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Collapsing the Philosophy/Rhetoric Disjunct: Nietzsche, Plato and the Perspectival Turn

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COLLAPSING THE PHILOSOPHY/RHETORIC DISJUNCT:

NIETZSCHE, PLATO AND THE PERSPECTIVAL TURN

by

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ABSTRACT

COLLAPSING THE PHILOSOPHY/RHETORIC DISJUNCT: NIETZSCHE, PLATO AND THE PERSPECTIVAL TURN.

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Often overlooked within the standard views of academe lie hidden a number of

tacit assumptions. Until the time of Nietzsche, the status of rhetoric as a discourse

formation in Western intellectual history was often colored by the unflattering view

generated by Plato in a number of his dialogues. In this thesis I present a case that

revisits Plato and Nietzsche with an eye toward understanding the reasons why these

two highly influential figures in contemporary philosophy adopt the views they

advocate. In doing so, I attempt to illumine the reason Plato forms a fundamental

split between philosophy and rhetoric and how Nietzsche's radical approach to

finitude unsettles and collapses this division. I also look at the ethical implications of

Nietzsche's accomplishment with an ear toward hearing what may be the next frontier

of philosophic speculation—that is, how to fashion an ethic that avoids both

hegemony and relativism.

For

Judi

&

Alexi Skye and Zuri

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

As producer and director, Plato continues to affect profoundly rhetoric's portrayal of herself. . . In the Gorgias, rhetoric and philosophy auditioned for the starring role. Rhetoric lost the contest but her talent did not go unnoticed; she was invited to play the supporting role in the Phaedrus whereby the real talent of her figural status became mastered and tamed by philosophical choreography. (Steve Whitson 10)

Richard Rorty has characterized the thinking that marks much of twentieth-century Western philosophy as the "linguistic turn" (3). Captured within this phrase is the revolutionary epistemological shift that has taken place over the last one hundred years. Traditionally, that is, since the time of Socrates and Plato, philosophers have concerned themselves with the search for primary, ultimate and certain truth. Contained within this quest was the comfortable assumption that both such a quest and its goal were possible. In the words of Rorty: "The history of philosophy is punctured by revolts against the practices of previous philosophers and by attempts to transform philosophy into a science—a discipline in which universally recognized decision-procedures are available for testing philosophical theses" (1).

However, what distinguishes philosophy during the twentieth century and makes it substantially different from its past tradition is the radical questioning of the possibility of philosophic inquiry. With rare exception, most philosophers no longer search for the primary and ultimate objects of "spectatorial" knowledge claims.

The MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers will be employed in this text.

According to Rorty, the "epistemological difficulties which have troubled philosophers since Plato and Aristotle" arise "only if one holds that the acquisition of knowledge presupposes the presentation of something 'immediately given' to the mind, where the mind is conceived of as a sort of 'immaterial eye,'" and where "'immediately' means, at minimum, 'without the meditation of language'" (39). When the object of philosophic inquiry shifts to the nature and process of truth claims themselves, we get a form of "metaphilosophy" where "philosophy-as-proposal" replaces "philosophy-as-discovery" (39).

It is this process of "metaphilosophical" speculation during the twentieth century that unites such diverse thinkers as Russell, Heidegger, Wittgenstein, Derrida and Foucault. Granted, the conclusions and outcomes of such speculation retain a fundamental diversity; however what has characterized much of contemporary "Continental" and "Anglo-American" philosophic thinking has been a focus on both the contingency of knowledge claims and an emphasis on the way language both constrains and informs the method and content of philosophic inquiry. In general, this radical questioning has led to what can also be characterized as an "anti-metaphysical" turn whereby philosophers, as a whole, no longer seek all encompassing non-contingent truth-claims.

The two thinkers around whom this study centers have each, in their own way, been seminally involved in this fundamental re-orientation of philosophy. As has been well rehearsed by a number of authors, Plato sits center throne among the metaphysical giants who have dominated Western philosophic thinking. In contrast, Nietzsche takes center position among those thinkers who eschew a metaphysical orientation. Indeed, in many ways, Nietzsche (and his followers) would not be "Nietzschean" were it not for Plato and his metaphysical system.[1]

As will be seen in this thesis, Plato plays a prominent antithetical role in Nietzsche's philosophy and therefore figures greatly in the reconstruction of the philosophic enterprise which Nietzsche initiates. It is because of this symbiotic relationship that I will center my

thought around Plato and Nietzsche. Together, I take them to most clearly represent and reveal the two major orientations that I will highlight in this thesis. Put succinctly, both thinkers have been enormously influential—Plato in constructing a metaphysical system that has lasted for millennia and Nietzsche in creating a discourse that evacuates all confidence in the ability to be "objective," "transcendental" and "certain" in terms of knowledge and truth claims.

Even more importantly, each has contributed substantially to the binary discourse trope and debate that I develop in this work, that is, whether or not knowledge and "truth" can be real, certain and unchanging or only arbitrary, indeterminate and contingent. Whatever position we adhere to regarding this debate, none of us can escape the echo (or ghost) of Plato and Nietzsche.[2] Both of them have contributed immensely to framing constructs that guide and delineate our contemporary orientation to the world. In the case of Plato we have a view that grants metaphysical security, epistemological confidence and ethical conviction while Nietzsche, in contrast, offers metaphysical abandonment, epistemological uncertainty and ethical plurality. As such, both thinkers serve to re-enforce and/or dismantle the fundamental foundations that undergird accounts of the world. As a prelude to the chapters to follow, I will briefly further adumbrate why I focus on these two highly influential thinkers.

The Plato Connection

Anyone remotely familiar with the discourse of postmodernity is quick to realize that Plato is the foil who most succinctly sets up a number of hierarchically ordered binaries that have guided the thinking of Western philosophers and against which "postmodern" thinkers rebel. Even a brief survey of Plato's dialogues reveals a number of themes and schemas that have significantly influenced the way philosophers conduct their speculative activities. When Plato has Socrates declare in the Euthyphro, "I rather think, Euthyphro, that when I asked you what piety is you were unwilling to disclose its essence to me, and merely stated one of its attributes. . . (10B-11B), he makes a distinction that

will resonate far beyond the confines of this short dialogue.[3] As Hugh Tredennick notes, this remark by Socrates is "apparently the first of this important logical distinction, and the first indication that the definition of anything must describe the essence of that thing, i.e., the quality or qualities without which it would not longer be itself" (Tredennick 186).

In the Theaetetus Plato fashions another important distinction that has guided philosophic speculation and discourse. In this famous passage Plato highlights the other-worldly orientation to which philosophers are often prone, namely, their disregard for the body and things corporeal because as Pindar says it is "thought" that takes wings "'beyond the sky, beneath the earth,' searching the heavens and measuring the plains, everywhere seeking the true nature of everything as a whole, never sinking to what lies close at hand" (173E). In Plato's scheme the philosopher disdains the earthly things that lie "close at hand" because of their very locality. For Plato, the true task of the philosopher is to discover that which is trans-local qua universal, unchanging and true. Hence, the fascination in the history of Western philosophy since Plato for seeking noumenal dimensions and realities that exist beyond the phenomenal world.

This Platonic quest for things certain, real and true depends upon the possibility that the philosopher, or seeker after such knowledge, can discern its disclosure. As will be seen in the Chapter Two below, Plato generates a distinction in discourse between rhetoric—or that symbolic activity which caters to opinion, deception, and contingency—and philosophy—or that rational activity which delivers true and certain knowledge. In his distinction, Plato creates a radical separation between rhetoric—the discourse of things apparent and expedient, and philosophy—the discourse of things real and eternal. As Socrates says in the Gorgias: "Is not the position of the rhetorician and of rhetoric the same with respect to other arts also? It has no need to know the truth about things but merely to discover a technique of persuasion, so as to appear among the ignorant to have more knowledge than the expert?" (459C-D).

Embodied within these Platonic ideas is a rich conceptual scheme whose light and shadow extend across a number of disciplinary thinking-fields to the present day. The ability to individuate discourse into that which partakes of the "substantial" and essential versus that which indulges in the "accidental" and phenomenal has proved a fruitful and useful heuristic. Traditionally, which is to say canonically, Western philosophers from the days of Plato have sought "truth" both in terms of the procedural methodology and substantive content of their speculation. This has led to a number of contrary positions and orientations such as the realist/idealist, empirical/transcendental, mind/body, knowledge/belief, rhetoric/philosophy, etc. It is precisely such epistemologically confident binaries which Nietzsche seeks to unsettle and dismantle.

The Rehabilitation of Rhetoric

As hinted above, the viability of Plato's extra-worldly guarantees has undergone a radical challenge since the late nineteenth century. The emphasis on language, non-universality and multi-perspectivism that marks this era has humbled philosophers and their understanding of their methodology and task. At the center of this shift toward the inescapable importance of the preconditional influence of language and cultural perspective in the understanding of philosophic knowledge-claims has been the rehabilitation of rhetoric.

Along with the separation of philosophy from the poetic, the division of philosophy and rhetoric has been a convenient construct during the history of Western thinking.[4] Samuel Ijsseling's understatement succinctly sums up the result of this traditional dichotomy when he states "that relations between philosophy and rhetoric have never been particularly favorable" (5). As mentioned above, Plato's ability to distinguish between rhetoric as an indeterminate discourse that focuses on "style" and the realms of emotion, contingency and popular belief, and philosophy as an apodictic discourse that centers on "substance" and the realms of reason, permanency and knowledge leads inevitably to a privileging of the latter over the former.

It is Nietzsche who dwells at the forefront of both a revival of rhetoric and a de-privileging of philosophy. His passionate anti-metaphysical orientation disavows the possibility of archic-centered knowledge, that is, knowledge-claims based on and grounded in absolute standards and foundations that grant certainty. The focus on language, ideology and cultural bias that has characterized much of twentieth century philosophic investigation since Nietzsche has contributed to a non-foundationalism that has enabled perspectivism to replace the traditional concept of universal and "objective" knowledge.

The present day emphasis on language and perspectivism has radically altered how we approach and conduct the philosophic enterprise. In many ways the origin of this revolution is encapsulated in the antipathy and rebellion which Nietzsche mounted against Platonism. If any consistency can be found in Nietzsche's thought, it lies in his passionate dismantling of the ontological and epistemological foundations which Socrates and Plato held dear. As will be seen below, to read Nietzsche is to experience Plato in reverse. Nietzsche's contribution to the linguistic and perspectival "turn" is immense, especially if these concepts are conceived broadly to include the thinking of Heidegger, Derrida, Foucault, Lyotard and other influential "postmodern" thinkers influenced by Nietzsche's radical approach to epistemology and philosophic inquiry.

A Brief Outline of Chapters

Given the enormous impact Plato and Nietzsche have had on contemporary perceptions and cultural constructs, I take them to be most influential and important. In light of this, I will tease out the ways and reasons why Plato and Nietzsche take the positions they do. In doing so, I hope to contribute to a better understanding of the way their cultural narratives continue to inform and impact our lives.

In this thesis then, I will explore in detail the issues outlined with a broad stroke above. In Chapter Two I will outline why Plato makes a sharp separation between the discourse of rhetoric and the discourse of dialectic. Put concisely, this division arises from Plato's ability to assert that there are epistemological and ontological realities that allow

and demand that this distinction be made. As a background to this division, I will sketch out the important role the Sophists and Rhetoricians of ancient Greece played in Plato's project. As will be seen, Plato had good historically conditioned reasons to develop this division and the metaphysical system which he offered as an alternative.

In Chapter Three I will investigate in detail Nietzsche's radical rebellion and departure from Platonically influenced metaphysics and epistemology. As is well known, Nietzsche maintains that there are no metaphysical or transcendental *arche* or archimedian standards by which to adjudicate "truth" claims. In place of this Platonic schema, Nietzsche offers a form of radical finitude that celebrates the creative and destructive life-force enwrapping our cultural fictions. In the process of making clear what this means, I will also highlight the influence ancient rhetoric plays in the development of Nietzsche's thought. Through a close reading of one of Nietzsche's early essays that was influenced by his study of ancient rhetoric, I hope to reveal the way in which rhetorical thinking influences the novel language-based ontology he develops.

In Chapter Four I will reflect on the impact of Nietzsche's disavowal of Platonic metaphysical and epistemological certainty and the way it has shaped current philosophic interests. In short, I will explore some of the implications of Nietzsche's collapsing of the distinction between philosophy and rhetoric, especially as it relates to the loss of epistemological boundaries and the movement away from metaphysical tyranny and dominance.

CHAPTER II

PLATO AND THE PHILOSOPHY/RHETORIC DISJUNCT

This is the source from which has sprung the undoubtedly absurd and unprofitable and reprehensible severance between the tongue and the brain . . . (Cicero[5])

The now legendary comment attributed to Alfred North Whitehead that "the safest general characterization of European philosophical tradition is that it consists of a series of footnotes to Plato" can be excused as the hyperbole of a sympathetic idealist (Cohen Dictionary of Modern Quotations 354). However, in terms of the contemporary interpretation of the way in which the Platonic legacy has exerted a dominant influence on Western philosophic thinking, Whitehead's claim is very much alive. As instigated by Nietzsche, broadened by Heidegger, and perfected by Derrida, this contemporary "Continental" conceptual trope purports that for over twenty-five hundred years, "Socratic-Platonic philosophy" has been the foundational paragon of a Western metaphysical system.[6] Universalistic and ultimate in orientation, rational in method and certain in outcome, it was until the time of Nietzsche, considered the quintessential model of what good philosophy should be. According to the contemporary "postmodern" narrative, the philosophy of Plato lies at the basis of an approach to life and philosophic understanding that is stifling in epistemological reach, tyrannical in ethical practice and illusory in ontological understanding.[7]

The chronicling of this "postmodern" narrative has been well rehearsed by a bevy of commentators.[8] A counter-view frequently offered by Platonic scholars and defenders is that this unfriendly interpretation is an overly myopic conception of Plato and his corpus

that fails to address the complex ambiguities and richness operating in his thought and writings.[9] However, even if we acknowledge the merits of this often well argued defense of Plato and admit that the contemporary Nietzschean influenced anti-Platonic narrative is overly generalized and unrefined in its analysis, this does not detract from the important questions this view of Plato has brought to the fore, especially regarding the undeniable influence of "Platonic" metaphysics. Indeed, as will be highlighted below, one of the fundamental tenets that unites and underlies the contemporary postmodern response to Plato's influence is the frequently taken for granted or overlooked conceptual assumptions that have guided and determined much of the development of Western intellectual history. My study of Plato in this chapter will address one such important issue that has been influential in the way many Western thinkers have organized their thought. Put succinctly, I am interested in investigating what the discourse of philosophy and the discourse of rhetoric represent for Plato.[10] Given the central importance of this organizing theme for this chapter, it is necessary to set-up what I mean by this.

Though the nature and status of knowledge are complicated issues in Plato's dialogues, it is my reading that much of Plato's thinking centers around the desire for, and the possibility of, definite and unerring knowledge.[11] In my view, much of the allure of the Platonic dialogues lies in the frustrating and fascinating way Plato has Socrates go about the business of generating initial "formal" confusion as he seeks (and later) proposes the "material" possibility of absolute and infallible knowledge in the dialogues. As commonly interpreted, the Platonic epistemological ideal entails the possibility for attaining moral and ontological knowledge, that is, truth that is non-contingent, unchanging and "real."[12] In positing this fundamental proposition, Plato constructs a cluster of binary hierarchically arranged metaphysical, moral and epistemological constructs, e.g., the radical distinction between knowledge (*episteme*) and belief (*doxa*), body (*soma*) and soul (*psyche*), wisdom and ignorance, being and becoming, pleasure and asceticism, rhetoric and philosophy, reason and emotion, time and eternity, and ultimate (non-temporal and supersensory) and

non-ultimate (temporal and sensory) spheres of existence.[13] It is both the cogent and alluring way in which Plato develops these binary conceits that has led some critics to deem the philosophic orientation he generates a "Manichean allegory." By this is meant that Plato fosters a number of dualistic discursive tropes that radically and absolutely privilege one element of an opposition over the other.[14]

As noted above, it has been well rehearsed in the philosophically oriented "postmodern" literature how Platonic polarizations and hegemonic representations lie at the heart of the metaphysical unsettlement and dismantling instigated by Nietzsche. As will be seen in Chapter Three, Nietzsche centers his highly influential metaphysical rebellion against the notion that it is possible to attain objective, ultimate and impartial truth. Therefore, as a set-up for the rhetorically centered "perspectival turn" which I will unpack in the thought of Nietzsche, I will explore some of the reasons why and ways in which Plato formulates his meta-physical "non-perspectival" approach to knowledge, ethics and being.[15] In conducting this investigation, I hope to highlight what I take to be the "ideal" model and representation of the metaphysical positions against which Nietzsche, and those influenced by him, have expended their enormous philosophic energies.[16] I also hope to use this chapter as a platform from which to offer some insights that may have been overlooked or not addressed sufficiently in the rush toward new discursive generalizations and the fashioning of assumed Post-Platonic qua post-metaphysical doctrines.[17]

At the center of this endeavor I will explore what I take to be a master trope that has grounded and guided many of the metaphysical and epistemological representations during the development of Western philosophy, that is, the Platonic philosophy/rhetoric disjunct. What I mean by this phrase is the intense separation and privileging that Plato generates and maintains between discourse that leads to truth—philosophy—and discourse that indulges deception—rhetoric. The Platonic dialogues Gorgias and Phaedrus are, among other things, most noted for their extended attack against rhetoric—the art of sausory discourse based on probable and therefore, from the Platonic vantage point,

specious and deceptive knowledge.[18] However, a close reading of many of the other Platonic dialogues reveals that this antipathy to what rhetoric stands for also plays a significant role. Indeed, Plato vents an immense amount of intellectual energy and passion against the leading exponents of the relativistic thinking which I take rhetoric to embody and represent.[19] In many cases, the victims of this Platonic philosophic wrath are the Sophists and Rhetoricians—the leading proponents of such probable and contingent knowledge. Much scholarly debate and dialogue have been spent trying to account for this radical division that Plato maintains.[20] This chapter will also contribute to this conversation.

A Preliminary Overview

The reading I propose in this chapter will center around the way in which the Platonic conversational themes of *elenchus, sunousia* (good-intentioned debate and conversation), dialectic and recollection—the primary means by which the philosopher or seeker after wisdom obtains truth—disclose an epistemological stance that functions in opposition to the world-understanding that underlies seduction, persuasion and compromise—the primary ways by which the Rhetoricians and Sophists of Plato's day accomplished their discourse task. Stated most briefly, Platonic philosophy stands in direct opposition to the lack of metaphysical, epistemological and ethical guarantees that rhetoric manifests and represents.[21] As I interpret this Platonic understanding, much of the heightened epistemological uncertainty and confusion that evolved during the fifth and fourth centuries in ancient Greece was both generated and represented by the discourse of rhetoric.[22] By discourse of rhetoric, I mean the Platonic view of the seductive application of the power of language to tempt and subvert the seeker after truth to remain within the knowledge limits imposed by language itself.[23] Exactly what this means and how it cashes out will be shown as I attend to the themes of interest here.

It is around this theme of the Platonic philosophy/rhetoric disjunct that I hope to plum the "deeper" reasons Plato privileges the discourse of philosophy over the discourse

of rhetoric.[24] To highlight this point, I will consider the important role the philosophies and practices of the Sophists and Rhetoricians played during this pivotal transitional time in ancient Greece.[25] As previously mentioned, a close reading of many of the Platonic dialogues discloses that Plato considered the Sophists and Rhetoricians to be formidable philosophic opponents. As the leading exponents of what rhetoric represents, the Sophists and Rhetoricians act as the perfect foils and opponents to the Socratic-Platonic notion of philosophy. In light of this, and in order to more fully appreciate the underlying reasons for the radical separation between Platonic philosophy and sophistic rhetoric, it is important to understand the socio-cultural context within which this disjunct developed. Therefore, I will explore two interrelated investigations. First I will briefly focus on the historical backdrop and context that influenced Plato to adopt his *generally*[26] strict division between the discourse of philosophy and the practice of rhetoric and sophistry while my second inquiry will seek to tease out the underlying metaphysical reason this founding patriarch of Western philosophy adopted the position he did. Through both investigations, I hope to expose the way this conceptual trope has profoundly affected Western philosophy and the reason Nietzsche collapses the onto-epistemological division represented by the Platonic disjuncture between the discourse of philosophy and the discourse of rhetoric.[27] In addition, I hope to offer some insight into the "psycho-metaphysical" allure this conceptual trope might have had for Plato and those influenced by him.

To accomplish this task, I will engage a number of key passages in Plato's dialogues that highlight the underlying differences between philosophy and rhetoric. As mentioned earlier, the advantage of this approach is that the Sophists and Rhetoricians—as the promoters of social, moral and political thought that are grounded in epistemological and ontological relativism—represent the antithesis of what Plato took to be the nature of truth and reality and thus act as the appropriate foil and precursor of the central epistemological and metaphysical issues dealt with by Nietzsche and those influenced by him, such as Heidegger, Derrida and Foucault.

A Brief Historic Backdrop

Before briefly setting up the social and historical context within which Plato and his philosophic rivals developed their ideas, it is important to clarify the key terms I employ in this section.[28] Kerferd reminds us that the name sophist is related to the words *sophos* and *sophia* which are "commonly translated 'wise' and 'wisdom'" and the term sophists applied to any "wise men," including poets, musicians, rhapsodes and diviners (24). In its earliest origins the word sophist designated a person who demonstrated or imparted *phronesis* (practical wisdom) or *sophia* (love of wisdom) and was used "in reference to poets, musicians, wise men, philosophers, or other accomplished and admired persons" (Barrett 3). Schiappa, citing the Oxford English Dictionary, narrows the term to apply to the "mid-fifth century BCE" communicators of knowledge, especially those who "undertook to give instruction in intellectual and ethical matters in return for payment" (Protagoras 4).

As is well documented, traditionally the Sophists have been conceived as a group of individual itinerant teachers who took fees for the information and skills they taught.[29] What distinguishes them from the ilk of other "Pre-Socratic" thinkers—a term I use loosely here to refer to the non-Socratic and Platonic intellectuals who both preceded and were contemporaneous with Socrates and Plato—is their emphasis on moral, political and social philosophy.[30] Unlike the Ionian physicists, Eleatic skeptics and other influential early Greek philosophers, the Sophists more strongly emphasized and incorporated the dimension of human anthropology as it impacted social, political and ethical relations.[31] As Untersteiner notes in citing Levi, the Sophists were itinerant teachers of *"sophia"* or wisdom "directed toward individual and social ends" (xv).[32] Kerferd succinctly lists a number of the epistemological and ethical problems with which the Sophists dealt. Chief among them were questions concerning how much of what we know is conditioned by linguistic and cultural patterns, whether there is any "ultimate" reality beyond the phenomenal world, and how can there be ethical absolutes given the diversity of normative claims by different culture groups (2).

Related to the Sophists were the Rhetoricians who also roved through the lands of ancient Greece seeking to impart skills and teachings for money. Tradition has it that Corax and his student Tisias invented rhetoric.[33] However, it is Plato who first uses the word rhetoric (Schiappa "Coin" 457). As Thomas Cole observes "There is no trace of it in Greek before the point in the Gorgias (449A5) where the famous Sophist . . . decides to call the art he teaches the 'rhetorly'—that is, rhetor's or 'speaker's—'art' *(rhetorike techne)*" (2).[34] Rhetors and rhetoricians were those skilled in teaching the art of oratory and public speaking arts.

Although both groups fundamentally overlap in many ways and are difficult to clearly differentiate, in general, for the purposes at hand, I will distinguish between Sophists and Rhetoricians by the emphasis of their pedagogy, subject matter and technical concerns.[35] Overall, I will denote the term Rhetorician to apply to those teachers and thinkers who place more importance on the teaching and aesthetic practice of oratorical, legal, ceremonial and other public speaking skills and who had less interest in "purely" cosmological and metaphysical speculation In contrast, the word Sophist will be used to denote those teachers and thinkers who engaged the entire intellectual and speculative horizon of their time—teaching and philosophizing about, law, language, literature, ethics, geometry, music, astronomy, science, etc.[36] In other words, although the Sophists also taught verbal and argumentative skills, I take them to emphasize larger epistemological and metaphysical concerns more than the aesthetic and "applied" oratorical considerations and tendencies of the Rhetoricians.[37] Although historically, collectively and individually Sophists and Rhetoricians cannot be so easily differentiated, I use this interpretive framework heuristically in order to organize and characterize the main metaphysical, epistemological and ethical concerns which I will emphasize in the Platonic dialogues. That is, I will take the Sophists to fundamentally represent "material" qua cultural, ontological and substantive relativism, while I take the Rhetoricians to emphasize the "formal" qua aesthetic, technical, psychological and persuasive dimensions of relativity.

Taken together in this way, both groups will entail the entire range and status of the metaphysical, epistemological and moral relativity and contingency which I take to be symbolized in the phrase "discourse of rhetoric" and against which Plato argues in many of his dialogues.[38]

As representative examples of the twin axes of this relativistic orientation, I will use Protagoras to exemplify what the Sophists stress and Gorgias to represent what the Rhetoricians emphasize, with the two of them together signifying the ungrounded relativistic perspectival stance against which Plato wages his intellectual battles. Exactly what this means and how I find it helpful in understanding what is going on in many of the Platonic dialogues will be clarified below. However, before doing this, it is important to consider some of the cultural contexts and momentous cognitive shifts that were going on during the fifth and fourth centuries in ancient Greece that helped give rise to the Sophists and Rhetoricians.

No matter how they are both conflated and distinguished, the Sophists and Rhetoricians mark a watershed moment in Hellenic Greece. According to what Schiappa calls the "standard account" (Protagoras 39), it was the rise of democracy that played a central role in the development of rhetoric and sophistry in Ancient Greece. The traditional story that frames this understanding of why the practice of rhetoric rose to such prominence during this time, begins with the overthrow of the Sicilian tyrants around 466 BC.[39] According to this received view, democracy developed in the legal and legislative spheres of the *polis* and people were in need of instruction in how to conduct themselves in both the political and judicial arenas. The two Sicilians, Tisias and Corax, responded to this need and "invented" rhetorical theory and instruction in the "art" of public oratory. A number of technical handbooks—*technai*—quickly developed to help people defend themselves in the courtroom, conduct celebratory orations, and move people to accept the new legislative laws that the politicians and *strategoi* desired to implement.

Overlapping this democratic account is a supplementary version that attributes the rise of rhetoric and sophistic to the "intellectual revolution" of the sixth and fifth century in ancient Greece when Hellenic culture made the passage from *mythos* to *logos*.[40] This was a transitional period when rational literary based speculation began to supplant the orality centered mythic, religious and poetic responses as the dominant way of conceiving the *kosmos*—or ordering of the universe.[41] It was a time when philosophy replaced mythology, science devalued magic, and politics and legislation began to override ancestral law (Cole 1-4). However, as Hatab cautions, this was a slow and incremental process and that "it is impossible to characterize the birth of philosophy as an opposition between reason and science on the one hand and religion on the other" (Myth 194-95). Nevertheless, it was a time when the traditional benchmarks of myth and ancestral customs used to guide cultural behavior were eroding and when people were actively seeking new ways by which to experience and adjudicate truth-claims. The Sophists and Rhetoricians of the fifth and fourth century were quick to capitalize on this state of epistemological uncertainty and insecurity and specialized in equipping the citizenry with the new skills and information they desired. As such they helped foster the ability to use reason and verbal skills to put forth persuasive and convincing proof for a given political, legal, or moral position. Individuals such as Gorgias and Isocrates developed methods and schools to teach people in the "instruction" of the art or *techne* of rhetoric that quickly supplanted the divine "inspiration" of the muses as the major way of obtaining eloquence in the speaking arts among the intellectual and influential people in ancient Greece (Cole 1).

A third explanation for the rise of a sophistic and rhetorical understanding of reality revolves around a mercantile explanation. Hussey attributes the quantum rise of this intellectual revolution and philosophic activity of this period to the blossoming of foreign trade in the Hellenic region of Asia Minor (3). It was through the open contact with other cultures that a cosmopolitan cross-fertilization and outlook of ideas and perceptions arose among the Hellenic Greeks. This concept of commercialization is important to the

development of the Rhetoricians and Sophists because it both created the wealth necessary to pay for their services and enabled these itinerant teachers to experience first hand the diversity of custom and culture that shaped their epistemological orientation.

Having briefly set up some of the historical backdrop, it remains to be asked what, if anything, united the Sophists and Rhetoricians as a common enemy against whom Plato reacted. In answer to this question I will explore briefly some of the key themes which many of the Sophists and Rhetoricians promoted.

Sophistic Subjectivism—Probability, Phenomenalism and Relativism

Several key themes appear to cut across the discourse of many of the Sophists and Rhetoricians of Hellenic Greece.[42] The first is the recognition that there are many competing explanations of the world and the place of human beings within it. As rehearsed above, itinerancy was an important factor in shaping the *Weltanschauung* of many of the Sophists and Rhetoricians such as Gorgias, Prodicus, Hippias, and Thrasymachus. Travel among different language and culture groups enabled may of them to experience first hand the diversity of customs and world-orientations of the people they encountered. This understanding of the confusing array of ways to perceive the world led to the evaporation of the desire and the ability to analyze and simplify the complex manifestations of existence that had preoccupied the more cosmologically oriented Ionian *phusiologoi* (speculative physicists) such as Thales, Anaximander and Anaximenes.

Protagoras of Abdera (c. 481-411) was quick to intuit the relativistic implications of this growing multi-perspectivism that marked ancient Greek culture from the sixth to the fourth century. It was his encounter with linguistic and cultural variance that led Protagoras to proclaim his infamous *homo-mensura* maxim, viz., that "man is the measure of all things, of those that are that they are, of those that are not that they are not." Among other interpretations, one can read into this adage a radical shift from an object/objective centered epistemology to a subjective/subjectivistic epistemology. By this is meant that the "internal" criteria of human perception and experience, and not some "external" extra-

human standard, determines what does and does not exist.[43] The growing de-mythologization, qua growth of intellectual secularization, during this period meant that appeals to the divine and transcendental guarantees of times past were losing their power to shape and control human interpretation and thinking.[44] Without such traditional conceptual anchors knowledge at best became probable and at worse impossible. This insight may help to account for the reason the Sophists and Rhetoricians shifted their attention to an anthropocentric sphere and focused their teaching and reflection on the *paideia* of political, legal, linguistic, ethical and cultural affairs. Barrett neatly sums up this speculative turn: "Forcibly challenging Ionian preoccupation with natural philosophy they (the Sophists) directed attention to human issues as a proper study" and "stimulated awareness of political, social, and natural phenomena affecting people's lives. . ." (Barrett 36). Put alternatively, if metaphysical claims and cognitive certainty are untenable at best then at least the more practical realms of human knowledge and experience could be addressed.

It was this combination of an experiential understanding of human diversity, metaphysical and epistemological uncertainty, combined with a hired-gun pedagogy and the need of Hellenic citizens to develop new speaking skills and approaches to legal, ethical, and political affairs that led the Sophists and Rhetoricians to develop adroit verbal dexterity and a deep concern for the nature and power of language. Among other verbal techniques, *dialectic, eristic* and *antilogike* (or antilogic) became the methods of choice of the Sophists. As commonly interpreted, all three argumentative techniques were employed by Sophists and Rhetoricians to win an argument at any cost. *Dialectic* is, as is well documented, rooted in dialogue and entails the art (*techne*) of skillful debate and argumentation. As a more specific counterpart to dialectic, antilogic and *eristic* entail "causing the same thing to be seen by the same people now as possessing one predicate and now as possessing the opposite or contradictory predicate" (Kerferd 61).[45] In other words, they involve proving or disproving a proposition by placing one *logos* or argument against

another either by contrariety or contradiction in "such a way that the opponent must either accept both *logoi*, or at least abandon his first position" (Kerferd 63). It was the adroit skill with which the Sophists and Rhetoricians employed their understanding of dialectic, *eristic* and antilogic that led to Plato's criticism that they generated misology and the hatred of all argumentation (cf. Phaedo 89D) by engaging in discourse that enables them to argue out of "both sides of their mouth" without any regard for truth, ethics, justice, or wisdom.

It was both their verbal dexterity and the underlying world-view that supported it that made the Sophists and Rhetoricians such controversial figures in ancient Greece.[46] However, upon closer inspection, it can be seen that, in a larger context, these argumentative techniques reflect and arise from the very world-view they represent. Stated alternatively, as outlined above, the Sophists and Rhetoricians responded to the implications of the Hellenic cultural transition away from certain and absolute cognitive markers.

It was their embracing of a relativistic approach to human knowing and cultural practice that allowed the Sophists and Rhetoricians to freely engage in alternative discourse forms that were not limited to or constrained by references to objective, impartial, or non-contingent universals and referents. Unfettered by conventional epistemological, supernatural, transcendental limits and constraints, they were free, in their estimation, to pursue and persuade a "truth" that the moment or situation demanded. In a way then, the techniques and views of the Sophists and Rhetoricians can be seen as the expected outgrowth of the ontological confusion and innovation that marked their day.

I will conclude this brief outline of the salient points entailed in the history, key ideas, and techniques of the Hellenic Sophists and Rhetoricians with a short analysis of Gorgias' Encomium of Helen. As mentioned above, Gorgias is a good representative of both the sophistical and rhetorical tendencies against which Plato battled. As will be seen below, his text delineates well the radical freedom and finitude embodied in the Platonic

understanding of the discourse of rhetoric I am exploring in this chapter. Stated otherwise, this understanding of the discourse of rhetoric admits of no extra-human constraints dictating our conceptual application and use of language. Segal draws attention to an important point when he notes that the writings of Gorgias reflect "the continued interest of the late fifth century in the internal processes of the *psyche*, and the application of this awareness of the area of psychic phenomena to rhetoric and the *techne* of persuasion" (104). It is this connection between language and psyche that provides a strong contrast to the Platonic themes I will explore below.

Gorgias' Encomium

Gorgias was the exemplar Sophist and Rhetorician of his day. A disciple of Empedocles, he was a master of oratorical style who employed numerous techniques such as amplification, antithesis, assonance, *parisosis* (parallel phrases and clauses with an equal number of syllables), and *paronomasia* (word play to reinforce and underscore and reinforce his ideas).[47] Many critics hold Gorgias' Defense of Palamades, Encomium of Helen and his speech defending Non-Being to be mere "sophistical" and exhibitionistic exercises intent on proving the impossible and unthinkable regardless of whether his propositions could possibly be true or not. However, as will be shown here, he can also be seen as a profound thinker seeking to penetrate and circumscribe the limits of human understanding.

Porter's reading of Gorgias' Helen as the symbolic synthesis of "Being, Saying, and what converts one into the other, Appearing" (Seductions 281) is indicative of the way some scholars are beginning to reassess many of the Hellenic sophistic and rhetorical texts.[48] Viewed in this fresh light, some of the Sophists and Rhetoricians are now taken more seriously as thinkers concerned about penetrating insights into the nature of being, language and the constructive power of human *psyche*, rather than as merely being crafty and expedient practitioners of effective oratory and *eristic*.

From this perspective, Gorgias' <u>Encomium of Helen</u> is a deceptive work. As will be seen through this short analysis, his defense of Helen—"whose ill-omened name has become a memorial of disasters" (<u>Encomium</u> 2)—offers the appearance of simplicity while simultaneously sheltering a number of complex insights. According to Porter, Gorgias is actually making a comment about the way in which "language cannot exhibit what lies outside language" because verbal, cognitive and tangible reality never directly intersect. In this light, *logos* becomes the "dramatization of the non-being of Being" (<u>Seductions</u> 290) because language seduces its users into accepting and taking as real the pseudo-reality that it generates. Interpreted this way, Gorgias becomes a perfect representative of the discourse of rhetoric and its recognition of the essential relationship between language and the freedom to experience and construct reality without metaphysical or a priori constraints.

In section 2 of his *Prooemion* or introduction, Gorgias announces that he wishes to give some "logic to language" and "to free the accused of blame and to show that her critics are lying and to demonstrate the truth and to put an end to ignorance." This pronouncement lends itself to a surface reading as merely a statement of authorial intent to vindicate a woman much aligned. However, following after Porter, this sentence and the entire text can also be interpreted as a metaphoric reflection on the nature and limits of language and discourse. Read this way, Helen becomes symbolic of the complex way in which language both limits and seduces our reflection on and understanding of the possibilities of thought. The "godlike beauty" of Helen qua language is both a blessing and a curse. Like Helen, language produces the "greatest passions of love," the "vigor of personal prowess," the "power of acquired knowledge" and the marshaling of "men" into both heroic and foolish action (<u>Encomium</u> 4). Putting aside the Greek ethnocentric view of the superiority of their language versus the rapacious "assaults" of the "barbarians" (7), Gorgias is not unreasonable in his claim that "speech is a powerful lord that with the smallest and most invisible body accomplished most godlike works" (8). Like Helen's

legendary beauty, speech qua human discourse, according to Gorgias, has a bewitching power to influence the soul via its "force of incantation" (10). As will be seen shortly, it is Gorgias' profound insight into the psychological connection between the power (*dynamis*) of *logos* and its narcotic-like ability (*pharmakon*) to "bewitch" and affect human emotional and cognitive response (14) that generates Plato's strong antagonism in the Gorgias.

As I interpret her here, Gorgias' Helen becomes the symbol of both the power of language itself and our response to this power as language-using beings. Thus, when Gorgias portrays Helen's passivity and inability to resist the forces of the "gods" and "barbarous hands" that control her in Sections 6 and 7, he is acknowledging the inescapable way in which language both generates and becomes a presence greater than our individual and collective response. Put more clearly, when Gorgias emphasizes how Helen was "seized by force" and "suffered" "dreadful deeds" and thus deserves our "pity" rather than our "pillory" (7), he is recognizing the complex web within which our lives unfold. That is, to be taken by force is to imply an abrupt encounter with otherness and the otherness Gorgias highlights is the extraordinary way the power of language configures our existence. Viewed this way, language becomes "bewitching" by way of the "shared, complicitous illusion" that we think it can actually deliver more "reality" than it is really capable of and that to "use language is to participate in this deception" (Porter Seductions 294) and thus to forget that no amount of philosophizing can escape this fundamental entrapment. Stated succinctly, at its deeper levels, Gorgias' Helen can be read as a profound treatise on the self- and culture-deluding nature of language by which we think we are able to transcend that which we invariably cannot. Interpreted this way, Helen could not help being seduced by language and thereby symbolically represents the way all of us cannot rise above the power of language to deceive and entrap us in its conceptual snares.[49]

What results from this view of language is the impossibility of philosophy to know anything beyond the language loop within which it participates. By this is meant that the

quest of philosophy to understand that which lies beyond the human experience becomes a fruitless illusion given that we can never transcend the web of language within which our fate unfolds. Conceived in this Gorgianic way, the goal of philosophy is always rhetorical as it seeks the best ways to illumine the ways in which we participate in the seductive power of language by disclosing it is only a *paignion* (game) which we play (Gorgias Encomium 20).[50] This is why Gorgias seeks to "put an end to (the) ignorance" (2) that enables us to continue the illusions that we can transcend the limits imposed by reflective thinking itself. This emphasis upon the illusionary web and power of language produces what Kerferd calls "a form of phenomenalism" where "the phenomenal world itself, (was) regularly seen as constituting the whole of reality and consequently as the only possible object of cognition" (72). As rendered in this reading of Gorgias' Helen, such phenomenalism is not based upon a pre-existing objective reality but rather entails a subjectivistic filtering of interpretive perspectives delivered through the lens of language.

Gorgias concludes near the end of his defense that "by speech I have removed disgrace from a woman" (Encomium 20). In keeping with the theme developed here, this may be interpreted to mean that we must not hold ourselves accountable for the limits imposed by language itself. Once freed from the illusion that we can ever transcend the confines of language, we are thus free to play—and praise—the *paignion* (game) of dwelling in finitude and misfortune that language forces upon us (19).[51] What follows from this insight and understanding is an openness toward the world that allows for the truth-value of a variety of view points and perceptions. It is not difficult to understand why Plato and later philosophers under his influence refused to take Gorgias seriously. As will be seen below, when Plato criticizes the Sophists and Rhetoricians like Gorgias as defending veracity-claims without concern for "Truth," he bases his critique on the possibility that we can escape the hermeneutical and conceptual web that language imposes and thus rise above a perspectival understanding of the world.[52]

I have taken the time to briefly survey the origins and philosophy of the Hellenic Sophists and Rhetoricians because, as will be shown below, their thinking is critical to understanding both Plato and Nietzsche. I will now look at the way many of the key themes and positions offered in Plato's dialogues can be seen, in the light of the thought of many contemporary thinkers, as a conscious reaction against the phenomenalistic relativism and subjectivism that undergirds what I call the discourse of rhetoric promoted by the Sophists and Rhetoricians.[53]

Plato's Response—From A Current Perspective

The "art" of rhetoric and the ideas of the Sophists were vitally important to Plato. The large number of passages in his dialogues dealing directly and indirectly with their principles and proponents reveal that he considered both "*rhetorly*" and sophistry forces worthy of vigorous opposition. As adumbrated in the analysis of Gorgias' Encomium of Helen above, at the root of this conflict lies a conception of existence, knowledge and social practice which Plato considered anathema. Exactly what this conception is and how it cashes out in terms of the discourse of philosophy will be the focus of this section.

It is important to note up front that it is not myth, poetry, rhetoric, or the use of verbal dexterity in itself that seems to bother Plato. A cursory reading of the Platonic corpus reveals that Plato's Socrates was master of the application and utilization of each of these discourse-forms in many of his dialogues. Indeed, a frequent charge leveled against Plato's Socrates by his "victims" is that he practices verbal sorcery and witchcraft and unfairly engages in antilogic and *eristic* (Meno 79E-80A). Plato even has Socrates admit that there is good and "true" rhetoric (Gorgias 517A), and endorse the ability to adapt to the "types of souls there are" and the "type of speech appropriate to each nature" (Phaedrus 271D, 277B-C).[54] The question then arises: what is it about the Sophists and Rhetoricians that vexes Plato?[55] In other words, if, as outlined in this chapter, Plato is against rhetoric then why does he expertly employ so many rhetorical devices and admit

that there can be a "true" rhetoric? Put succinctly, how do we reconcile this seeming contradiction?

The obvious response is that rhetoric for Plato is a deceiving technique or "knack" that leads to false belief. No matter how one distinguishes Plato's distinction in the Gorgias between rhetoric and sophistic (Gorgias 465B-D), both forms of discourse are "closely related" in that they are false or deceptive operations of the soul because flattery "insinuates herself into them" and "regularly uses pleasure as a bait to catch folly and deceives it into believing that she is of supreme worth" (464D). This makes rhetoric (and sophistic), in Plato's view, not an art but a "routine" given that "it can produce no principle in virtue of which it offers what it does, nor explain the nature thereof, and consequently is unable to point to the cause of each thing it offers" (465A). Though there is much to unpack here in terms of Plato's onto-epistemology, I will limit my discussion to the way in which he conceives them to be deceptive discourse practices.

In another key passage of the Gorgias, Plato has Socrates point out that rhetoric and sophistic act like "cookery" and "beautification" in their catering to the "bodily" qua sensory dimensions of human experience. In this capacity they become a "mischievous, deceitful, mean and ignoble activity" that "cheats" both those who use it and are influenced by it (465B). The root of this deception lies in rhetoric and sophistry's ability to become caught up in the realm of "shapes and colors" or appearance (465B). As the Polus section of the Gorgias reveals (461B-481B), it is this deceptive power of the discourse of rhetoric that motivates and entices people to take that which is not real to be "real." Rhetoric and sophistic are able to foster this enticement because they are unanchored in sensory independent non-contingent truth, justice and virtue. In contrast to this extra-worldly orientation, rhetoric partakes of the sensory and worldly experience of folly, pleasure, deceit and the "flattery" of "shameful mob appeal" (Gorgias 503A).

However, it is important to recognize that the discourse of rhetoric for Plato is more than just a seductive technique or "knack" that leads to false belief. Much more

troubling to him are the epistemological and ontological implications underlying the praxis of rhetoric. At its deepest level, the rhetoric employed by the Sophists and Rhetoricians that Plato has Socrates encounter in his dialogues reflects a metaphysical commitment that, in Plato's estimation, dismantles the philosophic enterprise. What is meant by this is that the discourse of rhetoric reflects an orientation to the world that makes ultimate truth claims impossible. To appreciate this concern of Plato it is important to highlight the important epistemological difference between Platonic philosophy and sophistic rhetoric.

Kerferd's interpretation of the Phaedo is helpful regarding the ambiguity at hand. According to Kerferd, Plato's main argument against the Sophists was that "they elevated half the truth to the whole truth by mixing up the source from which things come with its (phenomenal) consequences" (67). In other words, in the Phaedo Plato asserts that the Sophists mistook the confusing flux of phenomenal being as the totality of reality without seeing the hidden truth (ideal forms) that lay beyond it. Stated simply, Plato is bothered by the ingenious use of any form of verbal dexterity that is metaphysically untethered and therefore morally free floating.[56] Exactly what this means will form the center of my focus.

As outlined above, Plato lived during a tumultuous time when the traditional criteria for adjudicating truth-claims were evaporating. This helps account for the constant questioning that Socrates conducts. Without the foundations and old benchmarks that had guided people in the past, new definitions and distinctions had to be discerned.[57] As we have also seen, rhetoric qua persuasive language skills played an important part in this process. Without concrete standards and foundations by which to judge and adjudicate truth-claims the ability to reason well and put forth persuasive and convincing proof for a position became of paramount importance to the intellectual and influential people in ancient Greece. The persuasive battles Socrates and Plato waged against the Sophists and Rhetoricians can be reduced to a clash of orientations. On the one hand you have Plato upholding the possibility for certain and unchanging knowledge and the reality that grounds this knowing and on the other hand the Sophists and Rhetoricians proclaiming that such

knowledge and being are not possible to apprehend. Put another way, in contrast to the epistemological and axiological relativism and ontological contingency and uncertainty that characterizes much of sophistic and rhetorical thinking, Plato developed and maintained a metaphysics based on unequivocal knowledge and absolute changeless being.

From this metaphysical orientation there arises a sharp distinction between the purpose of philosophy and the activity of rhetoric. That is, in Plato's view the philosopher's quest is for truth, virtue and *episteme* versus the Sophistic resignation to contingency, pragmatic compromise and *doxa*. In the case of the former the goal is universal truth, knowledge, and certainty while the aim of the latter is particularistic and probable expediency and opinion.

As will be seen from the textual analysis to follow, the Hellenic Sophists and Rhetoricians act as important goads and inspiration for the metaphysical and philosophical system that Plato develops. I will now investigate what this means as I explore Plato's counter-move to the discourse of rhetoric proposed by the Sophists and Rhetoricians. In light of both the immense richness of ideas contained within Plato's dialogues and the short space allotted to this essay, I will limit my focus to three major Platonic themes that, in light of contemporary thinking, most directly address and refute the ideas and positions of the Sophists and Rhetoricians. Expressed succinctly, these themes gather around the possibility that reality is objectively independent of human construction, that discourse of dialectic or philosophy is the best and only way to know this reality and that such knowledge harbors immense ethical and axiological implications.[58] As will be seen below, these two themes function for Plato as the antithetical response to the metaphysical disintegration that the Sophists and Rhetoricians advanced.

Key Platonic Themes

Fundamental to Plato's philosophy is the possibility of *episteme* or the cognitive apprehension of objective and "ever unchanged" reality (Philebus 58A). One would not be accused of hyperbole to say that Plato was obsessed with the seeking of this type of

knowledge and truth. Indeed, undergirding the Platonic desire and search for truth, justice and wisdom resides the acknowledgment of the prospect that such things can be discovered and found.[59]

Plato knew certain knowledge cannot be grounded in the constantly changing flux of sensory experience. Contained within the Platonic quest for *episteme* is the desire for that which is unchanging and not prone to the whims and inconstancies of human experience and perception.[60] As is well documented, one of Plato's solutions to this perennial dilemma was the theory of *eide* or Forms, which are the eternal archetypes that ground tangible objects and realities in unchanging being.[61] Aristotle notes, regarding the theory of Forms, that "if there is to be any knowledge or thought about anything, there must be certain other entities, besides sensible ones, which persist. For there can be no knowledge of that which is in flux" (Metaphysics 1078B13-18). As such, the Forms are transcendent objects that are intellectually accessible.[62] They dwell in a timeless and changeless realm of being unaffected by the contingency and mutability of the sensory and particular world of becoming. Although the forms are accessible to human experience they are self-constructive and ontologically transcendent, meaning they are not dependent on human knowing for their existence.

By privileging the "always constant and invariable" nature of being over the "inconstant and variable" flux of becoming (Phaedo 78C), Plato offers the possibility for attaining absolute, objective, unchanging knowledge. In essence, the Forms become the permanent and reliable criteria by which to determine what is and is not ontologically true. As Jerrold R. Caplan observes, "The theory of Forms is an ontological scheme that makes possible a rigorous theory of knowledge" (174). Because of their ontological status they potentially make the adjudication of knowledge claims possible given that they become the perfect epistemological and ethical lodestars by which to evaluate what is real or spurious knowledge and practice.

The Forms are the perfect manifestation of absolute self-subsisting reality and thus become both the proper objects of knowledge and the standard by which to adjudicate epistemological, ontological and axiological truth-claims and definitions. When knowledge itself aligns with them it becomes perfect without blemish, corruption, or imperfection. The good, justice, beauty, and virtue become real properties both inherent *in rebus* and subsistent *ante res,* which, because of this unique status, become both the objective of epistemological inquiry and the model for ethical behavior. Unlike belief based on mutable becoming of sensory particulars, the Forms are ever-unchanging and absolute in their being. It is these Forms as agent-independent and stable realities that lend meaning and direction to life—indeed the Platonic philosophic journey entails the quest for and obtaining of this type of knowledge based on the "soul's" ability to cognitively experience supersensible reality.

Such "rigorous" knowledge stands in direct contrast to what Plato deems the *doxa* or opinionated belief of the Sophists and Rhetoricians that "feeds upon the food of semblance" (Phaedrus 248B). In other words, the concept of absolute and unchanging Forms enables Plato to reject the appearance based subjectivism and phenomenalism of the Sophists and Rhetoricians. Knowledge construed in this way, that is, from outside the human epistemological loop, also clears up the problem that knowledge claims are only a social or linguistic construction. This helps account for Plato's predilection for mathematics given that mathematics depends upon the definitive and self-subsisting nature of numbers. It is a distrust—even fear of the potential for surplus meaning—that preoccupies Plato and his Socrates in the later dialogues. As Plato's Socrates notes in the Philebus, if "from any craft you subtract the element of numbering, measuring, and weighing, the remainder will be almost negligible" (55E). Gone is the Socrates who no longer knows, who uses his ignorance as an opportunity to explore with wonder the problem at hand. As R. Hackforth puts it: "In the last dialogues there is an almost fierce concentration on the question to be solved" (1086), or as Plato claims "the remarkable

exactness thus attained" (Philebus 56B). Tradition has it that Plato had the following inscription mounted over the portal to his academy: "Let no ignorant of geometry enter here." It is this obsession for exactitude and precision that drives Plato to even disown mathematicians and mathematical structures that do not conform to the definitiveness he maintains dwells at the center of knowledge that the true philosopher seeks:

> The ordinary arithmetician, surely, operates with unequal units; his "two"
> may be two armies or two cows or two anythings from the smallest thing in
> the world to the biggest, while the philosopher will have nothing to do with
> him, unless he consents to make every single instance of his unit precisely
> equal to every other of its infinite number of instances. (Philebus 56D-E)[63]

Episteme or knowledge as truth is choice-worthy for Plato because he favors that which is "perfect and definitive" (Republic 506A). Such knowledge is both intrinsically and instrumentally good given that its perfect nature makes it deserving of desire as well as offering adjudicational standards by which to order and understand the world. Rhetoric, in contrast, is both intrinsically and instrumentally bad in that its deceptive nature makes it blame-worthy and it is used to confuse and seduce people into erroneous goods. Although mathematics cannot be considered a perfect example of self-existing and self-evident knowledge, it is Plato's illustration of what knowledge should be, that is, consistent and true. It helps us, as Plato notes, in the "contemplation" of "pure thought" and in converting the soul from the world of "generation"—becoming—to "essence and truth"—being (Republic 525C). Plato's symbols for rhetoric are flattery and cosmetics both of which give a showy appearance but lack true "substance" (Gorgias 565B).

Having highlighted what I take to be the ontological "essence" of Plato's metaphysics, I will briefly outline his epistemological response to the discourse of rhetoric.

Dialectical Transference

Not only does Plato maintain the possibility of the existence of *episteme* but he also claims that such knowledge is directly obtainable. As Plato envisions it, only the authentic

love of wisdom can deliver Truth. That is, only the Platonic-Socratic version of dialectic and *enlenchus* can reveal authentic knowledge and wisdom.[64] The organic image of planting and sowing words in the garden of the soul (Phaedrus 276B-277A) becomes more than just a metaphor for Plato. As Plato's Socrates points out to Phaedrus, words have the ontological capacity to bear true insight: "The dialectician selects a soul of the right type, and in it he plants and sows his words founded on knowledge, words which can both defend themselves and him who planted them" (276E). Such words have the power to "vouchsafe" to their "possessor" "the fullest measure of blessedness that man can attain unto" (277A).

In other words, *episteme*, for Plato, is both ontologically and epistemologically prior to human experience and thus becomes the most viable form of truth-criteria given that it arises from outside the limitations of human finitude.[65] In a famous Socratic-Platonic image, it is the job of the philosopher—the seeker after truth—to be a "midwife" in helping others to "give birth to wisdom" (Theaetetus 150-B-E). *Dialektike* or dialectic—the dialogic art of reasoning, questioning, division and classification—is crucial to this process. Dialectic—in contradistinction to the Sophistic emphasis on combative argument to prove any and all points of view—is based on the desire to seek the correct answer qua correspondence to a given question or inquiry. According to Plato in the *Meno*, it is the probing give and take of questioning and answering entailed in dialectic that jogs the memory of the *psyche* or soul and in doing so produces the true knowledge which the seeker after wisdom pursues (Meno 85C-E).[66]

It is this process of "recollection" which enables the "immortal" soul to recall everything it has "learned" while dwelling previously in the realm of the Forms (Meno 81C-D; Phaedrus 249C). *Anamnesis*, or soul remembrance, is Socrates' solution to the paradox of how we can eventually know what we are seeking when we search for knowledge. In other words, Plato's notion of remembrance means that true knowledge originates as extra-human revelation that determines truth for Plato. True knowledge for

Plato arises from beyond human sense perception and cognition and thus becomes the source and arbitrator of the deeper truths of existence.

Dialektike—as the search for and obtaining of epistemic certitude—becomes for Plato the alternative to the sophistic and rhetorical emphasis on subject-centered relativistic knowledge, endless argumentation, and the inability to arrive at any conclusive proposition. The Platonic quest for language to correspond to the Forms or *edios* through the dialectical process of classification and division is in direct contrast to the Gorgianic principle of linguistic and interpretive relativity. For Plato *dialektike* is an act of love (Phaedrus 253D-257B) in contrast to the *eristic* and misology of the Sophists and Rhetoricians, which in seeking to assert or defeat any position or truth-claim, fosters a hatred of reason and thereby the possibility to know truth (Phaedo 89D-90E). It is dialectic as opposed to *rhetorike* which enables the soul to remember its origin and destiny. Dialectic becomes for Plato the way in which—via questioning and probing—the *psyche* comes to see its need for wisdom and knowledge. Dialectic humbles the soul by helping it to see that what it has taken to be knowledge is in fact ignorance and in doing so enables the memory of the truth-seeker to be jogged so that the forgotten true knowledge of the Forms can manifest itself.[67]

Plato has Socrates point out in the Protagoras that it is benightedness or lack of this true knowledge and its "measurement" that lies at the root of evil and the "serious ignorance that the famous Sophists and Rhetoricians "Protagoras, Prodicus, and Hippias profess to cure" (357C-E). Platonic dialectic, then, is the instrumental application of the proper formal process of *philo-sophia* to the thinking process that triggers ontological contact with the objects of knowledge that lie beyond the realm of human construction. In Plato's schema, the good-intentioned interactive probing of dialectic is able to excite the memory of forgotten knowledge in a way that bad intentioned and self-seeking persuasion of the discourse of rhetoric cannot. In this way Plato gets around the problematic of the arbitrary signifier which sophistry and rhetoric invoke.

In Plato's estimation, the learning of the Sophists and Rhetoricians is self-induced belief rather than true knowledge. It is knowledge engendered and constructed by language rather than something self-existing and independent of the knowing process itself. Both Plato and the Sophists use language (*logos*) to discover knowledge but in the case of the former it is revealed while in the latter it is self-generated. The difference between the two is profound. Plato's epistemological orientation marginalizes gradations. Mutable sensible particulars emit of no permanent status and thus truth claims based on them will alter and change, while the eternal and unchanging being of Platonic Forms never vary and hence become the basis for infallible knowledge and absolute truth claims.

As evidenced in many of Plato's dialogues, e.g., the <u>Gorgias, Protagoras, Phaedrus,</u> etc., Socrates does not give back to the Sophists the image they want of themselves.[68] By sharply rebutting and ridiculing their *doxa* and false belief, Plato's Socrates generates confusion in their ranks and in doing so seeks to show the Sophists and Rhetoricians the true nature of their ignorance.

Before assessing some of the deeper metaphysical implications embedded in Plato's response to the discourse of rhetoric, I will briefly highlight one other key Platonic theme that relates to the topic at hand.

Ontological Virtue as Metaphysical Good

Both the possibility for certain knowledge and the ability to obtain it harbor immense ethical and axiological implications for Plato. That is, because his standards originate beyond the world of semblance and common experience, Plato's metaphysics grants the ability to adjudicate between spurious and real truth, justice, knowledge, virtue and goodness. As we have seen, rhetoric and sophistic are bad according to Plato because they are a fraudulent discourse that pretends to know and be persuasive about that which it does not know. In constructing his metaphysics this way, Plato widens the normative difference between philosophy and rhetoric. We can see this emphasis in one of the major

themes of Plato's <u>Gorgias</u> that revolves around the notion that rhetoric is "a creator of a conviction that is persuasive but not instructive about right and wrong" (<u>Gorgias</u> 454E).

In contrast, philosophy is the discourse that best incorporates and reflects Plato's ontological commitment. It is Plato's emphasis on *episteme* and *noeisis* that differentiates his philosophy and dialectic from the "belief" and "knack" of rhetoric. As we have seen, knowledge for Plato is that which is rational, unchanging and universal, while belief is that which is particularistic, contingent and local. The realm of knowledge partakes of that which is eternal and true while the sphere of rhetoric is that which participates in things temporal and prone to passion and opinion. Rhetoric thus becomes the lesser "routine" partaking of the world of semblance, pleasure, and political and social gain, while philosophy and dialectic become dedicated to the pursuit of truth, knowledge, and the non-contingent. Plato neatly sums up this position when he has Socrates pose his "rhetorical" question to Callicles: "Do you imagine that Cinesias, son of Meles, is in the slightest concerned with saying anything likely to improve hearers or merely what will gratify the mob of spectators" (<u>Gorgias</u> 501E-502).

Repeatedly throughout his dialogues, the idea of order, harmony, and end play an important part in Plato's concept of the well lived life, i.e., the wise and happy philosopher is he or she who uses reason to contemplate and seek after that which is virtuous, good, and true. As Robin points out, it is conformity to the "eternal pattern" which informs the Ideas or Forms of contemplation and remembrance is the highest goal of life (229). This "eternal pattern" is often equated with the proper "arrangement" of the "soul" according to transcendent forms or ideas. As Plato's Socrates succinctly notes in the <u>Gorgias</u>:

> Wise men, Callicles, say that the heavens and the earth, gods and men, are
>
> bound together by fellowship and friendship, order and temperance and
>
> justice, and for this reason they call the sum of things the 'ordered
>
> universe,' my friend, not the world of disorder and riot. But it seems to me
>
> that you pay no attention to these things in spite of your wisdom, but you

are unaware that geometric equality is of great importance among the gods

and men alike, and you think we should practice overreaching others, for

you neglect geometry. (507E-508A)[69]

As observed in the passages cited previously from the Philebus, such "geometrical

equality" and proportion are critical to Plato's desire to conform human understanding and

experience to extra-worldly realities.[70] As such, mathematics becomes the perfect

metaphor for the "rule" and "line of conduct" that gets summed up in the "ancient" maxim

that "'like'—when it is a thing of due measure—'loves its like'" (Laws 716C). Because of

its non-sensory status, intrinsic consistency, and dependency upon rational thought and

proper measurement, mathematical reflection helps reveal and point to fundamental first

principles. As Plato further notes in Book IV of the Laws:

> For things that have no measure can be loved neither by one another nor by
>
> those that have. Now it is God who is, for you and me, of a truth the
>
> "measure of all things," much more truly than, as they say, "man." So he
>
> who would be loved by such a being must himself become such to the
>
> utmost of his might, and so, by this argument, he that is temperate among
>
> us is loved by god, for he is like God, whereas he that is not temperate is
>
> unlike God and at variance with him; so also it is with the unjust, and the
>
> same holds in all else. (716C-D)

There is much to unpack in this passage, which I take to be a most concise

summary of Plato's correlation between knowledge and virtue.[71] However, I will limit my

analysis to how it impacts the theme at hand. Plato's allusion to Protagoras' "man-

measure" doctrine is obvious. As observed above, in contrast to Protagoras' homo-centric

view, Plato offers a transcendental non-human grounding of metaphysics, epistemology

and ethics. Unlike the discourse of rhetoric which caters to and re-enforces a human

centered approach to existence, philosophy is the discourse most suited to discover and

obtain the knowledge, truth, justice and virtue of this reality that Plato takes to be the

centermost constitution of the *kosmos*, which he ultimately symbolizes through the "self-beautiful" Form of the Good (Republic 507B). The Form of the Good, symbolized by "God" in the passage above, thus becomes the perfect representation and measurement of the ultimate metaphysical *arche* that unites Reality, true knowledge and virtue—the Platonic trinity that philosophy delivers.

Viewed this way, philosophy becomes the discourse that most appropriately taps into the metaphysical reality that simultaneously undergirds and constrains existence. What is meant by this is that Plato divides the discourse of philosophy that is centered around intrinsically virtuous Being from the discourse of rhetoric that is centered around amoral becoming given that they represent diametrically opposed orientations to the nature of truth and reality. Because it is concerned with ontological correspondence, the former imposes constraints and limits upon knowledge and action, while the latter generates a license that knows neither metaphysical or ethical bounds nor the validity of its own proposition.

Gill's insight is helpful here regarding the way in which Platonic knowledge "contribute(s) towards the ordering of one's own psycho-ethical state: that one can become more *kosmois* ('ordered') by correct understanding of the *kosmos,* and that this can help correct any 'disharmony' in one's character" (74). In other words, dianoetic rationalization leads to "harmonization" of the *psuche* (psyche) not in the sense that it "causes" virtue but that it does enable and contribute to moral development by helping reason govern passion (75).[72] Hoerber further points out that the Phaedrus is unified around Plato's theme that "the ultimate type of love of wisdom (philosophic) is inseparable from the best method of discourse (Dialectic), while the inferior discourse (Rhetoric) is suitable to the common love (erotic)" (33). In this light, rhetoric as viewed in the Gorgias and Phaedrus becomes synonymous with the use of words for emotional appeal, indulgence in the temporal realms of human affairs, and a deceptive enticement that obscures the apprehension of that which is true, virtuous, eternal and unchanging. Rhetoric then

becomes a spurious form of speech that caters to the realm of the body—which like erotic passion—seduces the soul to further forget its true origin, calling and knowledge.

The Platonic metaphysical and epistemological duality of body and soul inevitably leads to the bifurcation of discourse wherein one—the art or *techne* of dialectic—brings liberation to the soul via truth, knowledge, and justice, while the other—the "knack" of rhetoric—leads to corruption and entrapment of the soul in the body via flattery, *doxa* and pleasure. Philosophical discourse is thus centripetal in nature as it pulls the seeker of wisdom toward the center of Being's ownmost reality. Rhetoric in contrast is centrifugal—pushing the *psyche* away from the truth and reality which grounds existence. Rhetoric for Plato is the discourse that seduces the soul away from its origin and most important calling. Whether this ontological commitment on Plato's part was intuitive, analytical, or mystical remains open.

In short, the sum of this emphasis for Plato gets embodied in the discourse of philosophy which most appropriately unites and arranges the order and limit which he takes to reside at the center of existence. Plato is interested in non-context dependent infallible knowledge. This only happens in the disembodied non-temporal realm of being. Rhetoric represents the opposite of this true knowledge, dealing with the embodied, temporal-dependent realms of contingency and becoming. Hence, it is "bodily" qua delusionary orientation (Gorgias 465C-D) by which "orators" "use their skill to produce conviction, not by instruction, but by making people believe whatever they want them to believe" (Theaetetus 201A). Plato escapes the circularity and self-referential epistemological and moral dilemmas imposed by the relativistic entrapments of human language and "mere belief" by appealing to the transcendent pre-conditional virtuous realm of knowledge that true philosophy delivers.

Having briefly outlined the way in which three major Platonic themes express and reinforce Plato's disjunct between the discourse of philosophy and the relativistic

subjectivism of the Sophists and Rhetoricians, I will conclude this chapter with a "meta-analysis" of some of the deeper implications harbored within this Platonic counter-move.

Metacritical Critique

In essence, Plato offers the discourse of philosophy, as outlined here, as a best defense against, to use strong metaphors, the metaphysical murder, epistemological suicide and ethical manslaughter initiated and implied in the discourse of rhetoric. Put less shrilly, Plato knew that the implications inherent within the discourse of rhetoric meant the death of the philosophic life as he envisions it. As expressed above, philosophy for Plato means the acquisition of certain knowledge and unwavering virtue based on absolute and unchanging reality. It was their denial of such a possibility coupled with their ingenious verbal skills that made the Sophists and Rhetoricians so philosophically dangerous in Plato's estimation. As one who posited certainty and truth as ontologically viable realities, the discourse and practice of rhetoric entailed the antithesis of what Plato sought in his philosophic enterprise.

Read this way, the Platonic emphasis upon dialectic and *elenchus* act as the antidote to the philosophic poison inherent in the discourse of rhetoric. *Elenchus,* or "benevolent disputation by the use of question and answer without jealousy," as Plato notes in the Seventh Letter, tests and probes the "detailed comparisons of names and definitions and visual and other sense perceptions" and assists "in a flash of understanding" that enables the "mind" to be "flooded with light" (344B).[73] As a subspecies of dialectic, the purpose of *elenchus,* is, as Sayre comments, "to clear the tangled growth of false opinion from the soul to be seeded" (xvii). Sayre's metaphor of "seeding" highlights the way in which the Platonic *elenchus* differs from Sophistic *eristic.* Only a soul of the "right type" is capable of receiving the "seeds" planted by the dialectician (Phaedrus 276E). The interpersonal discursive transactions of *elenchus* and dialectic prepare the soul for the intuitive flash of insight of real knowledge mentioned in the Seventh Letter (341D).

The experience of dialectic and *enlenchus* is painful for the one on the receiving end. Like the breaking of soil to be seeded, the Socratic interrogation that Plato employs penetrates the surface understanding that many of his characters uphold and prepares them for the ignorance they need to be a true learner of truth. That is, truth-clouding knowledge and close-minded arrogance must be abandoned if authentic truth is to be received via the epiphanic nature of the Forms. In contrast to the contention of *eristic* for the sake of contentiousness and the epistemological flattery and ethical self-serving that marks the discourse of rhetoric, Platonic *enlenchus* and dialectic seek to rupture and unsettle the vanity and self-delusion that someone knows the "truth" he claims to have. Put succinctly, unlike the "craft" of rhetoric as presented in the Gorgias, Plato's discourse of philosophy is not prone to deceptively "flattering" the recipient by re-enforcing his or her "false belief."

Viewed this way, the "art" of dialectic and *elenchus* confute "the vain conceit of wisdom" (Sophist 231b) that marks "public" qua rhetorical discourse. As Sayre observes concerning Plato's Seventh Letter, it is the inherent instability of "public language that makes it unsuitable for communicating philosophic knowledge" (15). Although Plato centers his thought around the idea that "no intelligent man will ever be so bold as to put into language those things which his reason has contemplated" because the "unalterable" written symbol" is too stifling for this truth (Seventh Letter 343A), I interpret a larger insight here. That is, underlying Plato's notion is the idea that non-philosophic or "public" discourse by its very nature generates *aporia* and uncertainty (Seventh Letter 343C). Sayre's interpretation of the Seventh Letter is helpful here when he notes that "no one who understands philosophy would try to put it in writing" because "philosophy cannot be expressed verbally (*hreton*: 341C6) like other studies" (xiii). The "realities contemplated by the knowing mind—indentified (sic) at (342D) as including "the Good, the Beautiful and the Just"—are beyond the expressive power of language (*logon* 343A1) generally" (xiii). In Sayre's view, Plato holds that philosophic knowledge can only arise from the processs of *sunousia,* or truth-seeking "conversation," in contrast to "public language"

(xiv). This *sunousia* entails the philosopher's love of dialectic and *enlenchus* which activate the mind and soul to obtain and receive the truth it seeks. As Sayre notes, authentic philosophical language for Plato is not propositional but is based on a grasping of reality, i.e., the nature of being qua Forms and therefore "cannot be conveyed through the medium of language" (18). Put succinctly, only *philosophia* can deliver the intellectualistic intuition that the *psuche* (soul) seeks.

There is a fundamental gulf that separates the discourse of Plato from that of the Sophists and Rhetoricians which can be summed up in one word, teleology. For Plato the *psyche* and *kosmos* are inextricably linked in a unified field of ordered beauty, justice and harmony which is grounded in the ultimate Form of the Good. It is this understanding that informs the Timaeus: "Now when the Creator had framed the soul according to his will, he within her the corporeal universe, and brought the two together and united them center to center" (36D-E). *Psychagogia* (the protreptic leading of the *psyche*) via dialectic and *elenchus* both seeks and is sought by the divine "end" that lies at the center of existence. In contrast to written speech and "public" or common discourse, dialectic, *sunousia* and *elenchus* are what Plato calls in the Phaedrus "living speech" that engages the soul (*psuche*) of the participants (276A) in the proper way by leading it toward truth and knowledge. As Plato develops the metaphysics implicit in Socrates' thinking, being, knowledge and virtue become inextricably interconnected because they participate in the ultimate Form of the Good. Sayre nicely sums up this idea "the Good establishes a 'field of being' in which there is an objective distinction between being right and being otherwise" (190).

It is this fundamental Platonic certitude of "being right" versus "being otherwise" that radically separates Plato's discourse of philosophy from the discourse of rhetoric he maligns. When Plato gets around the "learner's paradox" (Meno 80E) by appealing to self-revealing and pre-existent extra-worldly knowledge, he takes philosophy to a new level. By grounding his views in a "non-hypothetical *arche*," Plato avoids the messy "*aporia* and

uncertainty" that mark the discourse of rhetoric. He also places a firm stricture upon human inquiry and assertion. At the center of Plato's schema lies a lack of epistemological self-independence. Plato's idea of The Good both underlies and draws the soul to itself. In this way, philosophy for Plato is always-already determined or, as Scolnicov points out, it is *euporic*, i.e., "showing the possibility of the desired conclusion under certain assumptions" (Method 249). Unlike the *aporia* of rhetoric, philosophy for Plato both generates and expresses absolute and already determined knowledge. Viewed this way, Platonic *elenchus* and dialectic imply an obligation to conduct philosophizing within the rules set down by the constraints of the metaphysical reality which informs its process.

Rhetoric requires no such accountability. In the words of Glidden, dialectic as "genuine conversation requires an indexical commitment" while rhetoric, without ultimate referents, makes "conversations become soliloquies" (334). It is Plato's concern for the monologic epistemological soliloquies that rhetoric generates which compels Plato to emphasize the dialogic aspect of his philosophic approach. In Plato's view we need a master or *sounousia* partner like Socrates to guide us to the right conclusions. As pointed out above, it is this intense desire to find the "right" answer that fuels Plato's philosophic drive. This helps account for the reason Plato has Socrates persistently attempt to reframe questions in terms of the procedural logic he sees necessary to philosophize in the right way. Michael Meyer draws attention to this notion when he underscores the way in which Plato "subordinates questioning to ontology and thereby generally to propositionalism" (4). This can be taken to mean that Plato privileges the exactitude of conformity and correspondence to the logic of the Forms, qua super-sensible reality, over the inquiring process itself. In doing so, according to Meyer, Plato evacuates "the very practice of philosophizing as Socrates understood it" (4).

Conceived this way, Plato abhors rhetoric because it symbolizes a multiple openness toward existence which his metaphysics denies. In Plato's kosmos, self-identification with the Forms limits both being and knowing. In essence, access to the

absolutization and commingling of being and truth guarantees a correct answer and outcome and thus negates the possibility for perspectivism and contingency. In Plato's world existence is ultimately univocal. Each object, each concept must correspond to the related form to which it is metaphysically and ontologically bound. This orientation accounts for Plato's obsession with conceptual definitions that do not allow for ambiguity or contextual dependency. In Plato's ideational universe a single question like "what is virtue?" demands a single answer, one that conforms to the Form to which it corresponds. Plato's metaphysics and philosophy minimizes the possibility of problemicity by offering an answer to and escape from the confusion, messiness, and painful difficulties which plague human existence. In this light, the impulse fueling Plato's discourse of philosophy arises from the desire to quell the painful epistemological, ethical and ontological vicissitudes which beset the human psyche.[74]

The juxtaposing of dialectic and rhetoric as briefly investigated in this essay reveals that Plato had an immense respect—if not fear—for the power of words. It was the *psychagogic* ability of language to either move and lead the soul either toward or away from its true destiny and conformity with ultimate truth that impelled him to battle the Rhetoricians and Sophists of his day.[75] In essence, Plato creates a wide gulf between the discourse of dialectic—the ability to lead the soul by reason to truth and virtue—and the discourse of rhetoric—the ability to corrupt and mislead the soul into falsehood. Through this binary framing trope, Plato is able to distinguish between those who have knowledge of truth are those who are able to "spend hours" "twisting" words "this way and that, pasting them together and pulling them apart" (Phaedrus 278E) to lead people into error. When language becomes connected to being—as Plato's philosophy proclaims—the "lover of wisdom" cannot escape the ontological connection between power of words and its action on the soul. One who seeks and obtains wisdom must also live it.[76]

Glidden offers further insight into the theme at hand. According to Glidden, "Plato's complaint (in the Theaetetus) against Protagoras is that Protagoras would deprive

reality of its authority to constrain our speech, which would in turn deprive our speech of any meaning" (333). What I take Glidden to mean here is that philosophy unlike sophistry "requires some ontological reach to be dogmatic or even skeptical about" (333). Put otherwise, without an indexical referent language and knowledge float into a semantic horizon of ultimate meaninglessness. This premise can be seen operating in Socrates' comment to Polus in the Gorgias: "When you call things fair, such as bodies and colors and figures and sounds and institutions, you must do so surely with reference to some standard" (474d). For Plato, philosophy requires both ontological and epistemological commitment and constraint. Referents both dictate and limit what we can claim truth to be. Without such ontological limitations, all claims ultimately become equal and thus impossible to distinguish.

Plato abhorred such rootless metaphysical relativity and freedom if only because it makes *philo-sophia* as the love of unconditional wisdom and truth unobtainable. In Plato's view, the endless *eristic* quibbling and attempts to prove and persuade people of the impossible and untrue which the Rhetoricians and Sophists engaged in are symptomatic of a world view that is philosophically bankrupt. From this perspective, rhetoric (and sophistic) become the anti-thesis of philosophy by denying both the commitment to a common world referent and the ability to judge that commitment by a given standard.[77] Dialectic and philosophy presuppose that truth and knowledge are both real and obtainable. Rhetoric and sophistic disrupt this process by maintaining that there is no truth and that the duty of the Rhetorician or persuader is to win an opponent or audience over to his or her perspective without referents to adjudicate the validity and ethicality of the truth-claim. Rhetoric and sophistic thus substitute interpretation and perspecticality for the nature of reality and metaphysical certainty. In doing so, they become, for Plato, false discourses which not only disarm and dismantle the foundation upon which philosophical enterprise is built but also enervate the possibility for authentic ethical responsibility. Viewed in this

way, rhetoric and sophistic become the antithesis of philosophy and dialectic—the discourse by which the soul learns and lives wisdom and truth.

At its core, the discourse of rhetoric for Plato thrives on the confusions and uncertainties of human finitude which allow for multiple interpretations and experiences. In contrast, philosophy disregards the "figuralness" of language in favor of an absolute literalness.[78] In Plato's metaphysical economy, rhetoric belongs to the realm of the phenomenal, relative, shifting, unanchored use of language and conception of the world. Hence its concern for stylistic tropes and figures of speech. Unconnected to any reality beyond itself it floats and plays across the surface of things, more concerned with persuasive eloquence than meaningful substance.

At base, then, rhetoric is always-already asymptotic. It both generates and expresses meaning that is grounded in *aporia* or unresolved knowledge. From Plato's perspective, it is the linguistic relativity of rhetoric and the excess of meaning, spurious knowledge and uncertainty that arises from its onto-epistemological assumptions that makes it deserving of disenfranchisement. In his view, the moral alarm of rhetoric lies in its ability and "knack" for casting "spells" with words to create a semblance of truth so powerful and real that it fills the soul with the conceit of real wisdom. Given that the Sophists and Rhetoricians cater to the multitudes giving them what they want to hear as opposed to what they should hear, they are the opposite of the dialectician or true lover of wisdom. In essence, Plato conceives that "the goodness of anything is due to order and arrangement" and that it is "the presence in each thing of the order appropriate to it that makes everything good" (Gorgias 506E). It is dialectic qua the discourse of philosophy that most effectively reveals and engenders this ordering and ensuing goodness. In this light, Socrates' metaphor and analogy of the philosopher/dialectician as "midwife" (Theaetetus. 150B-151D) becomes literal in that he helps birth the soul into a life of new awareness and existence based on goodness, truth and knowledge. Rhetoric, on the other hand, evokes and assists in that which distracts and disorders the soul by engendering

ethical and epistemological ambiguity. It operates most effectively in the affairs and functions of the bodily and social realm that operate to lure the soul from its appropriate order and destiny. In the words of Meyer, with which Plato would agree but not endorse, "Rhetoric creeps into us like a defect of the soul in order to make up for our ignorance, our natural imperfection" (2).

Constraint and other-imposed limit lie at the heart of Plato's understanding of the discourse of philosophy as presented here. When the human subject (whether individual or collective) rather than philosophy's proper end becomes the delimiting agent for the true and real, absolute axioms vanish. To prevent this fundamental and radical attack against philosophy as he conceived it, Plato emphasized rhetoric's lack of self-sufficiency in terms of knowledge claims by developing and contrasting it with a closely-woven metaphysical system that undercuts our freedom to determine what is real.

Conclusion

It is hoped that through this analysis I have presented a contemporarily influenced understanding of the important role Sophistry and Rhetoric play in the thought of Plato and the reason for his vehement attack against it. In contrast to the epistemological and axiological relativism and ontological uncertainty that characterized much of sophistic and rhetorical thinking, Plato develops and maintains a metaphysical system based on certain knowledge, unequivocal ethics, and absolute changeless being. From this orientation there arises a sharp distinction between the purpose of philosophy and the intent of rhetoric which Plato was not shy of proclaiming. In contrast to rhetoric, true philosophy qua dialectic disregards the "figuralness" of language in favor of an absolute literalness. In Plato's metaphysical economy rhetoric belongs to the realm of the phenomenal, relative, shifting, unanchored use of language and conception of the world. Hence its concern for stylistic tropes and fancy figures of speech. Unconnected to any reality beyond itself, it freely plays across the surface of things, more concerned with bodily and worldly centered accomplishments rather than extra-worldly substance.

In diametrical contrast, philosophical dialectic as conceived by Plato allows the seeker after wisdom to encounter and engage a non-contingent realm where language truth and being intersect. At base, then, it is this linguistic relativity and ambiguity of rhetoric generated by the excess of meaning, spurious knowledge and uncertainty it fosters from its lack of onto-epistemological grounding that makes Plato marginalize it. As pointed out above, this is not to imply that Plato did not employ "rhetorical" and "sophistical" techniques nor allow for the limited use of rhetoric, as noted in the Phaedrus. What I have been after in this chapter is delineating the fundamental difference between Plato's understanding of philosophy's allowance for a true metaphysics and the rhetoric of the Sophists that disavows the foundational possibility for such belief. It is Plato's concern for "pure" unequivocal philosophy as distinct from the "contamination" of indeterminate rhetoric that leads to his radical division In Plato's view, the discourse of rhetoric is the discourse of seduction, the ability to induce potent misrepresentations and false beliefs that deceive the soul. In contraposition, the discourse of philosophy represents the only authentic method for obtaining knowledge that is certain, unchanging and inerrant. For Plato an unbridgeable gap lies between these two orientations.

In short, there are at minimum three levels upon which Plato attacks rhetoric. The first is its procedural operation as a technical artifice whereby "It has no need to know the truth about things but merely to discover a technique of persuasion" (Gorgias 459C); the second is its unethical use in service for those who "do wrong" (Gorgias 480B-481B) and for pleasure and "gratification" (Gorgias 502C); and third is its substantive refusal to admit of absolute standards and limits by privileging the multiplicity of "becoming" and flux over the univocality of "being" (Theaetetus 156A-157C).

Philosophy then becomes, for Plato, the love of wisdom, reason, and truth while rhetoric becomes the passion for *doxa*, emotion and deception. The architecture of the Platonic differentiation between rhetoric and dialectic, knowledge and opinion, truth and deception depends entirely, as I interpret it, on there being both a way to apprehend the

referents which the wise "soul" seeks and an ontological reality inherent in the objects of knowledge themselves. As Magnus, Stewart and Mileur point out, Plato's demotion of rhetoric offers the promissory note that "Among all the competing self and world descriptions one and only one could be picked out as the vocabulary reality would choose to describe itself" (18).

I have chosen to focus on Plato's division between philosophy and rhetoric because it most acutely reveals the way in which and the reason why the discourse of philosophy and the discourse of rhetoric have traditionally represented an unbridgeable gulf in the history of western philosophy. It is the possibility of infallible knowledge based upon a foundation of metaphysical certainty that becomes Plato's key contribution and influence on the development of Western thought. When Plato writes that "every soul has, by reason of her nature, had contemplation of true being" (Phaedrus 249E-250) he opens the possibility for a metaphysics of certitude. At the center of this possibility lies a method and love for wisdom that influentially steers the course of Western thinking toward the conviction of epistemological and ontological certainty grounded on transcendental realities. The Platonic legacy bequeathed to Western philosophy offers the confidence that absolute and final truth could be both discovered and imposed. As we will see in the next chapter Nietzsche explodes confidence in such a philosophic vision.

Having set-up Plato as the traditionally conceived ultimate metaphysician, I will now turn to Nietzsche, the quintessential anti-metaphysician, and explore the way in which he "systematically" undercuts Plato's philosophy and legacy by resurrecting many of the key notions of the ancient Greek Sophists and Rhetoricians. In doing so, Nietzsche espouses the discourse of rhetoric with the same passion and intensity that Plato privileged the discourse of philosophy. To understand the Platonic separation between the discourse of philosophy and the discourse of rhetoric is to deeply plumb the interconnected dimensions of Plato's thought.[79] To understand this dichotomy is also to descry the

reasoning and logic behind the anti-foundationalism of the perspectival and anti-metaphysical turn that Nietzsche develops.

CHAPTER III

RHIZOMORPHIC RHETORIC:

NIETZSCHE'S UNSETTLEMENT OF PLATONIC DISCOURSE

Do I contradict myself? Very well then . . . I contradict myself; I am large . . . I contain multitudes. (Walt Whitman)

In Chapter Two, I set-up what I and many contemporary continentally influenced writers take to be the quintessential metaphysical system as embodied in the philosophical schema of Plato. In this chapter, I will focus on a thinker whose wealth of comments, reflections and writings are considered to be in diametrical opposition to that of Platonism. Indeed, to read Nietzsche is in many ways to encounter Plato in reverse. Where Plato privileges being, non-contingent knowledge and transcendence Nietzsche celebrates the opposite orientations of becoming, perspectivism, and naturalism. For many contemporary scholars this division represents an unbridgeable gulf in Western philosophy. Brogan succinctly sums up this cleft between the metaphysical constraint of Platonism and the pluralistic excess of Nietzsche:

> The rebirth of tragedy occurs because the Archimedean point of reference
> has shifted out of center. Plato's fixed supreme point of reference comes
> unchained. The chains through which human beings were enchained in
> Plato's cave have been broken. In contrast to the closure and conservation
> of energy at the heart of metaphysics, this unchaining unleashes the
> Dionysian excess once again. All talk of containing the multiplicity of the
> earthly in a primal unity or metaphysical will must now be suspended. (47)

As with any strict dichotomy, this generalization regarding the distinctive orientations of Plato and Nietzsche harbors a number of exceptions. However, in general, Nietzsche seems to have constructed much of his thinking as a conscious effort to unsettle the metaphysical hold and historical development of the thought of Plato and Socrates.[80] Among the numerous Platonic oppositions Nietzsche advances in his writings, the fundamental privileging of rhetoric has received proportionally little critical attention. What I mean by this lack of focus, though, is not the manner in which Nietzsche utilizes rhetoric as a polemical technique in his writings to state his case, a process well documented by many critics. I am more interested here in the way rhetoric functions, for Nietzsche, as a larger ontological and epistemological envelopment for human beings. De Man zooms in on this lack of critical focus when he asserts that the "key" to Nietzsche's critique of metaphysics is no "mere reversal" of Platonism but rather Nietzsche's insight into the way all language use is "explicitly grounded in rhetoric" (Allegories 109).

What concerns me, then, is the substantive way Nietzsche utilizes the discourse of rhetoric to dismantle and transfigure Platonic ontology, epistemology and ethics. Stated another way, Nietzsche's thought both expressively exalts the principles and orientations which Plato attributes to the discourse of rhetoric while simultaneously embodying the ontological praxis upon which this (re)vision is based.[81] Exactly what this means and the way Nietzsche conducts this task will be the guiding interpretive hypothesis for this chapter. Put briefly, I will explore how Nietzsche's texts reveal a highly complex and novel accounting of the way human ontology and symbolic practice inter-relate and transfigure one another. At the core of this Nietzschean insight lies an intricate interlacing of rhetorical, psycho-social and life-world forces which I label onto-rhetoric.[82] To make clear what I am asserting, I will conduct a close reading of one of Nietzsche's early texts that was highly influenced by his study of ancient rhetoric. I will then use insights gathered from this reading to address a fundamental problem many critics have with Nietzsche's thought and texts, namely his seeming contradiction and inconsistency. Borrowing a key

metaphor from some of Nietzsche's contemporary followers, I will then explore and explain the way Nietzsche's seeming contradictions reflect an integral part of the onto-rhetoric which I take to be a fundamental theme operative in his texts.

A word of caution is in order. My intent here is not to tame and reduce Nietzsche's highly complex and polysemic thought. Interpreting Nietzsche foregrounds what Magnus, Stewart and Mileur call the contemporary "crisis" of "the inadequacy of current forms of humanistic knowledge acquisition, production, transmission, and dissemination" (1). Nietzsche's constant mixing of literary and philosophic disquisition makes him difficult to compartmentalize. Indeed, Nietzsche's frequent use of rhetorical styles and techniques frustrates the traditionally oriented philosophic critic who looks for the type of propositional rigor and solemnity of expression that expresses what Magnus, Stewart and Mileur call the "God's-eye-view to which philosophy aspires" (5). As such, Nietzsche's philosophy continually refuses the imprisoning and constraining linearly oriented logical constructs within which critical thinking has traditionally been conceived. In the end, the inconsistency and contradiction inherent within Nietzsche's ideas reflect an integral part of Nietzsche's profound understanding of the multiplicity of human experience. What I am after, then, is a way—a conceptual metaphor—that most directly respects and accounts for the manner the thought-forces within Nietzsche's thinking function and unfold. Through this journey I hope to add to our understanding of the reason why and way in which Plato and Nietzsche offer diametric solutions to the complex problematics that confront us as reflective beings engulfed in finitude. I will add more to this idea in Chapter Four.

In order to appreciate the way the Nietzsche conducts his (re)vision and transfiguration of the metaphysical, epistemological and ethical ideals represented by the Platonic notion of the discourse of philosophy as developed in Chapter Two, I will begin by tracing some of the rhetorical insights Nietzsche offers in his early essay "On Truth and Lying in an Extra-Moral Sense." As will be seen below, it was from his study of ancient Greek and Roman rhetoric that Nietzsche brought together many of the key themes

regarding the life-world shaping power of language and the anti-metaphysical perspectivism that permeate his later thought.

Nietzsche's Study of Ancient Rhetoric

For the purposes of this chapter, I interpret the fundamental thrust of Nietzsche's philosophic enterprise to deal with his conscious effort to unsettle and collapse the distinction between the discourses of philosophy and rhetoric which Plato fostered. As Gilman, Blair and Parent observe, "It is possible that Nietzsche, like the Sophists and the Italian humanists, has been responsible for a historical reversal of the intellectual status (or possible reunion) of these two historically competitive fields" (xii). Ijsseling is even more explicit in his assessment of the way Nietzsche's early dealings with the ancient Greek rhetoric impacted his later thought:

> Rhetoric has an extremely important role in Nietzsche's analysis of the structure of philosophy and the function of philosophic speech, in the genealogical detection of the factors responsible for the factum of philosophy and in the question of the precise nature of formulation and interpretation. One can even say that the problem of rhetoric as been a decisive influence on his thought and that much of his own "philosophical" terminology is derived from the classical rhetorical tradition. (106)

My approach to adumbrating the origins of Nietzsche's early thinking accords well with the philosophic method he pioneered. As has been well rehearsed by Foucault and others, cultural genealogy, or the tracing of the psycho-intellectual origins of ideas as a way to arrive at the underlying reason a particular socio-historical belief has been established, is fundamental to Nietzsche's approach to philosophy and human understanding. By highlighting the origin of some of Nietzsche's important beliefs in the way I propose here, I hope to enlarge our understanding of the larger onto-epistemological implications entailed in his understanding of the relationship between the rhetorical use of language and our life-world practice.

Nietzsche's Academic Rhetoric

At the age of twenty-four, Nietzsche began to teach classical philology at the University of Basel. From 1872 to 1873 he lectured on the History of Greek Rhetoric and taught a course on the History of Greek Literature, and in 1874 he prepared for another course to be taught on Rhetoric.[83] The density of analytic and historical detail contained in Nietzsche's lectures, notes and commentaries on ancient rhetoric reveals him to be a classical and philological scholar of great depth and breadth.[84] De Man, Lacoue-Labarthe and Behler have conducted extensive readings of these early Nietzsche commentaries on rhetoric and language and have paved the way for scholars interested in the connection between these early ideas and the insights Nietzsche offers regarding the ontological connection between rhetoric and life-world practice which he develops in his later more "mature" works.[85] My interpretation will continue in their vein. In short, what I want to explore is the way Nietzsche positions the discourse of rhetoric in these early lectures and course notes as a counter-position to the Socratic-Platonic discourse of philosophy. By discourse of rhetoric, I mean Nietzsche's insight into the all encompassing power of language to hold us within its symbolic web. In contrast to the other-worldly and self-transcending orientation of Socrates and Plato, which Brogan pithily highlights in the quotation above, Nietzsche maintains that we are inextricably bound within the confines of language.[86] According to Behler, there is "no point of reference prior to language and rhetoric" and "every assumed origin proves to be not originary, and representation always precedes presence" (8).[87] Put more simply, Nietzsche pioneered the contemporary lack of faith in metaphysical and extra-human epistemological guarantees. In Nietzsche's universe there are no preexisting metaphysical a prioris that allow us an ultimate vantage point from which to judge and determine truth claims. For Nietzsche, all knowledge is contextual and conditioned by our finitude. Nietzsche comments on this theme when he offers an explanation of his fable regarding the "clever animals" who "invented knowledge" at the opening of "On Truth and Lying in an Extra-Moral Sense":

how shadowy and fleeting, how purposeless and arbitrary the human

intellect appears within nature. There were eternities when it did not exist;

and someday when it no longer is there, not much will have changed. For

that intellect has no further mission leading beyond human life. It is utterly

human, and only its owner and producer takes it with such pathos as if the

whole world hinged upon it. (246)

It is this deflation of anthropocentric human epistemological arrogance that lies at

the center of Nietzsche's revaluation of language and rhetoric. As Nietzsche notes near the

beginning of his "Description of Ancient Rhetoric" lecture we "must have accurate

knowledge of the human soul and be acquainted with the effects of all forms of discourse

upon the human mind" (Friedrich Nietzsche on Rhetoric and Language 7 hereafter referred

to as F.N.R.L.). As Nietzsche notes further on in the lecture, "There is obviously no

unrhetorical 'naturalness' of language to which one could appeal; language is itself the

result of purely rhetorical arts" (F.N.R.L. 21). It is the implications of these Nietzschean

insights into the "effects" and "non-naturalness" of discourse which I will center upon in

this chapter. That is, I will examine the way Nietzsche's view of language and rhetoric

contributed to his understanding of the fictive and delusory power of human knowledge

construction and the way he employs these insights to dismantle the "anthropomorphic"

arrogance of philosophic discourse in general and Platonic metaphysics in particular.

Foundations Like Flowing Water—On Truth as Fiction

The key text that forms the basis for my analysis of Nietzsche's insight into rhetoric

has been translated into English as "On Truth and Lying in an Extra-Moral Sense"—

(hereafter referred to as "On Truth and Lying.")[88] This essay contains two parts and was

"dictated in the summer of 1873 on the basis of his lectures on rhetoric" (Behler 6).[89] As

Behler observes, Nietzsche's official academic dealing with Classical rhetoric entailed "two

lecture courses: one with a more historical orientation toward the rhetoric of the Greeks

and the Romans, and the other more of an exposition of classical rhetoric according to its

concept, division into branches, relationship to language, tropical expression, figures of speech, and so on" and formed the basis for Nietzsche's lectures of 1872-3 (6).[90]

Nietzsche's key point in "On Truth and Lying" runs directly counter to the Platonic vision that the rationally centered discourse of philosophy can deliver veridical certainty. In lieu of Plato's notion of "fixed" and unchanging realities that lie beyond the scope of arbitrary human construction and contingency, Nietzsche's early understanding of the rhetorical and creative nature of human symbolic activity centers on the "legislation of language" that "enacts the first laws of truth" ("On Truth and Lying" 247). The notion of "forgetfulness" plays a vital role in Nietzsche's symbolic economy where human beings misremember that they "perpetually exchange truths for illusions" (248).

Nietzsche's view of language at the beginning of this essay also seizes upon the bodily or physiological origin of truth and language—"What is a word? The portrayal of nerve stimuli in sounds" (248). The site of the body as the locus of language lies at the foundation of Nietzsche's symbolic economy. For Nietzsche, language is merely a physiological response to stimuli and does not harbor any non-natural dimensions or hidden truths. As Nietzsche proclaims, the "thing-in-itself" (which would be pure, disinterested truth) is absolutely incomprehensible to the creator of language and is thus not worth seeking. Viewed this way, language for Nietzsche is used for designation purposes in order to "arbitrarily" select, "delimit" and organize "the relations of things to men" (248). It is the metaphoric quality of this conceptual arranging power of language that most interests Nietzsche in this section. Like an empirical detective, Nietzsche focuses on the naturalistic forces at work in this process of using "the boldest metaphors" to fashion meaning: "First he ("Man") translates a nerve stimulus into an image! That is the first metaphor. Then the image must be reshaped into a sound! The second metaphor. And each time there is a complete overlapping of sphere—from one sphere to the center of a totally different, new one (248-9).

Although this may seem a simplistic behavioral reduction on Nietzsche's part, his insight can also be interpreted as a direct assault on the Platonic high-view of "truth" that ignores the body via an over-emphasis on reason and extra-worldly revelation. In other words, if, as Nietzsche puts forth in this section, words are merely conventional designators of corporeal responses to the world, then they become arbitrary "subjective stimulation(s)" (248) unconnected to any metaphysical or extra-human reality. As Nietzsche notes with typical hyperbole, "We arrange things by genders, we designate the tree (*der Baum*) as masculine, the plant (*die Pflanze*) as feminine: what arbitrary transferences! How far-flung beyond the canon of certitude!" (248).

The reduction of words to mere "sound-figures" vitiates, for Nietzsche, the possibility that language can transcend beyond itself to obtain knowledge of some non-arbitrary reality: "When we speak of trees, colors, snow, and flowers, we believe we know something about the things themselves, although what we have are just metaphors of things, which do not correspond at all to the original entities" (249). In keeping with the life-oriented themes contained in Nietzsche's later writings, he uses the organic example of a "leaf" to draw attention to the way "Every concept originates by the equation of the dissimilar" (249). What Nietzsche means by this is the convenient way we over-generalize from the "unique, absolutely individualized original experience" to "fit countless, more or less similar cases, which strictly speaking, are never identical, and hence absolutely dissimilar""(249). Nietzsche's implication of this process can be construed as a direct attack against the Socratic quest to determine the right definition of a general concept in so many of Plato's dialogues. The following passage from the Theaetetus can be read as representative of the Socratic-Platonic tendency to arrive at proper meaning through conceptual generalization:

> Socrates: You do not suppose a man can understand the name of a thing, when he does not know what the thing is?
>
> Theaetetus: Certainly not.

Socrates: Then, if he has no idea about knowledge, "knowledge about shoes" conveys nothing to him?

Theaetetus: No.

Socrates: "Cobblery," in fact, or the name of any other art has no meaning for anyone who has no conception of knowledge.

Theaetetus: That is so.

Socrates: Then, when we are asked what knowledge is, it is absurd to reply by giving the name of some art. The answer is "knowledge of so-and-so," but that was not what the question called for.

Theaetetus: So it seems.

Socrates: And besides, we are going an indeterminable way round, when our answer might be quite short and simple. In this question about clay, for instance, the simple and ordinary thing to say is that clay is earth mixed with moisture, never mind whose clay it may be.

Nietzsche's denial of the possibility for such generalized conceptual knowledge strikes at the heart of the Socratic-Platonic epistemology that continually seeks to align words with their right objects. Indeed, the entire thrust of Nietzsche's approach to language in this essay can be construed as an overt attack on the idea that words must conform to pre-existing realities that determine their correct usage. In his later thought Nietzsche attacks the way philosophers have used conceptual generalizations to deaden response to vital life-forces he celebrates. The following passage from the "Reason in Philosophy" section of Twilight of the Idols is illustrative of this theme: "All that philosophers have handled for thousands of years have been concept-mummies; nothing real escaped their grasp alive. When these honorable idolators of concepts worship something, they kill it; they threaten the life of everything they worship" (1).[91]

Nietzsche also offers the example of the concept of "honesty"—a virtue in keeping with the ethical interests of Socrates and Plato—in this passage. The use of this moral

laden word coupled with Nietzsche's avowal that "nature knows no forms" and that the "distinction between individual and species is anthropomorphic and does not stem from the essence of things" can be further read to re-enforce Nietzsche's raid against the principles of language that undergird the discourse of philosophy which Socrates and Plato champion.

In the next section, Nietzsche calls truth a "mobile army of metaphors, metonyms, anthropomorphims" ("On Truth and Lying" 250). The idea of truth having mobility is in direct contrast to the fixed and stable understanding of truth as envisioned in Plato's dialogues. Nietzsche attaches the discourses of rhetoric and poetic to this idea of the "movable" nature of truth as he focuses on the way truth becomes "adorned" and "heightened" in its capacity to seem "solid, canonical, and binding to a nation" (250). In doing so, Nietzsche fuses a number of counter-Platonic notions. In a bevy of his dialogues, Plato devotes a number of significant passages to the task of refuting the discourses of rhetoric and poetry, both of which prey upon the ability of language to be ambiguous and unconstrained. Given the rhetorical emphasis of this essay, I will focus on only the former.[92]

The Gorgias is a good example of the way Socrates engages in intellectual battle with the famous rhetoricians of his day. As outlined in Chapter Two, in this dialogue, Plato positions the superiority of the discourse of philosophy over the discourse of rhetoric.[93] In a key passage, Socrates maintains that rhetoric acts like "cookery" and "beautification" in its ability to cater to the bodily dimensions of human experience. In this capacity, rhetoric becomes a "mischievous, deceitful, mean and ignoble activity" which "cheats" both those who use it and are influenced by it (465B). The root of this deception lies in rhetoric's ability to become caught up in the realm of "shapes and colors" or appearance (465B) because it deals with belief and opinion (*doxa*) which are particularistic, contingent, and local.[94] In contrast to rhetoric, philosophy, for Socrates and Plato, is art or *techne* that best allows the seeker after truth to discern the difference between true knowledge and that which is temporal and prone to deception. Such knowledge (*episteme*)

for Plato is that which is rational, unchanging and universal and is thus superior to the type

of knowledge (*doxa*) that rhetoric delivers. Rhetoric thus becomes, for Plato, the lesser

"routine" that indulges the world of semblance, pleasure, and political and social gain,

while philosophy and dialectic become the epitome of discourse dedicated to the pursuit of

truth, knowledge and that which is non-contingent.

Nietzsche is well aware that Plato's differentiation between appearance and reality,

truth and falseness, and *episteme* and *doxa* hinges upon the possibility that such distinctions

actually do exist.[95] As highlighted above, the fundamental theme of "On Truth and Lying"

has been to exalt the naturalistic and constructive power of rhetoric (qua language) while

undermining the foundations upon which Plato's metaphysical schema depends. Nietzsche

further capitalizes on the Platonic disdain for rhetoric when he employs the metaphor of a

coin to point out the way Platonically inherited truths are "worn-out metaphors without

sensory impact" ("On Truth and Lying" 250). As expressed in a number of Plato's

dialogues, e.g., Meno 90D-E and 94C-D, Apology 31B5, it was important for Socrates

that he did not take money for his teaching and philosophic services.[96] Nietzsche's use of

this money metaphor can also be viewed as a direct allusion to this Socratic concern. The

interpretive capital embodied in money as a symbol of both personal gain and worldly

corruption is in direct contrast to the other-worldly moral purity that Socrates and Plato

proclaim. Nietzsche's use of this image is a masterful handling of symbolical and rhetorical

compression to make his point against what he considers to be the artificial distinctions

generated by Plato's epistemology.

Continuing in this vein, Nietzsche pursues his multiple assault on the principles

underlying the philosophy of Socrates and Plato. Following the coin metaphor, Nietzsche

further unsettles confidence in the moral "obligation" with "respect to truth" that arises

when words and concepts have an ethical and ideological attachment to reality ("On Truth

and Lying" 250). Here Nietzsche attacks both rationality and the stoic-like denial of

human feelings and emotions that the Platonically influenced philosopher must employ in

the quest for truth: "As a 'rational' being, he now puts his actions under the rule of abstractions; he no longer lets himself be carried away by sudden impressions, by intuitions; he first universalizes these impressions into less colorful, cooler concepts, in order to hitch the wagon of his life and actions to them" (250).

Nietzsche equates this "rule of abstractions" as the motive factor that leads to domination and subordination and the building up of "pyramidal order according to castes and classes, a new world of laws, privileges, subordinations, boundary determinations" that produce a "regulatory and imperative world" (250). In keeping with the theme at hand, it takes little stretch of the imagination to see, in this passage, Nietzsche's allusion to Plato's Republic—the paragon of a new world order based on well regulated and codified laws and "subordinations." This excerpt can also be interpreted as a reference to Socrates assertion, in the Gorgias, that rhetoric partakes of "flattery and shameful mob appeal" (Gorgias 503A) while philosophy and dialectic are reserved for the elite who can follow reason and deny their corporeal passions. Viewed this way, Nietzsche's defense of the rhetoric of discourse undercuts both the substance and method of Plato's politics.

As revealed in Chapter Two, Plato's dialogues also contain numerous allusions to mathematics as the human discourse that most closely approximates the grasp of truth which philosophy delivers, e.g. (Philebus 56D-E).[97] Nietzsche accosts this cherished Platonic notion in the next part of this section when he likens the "great structure" of rational concepts to the "rigid regularity of a Roman columbarium" that "has an aura of that severity and coldness typical of mathematics" ("On Truth and Lying" 250-1). Nietzsche's image of a columbary, which was used in ancient times to store the ashes of cremated bodies, adds a further connotative dimension to the denial of corporeal life that he takes Socratic-Platonic philosophy to represent in the Birth of Tragedy and other later works, e.g.,: "They, however, thought that the senses might lure them away from their own world, from the cold realm of "ideas," to some dangerous southern island where they

feared that their philosopher's virtues might melt away like snow in the sun" (Gay Science 372).[98]

The origins of perspectivism—which Nietzsche fully develops later in his philosophy as a contrast and counter-move to the Platonic epistemological absolutism of "pure knowledge"—can also be found in this early text. Nietzsche's perspectivism holds that because there are no ultimate metaphysical realities there can be no ultimate epistemological guarantees. It is important to note that this does not mean that there cannot be any verifiable knowledge or truth claims. In Nietzsche's epistemology there may be better or worse knowledge assertions such as the empirically verifiable condition as to whether it is or is not raining outside the window now. What concerns Nietzsche is the metaphysical status and extrapolation of truth and knowledge that enables the philosopher to obtain a transcendental vantage point that trumps and/or abolishes all doubt and uncertainty among competing cultural and historical truth-claims. Nietzsche highlights this point when he notes the multiple and limited nature of knowledge acts both within and across culture groups and historical moments: "As the Romans and Etruscans carved up the sky into rigid mathematical sectors and assigned a god to each delimited space as in a temple, so every nation has such a mathematically divided conceptual sky above it and understands by the demand for truth that each conceptual god must be sought in his own sphere" ("On Truth and Lying" 251).[99]

Nietzsche uses the metaphor of "a mathematically divided conceptual sky" to draw attention to the "architectural genius" man exhibits as he "succeeds in building an infinitely complicated conceptual cathedral on foundations that move like flowing water" (251). It is not hard to find, within this metaphor, a reference to Heraclitus' notion of the fluidity of becoming, i.e., " a person can never step in the same river twice." As Nietzsche notes in the "Reason in Philosophy" passage of Twilight of the Idols, Heraclitus, whose emphasis on becoming, "multiplicity and change" is the antithesis of Plato's ontology, and is the only

Western philosopher he exempts from "the philosophic folk" who "rejected the testimony of the senses" (2).

Nietzsche's later, more mature, rejection of the Platonic ideal of universal all-encompassing and binding truth can also be found in this essay. In the next section Nietzsche posits that "'truth' within the rational sphere" is "anthropomorphic through and through" and "contains not a single point that would be 'true in itself,' real, and universally valid, apart from man" ("On Truth and Lying" 251). Nietzsche's assertion that the "investigator" of truth "is basically seeking the metamorphosis of the world into man" can also be read as a a swipe at another fundamental tenet of Plato's philosophy. When Nietzsche equates such a seeker to be like an "astrologer" who both "observes the whole world as linked with man" and maintains that the world is "a reproduction and copy of an archetype, man" (251), it is not hard to envision that he has in mind Plato's view of the cosmological link between human reason and the fundamental operation of the universe. The following illustration from the Timaeus is but one of many such "anthropomorphic" projections to which Nietzsche may have alluded—

> Now when the creator had framed the soul according to his will, he formed
>
> within her the corporeal universe, and brought the two together and united
>
> them center to center. The soul interfused everywhere from the center to
>
> the circumference of heaven, of which also she is the external envelopment,
>
> herself turning within herself, began a divine beginning of never-ceasing
>
> and rational life enduring throughout all time. (36E)

It is not that Nietzsche denies Protagoras' "man measure" doctrine—a foundational principle for the discourse of rhetoric. Indeed, Nietzsche explicitly states that it is not this doctrine that concerns him but the fact that human rationality thinks that "pure objects" or first principles that the mind fashions actually exist external to "man's" creation (F.N.R.L. 252).

Nietzsche next offers another direct allusion to Plato's Republic. Here Nietzsche inverts the Platonic epistemological schema of the cave when he recasts conceptual and transcendental realities as the "hardening and rigidification of the mass of images that originally gushed forth as hot magma out of the primeval faculty of human fantasy" ("On Truth and Lying" 252). In other words, Plato's Forms, or the "highest" rigidly unchanging reality, become reduced for Nietzsche, to the lowest or "primeval" source from which the "artistically creative subject" fashions the meaning that lends "calm, security, and consistency" to his or her existence (252). That is, the over-arching stability of the Forms, anaesthetizes the seeker after truth by granting a false complacency or "calm security" that disregards the "volcanic" forces of conflict that lie at the base existence. Viewed in this Nietzschean light, Plato's forms become as deceptive as the false shadows on the cave they seek to replace. Nietzsche completes his reversal of Plato's Allegory of the Cave when he conceives of true liberation as the "escape" from the "prison walls of this belief" in self-existing transcendental realities (252).

However, lest he fall into a simplistic polar reaction to Plato's metaphysical schema, Nietzsche searches for what he calls a "middle" way between the "different spheres" of the "absurdity" of "right perception" and the "seductions" of "appearance" (252). I say "searches" because at this early stage of his thinking, Nietzsche admits that the best he can offer is a "stammering translation" of an interstial sphere between "subject" and "object" that can have no "expression" (252). Nietzsche's inability to arrive at what this reality may be can also be viewed as a conscious contrast with Plato's assertion that he knows the ultimate objects of truth and knowing.[100]

As he nears the end of Section I of his essay, Nietzsche returns to the physiological imagery and explanation of the "nerve stimulus" which he employs at the beginning. This, too, can be read as a denial of both the process and substance of Plato's philosophy of discourse. Where Plato posits rational discussion qua dialectic and intuitive *gnosis* as the primary means for apprehending the Forms or ultimate principles of existence, Nietzsche is

content with a simple physiological explanation. In this way, Nietzsche seeks to continually deny the possibility of other-worldly realities by grounding human experience and understanding in the palpable here and now.

Here, too, Nietzsche reasserts his belief in perspectivism to circumvent deceptive universalizing concepts like "natural law" (253). The use of the images of "bird," "worm" and "plant" in the following passage represent the range of high, low and normal viewpoints that comprise the spectrum of human vision and work to deflate any supra-creaturely conception human beings (and philosophers) may have of themselves:

> Against this reasoning, the following can be said: if we had, each taken singly, a varying sensory perception, we could see now like a bird, now like a worm, now like a plant; or if one of us saw the same stimulus as red, another as blue, while a third heard it even as a sound, then no one would speak of a regularity of nature, but they would grasp it as only a subjective formation. (253)

Nietzsche concludes Part One by drawing attention to the principle of circularity and endless repetition which he will later make famous in his principle of "eternal return." In Nietzsche's epistemological schema, no "effect" can ever be isolated but always partakes in an endless series of "relations" that "always refer back to one another and are absolutely incomprehensible to us in their essence" (253). Nietzsche is ever sensitive to the overlooked and hidden complexities that abstract and logical propositions frequently conceal.

Part Two of "On Truth and Lying" primarily functions as a recap of Nietzsche's rhetorically oriented counter-move to the discourse of philosophy which Socrates and Plato champion. Nietzsche opens this section with a metaphor that compares the use of language and science to the work of bees who busy themselves with diligent but ultimately unproductive work (254). Following this, Nietzsche elaborates upon a theme that he hinted at in Part One, namely, that of dreams, dreaming and dreamers. For Nietzsche, the

"drive to form metaphors"—that "fundamental desire in man" for meaning—produces

what he deems a "rigid new world" that becomes a "prison fortress" for creative thinkers

and thus functions to goad them to seek "a new province" for "its activities" (254). Myth

and art become, for Nietzsche, the primary ways that "tear" apart the "rigidly regular web

of concepts" of the "wideawake person" (254). Nietzsche likens this process to dreams

and dreaming where "anything is possible" (255) and uses this image as a displacement of

the rational self-control which Socrates and Plato uphold as the epitome of proper

philosophic comportment.

Nietzsche again inverts Plato's philosophic system in the next section, when he re-

defines the notion of deception. In diametric opposition to Plato's epistemological

hierarchy in the Republic, Nietzsche avers that it is the "intellect" and the concepts of

reason and not the perceptions of the human senses that are the true "masters of deception"

("On Truth and Lying" 255). This is the climax toward which Nietzsche's essay has built.

In this final move he drives a stake into the heart of Platonic philosophy and in doing so

finishes the metaphysical and epistemological murder he set out to accomplish in this essay.

In other words, if reason and sensation are both equal forms of deception, then the

philosopher has no ultimate grounds by which to mount his or her truth-claims.[101]

Finally, Nietzsche concludes his essay with what appears to be both a prediction

and a challenge that will guide him through his future writing and philosophical thinking.

Unlike the "poor man" who "clings for dear life" to the "enormous structure of beams and

boards" of the concepts that give meaning to his life, the "liberated intellect" sees these

props for what they truly are, that is, "just a scaffolding and plaything for his boldest

artifices" (255). It is "intuition" and not science or reason that, for Nietzsche, will lead to

the realm of "forbidden metaphors and unheard of conceptual compounds" (256). In

contrast to what Nietzsche calls the "stoic person" who is "guided by concepts and

abstractions" and "controls himself by reason," the "intuitive man" "suffers more violently

when he does suffer" yet "reaps from his intuitions a continuously streaming clarification,

cheerfulness, redemption" (256). In this passage, Nietzsche seems to foretell the painful and lonely life he will experience in his pursuit of a radically honest life without the comforts and buffers that metaphysical guarantees, abstractions, and guidelines offer. Nietzsche symbolizes this type of heroic thinker—who has broken through the deceptions of what he will later call the "herd" mentality—at the close of his essay when he employs the image of a man wrapped in an overcoat who "walks away" under the rains of a "storm cloud" (257).

In summary, I have looked at the way Nietzsche's early understanding of ancient Greek and Roman rhetoric influenced him greatly, especially in regard to his anti-Platonism. I have chosen to focus on the division between the discourses of philosophy and rhetoric in Nietzsche and Plato's thought because it most acutely reveals the reason why these two highly influential thinkers form an unbridgeable gulf in their approach to the riddles of existence. In doing so, I have also attempted to genealogically explore how the early study of ancient rhetoric exerted a profound and powerful influence on Nietzsche's philosophy. In championing and constructing the discourse of rhetoric over the Platonic discourse of philosophy, Nietzsche pioneered the radical linguistic and perspectival turn currently so popular in Continental philosophy. To understand this Platonic/Nietzschean separation between the discourse of philosophy and the discourse of rhetoric is to go a long way toward appreciating some of the reasons for the fundamental difference between the metaphysics of certainty that has informed traditional Platonically-influenced Western philosophical inquiry and the epistemological and ethical indeterminacy that characterizes much of contemporary philosophic thinking since the time of Nietzsche. As will be seen below, the seeds for many of Nietzsche's later key ideas such as perspectivism and anti-metaphysicalism can be found in his early appreciation of rhetoric as a master discourse that infuses all human symbolic activity.

Having thus briefly explored the way the discourse of rhetoric functions for Nietzsche as an inescapable part of human knowledge production in his early thinking, I

will now concentrate on the way this discourse informs his mature understanding of the relationship between language and life-world experience. To accomplish this task I will examine how Nietzsche's perspectivism incorporates his rhetorical understanding of the way ontology and symbolic activity infuse each other.

Nietzsche's Interfusing of Thinking and Being—the Untamable Life-Force

A number of recent authors have claimed that there is an underlying "core" (Freeman 3), "unity" (Richardson 3), "system" (Tanesini 548), "coherency" (Alan White 6) "consistency" (Williams 119) or "principle concern" (Sleinis ii) to what Winchester calls "the bewildering plethora of voices, literary creations, styles and mythical settings" (ix) one encounters when one reads Nietzsche. Some writers are more cautious but nevertheless open to the possibility that "there is more structure in Nietzsche's work than generally meets the eye" (Winchester 2). Nietzsche himself seems to support such assertions of a fundamental unity underlying his thinking when he writes that the ideas expressed in his earlier works are "the same ideas" which he hopes have become "riper, clearer, stronger, and more perfect" in his later work:

> That I still cleave to them today, however, that they have become in the
> meantime more and more firmly attached to one another, indeed
> intertwined and interlaced with one another, strengthens my joyful
> assurance that they might have risen in me from the first not as isolated,
> capricious, or sporadic things but from a common root, from a fundamental
> will of knowledge, pointing imperiously into the depths, speaking more and
> more precisely, demanding greater and greater precision (Genealogy of
> Morals 452).

However, upon closer inspection, such claims of cohesion to Nietzsche's thought begin to lose their firm conviction. Karl Jaspers posits that Nietzsche is fraught with irreconcilable contradictions (10), while Kaufmann points out how Nietzsche did not have much regard for "terminological consistency" (85) and Richardson admits he bases much of

his insights and assertions about the "concealed core" within "the mature Nietzsche's writings" on Nietzsche's unpublished notes (the *Nachlass*) and the questionable premise that Nietzsche's "deep structural unity" is based upon an "unconscious process" which "is best left in that implicitness" (8-9).[102]

Nietzsche himself seems to contradict his own claim in the Genealogy of Morals passage cited above when, in Maxim and Arrow # 26 of Twilight of the Idols, he writes, "I mistrust all systematizers and I avoid them. The will to a system is a lack of integrity." Indeed, as Nietzsche notes in Beyond Good and Evil, the thrust of his philosophy can be reduced to the utter rejection and disdain for any metaphysical systemization that "tyrannically" seeks to create "the world in its own image" (I 9), especially those systems such as Christianity and Platonism that have prevented Western philosophy from engaging in the new adventure and orientation he seeks to champion.

Even Nietzsche's notion of the will to power—the one constant that many critics agree seems to unify his writings—loses its unifying capacity when he proclaims: "Supposing that this also is only interpretation—and you will be eager enough to make this objection?—well, so much the better" (Beyond Good and Evil I 22). However, Nietzsche seems to contradict this position a short while later, in the same text, when he reduces the world and its "intelligible character" to "nothing else" than the will to power:

> Suppose, finally, we succeed in explaining our entire instinctive life as the development and ramification of one basic form of the will—namely, of the will to power, as my proposition has it; suppose all organic functions could be traced back to this will to power and one could also find in it the solution of the problem of procreation and nourishment—it is one problem—then one would have gained the right to determine all efficient force univocally as—will to power. The world viewed from inside, the world defined and determined according to its "intelligible character"—it would be "will to power" and nothing else. (II 36)

Hatab attributes Nietzsche's seeming lack of interpretive consistency and "hardened 'convictions'" to his "experimental attitude with truthfulness" and Nietzsche's awareness of the "performative contradictions" and "self-referential limitations" inherent in his radical perspectivism (Democracy 150-51).[103] In other words, Nietzsche acknowledges that all truth claims, including his own, are self-limited perspectives. Poellner sums up this conflicting array of Nietzschean views and counter-views when he observes that "even if one ignores Nietzsche's provocative and rhetorically overstated paradoxes (e.g. to the effect that all our knowledge is false), there still seems to remain a plethora of contradictions and confusions in his statements on just about any issue" (2).

What I will investigate in this section is that the confusing array of interpretations and oppositional thinking Nietzsche's thought generates among his critics and the seeming contradictions and inconsistencies in his texts are part of a larger discourse move on Nietzsche's part. What I hope to reveal is that Nietzsche's discourse move enables his thought to harbor both substantive and procedural contradictions and oppositions without succumbing to a sheer relativism and illogicality that vitiates all knowledge claims.[104] As will be pointed out below, what appears to be contradiction, inconsistency and confusion on Nietzsche's part is not only appropriate but is essential to "understanding" what Nietzsche is about. This is a radical claim but then again Nietzsche is a radical writer.

What I propose, then, is that what appears to be inconsistency and contradiction in Nietzsche's thought is actually the manifestation of his novel approach to human thought and existence. A close examination of Nietzsche's writings reveals that he is an author who seeks to maximize the hermeneutical possibilities and oppositions inherent in human living. The discourse of rhetoric, which I take to deeply inform his texts, frees Nietzsche from the externally and a priorily imposed constructs which he claims Platonic metaphysics generates. As will be shown, Nietzsche embraces a rhetorically-imbued vitalistic view of existence that grants more freedom for naturalistic—qua non-metaphysical—impulses and forces to hold sway within the human sphere.

As one who consciously and constantly conceives of himself as a "new" thinker ushering in a "novel" metaphysical-shattering approach to life, Nietzsche developed a philosophic style and outlook that broke all the traditional discourse rules that had dominated Western philosophy since the time of Socrates and Plato. What I hope to show, in the remaining part of this chapter, is that the radical innovativeness of Nietzsche's conjunction of rhetoric and ontology demands that we read and interpret his writings in a different way—a way that allows for the simultaneous conjunction of contradiction and consistency, unity and disunity and "system" and chaos. In short, Nietzsche's thoughts and writings express a novel rhetorical and ontological logic that mirrors the operation of the life-forces which he seeks to describe and interpret. To understand what is meant by this, it is necessary to look at and listen closely to his writings. To help accomplish this undertaking I will borrow the notion of rhizome, from Deleuze and Guattari. This conceptual trope can go a long way toward making sense of what Nietzsche is up to in his frequently enigmatic employment of the discourse of rhetoric that I will explicate.[105]

Rhizomorphic Textuality

In their Introduction to A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia, Giles Deleuze and Felix Guattari highlight the dynamic "assemblage" of conflicting forces operating in the authoring and manifestation of any text:

> In a book, as in all things, there are lines of articulation or segmentarity,
> strata and territories; but also lines of flight, movements of
> deterritorialization and destratification. Comparative rates of flow on these
> lines produce phenomena of relative slowness and viscosity, or, on the
> contrary, of acceleration and rupture. All this, lines and measurable speeds,
> constitutes an *assemblage*. (4-5)

Borrowing from the realm of botany, Deleuze and Guattari use the metaphor of a rhizome to capture the multiplicitous dynamic of forces inherent in any textual event. Unlike the "arborescent" representational models of "tree" or "root"—as commonly used

in biology, linguistics, psychoanalysis and philosophy—which "hierarchize," centralize, control and distribute experience "along a genetic axis" within a "syntagmatic structure," (Deleuze and Guattari Plateaus 12), a rhizome is non-linear and non-binary. Deleuze and Guattari define a rhizome—which "assumes very diverse forms, from ramified surface extension in all directions to concretion into bulbs and tubers," such as "potatoe(s) and couchgrass" (7)—as a "network of finite automata" (18) which have "neither beginning nor end, but always a middle (milieu) from which it grows and which it overspills" (21). Unlike the metaphors of tree and root, a rhizome "connects any point to any other point" and "constitutes linear multiplicities with *n* dimensions having neither subject or object, which can be laid out on a plane of consistency" (21). Put more simply, rhizomes for Deleuze and Guattari, have no "structural destiny" which demand they conform to a priori or teleological laws (14) and are thus "reducible neither to the One nor the multiple" (21). According to Deleuze and Guattari, a rhizome reconfigures the verb to be into a process of perpetual becoming that "has no beginning or end; it is always in the middle, between things, interbeing, *intermezzo*" (25). Deleuze and Guattari like the rhizomorphic metaphor because it captures the unpredictable and uncontrollable way life concatenates and unfolds as a "radical-chaosmos rather than root-cosmos" (6). In their view, rhizomorphism has the ability to de-center language "onto other dimensions and registers" (8) and to destabilize the tyrannical tendencies to which the root and tree metaphors are prone (17).[106]

In light of Nietzsche's strong emphasis on the naturalistic forces and dynamics of existence, I find this understanding of the rhizome to be helpful in grasping the way his texts behave.[107] Indeed, Nietzsche's conception of the mutable nature of "things" seems to comport in many ways with Deleuze and Guattari's notion of the rhizome as indicated in the following passage from the Genealogy of Morals:

> the entire history of a "thing," an organ, a custom can in this way be a
> continuous sign-chain of ever new interpretations and adaptations whose
> causes do not even have to be related to one another but, on the contrary,

in some cases succeed and alternate with one another in a purely chance

fashion. The "evolution" of a thing, a custom, an organ is thus by no

means its *progressus* toward a goal, even less a logical *progressus* by the

shortest route and with the smallest expenditure of force—but a succession

of more or less profound, more or less mutually independent processes of

subduing, plus the resistances they encounter, the attempts at

transformation for the purpose of defense and reaction, and the results of

successful counteractions,. The form is fluid, but the "meaning" is even

more so. (II 12)

As will be seen below, Nietzsche's texts incorporate such a "fluid" form of what

can be called "rhizomorphic rhetoric," that is, a style of thought and technique that mirrors

and imitates the very process of the life-forces which he celebrates. By this is meant that

Nietzsche's thought and texts embody the dynamic interplay of the convergence and

divergence of the chaos and order which he takes to operate at the center of life. As I hope

to show below, it is around this insight that Nietzsche's rhetorical philosophy gathers itself

as a dynamic process that allows for the simultaneous expression of contradiction and

consistency.

Orchestrated Disorientation

As revealed above, Nietzsche's style and content attack a number of the primary

and fundamental ways that Plato, and Western thinkers influenced by him, have

traditionally structured their conceptions of existence. That is, he radically questions the

ways metaphysical realities, cognitive representations, normative values and the site of

rational consciousness are legitimized and taken for granted. As is his habit, Nietzsche

pithily strikes at such cognitive foundations when he exposes the precarious and unstable

nature of the human subject who legitimates what is and is not truth-functional: "the

standard by which we measure our own being is not an unalterable magnitude, we are

subject to moods and fluctuations, and yet we would have to know ourselves as a fixed

standard to be able justly to assess the relation between our self and anything else whatever" (Human All Too Human I 32).

As revealed in the previous analysis of "On Truth and Lying," Nietzsche also questions the complex ways metaphysical and epistemological "fictions" overlap and create a sense that there is an objective foundation to reality that can be discovered and known by the reasoning agent:

> For just as the popular mind separates the lightning from its flash and takes the latter for an action, for the operation of a subject called lightning, so popular morality also separates strength from expressions of strength, as if there were a neutral substratum behind the strong man, which was free to express strength or not to do so. But there is no substratum; there is no "being" behind doing, effecting, becoming; "the doer" is merely a fiction added to the deed—the deed—is everything. (Genealogy of Morals I 13)

In mounting these metaphysical and epistemological foundation-shaking claims, Nietzsche seeks to destabilize and unsettle what he takes to be the main "fictive" constructions of the world upon which Western philosophy has grounded itself.[108] Nietzsche considers what Zeitlin calls "the system-building philosophies of the past" (8) as misguided because they seek the seat of truth and reality in the realm of metaphysics. For Nietzsche, such metaphysical considerations are always "anti-life," that is, they displace emphasis on natural instincts and the things of this world in favor of the "eternal" verities of logic, reason, and transcendent truth. In Nietzsche's view, it is Socrates and Plato who most perfectly represent this desire to castrate the "creative-affirmative force" and impulses of the life-instinct by a "hypertrophy" which excessively privileges "the logical nature" (Birth of Tragedy 88). It is this displacement of the life-instinct into the "death-leap" of bourgeois and philosophic mediocrity (Birth of Tragedy 91) that infuriates Nietzsche and incites his attack against the anti-life metaphysics and morality of Platonism and the Judeo-Christian religions. Nietzsche—through the persona of Zarathustra—embraces the

"earth"—in contrast to transcendental realms of being and truth—as the only legitimate site of knowledge, morality and ontology:

> Remain faithful to the earth, my brothers, with the power of your virtue.
> Let your gift-giving love and your knowledge serve the meaning of the
> earth. Thus I beg and beseech you. Do not let them fly away from earthly
> things and beat with their wings against eternal walls. Alas, there has
> always been so much virtue that has flown away. Lead back to the earth
> the virtue that flew away, as I do—back to the body, back to life, that it
> may give the earth a meaning, a human meaning. (Thus Spoke Zarathustra
> I "On the Gift Giving Virtue" 2)

For Nietzsche, this new orientation gets succinctly encapsulated in the phrase "God is Dead" (Thus Spoke Zarathustra Prologue 2). Without the metaphysical and epistemological lodestars, comforts and assurances afforded by a Supreme Being, Nietzsche focuses his attention on the realm of the "earthly" qua phenomenal sphere of becoming and change. It is this categorical abandonment of all first principles that makes Nietzsche so radically different from Plato. It is also from this position that the bulk of Nietzsche's innovative and radical themes find their origin, especially his constant insistence on perspectivism and the creation of meaning. Without a primary ground or foundational depth beyond the mere processes and appearances of becoming, there can be no one correct assertion of "truth," reality or morality.[109] We are thus left to fashion our own meaning constructs, e.g., "The fundamental laws of self-preservation and growth demand the opposite—that everyone invent his own virtue, his own categorical imperative" (The AntiChrist 11). This orientation toward creative multi-perspectivism partly accounts for some of Nietzsche's inconsistencies given that he intentionally employs a rhetorical method that "deals with contradiction and criticism only as a means" (Twilight of the Idols I "What Germans Lack" 6). Nietzsche very much enjoys playing one view or position against another in order to disrupt and unsettle any epistemological confidence that would

ossify the creative antagonisms he so dearly champions. Put alternatively, human discourse, for Nietzsche, must mirror the ontological life processes he expounds. This insight helps account for the reason Nietzsche sometimes supports a position he has refuted previously in order to undermine a concept he is presently attacking.[110]

Nietzsche conceives of the role of the philosopher as a "Man Alone With Himself" (Human All Too Human I 483-638) who must disrupt all sedimented convictions given that they "are more dangerous enemies of truth than lies" (I 483). Much of Nietzsche's polemical passion gets vented against the dominant philosophic, religious and moral beliefs which he found constraining and anathematic to the life-force he treasures. Nietzsche aims his rhetorical will at a number of these crucial conceptual sites and in doing so radically challenges the dominant traditional conventions that seek to buttress our comfortable constructions of text, morality, world, and self. Nietzsche continually seeks to unsettle all metaphysical and epistemological assurances and certainty in order to provoke his readers to cast-off the moral and conceptual shackles that dull, deaden and prevent the multifaceted and agonistic forces of earthly life from unfolding.

In short, Nietzsche spends much of his enormous intellectual energy railing against and attempting to dismantle the metaphysics of religion, reason and other-worldly orientations that choke the life-impulses and wither the authentic "creative-affirmative" "instincts." However, several important questions haunt this Promethean endeavor. If Nietzsche undermines all confidence in the metaphysical models and epistemological methods of philosophic thought, style and decorum that help to reify the authority of the human subject as a truth-establishing agent, how can Nietzsche himself make a truth-claim worth considering? Put otherwise, having incapacitated the possibility for firm and consistent onto-epistemological criteria such as God, Reason and Being to ultimately ground, and therefore really determine what is good and bad, right and wrong, correct and incorrect, how can Nietzsche, or anybody, make a positive knowledge claim? From whence arises his, or any, propositional authority? Another important question follows

from this crucial problem, that is, what prevents a sense of futility and meaninglessness from enervating Nietzsche's project? If there are no "truth" guarantees, realities and guidelines why should someone stake a committed stance in the face of the lack of purpose and meaning that surrounds human existence? Put succinctly, how does Nietzsche avoid nihilism? To answer these vital questions, it is important to understand the way Nietzsche combines his understanding of rhetoric and ontology and the way this fusion synthesizes what Habermas would call the "performative contradictions" and paradoxes these questions raise.

Rhizomorphic Rhetoric

Nietzsche is no sheer relativist. Even though there are no extra-worldly guarantees to anchor his beliefs, Nietzsche is neither nihilistic nor non-moral.[111] As noted above, Nietzsche derives his morality from the natural realm of appearance and the dynamic life-processes inherent in the way things are. This is why Nietzsche embraces the surface of things. There are no hidden depths, no "eternal core of things," no "thing-in-itself," only the domain of earthly becoming. However, this emphasis on non-transcendental or ontological finitude is not value-less, for Nietzsche. It is not without prejudicial force and meaning.

Early on in his thinking, as documented in The Birth of Tragedy, Nietzsche saw in the tragic understanding of the ancient Greeks guiding principles he could seize upon. In place of the traditional transcendental guarantees that "God" and other Theo-centric metaphysical concepts offer, Nietzsche substitutes the primordial *agon* of the Apollinian and Dionysian forces in nature and art as the "transfiguring mirror" that allows the creative "overman" to justify and control his or her existence. As Nietzsche notes: "The Greek knew and felt the terror and horror of existence. That he might endure this terror at all, he had to impose between himself and life the radiant dreambirth of the Olympians" (Birth of Tragedy Section 3: 42). In other words, according to Nietzsche the ancient Greeks had to create gods to interpose between themselves and the tragic forces at play in the world

around them. As Nietzsche puts it the "highest effect of Apollinian culture" is that it "triumphed over an abysmal and terrifying view of the world and the keenest susceptibility to suffering through recourse to the most forceful and pleasurable illusions" (Section 3: 43).

In Nietzsche's view, without such a psycho-aesthetic buffer the ancient Greeks could not face the sheer rawness of suffering and pain which enveloped their lives. As developed in The Birth of Tragedy both the "gods" and "art" gave the necessary meaning via explanations needed to face the horrible sufferings and calamities the ancient Greeks witnessed and experienced. In doing so they enabled the Greeks to both make sense out of the chaotic and painful flux of the world and also to endure it. Viewed this way, aesthetic creativity in general, and Attic tragedy in particular, most directly mirror the dynamic forces of nature and are thus better suited than reason—as embodied in Socratic metaphysics—as the necessary buffer we need to protect ourselves from the harshness and meaninglessness of existence.[112] According to Nietzsche:

> The metaphysical comfort—with which, I am suggesting even now, every tragedy leaves us—that life is at the bottom of things, despite all the changes of appearances, indestructibly powerful and pleasurable—this comfort appears in incarnate clarity in the chorus of satyrs, a chorus of natural beings who live ineradicably, as it were, behind all civilization and remain eternally the same, despite the changes of generations and of the history of nations (Birth of Tragedy Section 7).

In Nietzsche's world, creativity becomes the "saving sorceress, expert at healing" which "knows how to turn these nauseous thoughts about the horror or absurdity of existence into notions with which one can live" (Birth of Tragedy Section: 60) and thus serves as a deep and necessary component of human experience.

As his philosophy matured, Nietzsche continued to return to the Greeks for the fundamental principles around which he could organize his thinking. Both the concepts of

agon and creativity as the "ineradicably" enduring life-affirming response to the confusions and pangs of finitude become re-fined in his notion of the will to power. If, as Nietzsche maintains, both nature and art harbor the contradictory agonistic forces of construction and destruction, then it becomes existentially warranted to initiate and imitate this process in the realm of human affairs. The will to power becomes the ultimate act of existential freedom by allowing the "overman" to direct and determine his or her destiny within the boundaries imposed by our radical finitude.

Richardson offers interesting insight into what he calls the fundamental "power ontology" which underlies Nietzsche's "theory of being" (16). That is, Nietzsche's understanding of power is not a "first truth" from which all his other ideas arise but rather is "a conceptual structure embedded within them" (16)[113] I interpret this to mean that Nietzsche's infamous concept of the will to power is intimately connected and inseparable from the phenomenally based life-forces which he continually affirms and celebrates. In other words, Nietzsche does not reify the will to power—or his concept of the Dionysian and Apollinian dynamic—into some metaphysical or a priori principle that exists independently from the drives and desires of the life-instinct which he emphasizes. As such, the will to power is always individuated and situated differently depending upon the context within which it takes place. From this perspective, there arises a double "fluidity" inherent in Nietzsche's understanding of power. First there is the notion of "wills to power," that is, that power is not a uniform deterministic destiny which gets expressed univocally. Power is always specifically and distinctly expressed, depending upon the recursive "adaptations" and "chance" "transformations" that result from the "resistances" the power drive experiences. This is why Nietzsche considers the life-denying ascetic and "turn the other cheek" drive of Christianity to be a form of power, albeit one that is turned inward (Genealogy of Morals Part III).

The second, and even greater, fluidity inherent within Nietzsche's concept of power arises from the meanings, interpretations and perspectives it generates. In other words,

power in the human realm, for Nietzsche, always entails an in-mixing of ontological and rhetorical factors. Put more simply, the will to power driven by onto-biological forces and the will to meaning impelled by cultural-symbolic practice become indivisible in Nietzsche's non-systematic schema. This process can be seen operating in the way Nietzsche dissects and analyzes the psychological and biological motives underlying the cultural genealogies he critiques, i.e., the way power adapts and transforms itself depends upon the manner in which biological need, "thought," "meaning" and "interest" influence and inform the life-process. As Nietzsche notes in Beyond Good and Evil, the will to power itself is never uniform or clearly reducible in its operation: "Therefore, just as sensations (indeed many kinds of sensations) are to be recognized as ingredients of the will, so, secondly, should thinking also: in every act of the will there is a ruling thought—let us not imagine it possible to sever this thought from the 'willing,' as if any will would then remain over!'" (19).

As an illustration of this process Nietzsche uses the example of the socio-rhetorical power embedded within the concept of equality that can drive a nation or people group toward its "democratic" end. In short, power and interpretive interest are indivisible for Nietzsche.

Conceived in this light, neither the various forms of the "will to power" nor the persuasive influence of "meaning," "value" and interest are autonomous unto themselves. Both complexes interact and play off of each other in a complicated "rhizomorphic" assemblage of strong and weak forces. The drives imbedded within the ontological will to power are shaped and influenced by the rhetorical significance that desire, value and meaning attach to the objective they seek. In Nietzsche's words, willing is "something complicated," something which is "not only a complex of sensation and thinking, but is above all an affect, and specifically the affect of the command" (Beyond Good and Evil 19). It is this combination of both individuated biological drive and contextualized cultural-rhetorical meaning that affects this "command," that is "A man who wills

commands something within himself that renders obedience, or that he believes renders obedience" (19).

Nietzsche's continual sensitivity to the variegated complexities of existence does not allow him to be a reductionist. As he notes in Human All Too Human: "A drive to something or away from something, divorced from a feeling one is desiring (willing) the beneficial or avoiding the harmful, a drive without some kind of knowing evaluation of the worth of its objective, does not exist in man" (I 32). It is this agonistic assemblage of biological and social manifestations of will combined with the rhetorical or persuasive power and influence of individuated values, interests and meanings that accounts for the fascinating variety of cultural expressions throughout human history. As noted above, this is also the process of which Nietzsche's genealogy partakes, that is, uncovering and dissecting the complex ways in which the "rhizomorphic" inter-relationships of meaning-interests and ontological drives and desires stimulate and infuse each other. This is the key to Nietzsche's understanding of power and the reason he enjoys playing psychologist and analyzing the hidden motives behind bio-cultural desires and their philosophic and cultural expressions.

In Nietzsche's rhizomorphic assemblage of power, rhetorical-cultural and biological expressions of will unite and play off one another in a complex inter-dynamic "under which the phenomenon of "life" comes to be (Beyond Good and Evil 19). The perspectivism which Nietzsche continually champions arises from his understanding that this complex agon of biological and symbolic forces and practices militates against the possibility for totalization which Plato continually seeks. The will to power and the meaning-interest that fuels it are both highly complex and limited in scope. To will one thing is to un-will another. In this light, Nietzsche's perspectivism is both ontologically and conceptually coherent in terms of the rhizomorphic life-world assemblage he describes. This insight can be seen underlying his assertion of the multiple "souls" operative within the bodily expression of the will to power: "the person exercising volition adds the feelings of delight

of his successful executive instruments, the useful "under-wills" or "under-souls"—indeed, our body is but a social structure composed of many souls," and that therefore in "all willing it is absolutely a question of commanding and obeying, on the basis, as already said, of a social structure composed of many souls"(Beyond Good and Evil 19).

If this interpretation merits consideration, power for Nietzsche is not a uniform telic force but rather the variegated rhizomorphic process by which biological and specific historical-cultural forces express the drives, desires, values, interests and meanings which fuel human existence. As Nietzsche further notes in the Gay Science, symbolic communication and biological drive are intimately related in that the "the subtlety and strength of consciousness always were proportionate to a man's (or animal's) capacity for communication, and as if this capacity in turn were proportionate to the need for communication" (354). For Nietzsche, it is this combination of what I call onto-rhetorical factors that comprise the human life-force which he celebrates and offers as the criteria to judge if a moral code or truth-claim is "strong" or "weak." In grounding his revaluation of values in the inescapable forces of the life wills themselves, Nietzsche offers an alternative vitalistic criteria in place of the life-denying metaphysics and ethics that have dominated Western philosophy since the time of Socrates and Plato. Thus, the lack of metaphysical guarantees actually assists Nietzsche's aim given that, in his view, the only standards that remain are those that lie closest at hand in the vitalistic forces of life. For Nietzsche this insight is also the key to avoiding a fundamental problem that continually dogs his innovative revaluation project.

Nietzsche Contra Nihilism

A number of writers have also drawn attention to the specter of nihilism that haunts Nietzsche's thought. Philosophy becomes, only and ultimately, rhetorical for Nietzsche because of the absence of extra-human, transcendental and universal truths. Without an objective, impartial vantage point or ultimate touchstone to assure or ascertain a truth-claim, the philosophic enterprise becomes a combination of perspectivistic assertion and

rhetorical persuasion.[114] However, as mentioned above, Nietzsche's position presents some troubling questions and problems. That is, why propose or seek one position over another? If all truth and knowledge-claims are ultimately equal and groundless, then why subscribe to one position over another? Indeed, why subscribe to any position at all? Given that essentially a radical nullity lies at the center of all epistemological endeavors, why go through the effort and pain it takes to stake a truth or knowledge claim?

Nietzsche was acutely aware of the nihilism lurking in the shadows of his thought. To off-set this significant problem, Nietzsche grounds his anti-metaphysicalism in the will to power as a way to embed his position within the life-force of existence itself. As Nietzsche observes: "A living thing desires above all to discharge its strength—life as such is will to power" (Beyond Good and Evil 13). For Nietzsche, such ontological grounding both undermines nihilism and acts as a counter-move to the impotency of "absolute" relativism. Existence may lack ultimate meaning, but it does not lack life and power. Nihilism is the antipode to Nietzsche's philosophy because it enervates zest and passion for the affirmation of the life-force that fuels the will to power. Nietzsche centers his philosophy around the idea of power because it expresses itself in the active actions of controlling, mastering, dominating, developing and flourishing, and, as such, offers guidance to propel us away from the passivity and nullity marked by nihilism. As Nietzsche proclaims in The Antichrist: "What is good? Everything that heightens in human beings the feeling of power, the will to power, power itself" (2).[115] Put simply, Nietzsche champions the will-to-power because it most intimately connects to the life-force processes of existence and thereby becomes an alternative to the passive nullity that the lack of metaphysical guarantees tempts some thinkers to embrace.[116].

As developed in this chapter, Nietzsche's rhizomorphic onto-rhetoric also functions as a counter-move to nihilism by complicating reductionistic tendencies and assertions. If life, as Nietzsche conceives it, is a complex assemblage of biological, cultural, and rhetorical wills, then overly simplistic propositions lose descriptive viability. Nietzsche

cannot abide nihilism because, like Christianity and Platonism, it fosters an inauthentic simplification of the complicated creative and destructive conflicts that comprise existence.[117] This insight also helps account for the reason Nietzsche seems to contradict himself so often. His fine calibrated sensitivity to the numerous forces at play in the world prevent him from limiting himself to ossified propositions. Life-statements, from his perspective, become dependent upon how one frames a given issue. Given that there are no globally binding cross-contextual universal truths, to say that existence is only one way or another is to deny the rich complexity inherent within the conditionally-dependent and continually unfolding forces of life. Unlike Plato's metaphysics, Nietzsche's discourse of rhetoric encourages and indulges the limitations inherent in life.

Even the case of nihilism is not so simple for Nietzsche. Though he may fight against its life-enervating effects, ultimately he agrees with its final analysis. Therefore, even though existence may ultimately be teleologically and meaningfully bankrupt for him, Nietzsche champions the assemblage of power-forces that drive us onward. It is this view of composite life that admits of both a meaningful interplay of constructive and destructive life-forces and the oppositional position that this process has no ultimate meaning or purpose that makes Nietzsche's onto-rhetorical understanding of human existence unique. It is the way Nietzsche fuses these two positions that makes him seem contradictory and inconsistent.

Nietzsche, thus, embraces a movement between oppositional positions because it prevents him from falling into the life-denying and life-destructive traps which he takes reductionistic and universalizing tropes to be prone. What seem to be inconsistencies and contradictions in Nietzsche's thoughts are actually exhibitions of the very life-dynamic he advocates. From Nietzsche's perspective, it is both life-deniers like Plato and "card-carrying" nihilists who misrepresent the value of existence by imposing rigorous consistency on a process that "deprives life of its center of gravity altogether" (The Antichrist 43). The uniformity and harmony that traditional logic and consistent thinking

demand are in direct opposition to the agonistic play and counter-play entailed within Nietzsche's life-world understanding. In Nietzsche's world, life is full of paradoxes and contradictions and we must not shy away from expressing and participating in them.

Conceived this way, the discourse of rhetoric for Nietzsche offers the strongest life-affirmation by off-setting the existential enervation that both Platonism and nihilism engender. In Nietzsche's domain, to willfully create and affirm the totality of life's processes is to engage in the very act that enables existence to be. Nietzsche abhors the passive nullity of nihilism as much as the life-denying metaphysics of Socrates and Christianity, given that all three devitalize an active embracing of this life-instinct. In this light, the agon of the Dionysian and Apollinian are metaphoric statements of the structuring and de-structuring processes entailed in all human endeavors. By conceiving power in this dynamic manner, Nietzsche escapes the dangers of a universalized and reified a priorism which "lure us to hypotheses concerning a deceptive principle in the 'essence of things'" (Beyond Good and Evil I 34). Nietzsche has little patience for anyone or view predisposed toward the negation of life. It is this impatience that goads him to the hyperbole and polemics for which he is famous. If his life-affirming philosophy "mirrors" or imitates the very process which "nature" engages, then, in his view, it grants him justification for being passionate and ardent in the denunciation of those religions and philosophies that are diametrically repressive of the position he esteems.

Nietzsche's thought and "rhetorical" style reflects the underlying ontology that fuels his philosophy—the life agon itself.[118] The conflicts, contradictions and inconsistencies of existence give rise to a non-unified whole that surpasses the sum of its parts. The epigrammatic and aphoristic style which he employs allows Nietzsche to engage in new forms of philosophic expression and thought-experiments that reflect his rhizomorphic onto-rhetorical understanding of life. Such experimentation thus allows him to offer criteriological guidelines and insights without falling prey to the old logically and rationally deduced repressive metaphysics and methods he eschews.

Section Summary

Although in principle I hold to the more "traditional" view that there is no "system" embedded within or underlying Nietzsche's thinking, I do sense there is an odd but coherent movement within Nietzsche's thought and writing. In this section I have explored the way many of Nietzsche's key themes, concepts and methods mesh and interplay in a complex assemblage of rhetorical and ontological processes grounded in an ever contextually situated and oppositionally oriented process of becoming. To flesh out this concept, I have used Deleuze and Guattari's trope of a rhizome to underscore the simultaneous divergence and convergence of dynamic forces operating within Nietzsche's texts and conceptions of the world. Nietzsche's rhizomorphic onto-rhetoric grants a strange, but never-the-less, coherent consistency to his understanding of the paradoxical, open and creative life-processes which he intuits to operate amid human finitude. This hidden consistency that underlies his seemingly contradiction-laden philosophy and methodology lies in his understanding of the recursive and dynamic way rhetorical and ontological power infuse each other. Nietzsche's discourse of rhetoric can be called rhizomorphic because it continually overflows any self or externally imposed constraints by vitalistically mirroring the complex assemblage of ontological and symbolic power structurations that mark human existence.

Nietzsche embraces the discourse of rhetoric because it most appropriately expresses the existential processes of destruction and creativity to intertwine and inspire each other without undue constraints. According to Nietzsche, it was the "pressure of the demonic Socrates" who made Plato force poetry and tragedy into an ancillary position to dialectic where the "Apollinian tendency has withdrawn into the cocoon of logical schematism" (Birth of Tragedy Section 14: 91). This rationalistic hegemony is anathema to Nietzsche because poetry and tragedy, as fellow members of the discourse of rhetoric, are highly creative activities that both mirror, imitate and participate in the creative life-force of existence.

Envisioned this way, Nietzsche's texts literally incorporate his thought, that is, they "embody the theses for which they argue, they represent, incarnate their thought, they are instances of their own kind, tokens of their own type; they are self-referring simulacra" (Magnus, Stewart and Mileur 16). Nietzsche needed such a rich concept of onto-rhetoric to counter-act three potent specters that shadow his thinking, namely tyrannical metaphysicalism, absolute relativism and nihilism. All three philosophic responses deny the life instinct he advocates in that they limit and disavow the vitalistic and tragic possibilities that comprise the phenomenal play of human existence. In the ensuing choice between apathetic resignation to the sheer meaninglessness of existence or the passionate embracing of the creative life-forces of the natural world, Nietzsche chooses the latter.

Final Comments—Chapter Conclusion

As can be seen from Nietzsche's earliest writings, a number of recurrent themes intertwine in his texts. One key theme—Nietzsche's radical belief that all meaning-constructs are fictive overlays and veneers that seek to mute the chaotic meaningless of existence—holds both potential and terror. Potential results from the radical freedom offered in the recognition that there are no extra-human principles, truths or gods to constrain and limit human endeavors. Terror arises from the existential meaninglessness that follows from this view. As an antidote to the terrifying disillusionment that lurks within this position, Nietzsche offers creative "overcoming" as the "healing balm" that most closely approximates the ontological conditions of the phenomenal world he describes. In recognition of the need for psychological buttressing against the harshness of metaphysical abandonment, Nietzsche develops a naturalistically grounded, will-centered rhetoric that both imitates and inspires the life-affirming and life-destroying processes he highlights.

Nietzsche's notion of a world without metaphysical anchors and epistemological guarantees vitiates the idea that any discourse, including philosophy, can deliver truth or certainty. By embracing this view, Nietzsche collapses the distinction between philosophy

and rhetoric which Plato maintains in a number of his dialogues. If, as Nietzsche proclaims in his early essay "On Truth and Lying," words are but mere "nerve stimuli in sounds" (248) with no connection to "the essence of things" (249) and truth is merely a "mobile army of metaphors, metonyms, (and) anthropomorphisms" (250) and "invented" concepts (247) designed to produce a "pyramidal order according to castes and classes, a new world of laws, privileges, subordinations, boundary determinations" that produce a "regulatory and imperative world" (250), then discourse in general—and philosophy in particular— become for Nietzsche rhetorical acts. It is this collapsing of the distinction between philosophy and rhetoric, generated by Plato, that resides at the center of Nietzsche's view of language. It is also the reason he employs the unique styles he does.

Among the many contrasts between Nietzsche and Plato highlighted in this chapter, this matter of style harbors a number of significance differences. Though Plato's persona—expressed most frequently through Socrates—has an engrossing edge to its personality, the philosophic method and style it offers differ markedly from the multiple erratic personas Nietzsche exhibits in his texts. To read Plato's Socrates is to experience a masterful exhibition of logical reason and measured reflection. Granted, Plato's Socrates may at times be playful, ironical and stubborn; however, in general, he rarely strays into the realms of emotional excess, passion, polemic and diatribe that marks Nietzsche's Zarathustra and other philosophic personas.[119]

Magnus, Stewart and Mileur offer a productive insight when they point out that Nietzsche's excessive hyperbolic style is in direct contrast to the ironic understatement embodied in the Platonic "litotic voice" of Socrates wherein "the reader is left deliberately with the impression that impersonal, disembodied reason speaks here, that there are no distorting persona at all, or better that Plato's interlocutors are merely place-holders for Reality's Own Vocabulary" (17). From Nietzsche's perspective, though Plato's Socrates may speak of epistemological and ethical humility, his method discloses a spirit of "pyramidal" authority and control. It is the epistemological certainty that ultimately arises

from Plato's metaphysical confidence that makes him seem realms apart from Nietzsche. Indeed one of the fundamental intents of Nietzsche is to undermine and expose the dominant conceit of immodesty that helps Plato generate the fictive illusion that philosophic discourse and its method speaks for "truth."[120] As Magnus, Stewart and Mileur further observe, "Litotic philosophic voices seduce and succeed through their pretended neutrality, through the conceit that they are disinterested sites in which reality itself achieves its true voice. Nietzsche's shrill voice is modest, in contrast, because it speaks for no one save its proper name" (18). Nietzsche's style is the antithesis of the mathematical-like precision and authoritative control that marks much of the philosophical discourse in Plato's dialogues. Where Nietzsche rambles and employs pithy aphorisms with rapier-like intensity, Plato dawdles and develops logical dialogues of exacting proportion. As Pettey adds, Nietzsche "relished the inexactitude of impassioned language, rendering formulations vibrant, but often puzzling and paradoxical" (20). In Nietzsche's schema, given there is no ultimate "Reality," there can be no correct method or style for expressing philosophic or any other discourse.

Envisioned in this manner, Nietzsche's style reflects the metaphysical abandonment he and his personas express in his writings. For Nietzsche, if there are no ultimate external truths and first principles independent from the human will's creation of them, then there can be no unitary or proper voice and style with which the philosopher must speak. The cool detached persona of logic and objectivity lose their empowering hold in Nietzsche's universe. From this perspective, the difference between the discourse of philosophy—the supposed vehicle of truth—and the discourse of rhetoric—the supposed caterer to the weaknesses of the "masses" (Plato <u>Statesman</u> 304D)—loses its distinctiveness. The passion and perspectivistic purpose of the discourse of rhetoric are critical to Nietzsche's thinking because they most appropriately mirror the creative and destructive life-force dynamics he takes to be the key principle of existence. Nietzsche's sententious style embodies the active forces of existence which he celebrates. His aphorisms and compact

thought-punches act as cognitive and perceptual dynamite to trigger recognition of the complex power manifestations which infuse life. As Pettey further points out, the rhetorical and poetic effect Nietzsche desires is more important than the rules of logic and rational discourse that dictate and enforce their own requirements on cognition and perception (15). Unlike, Socrates (and Plato) who continually seeks to define and codify and thus control our cognitive responses to existence, Nietzsche and his characters traipse across the landscape of life searching and seeking for new ways to respond to the manifold plurality of sense experience.

Nietzsche's volcanic-like passionate thought and feeling eruptions seek to dynamite what Heidegger calls "the Platonic-Christian modes of thought" (7). However, as we have seen, Nietzsche does not resign himself to the abject meaninglessness of existence lurking within the metaphysical vacuum that results from this loss of confidence in absolute truth. (See Thus Spoke Zarathustra IV "The Cry of Distress" where Zarathustra refuses the temptation of the soothsayer to accept the possibility that "nothing is worthwhile"). Nietzsche rejects pity, nihilism and despair because they act to obstruct the process of the will to power. Nietzsche embraces the discourse of rhetoric because it most fully and freely ontologically expresses who we are as speaking and willing beings-in-the world. For Nietzsche, this means we must make and create the best world we can. As Zarathustra says, "I led you away from these fables when I taught you, 'The will is the creator.' All 'it was' is a fragment, a riddle, a dreadful accident—until the creative will says to it, 'But thus I willed it.'" (II "On Redemption").

Unlike Plato's discourse of philosophy which constrains both speaking and willing by making it subject to principles and process beyond human experience, Nietzsche's discourse of rhetoric can never be rigid, fixed or dogmatic. It is always open to other possibilities to maximize the life-enhancing goal it seeks. Rhetoric is the discourse of becoming for Nietzsche because it is creatively responsive to the challenges of the life-world. Rhetoric is always grounded in contingency because it must manufacture "truths"

for each moment that challenges our life-experience. Nietzsche centers his epistemological abyss in an ontology of rhetorical will that functions as an enabling power for cognitive sustenance amid the ultimate nullity of existence.

In his short essay "On the Poet," written in 1875 during his period of study of ancient rhetoric, Nietzsche praises the "poet" for breaking free from the "spell of logic" and thus becoming like a "magician" who can make "great sentiments" "possible again" (F.N.R.L. 242). It is this notion of "possibility" that separates Nietzsche from Plato so immeasurably. As can be gleaned from the brief analysis of this Nietzschean understanding of the ontological status of the discourse of rhetoric, Nietzsche's philosophy is not conducive to any "official view" where philosophical propositions are aridly "grouped like set-theoretic constants" and "axiomatic deductive systems" (Magnus, Stewart and Mileur 9-10). Nor is his thought subservient to constraints and impositions dictated by supra-human first principles or a prioris. As we have seen, Nietzsche is no simplistic reductionist, but is ever sensitive to the remainders and surpluses of meaning and becoming inherent in any rhetorically-oriented ontological event. His major themes of worldly grounding, genealogical investigation, perspectivism, revaluation of morals and the will to power are neither simple metaphysical reductions nor convenient explanations. Nietzsche is alert to the rhizomorphic potential inherent in the will to language and living and uses his key themes to track and disclose the way that such onto-rhetorical forces unfold.

As presented here, it the discourse of rhetoric that represents most fully the type of freedom and possibility that Nietzsche celebrates. "Official views," whether they be imposed by the gods, forms, or tradition are anathema to the creative freedom Nietzsche cherishes. Plato's transcendent-oriented hypostatization imposes unavoidable strictures upon human experience and thus, from Nietzsche's perspective, deserves the antipathy he vents against it. Nietzsche's onto-rhetoric undermines and defuses what Poulakos calls "the perils of normatively controlled intellectual production" ("Nietzsche's Reception" 26).

Ultimately, it is the discourse of rhetoric that, when focused and fueled by the will, can best foster creativity and thereby maximize the life processes that Nietzsche celebrates.

Nietzsche's major move, as I have portrayed it here, is to collapse the fundamental distinction between the discourse of philosophy and the discourse of rhetoric. Nietzsche's style and thought work together to reveal the ontological base of human rhetoric and the rhetorical base of human ontology. In a complicated way, Nietzsche travels full circle back to the type of thinking exhibited by the Sophists and Rhetoricians against whom Plato waged his intellectual battles. Given the detail of his understanding of ancient rhetoric and antipathy for things Socratic and Platonic, it is not surprising that Nietzsche makes this move. In the next chapter, I will offer some observations and reflections on the implications of this important "return" on Nietzsche's part, especially in terms of the epistemological and ideological freedom it engenders.

CHAPTER IV

SUMMARY REFLECTIONS AND CONCLUSION:

LOGO-TYRANNY AND HEGEMONIC CONTROL

I have highlighted in this thesis two competing tendencies that address some of the complex problems confronting us as reflective beings engulfed in the play of finitude. On the one hand, I have adumbrated the type of absolutist-oriented, rational and systematic response that seeks exact epistemological and ethical solutions through extra-worldly means as best represented by the metaphysics of Plato. The lure of this response has been perennial, exerting a major influence throughout the development of Western intellectual history. In contrast, I have also focused on a more relativistic, naturalistic, and self-creating orientation toward existence as represented by the rhetorical orientation of Nietzsche. By self-creating, I mean the "auto-elevation" of philosophy, or the recognition that human beings through their own reflective efforts must fashion a workable understanding of the world without the extra-human appeals that have traditionally guided the search for truth. The appeal of this "existential" response has also been great and has influenced a number of contemporary intellectuals.

Both positions have their merits. The Platonic orientation offers the hope for stable, certain and universal knowledge. As such, it advances the benchmarks necessary to adjudicate truth-claims amid the maze of conflicting and competing responses to the vagaries of our experience in-the-world. The naturalistic orientation represented by Nietzsche, in contrast, celebrates the distinctively human capacity to creatively respond to the limits imposed by finitude. The Nietzschean themes expressed in Thus Spoke Zarathustra of "remaining faithful to the earth" (Part I: 125), accepting the realm of the body (Part I: 146), accepting passion and phenomenal appearance and appearance as the

true realities of life (Part I: 148), as well as the exhortation not to renounce life (Part I: 156) and to live passionately within the confines of this world all flow directly and indirectly from Nietzsche's profound understanding of what it means to exist without the fantasies and hopes of other-world and "afterworldly" guarantees (Part I:142-3). In essence, Zarathustra's famous remark that "God is dead" is a pronouncement that the Western world has become functionally metaphysical-less.[121] Such radical finitude for Nietzsche becomes an opportunity for creative expression and exuberance rather than despair and nihilism. As Zarathustra succinctly puts it: "God died: now we want the overman to live" (Part IV: 399). In this light, Nietzsche's orientation offers hope amid the greater freedom to cope with the vicissitudes of finitude. In other words, the lack of externally and extra-worldly imposed constraints means that human beings are free to invent their own solutions to the existential problems that beset them.

I have also focused on the way the positions of Plato and Nietzsche represent what I call the discourse of philosophy and the discourse of rhetoric. In the case of the former, the ideal of "truth" and knowledge becomes something permanent, real and obtainable, while in the latter truth becomes partial, probable and contextual at best. As presented in Chapter Two, it is Plato who began the split between the discourse forms of philosophy and rhetoric. The disjunct he generates, in a number of his dialogues, between being and becoming, knowledge and belief, universality and contextuality lend themselves to his division between the discourse of philosophy that delivers the former of each binary and the discourse of rhetoric that seductively presents the latter. This Platonic polarity between philosophy that grants true wisdom and rhetoric that fosters eloquent deception has had a lasting influence through Western intellectual history.[122] In Chapter Three, I stressed the way Nietzsche seeks to unsettle and topple this Platonic hegemonic distinction. Through the lens of Nietzsche's perspectivism and onto-rhetoric, all of philosophy becomes merely another form of human symbolic invention, no better and in some cases much worse than the various discourse fields that comprise human experience. In many ways, Nietzsche

returns philosophic thinking to the type of ontological speculation of early Greece when rhetoric and natural philosophy were "aspects of unified systems of thought" (Poster 1).[123] Indeed, Nietzsche's onto-rhetoric, as I have defined it here, views human subjects as fatally enmeshed in a complex interplay of language, biology and culture.[124]

Taken together, Chapters Two and Three have looked at two competing discourse tendencies that have highly influenced contemporary Western intellectual history. In the case of Plato, his thought has been considered by many liberally and existentially oriented thinkers to represent the quintessential metaphysical system and therefore it forms the perfect foil for attacks geared against the way such systematic thinking can be employed for social and intellectual control, e.g. European Medieval Christendom. Dissimilarly, though Nietzsche's idea of the will to power may be troubling for some, his ideas in general best illustrate, for many, the type of creative thinking and freedom that fosters greater intellectual and social autonomy.[125]

However, a number of problematics lie sheltered within this Nietzschean influenced contemporary shift away from the confidence and certainty that traditional metaphysics grants. As adumbrated in the previous chapters, principal among these problems is the ability to confidently determine right and wrong. Without self-subsisting concepts (or "realities") like God, Logos, and Truth by which to judge and hold beliefs and actions accountable, all values and knowledge claims, ultimately, become relative and arbitrarily chosen.[126] For many thinkers this inability of rhetoric to sort out what is true and false and to offer specific directional guidance results in a form of intellectual disorientation, disillusion and even terror. Nietzsche acknowledges this prospect in the following oft cited passage from the Gay Science: "What were we doing when we unchained this earth from its sun? Whither is it moving now? Away from all suns? Are we not plunging continually? Backward, sideward, forward, in all directions? Is there still any up or down? Are we not straying as through an infinite nothing?" (125).

Nietzsche's reference to the sun carries many allusions, not the least among them being Plato's chief symbol of the Good in the Republic. As Nietzsche's reference indicates, Plato rightfully addresses some of the potential problems in Nietzsche's metaphysical-less schema. For example, in the Gorgias Plato has Socrates reject the position that truth is a social construct at the whim of those who are powerful and persuasive enough to assert its viability.[127] In light of Nietzsche, Plato's response to this important issue exhibits the perfect expression of what Magnus, Stewart and Mileur call "the unstated but powerful assumption that there exists over and above one's interpretive practices a neutral ideal space which one's categories of reflection merely exemplify: a kingdom of Platonic kinds never tiring of yet another instantiation" (11-12). Plato's belief in the ability to obtain knowledge that originates transcendentally from beyond human speculation and will generates a confidence that enables him to hierarchically arrange and categorizes the various facets of existence. Whether or not taken literally, the organizational hierarchy in Book Two of his Republic symbolizes the type of social, epistemological and ethical hegemony that a coherently strong metaphysics can generate.[128]

Nietzsche, in contrast, as I have presented him, favors a naturalistic radical finitude that avoids the limits and constraints fostered by traditional metaphysics. His onto-epistemology allows for greater conceptual plurality and diversity. In fact, Nietzsche's passionate disavowal of metaphysics fosters so much freedom that he develops a life-urge orientation as a solution to the nihilism-problematic his radical finitude generates. That is, Nietzsche generates a form of creative perspectivism as a viable alternative to the lack of transcendent and universal onto-epistemological grounding that has traditionally anchored Western philosophy's truth claims results. By this is meant that Nietzsche affirms local aesthetic and life-based achievements in place of grand teleological schemes and constructs. For Nietzsche radical finitude grants the freedom to invent and live without externally or hierarchically imposed constraints.

As I have outlined in the previous chapters, the implications of this view are profound. Without a transcendent overview, metaphysical guarantee, or, what Nash calls, a "logical ground" (3) for a correct version of the way things are or should be, philosophic or truth-seeking discourse becomes, in the final account, a matter of open-ended perspective. Granted, some claims may be better than others, i.e., more coherent, more in keeping with consensually chosen "facts," but ultimately each assertion is a perspective, a knowledge-claim based on arbitrarily chosen and ultimately ungrounded standards. As Nietzsche notes in his early thinking: "Now no comfort avails any more; longing transcends a world after death, even the gods; existence is negated along with its glittering reflection in the gods or in an immortal beyond. Conscious of the truth he has once seen, man now sees everywhere only the horror or absurdity of existence" (Birth of Tragedy Section 7: 60).[129]

As revealed in Chapter Two, it was against the implications of this position, inherent in the discourse of the Sophists and Rhetoricians of his day, that Plato developed and maintained his metaphysics as a way to constrain speculation and action within appropriate meaning-limits. It is this tension between the foundationally-centered tendency for control generated by systematic metaphysics and the groundless anarchy lurking within the position of radical perspectivism that I want to briefly reflect on in this chapter.

Stated otherwise, Nietzsche's collapse of the distinction between the discourse of philosophy that offers the possibility for sure and certain epistemological, social and ethical benchmarks and the discourse of rhetoric that admits of no such limits evacuates the legitimacy of social and intellectual institutions to enforce their views on others as the right and appropriate response to a given situation. Nietzsche's emphasis on temporal becoming rather than changeless being ultimately undermines the foundation and possibility for objective impartial and ultimate truth. Without the firm and consistent foundation that God, Reason and Being have afforded traditional Western philosophic understanding, truth-claims lose their firm grounding.[130] The lack of such stable guarantees also

impotentizes or enervates the possibility that any normative claim can rise above itself to the status of a legitimate benchmark for adjudicating conflicting perspectives.[131] It is the implications of this tension that I want to briefly touch upon in this concluding chapter. In short, I will examine a few of the ramifications of the influence of Nietzsche's collapsing of the distinction between philosophy and rhetoric, especially as I take it to relate to the movement away from metaphysical tyranny and the cultural hegemony and dominance that arises from it.[132]

Non-Dominance and De-Marginaliztion of the Other

A host of contemporary writers have seized upon the trope of Otherness as the sphere that most appropriately defuses the tyranny and control to which systematic and other worldly oriented meta-narratives like Platonic metaphysics lend themselves.[133] Indeed, the characteristic thrust of Derrida's critique of Western philosophy can, in some ways, be reduced to revealing the operation of logo-tyranny, or the way that discourse is used to control and subjugate via metaphysically-grounded interpretive practices. Foucault can likewise be simplified to disclosing the institutional control and codifications that result from metaphysically derived discourse formations. In many ways, this emphasis on Otherness can be read as the natural outcome of Nietzsche's collapsing of the distinction between the discourse practices represented by rhetoric and philosophy.[134] In other words, if language can at best reveal only a limited perspective and is intimately tied to the power struggles of bio-cultural practice as I have highlighted in Nietzsche's understanding of rhizomorphic rhetoric, then metaphysics, and any other like-minded meta-narrative, loses its distinctive autonomy and totalizing legitimacy as a justifying ground for normative and social-control claims. In addition, Nietzsche's rejection of the privileged position that Plato assigns philosophy can also be interpreted as a rejection of the ability of philosophers and the rational methods they employ to be objective and neutral in their pursuit of truth. As Robert Hull observes: "Philosophers have believed themselves to possess, in advance of any investigation, an understanding of the proper hierarchy of philosophical investigation

generally positing as most fundamental questions concerning the nature of truth" (120). By

voiding all a prioris, metaphysical hierarchies and the ability to be impartial, Nietzsche

conducts a fundamental self-cancellation of the ability "to see reality for what it is" (Hull

122). Put alternatively, Nietzsche reevaluates the entire philosophic enterprise by

questioning its content, process and the integrity of its practicing agents, and in doing so he

initiates a sweeping and fundamental self-canceling of any privileged knowledge-claims.

Essentially, I take such insights to be central to the perspectivally based anti-

metaphysical turn initiated by Nietzsche, that is, the influence of Nietzsche's notion that

neither language use nor the social practices that arise from it can be, in the words of

Deleuze, "forced to enter being" (Nietzsche and Philosophy 57).[135] On the surface,

Nietzsche's "existential elevation of rhetoric" appears to maximize human freedom given

that it disavows extra-human standards and principles by which to constrain human

judgment and experience.[136] As Smith points out, "only rhetoric can accommodate

subjectivity" (166). What I interpret this to mean in terms of Nietzsche's onto-rhetoric is

that, for human beings, ontology infuses rhetoric and rhetoric ontology, meaning that as

language-drenched beings we cannot escape the subject-centered operations inherent in the

very functioning of who we are as symbol-using beings-in-the-world. As such, rhetoric

becomes the discourse of choice for those like Nietzsche for whom the world is, ultimately,

an arena of perspectival persuasiveness and subjectivistic possibility.[137]

However, from a Platonic perspective, without metaphysical anchors epistemology

and ethics become mere rhetorical acts. In response to this charge, as highlighted in

Chapter Three, Nietzsche grounds his reevaluation of ethics and normative claims in

biology because the strength of the life-forces of the physical world are so vividly

inescapable, e.g., we all must eat, sleep and breathe or we will die, that they help attenuate

the nihilism lurking within a metaphysical-less world. However, this does not mean that

Nietzsche's bio-cultural perspective takes on the status of unassailable truth. In other

words, the life-forces may be inescapable in their ontological import but this does not mean they will be interpreted and lived out in uniform ways.

What I want to explore in this section the way the discourse of rhetoric may open up onto-symbolic practice for those who do not subscribe to the dominant rendition of what this praxis should be. Put alternatively, Nietzsche's rhetorical understanding of the world might be less likely to lend itself to the authoritarian certitude and control that arises from metaphysically centered discourse formations. In this light, Plato's banning of poets from his Republic becomes both symbolic and symptomatic of the fear of what Magnus, Stewart and Mileur call the "unfettered exploitation of language's rhetorical possibilities" (134). As developed in Chapter Two and Three, unbridled possibility whether of an epistemological, ethical or aesthetical kind is unacceptable to Plato. In contrast, the discourse of rhetoric knows no such limits and therefore lends itself more readily to alternative view points and positions.

Viewed this way, the discourse of rhetoric comports with appeal and advocacy rather than control and coercion because it has no solid foundation or extra-human reality upon which to construct its claims. Granted, Nietzsche's will to power has the weight of force embedded within it, but not as a collectively empowered act that transcends the limits of our fated finitude or vitiate conflict. Put alternatively, Nietzsche favors the individualized, aesthetical "free-spirit" over the politically-oriented group or "herd" because "nationalism" and other zealous ethnocentric group activities deceive their adherents into thinking they can transcend and control the limits that mortality and our common fatedness impose upon us.[138]

Conceived in this manner, the discourse of rhetoric is always-already inter-subjective. That is, the human subject gains its identity, consciousness and meaning only by being birthed in an already pre-established symbolic field.[139] Karl Jaspers succinctly hits upon this view when he notes that the "individual cannot become human by himself. Self-being is only real in communication with another self-being" (Smith 168).[140] It is this inter-

subjectively dependent capacity that allows a rhetorical conception of the world to undermine faith in ability to impose dominance and control over the Other. Put otherwise, the discourse of rhetoric, being existential in orientation in its attempt to make sense of a world that has no inherent meaning, lends itself more to a position of petitioning rather than a commanding of the views it generates. The discourse of rhetoric petitions because it operates out of what Derrida calls an "(unfounded) foundation" (Spurs 3), by which I take him to mean an orientation that has no objective, self-subsisting and/or metaphysical support. In this light, the discourse of rhetoric becomes self-fashioning and thereby contains within itself its own self-imposed limit as a channel of various perspectives. Because of this, the discourse of rhetoric represents various ways of interpreting and promoting perspectives of world-experience and therefore does not support universally binding and totalizing meta-narratives.[141] Following this logic, it can be inferred that ideological conformity becomes less likely in a world-orientation that has no pre-established authoritarian constraints and requirements. It is precisely this view that makes Nietzsche's ideas so appealing among those who reject the limitations and restrictions that a strict metaphysics demands.

Having said all this, it is important to be reminded that, as with most things in life, this position is not quite so simple and tidy. Reality conditions may not align so easily with the view that we are free to create our own responses to existence.

A number of tensions operate within this tendency to maximize the diversification of Otherness. Brumbaugh's reminder is appropriate in this regard: "For language and life are never simple enough to give what analysis needs, a perfect match of an argument and its existential denotation. Neither, though, are language and life tolerant enough of contradiction to melt into an all interpretations soup of Anaxagorean eclecticism" (246). Put more simply, in the flight away from the control and limits imposed by systematic metaphysics, we must not fall prey to an indiscriminate relativism that enables anything to

"go." Both the lessons of history, and the inescapable intimacies embedded within social and inter-subjective practice teach us that some order and constraint are necessary. Left alone on Nietzsche's naturalistic human plane, we, as rhetorically active, symbol-using and symbol-creating creatures, must find a viable course amid a flurry of tension-ridden possibilities.[142] By the phrase "tension-ridden," I mean to highlight the invigorating contraries embedded within the freedom to interpret and live out our world without any extra-human constraints, e.g., the diverse and unpredictable Janus-like manifestations of the Hilters, Mother Theresas, Fabios and Shakespeares that mark human experience.

The fundamental question that arises from this situation is whether a rhetorical orientation can deliver the necessary goods to live and flourish within this tension. That is, whether the discourse of rhetoric, as developed in this thesis, which admits of no independent objective knowledge-base can be socially functional amid the extreme openness it generates. Persuasion becomes important as the means of consensus within the discourse of rhetoric because, unlike Platonic metaphysics which allows for knowledge to arise from beyond human construction, rhetoric remains fundamentally tied to the ubiquitous fallibility of humanness.

The difficulty as I see it lies in discovering the balance between authoritarianism and anarchy. As developed in Chapter Three, Nietzsche's understanding of the discourse of rhetoric may aid in this adventure. Nietzsche's passionate recognition and defense of the agonistic life-forces that inform his writings enables him to avoid both rigid "dogmatism" and tepid "eclecticism," by maintaining a proactive approach to existence that has no lasting or permanent foundation.[143] Envisioned thus, Nietzsche's unified but non-systematic thought may entail a way of circumventing what John Richardson calls "the self-undermining paradoxes involved in a 'perspectivism' that casts away all claim to a privileged truth" (6). In constructing such a view, Nietzsche offers a rhetorically-based philosophy that evades the tyranny and hegemony to which systematic metaphysics is prone and the feeble normative impotency to which relativism and nihilism lend themselves.[144] It

is also because of this that, in my estimation, Nietzsche's thought has been so highly influential among a number of the major Continental thinkers in this century. By offering a basis for critique that does not preclude multiple existential options, as a systematic foundationalism would, Nietzsche may present a viable option for the multi-cultural and varied perspectivism that marks much of our post-industrial world.[145]

Nietzsche's revaluation of epistemology and ethics engenders new standards by which to organize truth-claims and the method and process of the philosophic enterprise. Ultimately Nietzsche's life and power-based perspectivism could be viewed as qualifying both relativism and absolutism by admitting of the paradoxical and contradictory dimensions inherent in his tragic view of human finitude. What this means is that the human capacity for interpretive and biological response to the creative and destructive life-forces exhibited in world-events entails both the shifting perspectivism to which language and symbolic activities are prone and the inescapable bio-dynamics that ground us in creatureliness and mortality. In this light, the becoming of interpretation interfuses with the being of the life-urge in a complex dynamic that disavows both sheer relativism and dogmatic absolutism. In Nietzsche's perspective, there is neither unconditioned knowing nor unconditioned being. We are thinking vitalized bodies in an interpretive-material world where drive, power, persuasion and value interplay constantly. As Nietzsche puts it in the Will to Power, "In order for a particular species to maintain itself and increase its power, its conceptions of reality must comprehend enough of the calculable and constant for it to base a scheme of behavior on it" (480).

Part of Nietzsche's strategy is to provoke the reader to break new noetic and conceptual ground by seeing that that many of the taken-for-granted methods and beliefs of traditional metaphysically-centered philosophy are but convenient "fictions" by which to structure experience. Such structuring may be necessary in Nietzsche's view—as attested by his emphasis on the importance of the Apollinian elements in ancient Greek theatre—but the way in which we conduct such structuring makes all the difference. In Nietzsche's

book, there is no transcendent or underlying substantive dimension to existence to guide our life-constructions within finitude. Empirical reality for Nietzsche is "a perpetual becoming in time, space, and causality" (Birth of Tragedy 45). The Apollinian force for "boundary" and "moderation" and the Dionysian force for disruption and "excess" are, for Nietzsche, a single process of "primal unity" that are "ever following and mutually augmenting one another" without a hidden depth beyond their "appearance" (45-7). For Nietzsche this primordial *agon* has no message other than that it is the process of "Contradiction, the bliss born of pain, spoke out from the very heart of nature (46-7). From this viewpoint, Nietzsche seeks to help his readers see the value of affirming the meaningful meaninglessness of existence as he conceives it and offers the notion of power as the best way to maximize the potential latent within this world-condition.

Given that there are no ultimate metaphysical foundations to base knowledge claims upon, Nietzsche's approach to epistemology is "experimental" and always contingent: "With knowledge, the body purifies itself; making experiments with knowledge, it elevates itself" (Thus Spoke Zarathustra I "On the Gift Giving Virtue" 2). Nietzsche's radical break with the philosophic tradition entails a new conception of how to philosophize. This accounts for his constant emphasis on newness. It is this provisional status of knowledge that separates the metaphysical orientation of Plato's discourse of philosophy from the ontological orientation of Nietzsche's discourse of rhetoric. Nietzsche rejects the Platonic notion of truth-consistency because he finds it an arid and artificial imposition upon the tragic dimensions of existence. His emphasis on the destructive and constructive forces that comprise the ontological life-experience enables him to emphasize an alternative life-schema—a schema that exhibits the coherency of the life-force but not the logic of human reason. Nietzsche privileges naturalistic values and processes over cognitive ones and thus his views militate against his trying to construct a new totalizing "system." The potential hegemony of Nietzsche's will to power and perspectivism gets circumvented by the process he celebrates. This is why Nietzsche can have Zarathustra proclaim, "This is my

way; where is yours?—thus I answered those who asked me 'the way.' For *the* way—that does not exist" (III: 307). This is also why Nietzsche's thought compots so strongly with the contemporary flight from tyranny and distrust of meta-narratives.

Final Question and Conclusion

I have attempted in this final chapter to briefly offer some personal reflections on the way I take the Platonic and Nietzschean discourse formations of philosophy and rhetoric continue to inform much of the contemporary emphasis on the flight from the hegemony and logo-tyranny embedded within traditional metaphysics. When Nietzsche jettisons all metaphysical, transcendental and a priori principles and possibilities, he enters a world without principles, anchors and benchmarks to ground human meaning. Plato, in his dealing with the Sophists and Rhetoricians of his day—thinkers who were akin in their ideas to Nietzsche's inventive and creative approach to radical finitude—knew the problems and dilemmas this position would create. In response to this, Plato relies on knowledge and truth that are generated and accessible beyond the closed circularity of human experience. For Nietzsche, this solution was too confining in the way it ignores and devalues the tragically-rich creative and destructive dynamics which he envisions operating within existence.

Both positions have their strong points. Plato offers a hope and confidence that transcends human limitations while Nietzsche champions the creative freedom and exuberance that arise from the lack of extra-human accountability. However, both positions also have their weaknesses. The unwavering principles manifest in the Platonic metaphysical orientation can lead to tyranny and hegemony, as represented in the Republic, while the relativism inherent in Nietzsche's perspectivism can lead to ethical impotency and nihilism.

As I have attempted to show, much of Nietzsche's thought can be summed up as a quest for workable solutions to the enormous problematics unleashed by his radical embrace of finitude without a return to the strictures and confines he sees operative in

Plato's absolutist-orientated, systematic metaphysics. In addition, I have also tried to offer an interpretation of Nietzsche's rhetorically-based anti-metaphysical turn that salvages the best of both positions. In order to off-set the ultimate nullity and unsupportability inherent in all human cognitive constructs, Nietzsche offers an active espousal of both the creative and destructive forces of life. In doing so, he attempts to avoid both a rigid dogmatism and an impotent relativism. Nietzsche's will-centered onto-rhetoric attempts to both maximize freedom and delineate its ultimate meaning(lessness) limits. As I have spelled it out here, Nietzsche's rhizomorphic rhetoric is a life-based and naturalistically grounded process of idea induced power-structurations that allows for the simultaneous in-mixing of the ontological nullity and existential pregnancy of existence to interlace and inspire each other within what Nietzsche conceives of as the fictive constructs of human meaning. In short, Nietzsche's thought and texts incorporate the simultaneity of affirmation and nihilism as the inescapable dynamic to which we are fated. It is this profound insight that underlies and infuses his writing.

Woodruff makes an interesting observation that historically and intellectually skepticism depends upon "a rich background of dogmatic epistemology" and the truth-claims it fosters (61). In this light, Nietzsche's thought reacts against the perfect opponent—the Platonic notion of metaphysics that held out the possibility of absolute knowledge and the ensuing epistemological and socio-ethical structures that arise from this view. For Nietzsche, such philosophy was far too confining and carried within itself the denial of the life-celebration he cherished. The discourse of rhetoric, as I present it in this thesis, becomes Nietzsche's best alternative to ensure that the life-denying and thought-constraining intellectual forces that have dominated Western history would not be victorious. By offering a vigorously defended position that allows for its own refutation, Nietzsche suggests a new approach to life (and logic) that allows for the nuances most systematic ways of conceiving the world overlook.

As I have also shown, Nietzsche undertakes a radical revision of the philosophic enterprise by conceiving it as a constructive fiction that protects the philosopher, qua believer, from the abyss of meaninglessness that continually and inescapably haunts our experience in-the-world. In this light, philosophy becomes what Ijsseling calls a functional way to "maintain oneself and one's world" (105). For Nietzsche, such maintenance consents to a number of contradictory affirmations and negations much like the conflicting forces that comprise human finitude. Nietzsche's onto-rhetoric entails the situated and synergistic interplay of will, drive, interest, value and meaning which ultimately means that only context can determine what the best action and perspective of a given event should be. As Nietzsche notes in the Will to Power:

> The world, apart from our condition in it, the world that we have not
>
> reduced to our being, our logic and psychological prejudices, does not exist
>
> as a world 'in-itself'; it is essentially a world of relationships; under certain
>
> conditions it has a differing aspect from every point; its being is essentially
>
> different from every point; it presses upon every point, every point resists
>
> it—and the sum of these is in every case quite incongruent. (306)[146]

Conceived so, the "world" and its interpretations become, as Porter points out, "uncontrollably historical, overlaid with inheritances, fraught with entanglements and contradictions that are of its nature only to the extent that it has no autonomous nature, but only a history" ("Nietzsche's Theory" 241).

The implications of this view are profound, that is, as I have pointed out, both Nietzsche's particular philosophy and the philosophic venture in general are denied any privileged position or vantage point by which to adjudicate truth claims.[147] In this light, all discourse becomes a rhetorical act that can appeal for adherence but not demand conformity because of some overarching principle or reason. In doing so, philosophic discourse loses its authority and ability to become totalizing in vision or outcome. It is this

Nietzschean insight that has been highly influential for many of the thinkers engaged in the linguistic and postmodern turn of twentieth century philosophy.

And yet, as raised earlier, it remains to be seen just how this perspectivally based post-metaphysical experiment will play out. As I see it, this question will become vitally important during the next century as we grapple with the complex social implications of Nietzscheanesque perspectivism as a cultural orientation and practice. How well this novel orientation will or can work after two thousand years of Platonic-Christendom remains an open question. What will be less questionable is the role both Plato and Nietzsche will play in this debate. As representatives of the two diametrically opposed approaches to the philosophic questions imbedded in this problem, Nietzsche and Plato will figure prominently in our attempt to decipher and discern the best direction to go.

As a final comment, Nietzsche's philosophy has been difficult for the academy to accept or understand because its heavy use of rhetoric does not translate well into the conceptual categories and methodologies influenced by the Platonic (and Cartesian) standards of what proper philosophic discourse should be. Nietzsche's rhetorically based philosophy violates substantive due proportion and stylistic modesty—two of the hallmarks of traditional philosophical discourse and responsibility. In this way, Nietzsche's non-linear aphoristic "style" mirrors and unifies the very ideas he promotes while it simultaneously avoids the destructive consequences of sheer relativism, nihilism and the tyranny of systematic metaphysics. It is the combination of all these factors that makes Nietzsche so fecundly rich a thinker and Plato the perfect foil to highlight his ideas.

ENDNOTES

[1] In many ways, few, if any, "postmodern" qua post-Platonic thinkers escape the influential shadow cast by Nietzsche and his ideas. In truth, the more I learn of Nietzsche, the more I discover how much Heidegger, Derrida and Foucault are in many ways overwhelmingly indebted to his thought.

[2] By no means do I mean to reduce and "sublate" into an absolute binary the number of alternative responses to the discourse problematic I explore here. As will be seen, my intent is to investigate the strong division Plato engenders between philosophy and rhetoric and Nietzsche's counter-move to it. In doing so I have retained Plato's binary trope as a heuristically rich lens through which to view the issue at hand.

[3] See also Laches 192A for another representative example of the Platonic quest for the "essence" of a "quality" that crosses specific examples. Note too that all references to Plato's texts are based on the "marginal sigla derived from the pagination and page divisions of the 1578 edition of Plato by Henri Estienne" (Hamilton 1609).

[4] See Peter Carravetta's representative study "which reactivates, as a hermeneutical figura, the ancient quarrel between poetry and philosophy" (xi) and Ijsseling for the division between philosophy and rhetoric.

[5] De Oratore, Book III translated by H. Rackham in Bizzell and Herzberg (247).

[6] I place "Socratic-Platonic philosophy" in "scare" quotes to draw attention to the problematics inherent in trying to distinguish who is speaking and whose thought is represented in Plato's dialogues. I will leave the debate and proposed solutions to these questions to those far more qualified than myself to unravel the complex critical, historical and philological problems entailed in this issue. However, although there may be merit in Brickhouse and Smith's view that the philosophy in Plato's dialogues is both Platonic and Socratic, if only because "Plato is the author of those texts in which this philosophy is expressed, developed, and explained, and Socratic because it is the character, Socrates, whose words this philosophy motives and expresses" (viii), I will use the terms Plato, Plato's Socrates and Platonic to signify the way in which Plato develops and expresses his basic philosophic orientation as it has come to be generally conceived by Nietzsche and those influenced by him. My reason for this will be made clear throughout this work. (See Caplan and Scolnicov for a representative sample of the Plato-Socrates authorship debate).

[7] As employed in this chapter the terms "postmodern," "postmodernism" and "postmodernity" will be used to simplify and signify the general anti-Platonic orientation that has developed among many "Continental" thinkers and those influenced by them since the time of Nietzsche. Stated with maximum succinctness the polyvalent term "postmodern" is used here to designate the type of thinking that seeks to explicate and/or unsettle the binary, reason-centered constructs and "meta-narratives" that have traditionally guided Western thinking since the time of Plato. As a general descriptor, this term encompasses a number of diverse thinkers such as Nietzsche, Heidegger, Derrida, Lyotard, Rorty and Foucault, many of whom would actively resist such reductionistic labeling.

[8] See Bernstein and Stephen White for an interesting analysis of this present day understanding.

[9] See Press (introduction and preface), Sayre and Rosen for a vigorous representation of this view.

[10] Consult Bizzell and Herzberg for a historical overview of the number of writers and thinkers from Aristotle to Locke and Ramus who have been influenced by this Platonic division between philosophy and rhetoric. See Gooch for insight into the Platonic influence on St. Paul's privileging of "right-reasoning," "clear-headedness," and "problem solving" over thinking and speaking that generate "opinion," "confusion and falsehood" (3-5). See also his analysis of Paul's attack on rhetoric or *sophia logou* ("eloquent wisdom" and "worldly persuasion") in I Corinthians 1-2 that seeks to "misuse words to convince beyond the proper bounds of knowledge" (48-9). As will be shown shortly, it is this understanding of proper boundaries which deeply informs Plato's division between philosophy and rhetoric.

[11] See Nair for a succinct and insightful overview of the numerous epistemological complexities and problems in Plato's dialogues.

[12] In using the phrase "as commonly interpreted" I follow after Poellner who maintains that, as is commonly done, interpretation refers to the meanings that readers find in a writer's texts that are based on propositions "embodied in a public language" (28). Simply put, I will use the word's Plato, Platonic, Nietzsche and Nietzschean, etc. to imply what I take to be the conventionally conceived notion of the ideas embodied in their texts which they "intended" to communicate. This is not to discount the possibility for irony, parody, dissimulation, etc. by these and other writers but to imply that "interpretation," as I use the word, incorporates any and all intended and discernible communications that these authors have made public through their texts. I make this qualification to off-set Derrida's claim that regarding the "totality" of Nietzsche's texts—and potentially all written works—it is "always possible" they mean "nothing at all" or have "no decidable meaning" (Spurs 131-33).

[13] The question of whether this is a "two level" (epistemologically oriented) or "two world" (ontologically grounded) division will not be settled here. See Thesleff and Fine for a deeper exploration of this important, but in terms of this essay tangential, concern.

[14] I borrow the phrase "Manichean allegory" from JanMohamed. See his "The Economy of Manichean Allegory: The Function of Racial Difference in Colonist Literature" for an application of this binary orientated approach to the cognitive constructs that shaped colonial literary discourse.

[15] Although the issue of ethics is critical to the Platonic corpus, my emphasis will primarily be on Plato's epistemology and ontology. See Chapter One of Sissela Bok's Lying for an important connection and consideration of the connection between epistemological and ethical questions.

[16] In focusing on what I take to be the conceptual "model" and possibility that Platonic philosophy represents, I will call upon a number of theoretical and critical approaches and in doing so will borrow from a number of orientations to Plato's texts, e.g. "historical," "doctrinal," "dramatic," "analytic," etc. Though I favor a "doctrine" approach in terms of the ideas I think Plato posits, I am welcoming of the variety of interpretations and critical methods his fecund texts offer. See Gerald A. Press' Preface, Introduction and Essay in Plato's Dialogues: New Studies and Interpretations for support for this varied and "open" hermeneutical orientation.

[17] I am thinking of Derrida, Lyotard, Deleuze and Guatarri, and other "postmodern" thinkers who are quick to assign Plato to the confines of an easy to "stereotype" and oversimplify metaphysical construct. However, as Dorter points out, the thought of both Plato and Aristotle is "far richer" than many contemporary scholars make them out to be (114). By this is meant, that their texts and thinking reflect a complex understanding of the "fundamental tension" between contemplative and social necessities that comprise the human philosophic experience. That is, Plato and Aristotle's writings reveal passionate thinkers who are not oblivious to the uneasy requirements which

philosophic and inter-subjective necessities demand. Thus, though I will paint a vivid portrait that boldly characterizes the strong distinction Plato demarcates between philosophy and rhetoric in order to set-up the anti-metaphysical perspectival "turn" Nietzsche generates, I do agree with Dorter that Plato is far from being a "one-sided and one-dimensional" thinker (114) and that what Sayre calls the "fecundity" of "seedbed" in his texts (xviii) actively resists the overly simplistic reductions to which many "postmodern" writers tend to assign him.

[18] Again I remind the reader that Plato's thought continually resists oversimplified generalizations, e.g., in the Phaedrus he does allow for the use of "good" rhetoric. However, in general, my essential point remains valid that both Plato and the tradition he helped initiate do subscribe to the "disjunct" that I develop in this chapter.

[19] Jaeger broadens his notion of *paideia* in Volume II of his famous study to incorporate many of the epistemological issues, battles and forces entailed in Plato's dialogues that I lump under the term discourse of rhetoric.

[20] See Glidden, Hussey, Jarratt, Kerferd and Schiappa for a more extended analysis of the role the Sophists and Rhetoricians played in the development of both epistemological relativity and skepticism and the Socratic-Platonic counter-move against it. See also Nehamas and Schiappa (Protagoras) for the way in which Plato tries to distinguish himself from the Sophists and Rhetoricians who attempted to influence his students.

[21] I am of course oversimplifying a number of complexities and problematics embodied in ascertaining just what Socrates and Plato mean by "knowledge." Again, I make my appeal to the "conventionally" held view that acknowledge the way in which Plato differentiates the type of knowledge obtained by dialectic and the "opinion" and "belief" that rhetoric grants. See Woodruff and Sayre for more detailed discussion and analysis of the problems inherent in Plato's epistemology.

[22] By no means is this meant to imply that only sophistic and rhetorical thinking contributed to the epistemological confusion during this period. Havelock offers a detailed analysis of the disruptive rise of literacy, Hussey of the economic and scientific developments and Hatab (Myth and Philosophy) presents a cogent analysis of the transition from mythic to philosophic thinking—all of which contributed significantly to the complex historical and cultural conditions against which Socrates and Plato reacted.

[23] As will be seen below, the discourse of rhetoric is not limited to the practical art of oratory but incorporates the over-all "sophistic" tendency to view truth as always partial, contingent and conditional and hence ultimately unobtainable in a Platonic sense.

[24] Although I am focusing on the way in which the term rhetorical discourse embodies a relativistic orientation toward, and understanding of, "reality," it could also apply to any non-philosophic qua non-rational understanding of the world such as poetic and mythic discourse. However, exactly how this wider understanding plays out in Plato's thought would entail a book itself. Hence, I will limit my application to what I take to be the dominant orientation of the Sophists and Rhetoricians against whom Plato undertakes his *logomachia*. See Hatab's Myth and Philosophy for a cogent analysis of the ancient Greek mytho-poetic understanding of reality.

[25] I use the plural form of philosophy and practice to draw attention to the idea that this was not a unified systematic process engendered by a few individuals but rather developed as a widespread and fragmented evolution that involved a number of diverse thinkers, historical developments and geographical locations.

[26] I qualify my intent with "generally" to draw attention, as noted previously, to what supporters of Plato would call ambiguous complexities and what detractors would call contradictions contained within Plato's texts. As an example see the Phaedrus 271C-272B where Plato has Socrates allow for "good" rhetoric, a theme I will not develop here, given that, as Plato paints it, such rhetoric is merely another form of dialectic.

[27] See Ijsseling for a historical analysis of the way in which the Socratic-Platonic philosophy/rhetoric disjunct has played itself out in Western intellectual history. See Poulakos' Introduction (New Idioms)—and the entire volume of Argumentation 5 1991 for a concise overview of the way in which the Hellenic Sophists have been represented and re-figured over the last 150 years.

[28] I begin with an important caveat. The lack of primary source material and reliable doxographic commentary regarding the Sophists and Rhetoricians in ancient Greece makes dependable truth claims concerning them tenuous at best. Hindsight enables us to quibble over distinctions which may not be so readily apparent in the throes of an intellectual development. This is not to say that scholarly positions cannot be taken, only that we must encounter the Sophists and Rhetoricians with a degree of open humility toward how much reliable knowledge we can claim.

[29] I use the phrase "group of individuals" to again draw attention to the idea that this was less of a unified "school" and more of a "movement" composed of individually competing teachers and thinkers who may or may not have shared much in common. In addition, as Kerferd points out, the rejection of this movement as composed of serious thinkers by Plato and Aristotle meant they were ignored by the philosophic surveys conducted in Aristotle's school which accounts for the acute shortage of doxographic accounts concerning their speculative thinking (Sophistic 36). Thus, conceptually it is easier to lump them under one name—Sophists—as I do here. However, this is not meant to erase the individual differences and complexities that marked these innovative teacher/thinkers. See McKirahan (353-89) for a more "conservative" approach regarding the analysis of the sophistic movement.

[30] Again qualifications are in order. The distinction between the Pre-Socratics and Sophists in Hellenic Greece is, as McKirahan notes, "not neatly draw" (353). In general, I agree with McKirahan that the Pre-Socratics were more concerned with physical science and cosmology, while the Sophists focused more on social and political matters. However, along with Schiappa, I both distinguish and add the Rhetoricians of this period to the Pre-Socratic mix. In general, as I highlight here, the Rhetoricians can be differentiated by their emphasis on skills and matters of the verbal arts of eloquence and oratory. (See Schiappa Protagoras 39-63). Exceptions to this oversimplified tripartite schema abound, e.g. Gorgias and Democritus who do not fit into such neat schematic categories. However, as a conceptual heuristic, such a division can help keep us from getting so bogged down in quibbling details and qualifications that we cannot make any useful or helpful generalizations.

[31] This is not to imply that they were totally disengaged from epistemological and metaphysical reflection. Their emphasis on the philosophy of language and how thought varies across discourse communities invariably entails epistemological and metaphysical concerns.

[32] Schiappa offers an important reminder that the definition of the terms related to "sophist" often depends upon the "interpretive frameworks within which Sophists have been studied and understood" (Protagoras 3). As is well documented, most often these "frameworks" have been influenced and colored by the pejorative and unflattering view offered by Socrates and Plato, i.e. a Sophist as one who engages in unethical fallacious arguments and employs specious reasoning for the sake of personal gain. The protean quality of this enigmatic and polysemic concept is reflected in the various ways sophistry and sophist have been conceived by scholars. Recently some scholars have gone in the opposite direction by way of reconsidering and "re-figuring" ancient sophism in light of postmodern

thought, with Jarratt being a prime representative of this view. Schiappa's extensive list regarding the interpretive reads of Protagoras is typical of this hermeneutical complexity, i.e. Protagoras has been called "the first humanist, the forerunner of pragmatism, a skeptic, an existentialist, a phenomenalist, an empiricist, an early utilitarian, a subjective relativist, and an objective relativist" (Protagoras 15).

[33] See Goebel's footnote number one for a list historical sources dealing with Corax and Tisias.

[34] Schiappa also claims Plato is the first person to coin the word *rhetorike*. Though Schiappa's philological argument for Plato being the first to use the word *rhetorike* is impressive (Schiappa Coin 457), his reduction of Plato's invention of the term to the pragmatic level of pedagogical rivalry with Isocates is far from satisfying (Coin 466-7). As will be seen below, Plato's privileging of *dialectike* over *rhetorike* arises from an important and entrenched metaphysical disagreement. However, some scholars maintain that because so few fifth century sophistic texts have survived we cannot conclude the word rhetoric was not in circulation before Plato's use of it. See O'Sullivan for a refutation of Schiappa's *argumentum ex silentio* (87-9). See also Wilcox for some alternative views of the origin of the word *rhetor*, i.e., that it has the meaning of "a speaker in the assembly" and that it might be a derivative from Sicilian word *rhetra* (132).

[35] Some may quibble over the distinction I make here. Indeed, as Plato notes in the Gorgias "while there is a natural distinction between them (Sophistic and Rhetoric), yet because they are closely related, Sophists and Rhetoricians, working in the same sphere and upon the same subject matter, tend to be confused with each other, and they know not what to make of each other, nor do others know what to make of them" (Gorgias B-D). My point here is that both Plato and numerous scholars following after him both conflated and distinguished between sophistry and rhetoric, leaving us in need of some differentiation. It is my hope that the subtle distinction I develop here sheds more light than smoke on the matter at hand.

[36] See Rapple for a succinct summary of the "encyclopedic" knowledge interests and curricula of the Sophists and the role they played in the transition between the "Old" and "New Athenian education.

[37] Again an easy dichotomy eludes us. Many rhetoricians were also philosophic thinkers while many sophists also taught practical and oratorical skills. I use, therefore, the principle of general tendency to distinguish them. See Wilcox for a detailed analysis of the types of political and legal oratorical skills and *techne* that the 5th and 4th century Rhetoricians and Sophists developed and engaged.

[38] Again I stress that this division and oversimplification is simply my way of helping to tease out some of the subtle philosophic differences and emphasizes which seem to be implied in Plato's dialogues. Thus, for the purposes at hand, I will consider Sophists and Rhetoricians to be inter-representative of a mind-set and pedagogy that advocated the epitome of those beliefs that Plato opposed. See Segal for a more accurate "historical" account of the way in which Gorgias seems to have represented both tendencies (99-102).

[39] Schiappa attributes this "standard account" to the influence George A. Kennedy has had on the American understanding of how rhetoric rose in Ancient Greece. See Kennedy's The Art of Persuasion in Greece and Classical Rhetoric and Its Christian and Secular Tradition from Ancient to Modern Times.

[40] See Havelock's Preface to Plato and Jarratt and Hatab for an extended analysis of the movement from the oral mytho-poetic to the literary abstract-rational paradigm during the Archaic and Classical period.

[41] Many scholars question the over-simplification implied in the *mythos/logos*—orality/literacy conceptual trope. Jarratt does a good job tracing out the hidden complexities and oversights embedded in these convenient dualisms and offers the term *nomos*—custom, law, or convention—as an alternative concept to capture the cognitive displacement of narrative that developed during the sixth to fourth century (31-61). However, in general, most scholars do agree that the notion of a transition from a "mythic" to a "rational" centered approach to existence does capture a sense of the profound changes occurring in Hellenic culture at this time.

[42] As with many things from antiquity, much of what we know about the Sophists and Rhetoricians is culled from a number of scattered textual fragments and doxographic commentary. Rapple quoting A. P. Cavendish reminds us that our understanding of the teachings of these thinkers is a "disconnected dicta" that is "limited to 'a vague general impression of the tenor of their doctrines rather than any coherent outline of them'" (68). Boardman et. al.'s caution is also worth noting, that is, the thinkers whom we group under generic designations like Sophists had "no generic name for themselves" and were "more like a flotilla of small craft whose navigators did not all start from the same point or at the same time, nor all aim for the same goal; some went in groups, some were influenced by the movements of others, some traveled out of sight of each other" (113). Thus, in the interests of the limited scope addressed in this chapter, the themes highlighted here are admittedly an immense abbreviation and oversimplification. However, in general, as will be seen from the following analysis of Plato's dialogues they capture some of the fundamental understandings and orientations against which Socrates and Plato waged their philosophic battles.

[43] Just what this proclamation means in terms of shifting the problem of knowing and knowledge from object to subject is hotly debated. Did Protagoras mean by "man" the individual, the group or "Man" universal? Did "measure" subjectivism, and did "things" mean sense perceptions, extra-mental phenomena, or feelings? The interpretive complexities inherent in this maxim cannot be addressed here. See Copleston (88), Zeller (81) and Kerferd (Sophistic Ch. 9) for interesting interpretations of this polysemic aphorism.

[44] See Hatab (157-205) for a detailed analysis of this transition from mythic to philosophic thinking.

[45] I am collapsing and oversimplifying these techniques to make a point. See Kerferd (Sophistic 61-3) for a more detailed analysis of the relationship between dialectic, *eristic* and *antilogike*.

[46] Again I re-iterate that by "movement" I do not mean to imply that the sophists and rhetoricians of ancient Greece acted in unity as a consciously formulated group. A number of scholars draw attention to the intellectual and geographic diversity of these thinkers, e.g., Nightingale (193) and Untersteiner (xv). I use the word movement to highlight the radical way of re-conceiving and dealing with the world that many of these thinkers advocated and/or reflected in their teachings, techniques and thought.

[47] I am grateful to George A. Kennedy's insights into Gorgias' style which he highlights in his brief Introduction to the Encomium of Helen (283-4). I will also rely on his translation for the following analysis.

[48] The implications of this relationship between saying and appearing will be explored in Chapter Two in terms of Nietzsche's rhetoric of becoming.

[49] This is of course Plato's chief argument in the Gorgias. However, as Gorgias suggests in his Helen, Plato can wish, hope and try to transcend the prison-house of language, but in the end his effort will remain but a valiant effort.

[50] It would be interesting to compare and contrast Wittgenstein's notion of "language-games" with what Gorgias is doing in this text, as interpreted here.

[51] See Hatab's Myth and Philosophy for a cogent analysis of the affirmative embracing of limit, fate and tragedy by the ancient Greeks.

[52] As Chapter Two and Three will reveal, Nietzsche seeks to expose and dismantle the perennial lure of this possibility, and the way it has empowered Western philosophers to limit knowledge claims, speculation and social-moral practice.

[53] Again I stress the notion that the following interpretation is cast in light of the profound influence that Nietzsche via Heidegger and Derrida has had on the contemporary understanding of Plato. In some ways this unflattering current view can be seen as Nietzsche's payback to Plato for casting the sophists and rhetoricians of his day in a negative light.

[54] See James A. Coulter for his insightful analysis of the number of "clear verbal parallels discernible in Gorgias' Defense of Palamedes and Plato's Apology of Socrates" (269).

[55] See Sichel for a more traditional defense as to why Socrates frequently indulged in the practices he condemned.

[56] This explanation also helps us understand why Plato speaks out against myth and poetry and yet employs these discourse forms throughout his dialogues. In other words, to the degree that rhetoric, myth or poetry is in service to metaphysical truth its use is justified. Otherwise they become but another form of deception that caters to the imprisonment of the soul.

[57] See Hatab for a detailed analysis of the important role the rise of abstract thinking and speculation played in this process. See especially (88-103.)

[58] In reducing Plato's complex philosophy in this way I admit I am egregiously guilty of an approach that "usually means to magnify one aspect (of a dialogue) at the expense of other aspects no less important" (Guthrie Unity 117). My justification for this is that these three themes, rightly or wrongly, succinctly represent the traditionally conceived metaphysical conceit against which Nietzsche constructs his philosophic counter-move and which, as I develop it here, most directly lend themselves to the contrast between the discourse of philosophy and the discourse of rhetoric.

[59] Precisely what "such things" are is debatable depending if one looks at Plato's early, middle or late dialogues. However, in general I take the possibility for *episteme* to be a common and constant theme in most of Plato's writings and the Forms to be both representative and symbolic of the type of knowledge Plato craves.

[60] For a representative example of Plato's position on the epistemological unreliability of becoming and change see the Theaetetus (181D-183B).

[61] I qualify this assertion with "one of" in deference to the recognition that Platonic scholars are divided on the issue of how consistent, uniform and unhedging Plato's epistemological positions are. As explicated here I hold to the notion that, even though Plato's epistemology may "evolve" in the course of his philosophic development, he nevertheless consistently maintains the possibility that philosophy can deliver, or at least point the way, toward unchanging and sure knowledge.

[62] I am not attempting to solve the complex and controversial epistemological problems in Plato's dialogues. I am limiting myself here to exploring the underlying reasons Plato distinguishes between the knowledge-possibilities of philosophy and those of rhetoric and sophistic. Following after Santas,

I take the position that Plato never proved that the Forms exist, only that they provide the necessary conditions for the "possibility of knowledge as he (Plato) conceived it" (Santas 57). See Santas for a discussion of problematics entailed as to whether this ontological status is predicative or existential. See also Fine for a cogent defense of Plato being a "coherentist, rather than a foundationalist, about justification" (86). That is, that Plato relies on his notion of the Forms for the "explanatory power, in terms of the results it allows one to achieve" (113).

[63] Confer also with the Republic wherein Socrates considers "whether the greater and more advanced part of it (geometry) tends to facilitate the apprehension of the good" (526D-E).

[64] Whether one accepts Sayre's interpretation that Plato's *episteme* is ultimately a "vision" and "flash of insight" or Fine's view that its basis is in "explanation and interconnectedness" (115) the outcome is the same, that is, Plato believes in the possibility of objective and infallible knowledge. What I am interested in highlighting here is the way in which this hope and possibility allow Plato to distinguish his understanding of philosophy from the discourse of rhetoric.

[65] See Books VI and VII of the Republic for Plato's famous "divided line" and "allegory of the cave" hierarchically structured epistemological criteriology.

[66] By reducing Plato's epistemological response to the discourse of rhetoric, as I do here, I do not mean to imply that his understanding of recollection and the Forms remains fixed and undeveloped throughout his dialogues. I acknowledge this is a complex issue without a simple resolution. However, I maintain that, even though the nature of his epistemological objects and their attainment may change throughout Plato's philosophic adventure, his fundamental orientation remains in direct contrast with that of the discourse of rhetoric as represented by the Sophists and Rhetoricians of his era. See Woodruff for a discussion of the development of Plato's epistemology.

[67] This helps explain why Plato has Socrates incessantly seeking the proper definition of terms like virtue and wisdom and his claim to be a "gadfly." Both techniques work to irritate the recipient and thus help "jog" the memory of those experiencing his "mid-wifyic" onslaught.

[68] For a profound insight into the identificational and imaginary dimensions self-generated constructions of Otherness see Derrida's "Plato's Pharmacy" and Metzger's Lost Cause of Rhetoric.

[69] For an amplification of this theme, see Plato's Timaeus and Book X of the Laws (896E-897B) which, as Robin comments, conceives of the world as a "very beautiful work of art" where "the mutual arrangement of things, in general and in detail, is not merely the result of a chance concurrence of causes, but is due to an intelligence which aims at the general good and has arranged everything 'according to a premeditated design'" (222-23).

[70] The genealogy of Plato's appropriation of mathematics is complex and far beyond the range of the essay at hand. Like Socrates before him, Plato's thought harbors a compendium of the "scientific" and ethical thinking and reflection that preceded him. Robin nicely sums up this eclecticism: "Moreover, there seems to be in his reflection a combination of all the tendencies which had emerged in earlier philosophy—geometrical mechanism of the School of Abdera and the abortive teleological dynamism of Anaxagoras, the pluralistic mobilism of Heracleitos, and the monistic immobilism of the Eleatics, the mathematical formalism of the Pythagoreans and the conceptualistic formalism of Socrates" (Robin 235).

[71] For a further exploration and amplification of this correlation between knowing and virtue, see Hatab (223-37).

[72] Gill further points out that the appeal to nature for virtuous development in Plato (and Aristotle) does not imply an automatic effect. By this is meant that "The appeal to 'nature' is not an appeal to an independent, purely 'scientific' standpoint that anyone should be capable of adopting" but rather is an appeal "to those who are properly prepared, in character as well as knowledge, to understand them" (77).

[73] Although I am sensitive to the controversy that surrounds the "authenticity" of the Letters attributed to Plato, I agree with Sayre's "stylometric" evidence and other reasons why "recent Scholarship tends to strongly favor the authenticity of the Seventh Letter" (xviii-xxiii.). See Sayre for a brief historical overview of this problem and a persuasive case for his position. I am also grateful to Sayre's insights into *elenchus* and freely draw upon his analysis in this section.

[74] Although it is beyond the parameters of this essay to explore, this notion lends insight into the theme of extra-worldly rewards for those who live a virtuous life in Plato's corpus. As Socrates reminds us in the Phaedo, bliss and happiness are the eventual goals of the true lovers of wisdom, in so far as they remember and align their soul with the Good. Virtue leads to happiness because it allows one to participate in the realm and form of the Good which suppresses and supersedes the problems which the contingent and changing world harbor. See Hatab for a fuller analysis of the way in which Plato's quest for certainty acts as a counter-move and solution to the tragic impulse that haunts humanity Myth and Philosophy (207-257).

[75] I am grateful to Harding for this insight into the *psychagogic* power of language.

[76] As adumbrated earlier, this helps account for the constant concern for virtue in the Socratic dialogues given that all Forms participate in some way in the ultimate Form of the Good. Truth, virtue and being thus become inextricably intertwined in that the lover of wisdom becomes the receiver of wisdom. Viewed in this way the dialectician literally embodies the transcendental signified which his method brings him to know. This is why when Socrates quotes Homer and says he would follow after a dialectician as if he were a "god" (Phaedrus 266b), he is not engaging in hyperbole nor mere literary allusion. To practice dialectic and live the life of the philosopher is to literally partake in that which is eternal, absolute and unchanging and become like a god.

[77] This helps further account for the passage in the Philebus where Socrates argues that the more a method of inquiry, craft or art resembles the precision and exactitude of mathematics the more "pure" and true it is (55C-58C).

[78] I am grateful to Steve Whitson for clarifying the concepts of transcendental signifieds, surplus of meaning and the distinction between literal and figural discourse in Plato's distinction between philosophy and rhetoric (17-20).

[79] My position in this chapter is not meant to imply that that this is the only way to view Plato's conception of philosophy or rhetoric. As Edwin Black notes, about the only agreement that has "crystallized" from the diversity of scholarly interpretation concerning Plato's view of rhetoric "is the judgment that Plato disapproved of rhetoric, and was in fact rhetoric's most effective historical opponent" (361). See Black's essay for a sample of the variety of perspectives on this important problem in Plato's thinking.

[80] Unlike Chapter One, for the purposes at hand, I will make frequent use of the terms Socrates and Plato in this chapter. I do this because Nietzsche regularly differentiates between Socrates and Plato and simultaneously conflates them to represent the spirit and embodiment of the approach to philosophy that Nietzsche takes to be antithetical to his own position, i.e., Christian-Platonism. As will be made clear later, this seemingly contradictory stance on Nietzsche's part can be understood as an intentional tactic within his philosophical arsenal.

[81] I employ the currently fashionable though highly distracting use of a bracket around the (re) in revision to draw attention to the double dimensions of existential and epistemological refashioning entailed in Nietzsche's onto-rhetoric which I will highlight in this chapter. What this means and how it plays out will be the thematic thrust of this chapter.

[82] By attaching the prefix "onto-" as I do here, I mean to capture the intricate and complex way in which ontology is inextricably interwoven with human epistemological, social and rhetorical praxis. In other words, as Kenneth Burke asserts, human beings are by nature and definition "symbol-making and symbol-using animals." (See his A Grammar of Motives and A Rhetoric of Motives.) The import of the way symbolic and life-world practice interfuse with one another will be explored below in my analysis of Nietzsche's understanding of the rhizomorphic nature of onto-rhetorical actions.

[83] See Blair's Introduction for problematics concerning both textual questions and the exact time of composition of these lectures and notes. See also, Behler for a more in-depth analysis of the chronological and textual problems concerning Nietzsche's courses on rhetoric as well as a historical overview of Nietzsche's professional academic career.

[84] See Poulakos for insight into why Nietzsche's philological "voice" has been "silenced" among Classicists ("Nietzsche's Reception" 39-42).

[85] See Poulakos ("Nietzsche's Reception") for a brief, but cogent, overview of Nietzsche's place within nineteenth century Germanic studies of sophistry and rhetoric, i.e., how Nietzsche differs from Hegel, Grote and Zeller.

[86] In this regard, Nietzsche prefigures Heidegger's famous dictum that "Language is the house of being."

[87] Although Behler disagrees with Lacoue-Labrathe as to whether this Nietzschean insight arose before or after his intense study of ancient rhetoric (8), the point remains that both scholars are in accord as to the implications that this rhetorical orientation toward philosophy and existence has for Nietzsche.

[88] The primary text I am investigating here is contained in "Nietzsche's Lecture Notes" which is comprised of the observations and commentaries Nietzsche prepared and wrote for his rhetoric courses. Records at the University of Basel announced these courses as centering around a "description of ancient rhetoric" (Blair 94). In keeping with the many unfortunate events in Nietzsche's life, his last course on rhetoric was never held because of lack of student interest.

[89] See Section III of "Ancient Rhetoric" ("The Relation of the Rhetorical to Language" F.N.R.L. 21-26) where Nietzsche expresses many of the key themes entailed in "On Truth and Lying."

[90] As with the early writings of many writers, there is debate over when Nietzsche developed his ideas, that is, whether Nietzsche formulated his historical or theoretical insights first. Behler, among others, makes a compelling "inner" (textual argument) and "outer" (based on one of Nietzsche's students notes) argument that places "Historical" insights first (6).

[91] See also The Gay Science where Nietzsche chides the traditional approach to "philosophizing" wherein a "real philosopher no longer listened to life insofar as life is music" ((372).

[92] See Hatab for an in-depth analysis of Plato's reservations with and battles with the discourse of poetry (Myth and Philosophy Chapters 3-5.

[93] The historical Gorgias was the exemplar Sophist/rhetorician of his day. A disciple of Empedocles, he mastered the art of persuasion and relished the opportunity to prove the unthinkable, whether it was correct or not. As rehearsed in Chapter One, both his "Defense of Palamades" and "Encomium of Helen" are cogent examples of Gorgias' attempt to exonerate the world-shaping power of language.

[94] See Books V and VI of the Republic where Plato outlines his two-world "divided line" theory of epistemology.

[95] See Nietzsche's analysis of Plato's reservations regarding rhetoric in the Gorgias and Phaedrus at the beginning of his first lecture on the "Description of Ancient Rhetoric" (F.N.R.L. 5-9).

[96] As Kerferd notes, it was this image of Socrates' separation of himself from the Sophists and Rhetoricians who took money for their teaching that is responsible for some of the pejorative reputation that rhetoric and those who practice have accrued (5).

[97] Confer also with the Republic wherein Socrates considers "whether the greater and more advanced part of it (geometry) tends to facilitate the apprehension of the good" (526D-E).

[98] Although Nietzsche seems to exempt Plato from the life-denying "disease of idealism" at the end of this passage, I think, in keeping with the dominant trust of Nietzsche's thought, that this "exemption" can also be read as his indictment against how far his contemporaries had strayed from the uses of their senses in dealing with life. See Kaufmann's footnote (Gay Science 372). See also Twilight of the Idols where Nietzsche comments on the "concept-mummies" that the philosopher's "hatred of the very idea of becoming" has generated ("Reason in Philosophy" 1).

[99] It is not difficult to find in Nietzsche's thought the conceptual roots of Gadamer's hermeneutic insight regarding the historical conditionedness of any interpretive act. See his Truth and Method.

[100] In making this claim, I am aware of the contrast between Plato's epistemological certainty and Socrates' frequent disavowal of such assuredness. However, in keeping with the overall theme I am presenting here, Nietzsche's uncertainty comports with the fundamental thrust of the discourse of rhetoric while Plato's certitude is in keeping with the discourse of philosophy.

[101] As will be seen in the next section, Nietzsche's skepticism is not nihilistic. Though his justifying grounds may not be ultimate in their appeal, Nietzsche's philosophic position is rooted in ontological life-processes that grant them existential legitimacy.

[102] In addition, as Richardson himself notes, many scholars maintain that it is precisely because Nietzsche did not publish the writings in the Nachlass, that we cannot use them as justification for claims about his writings (8). However, in the spirit of multiple perspectives regarding Nietzsche and his thought, Poellner makes "extensive use" of the Nachlass (11).

[103] See Human All Too Human where Nietzsche posits that "convictions are more dangerous enemies of truths than lies" (I 483).

[104] I do not mean to imply that the following interpretation is the only "solution" to the problematics inherent in Nietzsche's thought. Obviously Nietzsche's text are complex enough to harbor a number of plausible and implausible explanations.

[105] I am grateful to Professor Lawrence Hatab for steering me toward Deleuze and Guattari's notion of a rhizome in terms of Nietzsche's thought. As teacher and mentor, his insights have greatly inspired and informed my understanding of what Nietzsche is about.

[106] Like Nietzsche, Deleuze and Guattari indulge in hyperbole to make their point. That is, in their view, root and tree metaphors are in service to the dictatorial schemas of the "State," and that even though "You may make a rupture, draw a line of flight, yet there is still a danger that you will reencounter organizations that restratify everything, formations that restore power to a signifier, attributions that reconstitute a subject—anything you like, from Oedipal resurgences to fascist concretions" (9).

[107] My use of Deleuze and Guattari is itself "rhizomatic" given that they are greatly influenced by Nietzsche.

[108] It would be interesting to do a content analysis of the number of times Nietzsche employs metaphors centered around the concept of earthquakes and volcanoes that act to re-enforce his belief in the "ground-breaking" project he promotes.

[109] Such a view underlies some of the more "uncomfortable" positions Nietzsche supported, given that procedural perspectivism allows creative "overcomers" to chose the program they feel most appropriate to exhibit their will to power.

[110] See Morrisroe's article on Hume's use of similar rhetorical methods in his religious writings. In this essay, Morrisroe reveals the way Hume employs a conscious strategy of contradiction to make his points. According to Morrisroe, Hume seeks to encourage his readers to "enlarge (their) view" (Morrisroe 126) and does this by drawing "contrasting beliefs together" by opposing "'one species of superstition to another,' and then—through the architectural disposition of materials—he lets the contrast speak for themselves" (127). See, too, Ecce Homo where Nietzsche spells out the "four propositions" he uses to determine when to "attack" a cause or person (I, 7). It would be interesting to trace if, and how much, Nietzsche may have been influenced by Hume in developing this rhetorical tactic.

[111] Nietzsche may be immoral by Judeo-Christian standards in that he does not subscribe to its understanding and privileging of certain virtues, life-styles and concepts of good and evil, but, as will be seen, he never-the-less does assert and maintain a positive normative position grounded in the forces and powers of naturalistic becoming.

[112] Although, as many scholars claim, Nietzsche abandons many of the Wagernian and Schopenhauerian elements contained in The Birth of Tragedy, the case can be made that Nietzsche strengthens and deepens many of the views that were influenced by his early study of Attic tragedy. This, along with the reason that it was written near the time of his reflections on ancient rhetoric, is part of the reason I rely so extensively on this text.

[113] Though I disagree with Richardson's overemphasis on a unified systematic ontology in Nietzsche's thinking resulting from this insight, I do admit the will to power operates as a simultaneous linking and complicating term underlying much of Nietzsche's thought. I also acknowledge my debt to Richardson's incisive and in-depth analysis of the complicated dimensions inherent in Nietzsche's concept of power that has influenced my understanding in this essay.

[114] In this regard, Nietzsche promotes skepticism, or incredulity toward the "truth" of truth-claims as opposed to nihilism, which for him leads to passive resignation and thus the abandonment of the life-forces and conflict he espouses. See The AntiChrist 54.

[115] Although issues of Nietzsche's infamous morality are beyond the focus of this chapter, it is important to recall that the motive behind Nietzsche's "revaluation" of all morals lies in his antipathy against all systems of "self-abnegation" (e.g., Christianity and Platonism) that deny the inbred natural instincts and life-promoting desires of the individual, i.e., "The great lie of personal immortality

destroys all reason, everything natural in the instincts—whatever in the instincts is beneficent and life-promoting.(The AnitChrist 43).

[116] See Nietzsche's "Homer's Contest"—(published in 1872)—where he writes "When one speaks of humanity, the idea is fundamental that this is something which separates and distinguishes man from nature. In reality, however, there is no such separation: 'natural' qualities and those called truly 'human' are inseparably grown together" (32).

[117] See The AntiChrist where Nietzsche equates nihilism and Christianity, i.e., "Nihilism and Christianism: that rhymes, that does not only rhyme" (58).

[118] I place "rhetorical" in quotation marks to draw attention to a distinction between the discourse of rhetoric that shapes Nietzsche's fundamental philosophy and the rhetorical or "stylistic" techniques which he employs to make his case. I have predominantly dwelled on the implications of the former given that it most directly informs the anti-metaphysical perspectivism and phenomenalism I have highlighted in Nietzsche's thought.

[119] A close reading of Plato's dialogues may make this over-generalization questionable, especially given the way Socrates' persona and ideas change as Plato matures in the development of his thought and the extensive use of myth and dramatic textual forms in his dialogues. However, in comparison to the flamboyant personas, polemical strategies and rhetorical excess Nietzsche employs, Plato's philosophic style is tame and in keeping with the restraint his discourse of philosophy demands.

[120] See Pettey who points out how Nietzsche is against the life-less "gray, dry, stiff, frigid" style of Kant (19) that sought to obtain the disembodied purity of "mathematical abstraction" (20).

[121] I am grateful to Nash for his insights into what he calls the "functional godlessness" that Nietzsche both reflects and promotes in his work. Borrowing from him, I have substituted metaphysical-groundlessness for "godlessness" in his phrase.

[122] Confer with Seigel for insight into the way Renaissance humanists bridge and "combine" the gap between philosophy and rhetoric that Plato initiated.

[123] See Poster for his analysis of the way "the physical and ontological theories of Protagoras and Gorgias" consider "rhetorical strategies to be ontological" and "the limits of ontology and epistemology to be linguistic" (1), a theme very much in keeping with the onto-rhetoric that I maintain operates in Nietzsche's thought.

[124] For a more epistemologically-centered view of rhetoric see Gregg for an in-depth analysis of "where in the epistemic realm rhetoric may be properly located" (10ff.).

[125] By this assertion I do not mean to imply that Nietzsche's thought has not been employed by those seeking to dominate and control others, the Nazis being a prime example of this. What I am after in this chapter is an exploration of the way the discourse of philosophy and the discourse of rhetoric represent general orientations toward or away from hegemony and domination. Either discourse form can be used to exploit and control; however, as I conceive it here, the discourse of rhetoric lends itself less readily to the meta-narratives that foster the totalizing schemas that result in subjugation of the "Other."

[126] I have not addressed the issue of skepticism in this thesis. The reasons for this are varied with the most prominent being that Nietzsche's onto-rhetoric admits of a "real" world and that the problem of nihilism figures much more importantly in his thought. See Beyond Good and Evil (208) where Nietzsche deconstructs the sickly and "lulling poppy of skepticism." See also Crawford for a well

enumerated examination of Nietzsche's concepts of real and apparent worlds and Rickman for a perspicacious analysis of the nineteenth century roots of the skepticism that underlies much of the thinking surrounding postmodernism and deconstruction.

[127] See Goebel for a more in-depth exploration of Plato's reservations and concerns generated by the notion that all knowledge is probable.

[128] I acknowledge the possibility that the complexity inherent in Plato's thought and realize the Republic can be read as an ironical text. Again, I remind the reader that Plato's thought is highly polyvocal, especially when conceived dramatically and ironically, and that the hermeneutical standpoint I develop in this thesis centers around the Continental, i.e., Heidegger and Derrida, influenced perspective on Plato that operates among many "postmodern" oriented critics. See Hyland, especially Chapter Six, for a stimulatingly different "'Heideggerian' interpretation of Plato" that highlights many of the existential themes Heidegger and those influenced by him often overlook in Plato.

[129] I do not mean to imply that Nietzsche ultimately devalues all truth-claims. His active defense against skepticism, nihilism and his advocating of his core idea of "eternal return" all militate against the interpretation that Nietzsche's thought nullifies all meaning. The continuing fascination of Nietzsche's thought lies in the way he voids the traditional metaphysical grounds of meaning while finding the ensuing finitude sufficient for generating the meaning necessary to embrace the life-drives he champions.

[130] I am adumbrating here what Stephen White calls the "postmodern problematic" by which he means that many of the adjudicatory benchmarks by which we "traditionally" referee truth claims are being "riven by phenomena that are not easily comprehended within familiar cognitive and social structures" (4).

[131] I am grateful to Barry Brummett for pointing out the "impotency" and lack of legitimating justifying grounds that result from views espousing "sheer' relativism.

[132] In focusing on the implications of these two orientations I do not mean to create a false dichotomy nor imply that only metaphysics can sustain an ethics. See Boothroyd for an analysis of Levinas and Nietzsche's non-metaphysically grounded ethics. What I am after here is clarifying what I take to be some of the key tensions inherent whenever we attempt to fashion normative claims within a domain of total self-reference, especially as it relates to the eschewal of dominance of the non-dominant Other. As such, this Chapter follows after Nietzsche in being more a matter of personal reflection than a discursive argument.

[133] See Bernstein for a fruitful analysis of the way the concept of "Otherness" functions among a number of the major "postmodern" thinkers, e.g., Levinas, Derrida, Foucault, Rorty, etc.

[134] By stressing the trope of Otherness I do not mean to imply that this is the unifying concept underlying all "postmodern" oriented thinkers and their discourse. However, I do take this notion to play a vital role in the thought of those theorists for whom the social and ethical dilemmas posed by non-foundational thinking are important matters. See Bernstein and White for representative illustrations of those seeking to find a way through the tension of "an 'aesthetics of existence' and its relation to a 'notion of community'" (Bernstein 167).

[135] I am beholden to Boothroyd for steering me toward Deleuze's phrase.

[136] I borrow the phrase "existential elevation of rhetoric" from Smith whose article contrasts the "subordination" of rhetoric in the medieval epoch with its "elevation" in existential philosophy.

Smith's insight into the way the more philosophically oriented medieval scholars hierarchically arranged "alternative modes of discourse" according to "political divisions" and "levels of intelligence" (160) and the way existential philosophers employ rhetoric as the only discourse form that can lend meaning in an "essentially absurd world" (165) is in keeping with the theme I am developing here.

[137] The subjectivism I am highlighting incorporates both "realist" and "idealist" orientations to the world by admitting that all human assertions are interpretive acts conditioned by our experience as thinking and relating agents in a material world. See Nietzsche for his stated balance between "accursed ipissimosity" or overly subjective very ownness and the overly "unselfing" and "depersonalization of spirit" that extreme objectivism promotes (Beyond Good and Evil 207). See also Smith and Rickman for insights regarding the historical influence of Kant's epistemology on the hermeneutical dimensions inherent in the view of rhetoric developed here.

[138] This insight helps account for the numerous passages in Nietzsche's works where he rants against the tendencies toward German nationalism and anti-Semitism.

[139] This, of course, is Heidegger's fundamental position regarding the way "language is the house of being." See Bineham for a contemporary recap of the Heideggerian influenced Gadamerian view that language and symbolic activity are the inescapable hermeneutic medium through which we encounter the world.

[140] The inter-subjective capacity I am stressing here is not meant to imply the lack of conflict and confrontation, a la Buber or Habermas. In fact, Nietzsche's understanding of the *agon* that underlies all of human experience is a form of non-accommodating inter-subjectivity. That is, as I emphasize below, Nietzsche's insight also does not mean that one group has the "right" to so strongly impose its views on the Other that it destroys the very difference Nietzsche's *agon* needs in order to function as conflict. To use a Levinas phrase, both identity and difference depend upon one another. See Hatab (Democracy) for an application of this Nietzschean insight to the realm of democratic political praxis.

[141] I am, of course, making a distinction between the discourse orientation of rhetoric as a radical openness to the complexity of existence and the use of rhetorical techniques or methods to support a world-view or proposition. The former is always perspectivistic in orientation while the latter can be employed in service to any truth-claim, this is, rhetorical techniques are discourse-neutral in their ability to be employed in service to any cause as Plato points out in the Gorgias and Phaedrus.

[142] I intentionally use the word "creature" here, rather than the more popular terms agent or subject, to draw attention to the ontological importance Nietzsche places on the biological dimensions inherent in human symbolic practice. Refer to the section in Chapter Two on Nietzsche's "rhizomorphic" rhetoric.

[143] This insight is important for those interested in developing an ethica that admits of no metaphysical foundation and yet which recognizes the commonality that binds us as symbolically inflected inter-subjective beings. See Hatab ("Ethics") for an example of a non-metaphysically derived ethics.

[144] Recall Nietzsche's assailing of those prone to excessive objectivism, subjectivism and skepticism in Beyond Good and Evil (207-208).

[145] Although it is beyond the confines of this thesis to develop, it would be worth pursuing the notion of how the fluidity of Nietzsche's ethics and epistemology comports well with the pluralistic eclecticism and hybridity that marks the momentous cultural shifts that cyber-technology has helped usher in over the last fifty years.

[146] I am grateful to Crawford for pointing this pregnant passage out in her detailed and insightful analysis of the multiple "worlds" contained in Nietzsche's epistemology. See also Porter for the way Nietzsche uses rhetoric for demoting and assaulting our "inherited and habitual ways of imagining the world" ("Nietzsche's Rhetoric") 221).

[147] Confer with Gilmour for a different version of how Nietzsche overcomes the "self-referential difficulties" entailed in his perspectivism that many commentators find in his works (259ff.)

VITA

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