274b3).⁴

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² Definition in the orthodox form of a *διαίρεσις* is more easily recognised in Socrates' first speech (237b7–238c4) than in his second, whose poetic style severely limits technical language (244a4–245a8; 249d3 ff.). For the liberties which the summary at 265ef. takes with the content of his speeches a reference to Hackforth, op. cit. 133 (n. 1) may suffice. Plato in effect supplies here an additional *dihaeresis* of *μανία* which pulls together both speeches while yet starting them off in opposite directions.

³ Immediately before 263b6 Socrates speaks of *ἡ ῥητορικὴ* (b3), and there is no obvious reason for changing from the simple *ῥητορικὴ* to the more elaborate *τέχνην ῥητορικὴν*.

⁴ See further 265d1 *δυνὸν εἰδοῖν, εἰ αὐτοῖν τὴν δύναμιν τέχνην λαβεῖν*, 270b5 *μὴ τριβῇ μόνον καὶ ἐμπειρίᾳ, ἀλλὰ τέχνην*, 270e1 and e2 ff., 271b8, c4, 272b1 (272e1 f.), 273e3, 277b1, c4.

Another representative passage is 266d2, where Socrates and Phaedrus have agreed that methods like those adumbrated at 263b belong properly speaking to dialectic, not to rhetoric, which seems still to elude them: *καλὸν πού τι ἂν εἴη, ὃ τούτων ἀπολειφθὲν ὁμῶς τέχνην λαμβάνεται*.

THE EPITAPH OF PUBLIUS SCIPIO

Quei apice insigne Dial(is fl)aminis gesistei | mors perfec(it) tua ut essent omnia | brevia, honos, fama, virtusque | gloria atque ingenium. Quibus sei | in longa licuisset tibi utier vita, | facile facteis superases gloriam | maiorum. Qua re lubens te in gremiu, | Scipio, recipit terra, Publi, | prognatum Publio, Corneli. *ILLRP* 311

For you who wore the distinctive cap of a Flamen Dialis, Death cut everything short – honour, fame and virtue, glory and intellectual ability. If you had been granted a long life in which to use these advantages, you would have far surpassed the glory of your ancestors by your achievements. Therefore Earth gladly takes you in her arms, Scipio – Publius Cornelius, son of Publius.

It has usually been supposed that this is the epitaph of a son of the elder Africanus,