

## On Socrates' Criticisms of Sophistic Educational Practice

### 論蘇格拉底對智者教育的實踐的批評

Yip-Mei Loh\*

(羅月美)

#### Abstract

This paper, by focussing on Plato's Protagoras and Gorgias, sets out to show the discrepancy between Socrates and the Sophists toward educational attitudes by means of the following two questions which Socrates proposes therein: 'what a Sophist is' (ti estin ho sophistēs) and 'what rhetoric is' (ti estin hē rhētorikē), thereby demonstrating the dissimilarity of occupation and vocation. The principle task therefore, is to examine how Socrates criticizes the Sophists' education, by attempting to construe the different educational methods between them, mainly with the aid of the German scholar, Werner Jaeger's *Paideia*, by virtue of which it is supposed that the concepts of technē and tychē are manifested, thereby the differentiation of technē (art) and ergasia (craft) is exposed and that of ta mathēnata (knowledge, die Kenntnisse) and hē epistēmē (science, das Wissenschaft or das Wissen) is demonstrated.

Keywords: paideia, technē, epistēmē, aretē, science

收稿日期:2015/10      接受日期:2016/07

---

\* 作者為中原大學宗教研究所助理教授。



The term “sophistēs” stems from the verb “sophizō”, which means “to instruct” and “to make wise or learned”, from which point of view, it can be assumed that “sophistēs” has an intimate relationship with the pedagogic arts. As the name implies, and according to Kerferd, the term Sophist is closely linked with the Greek words “sophia” (“wisdom”, “skill in art”) and “sophos” (“clever”, “skillful in any art”).<sup>1</sup> In English, they are translated into ‘wise’ and ‘wisdom’ respectively. Kerferd based his elucidation on some recognized expositions, arguing that these two terms in their meanings experienced the following three stages of evolution: first, skill in a particular craft, especially handicraft, through second, prudence or wisdom in general matters, especially practical and political wisdom, to third, scientific, theoretic or philosophic wisdom.<sup>2</sup>

According to Robert W. Wallace, before 450 B.C., poets were a group of sophistai who were expert in wisdom in Greek. The public role of the sophistai down through Aristophanes were as educators of the upper classes, privately or in the symposium, and also of the poleis. They often travelled all around among the poleis, and were paid handsomely. For example, Theognis, Solon, Pindar and the Attic dramatists often gave direct political advice to the poleis,<sup>3</sup> because ‘in Greek eyes practical instruction and moral advice constituted the main function of the poet’.<sup>4</sup> In the *Gorgias*, Plato points out that if one removes from all

<sup>1</sup> G.B. Kerferd, *The Sophist Movement*, (London: Cambridge University Press, 1981), p. 24.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Robert W. Wallace, ‘The Sophists in Athens’ in the *Democracy, Empire, and the Arts in Fifth-Century Athens*, Deborah Boedeker and Kurt A. Raaflaub ed., (London: Harvard University Press, 1998), pp. 209-210.

<sup>4</sup> W.K.C. Guthrie, *The Sophist*, (London: Cambridge University Press, 1971), p. 29.



poetry its music, rhythm and meter, nothing remains except for speech because the art of poetry is also public address.<sup>5</sup> According to Wallace, when poetry was supplanted by prose, prose became the most serious medium of discourse.<sup>6</sup> Hence, ‘when during the fifth century prose and logical analysis replaced poetry and poetic inspiration as the fundamental means of thought and communication, the status of the poets was superseded by sophists, and the central importance of poetry faded’<sup>7</sup>.

According to Kerferd, after the fifth century, the term “sophistēs” was not only applied to poets, but also to many of these early “wise men”, that is, teachers.<sup>8</sup> Musicians and rhapsodes are thus described as Guthrie explains, telling of Atheaeus quoting Aeschylus, who says that ‘all who practice the art of music used to be called sophists’<sup>9</sup>. Diviners and seers also fall into this category, as do the Seven Wise Men and other early wise men; and Presocratic philosophers, and the like. There was nothing derogatory in these appellations, indeed, the reverse was true.<sup>10</sup> During the second half of the fifth century, B.C., the term “sophist” not only referred to a group of intellectuals who worked and taught in Athens and elsewhere, but due to their special skill of rhetoric, the Sophists have also been described as travelling “wisdom professors” for hire, according to Wallace’s study.<sup>11</sup>

---

<sup>5</sup> *Gorgias* 502c-d.

<sup>6</sup> Robert W. Wallace, ‘The Sophists in Athens’, p. 209.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid*, p. 210

<sup>8</sup> G. B. Kerferd, *The Sophist Movement*, p. 24.

<sup>9</sup> W. K. C. Guthrie, *The Sophists*, p. 30.

<sup>10</sup> G. B. Kerferd, *The Sophist Movement*, p. 24.

<sup>11</sup> Robert W. Wallace, ‘The Sophists in Athens’, p. 203.



After the period of Pericles, Athenian politics strode forward into a new age of demagogues, who relied on military ability and, more importantly, depended on rhetorical skill to achieve political success. Therefore, during this time Athens witnessed a reaction against the Sophists and against intellectual activities.<sup>12</sup> In the lifetime of Socrates, the name Sophist was used to refer to a particular class of professional educators, who instructed young men, giving public displays of eloquence, and charging fees for their services.<sup>13</sup> According to Guthrie, the Sophists fulfilled two main functions; for instance, Protagoras' students were either young men from noble families who wished to enter politics, or those who were studying "for professional purposes" (*epi technē*), to become Sophists themselves.<sup>14</sup>

## I. What is a Sophist?

'What is a Sophist?' (*ti estin ho sophistēs*;<sup>15</sup>) To answer this question, I focus on two of Plato's earlier dialogues, the *Protagoras* and the *Gorgias*.

---

<sup>12</sup> Ibid, p. 218.

<sup>13</sup> W. K. C. Guthrie, *The Sophists*, p. 35.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid, p. 37.

<sup>15</sup> In ancient Greek, the interrogative of masculine and feminine nouns is "tis", and the interrogative of neuter nouns is "ti". Socrates asks: "ti estin ho sophistēs;" instead of questioning "tis estin ho sophistēs;". This is because "ti estin ho sophistēs;" differs from "tis estin ho sophistēs;". The former interrogates what is the essence/nature (*ousia*) of the thing, that is, what is the essence of the Sophist. It is concerning the nature of a thing. The latter asks about the class of the thing. See Herbert Weir Smyth, *Greek Grammar*, 1265, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1920), p. 310.



In these dialogues, Socrates puts two questions to Hippocrates, Polus and Gorgias: What is the art (*hē technē*) of Protagoras and Gorgias; and what kind of name must we use for them? (*Prot.* 311e; *Gorg.* 448e-449a) Hippocrates answers: “Socrates, people call this man a Sophist,” (*Protagoras* 311e) and Gorgias says: “Rhetoric, Socrates”.<sup>16</sup> (*Gorg.* 449a.) Therefore, Hippocrates’ purpose, in wishing to visit Protagoras and pay him a fee, is to become a Sophist. Those students who spend time with Gorgias want to become rhetoricians.

Does Hippocrates understand what a Sophist is and what a Sophist’s “ability of the art” (*hē dunamis tēs technēs*, *Gorg.* 447c) is? First of all, Hippocrates answers: ‘in my opinion, just as its name implies, a Sophist is one who is proficient in wise things (*ton tōn sophōn epistēmōna*)’. (*Prot.* 312c) Socrates goes further:

If we were asked what sort of wisdom painters understand, we should reply, wisdom pertains to making different kinds of painting, and so on with the others. If then we were asked in what sort of wise things is the Sophist clever (*ho de sophistēs tōn ti sophōn estin*), what should we answer? Of what is he the master? (*Prot.* 312d; cf. *Gorg.* 449a)

Hippocrates answers, ‘the Sophists master to make man eloquent in speaking’, (*Prot.* 312d) that is, ‘make man acquire ability in speaking’.

<sup>16</sup> It is the art of persuasion. The poems of Homer had already shown how keen was the Greek interest in speech; the Sicilian Coras (460 B. C.) was the first man to teach such an art. In 427 B. C. Gorgias of Leontini introduced this new art to Athens. Michael Grant, *Greek and Roman Historians*, (London and New York: Routledge, 1995), p. 31.



(*Gorg.* 449e) But the genuine question of Socrates is, ‘pertaining to what matter does a Sophist make man able to speak eloquently? Just as a performer of the lyre makes a man clever at speaking on his own subject, and a master of the art of the lyre’ (*Prot.* 312d-e) and ‘in what issue are the Sophists skilled and train their students?’ (*Prot.* 312e) Hippocrates is not able to answer Socrates’s questions. (*Prot.* 312e) Hippocrates represents the youth of Athens, who are eager to follow the Sophists. He not only pays them money, he is willing to give them his soul as well. He does all these things because he wishes to be a Sophist in the future. He is the same as the apprentices who pay the sculptors like Polykleitos and Pheidias<sup>17</sup> so as to become sculptors themselves, after learning their skills. (*Prot.* 311c) The main purpose of Socrates here is to remind the youth of Athens to think about whether they genuinely understand the things they have believed that they know, or just understand the appearances of things. Do they follow the trends and say what the crowds have said? Or do they really “understand

---

<sup>17</sup> Polykleitos was an Argive sculptor, active c.460-410 B.C. He was supposedly a pupil of Hageladas and worked exclusively in metal; all his works were in bronze except for the Hera of Argos. Hornblower and Spawforth, *The Oxford Classical Dictionary*, (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, c. 2003), 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition Revised, p. 1211. According to Plutarch (c.45-120 AD), Pheidias (died c. 423 B. C.) had an assistant called Meno. Because Pheidias was a friend of Pericles and had great influence on him, some enemies were jealous of him. Some persuaded Meno to take a suppliant’s seat in the agora and demanded immunity from punishment in case he should bring information and accusation against Pheidias. The people accepted the man’s proposal, and formal prosecution of Pheidias was made in the assembly. Pheidias was led away to prison, and died there of sickness, but some say of poison which the enemies of Pericles provided, that they might bring calumny upon him. As for Meno, on the orders of Glycon, the people gave him immunity from taxation, and ordered the general to protect his safety. Plutarch, *Plutarch’s Lives III*, XXXI, 2-5, with an English translation by Bernadote Perrin, edited by G. P. Goold, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, c. 1996), pp. 88-91.



themselves”<sup>18</sup>?

On the other hand, Socrates distinguishes the educational courses of the Sophists from the professional. The education propagated by Protagoras differed from that generally found in Athens. Hippocrates does not learn a specialized art, such as medicine or sculpture, nor does he study language, music or gymnastics, such as he would be able to learn from masters of language, music and exercise. (*Prot.* 312b) The courses that Hippocrates intends to learn from Protagoras are “not pertinent to art (he *technē*), to becoming an expert (ho *dēmiourgos*)”<sup>19</sup>, (*Prot.* 312b) but are instead “to learn about education (*epi paideia*)”<sup>20</sup>;<sup>21</sup>

<sup>18</sup> Socrates says: “know yourself (*gnōthi sauton*)” in *Protagoras* 343b.

<sup>19</sup> Generally speaking, ho *dēmiouros* means a person who has a special skill in a particular area; in modern terms, it refers to a person who has undergone professional training, that is, a special technical expert.

<sup>20</sup> There are two verbs related to the word “*paideia*”. The first one is “*paizō*” which means “to behave like a child” (*sich wie ein Kind benehmen*), and it can also mean “to play” (*spielen*). The second one is “*paideuō*”, which means “to educate a child” (*ein Kind erziehen*), and it can also mean “educate” (*erziehen*), “form, develop” (*bilden*), and “teach” (*unterrichten*). In fact, as far as Greek culture is concerned, the purpose of education (*Paideia*; *die Bildung*) is very extensive. *Paideia* not only means that the teacher instructs the students, it also refers to culture. We are able to understand its meaning from the German word “*die Bildung*”. This term has a similar relationship with the word “*das Bild*” (*picture, sculpture*). The process of education is like that of creating a statue. A great statue is carved out of marble by a sculptor by means of travail day and night. Education is the same. The whole process of education is a cultural cultivation. Hence, a person who accepts good education receives cultural formation. So the verb “*bilden*” not only means “form”, but also has the meaning of “to bear”, or “to produce”. Also, in English, “educate” derives from the Latin “*e*” (out) + “*ducere*” (to lead). “*Ducere*” resembles the German “*ziehen*” (to educate, to drag) and “*zeugen*” (to beget). Therefore, the Latin word “*educō*” in meaning “draw out”, “train” and educate children’s physical and spiritual health, especially, with regard to older children. In summary, education is to cultivate children’s bodily and spiritual health and to teach them knowledge.

<sup>21</sup> In a footnote to the *Paideia*, Jaeger explains that the purpose of studying



(*Prot.*312b) because Protagoras is better than others, clever in helping a person to be a beautiful and good man (to kalon kagathon), (*Prot.* 328b) namely to be a man with aretē<sup>22</sup> (virtue). In view of this point, Jaeger states:

Only the special students of the Sophist study his art with intention to become sophists themselves in the future, but the aristocratic young Athenians who crowd round him, only just want to listen to him “for the sake of culture” (“um der Bildung willen”), as befits a person who is not a specialist (ein Nichtspezialist) and a free-born man (ein Frei). But this young man (Hippocrates—writer) does not understand exactly what this ‘culture’ (Paideia; die Bildung) is, and we feel that he is a typical of all the other young men who are so keen about it. (*Paideia*, W. Jaeger, Zweiter Band, S. 167)

---

occupation is in connection with the art of learning (epi technē manthanein), one who studies the kalos kagathos with Protagoras merely learns about Paideia (epi paideia). Werner Jaeger, *Paideia—Die Formung Des Griechischen Menschen*, Zweiter Band, (Berlin: Walter De Gruyter & Co., 1944), S. 385, Fußnote 6. The translation of this paper was made by Gilbert Highet, with some modifications by the author.

<sup>22</sup> The noun “aretē” (cf. Latin virtus) comes from the conjugation of the adjective agathos, which means “good”. The comparative and superlative of agathos are ameinōn and aristos, respectively. In etymology, aristos is the superlative of agathos, hence “aristos” means “excellent”. According to Jaeger, ‘the root of arete is the same as that of aristos, which shows superlative ability and superiority, and aristos was constantly used in the plural to denote the nobility.’ Werner Jaeger, *Paideia*, translated by Gilbert Highet, Vol. 1, (New York; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986) p.5. In addition, Jaeger points out that in Homer’s time, ‘the adjective agathos, which corresponds to the noun aretē though it derives from a different root, came to imply the combination of nobility and valour in war. Sometimes it meant “noble” and sometimes “brave” or “capable”, but it seldom meant “good” in the latter sense, any more than aretē meant “moral virtue”.’ Ibid., p. 6. On the other hand, the stem of Ares (god of war) is the same as that of aretē: ari-, areiōn, aristos, hence the first notion of goodness is manhood, bravery in war.



On the contrary, Socrates forms a sharp contrast to the Athenians and the Sophists who engage in educational activities in Athens. Because he does not yet fully understand who he is, Socrates insists that he is ignorant, whilst the Athenians proclaim that they possess some knowledge. Hippocrates is a typical example. He claims that he explicitly understands what a Sophist is, but when Socrates asks him in what particular subject do the Sophists have particular art, Hippocrates cannot answer. Hence, Socrates indirectly points out ‘the essence of sophistic education’<sup>23</sup> (das Wesen der sophistischen Erziehung), on the one hand, and ‘reminds his young friend of the danger into which he is putting his “soul” (Seele), by entrusting it to a stranger whose purposes and goals he himself cannot give an explanation’<sup>24</sup> on the other. He urges this young man to look after his soul carefully, and that he has to understand what kind of food benefits and what kind harms the soul.

#### A. Socrates' views of the Sophists

In Socrates' view, the essence of Sophistic education is like that of itinerant merchants and peddlers, who not only carry the various subjects of their knowledge (ta mathēmata<sup>25</sup>; die Kenntnisse) from polis

<sup>23</sup> Werner Jaeger, *Paideia*, Zweiter Band, S. 168.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid.

<sup>25</sup> Ta mathēmata (die Kenntnisse) differs from hē epistēmē (die Wissenschaft). The former is ‘learning knowledge’. We understand such kinds of knowledge because of learning them; therefore these kinds of knowledge involve experience and memory. The latter is ‘scientific knowledge’, namely, systematised knowledge which derives from observation, research and the like. The word “science” derives from “scire” in Latin, which means “to know”. More precisely, the concept of hē epistēmē contains ta mathēmata, because hē epistēmē includes the following meanings: (1) understanding, comprehension (das Verständnis); (2) science (das Wissen); (3)



to polis, but also tout for business, and selling that knowledge to the young men who are thirsty for it, such as Hippocrates. The Sophists do not themselves know which sorts of the knowledge they offer are good or bad for the soul, but in selling them praise all alike, and these young men who buy from them don't know either. (*Prot.* 313b-313d) With reference to the Sophists' behaviour, Jaeger describes:

Protagoras comes from abroad to Athens and sells all kinds of knowledge (allerlei Kenntnisse) to everyone who pays fees to him. He regards it as a social phenomenon; he is like the travelling merchants and peddlers who hawk their imported goods for money. (*Paideia*, W. Jaeger, Zweiter Band, S. 168)

Socrates claims that the souls and bodies of these merchants and peddlers possess apparent health, but not real health. (*Gorg.* 464a) These people appear to be in a good state of health, 'no one could perceive they are not so, except for a doctor or some physical trainer'. (*Gorg.* 464a, *Prot.* 313d) Here Socrates distinguishes two types of risk. The first one is in buying food. When Hippocrates buys food from the merchants, he is able to take advice from experts as to what he should eat and drink and what he should not, and how much he should

---

theory (die Theorie); (4) study (Studium); (5) learning knowledge (Kenntnis) and (6) ability, skill (Können). Kaegi, Adolf bearbeitet, *Griechisch-deutsches Schulwörterbuch*, S. 295, Wissenschaftlich Buchgesellschaft. For further explanation, see footnote 56. In German, both Kenntnisse and Erkenntnis are related to the word "Wissen". The discrepancy between Kenntnisse and Erkenntnis is that Kenntnis is simple experience void of observation, whereas Erkenntnis is experience with observation so as to discover the truth. Here "Wissen" is a synonym of "Erkenntnis".



consume and when, so the risk he runs in purchasing food is low. The other one is in purchasing knowledge. This case is totally different from the former because the risk Hippocrates runs in purchasing knowledge is much greater, since when he has paid for the knowledge, he must receive it straight into his soul without having the opportunity to get advice from experts. Hence, when he absorbs the knowledge from Protagoras, it may benefit or harm his soul accordingly. (*Prot.* 314a-c) These Sophists who sell knowledge to the young appear to possess healthy souls, and the purchasers, after acquiring the knowledge, seem to have healthy souls as well. Actually, from Socrates' perspectives, except for a doctor having the treatment of souls, the Sophists are unable to prescribe medicine for healing purchasers' illness of souls. As a result, the purchasers do not possess truly healthy souls, and the risk in procuring the knowledge is much greater than in purchasing goods. (*Gorg.* 464b; *Prot.* 314a)

With regard to the different arts devoted to the health of body and that of soul, Socrates names the latter the art of polis (*politikē*<sup>26</sup>), but he does not give a name to the former. Instead, he divides the art of taking care of the body into two parts. The first he calls gymnastics, and the second medicine. Hence, with reference to the art of polis, legislation

---

<sup>26</sup> The word “*politikē*” comprises two words, “*polis*” (polis) and “*technē*”. In English, the word “*polis*” is translated into “city-state”. Kitto maintains that this is a bad translation, because the normal polis was not so much like a city, but was very much more like a state. Although in English we do not have an equivalent word, we still have to avoid reading the city-state into the polis according to Kitto. H.D.F. Kitto, *The Greeks*, (London: Penguin Books, 1951), p. 64. Some scholars suggest that the term “*politikē*” can be rendered as “art of government” or “art of political management”.



corresponds to gymnastics and justice corresponds to medicine. (*Gorg.* 464b) Jaeger expounds that there are two distinct kinds of educators:

The first one is:

The Sophist stuffs people's souls (der Geist) indiscriminately with all sorts of knowledge (Kenntnisse) and plays the part of Average Education (die Durchschnittserziehung) throughout the ages right down to today. (*Paideia*, Jaeger, Zweiter Band, S. 168)

The second one is:

Socrates, who is the physician of the soul, holds that episteme (das Wissen) is the food of the soul, and begins by asking what kind of the food of the soul is good or harmful. (*Paideia*, Jaeger, Zweiter Band, S. 168)

Considering Socrates as the educator of the soul, Jaeger cannot refrain from criticism: 'Socrates does not pose himself as a doctor of soul, but when he mentions that doubts about bodily food can be solved by the gymnast or the doctor, one is forced to ask: who is the specialist (Sachverständige) who can solve doubts about the food of the soul? If this striking comparison were to be made, then it would exactly describe the essence of the true educator (das Wesen des echten Erziehers), as per Socrates' stipulation.'<sup>27</sup>

Of course, this genuine educator and expert, who is able to offer true

---

<sup>27</sup> Werner Jaeger, *Paideia*, Zweiter Band, S. 168.



opinions, is not a Sophist, since the Sophists, in Socrates' views, are not the real rhetoricians who are proficient in the art of rhetoric; they are excellent in sophistry instead. The Sophists use their convincing abilities to persuade the ignorant crowd not only to accept their knowledge but to pay well for it. The Sophists' behaviour is like that of merchants who use their eloquent tongues to persuade the ignorant to buy their wares.

## B. Protagoras' views of the Sophists

In the *Protagoras*, Plato, for the first time, removes the veil from the Sophists' art through Protagoras. Such a revelation may pave the way for Plato to drive the poets from the polis of Athens in the *Politeia*.

Protagoras says that the art of the Sophists is ancient and long established. As regards their nomenclature, he notes that they avoided calling themselves 'Sophists' and that instead, they adopt other labels to appear in front of the crowd. For example, they use the term doctor or gymnast or musician to conceal their genuine occupation. Homer, Hesiod and Simonides used poetry as a screen and Agathocles used music. All of them chose arts like these as a cover, for fear of incurring jealousy.<sup>28</sup>

In view of Protagoras' assertion, Jaeger explicates that the distinguished poets from Homer to Simonides were accustomed to living on their educational prestige and the treasures of their wisdom. They were used to trying to transform these treasures of wisdom into

---

<sup>28</sup> *Protagoras* 316d-e; cf. Werner Jaeger, *Paideia*, Zweiter Band, S. 170.



intellectual moral books for learning in school (verständig moralisierende Schulweisheit). However, Protagoras alters this role and holds that those old heroes not only chose to disguise the fact that they were Sophists, but called themselves poets to avoid the mistrust of their contemporaries.<sup>29</sup> He further points out that they were not successful in their deceptions because they could not deceive the competent men in their polis. As for the popular masses, they were generally unaware, but simply echoed what the leaders told them. If a Sophist attempted to deny who he was this could be folly; and if he failed in his attempt he would arouse greater hostility, for people would think that a man who behaved like this was an unprincipled rogue. (*Prot.* 316e-317b) Therefore, Protagoras does not follow in the steps of the earlier Sophists, saying:

I admit that I am a Sophist and educate men, and hold that admission is a better precaution than denial (*Prot.* 317b)

In addition, he openly announces himself as a teacher of virtue and the first person to claim payment for this service in Greece. (*Prot.* 349a)

In the *Paideia* Jaeger writes that when Protagoras says that he is different from those old heroes and does not fear the light of publicity because he is concerned that this hide-and-seek game will excite greater suspicions to oppose these replacing cultures (die vertretene Bildung), he is admitting that he is a Sophist, a professional teacher of

---

<sup>29</sup> Werner Jaeger, *Paideia*, Zweiter Band, S. 170.



higher culture, who 'educates men' (Menschen erzieht).<sup>30</sup> Similarly, Hegel notes that the Sophists in Greece 'had given a higher culture to their people (eine höhere Bildung); for this, indeed, great credit was ascribed to them in Greece, but they were met by the reproach that was encountered by all culture. That is to say, the Sophists were masters of argument and reasoning, and were within the stage of reflective thought (der Stufe des reflektierenden Gedankens)'.<sup>31</sup>

In fact, if democratic Athens did not create the movement of "foreign culture" of the Sophists, it certainly welcomed the sophistic movement to operate there.<sup>32</sup> In the early fifth-century B.C., Sophists in the poleis took the place of poets in terms of their vital status,<sup>33</sup> 'Hence, as a cultural and educational phenomenon the sophists were not new'.<sup>34</sup> Hegel describes the educational duties of Sophists in Athens as follows:

The Sophists are the teachers of Greece through whom culture (die Bildung) first came into existence in Greece, and thus they took the place of poets and of rhapsodists, who were the earlier public teachers (früher allgemeine Lehrer)... The Sophists educated men

<sup>30</sup> Ibid., S. 171.

<sup>31</sup> Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, *Lectures On The History Of Philosophy---Greek Philosophy to Plato*, Vol.1, translated by E. S. Haldane, (Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 1995), p. 365; *Vorlesungen über die Geschichte der Philosophie*, Vol.1, (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp Verlag, 1971), S.420.

<sup>32</sup> Robert W. Wallace, 'The Sophists in Athens', p. 214. Robert W. Wallace does not employ the phrase "foreign culture"; he explains this as follows: none of the "major" sophists---only Damon of Oa, Antiphon of Rhamnous, Kritias, and Socrates---were Athenians. Protagoras came from Abdera, Gorgias from Leontinoi, Prodikos from the island of Keos, Hippias from Elis. Ibid, p. 213.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid., p. 210.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid, p. 211.



in wisdom, in the sciences, music, and mathematics, and this was their foremost purpose.... They had the duties of education (Amt der Bildung). For various relations, men wished to be determined by thought, and no longer merely by oracles or by custom, passion, and the feelings of the moment - this wish of refection was already awakened in Greece. (*Vorlesungen über die Geschichte der Philosophie*, V.1, S. 409-410; *Lectures On The History Of Philosophy*, V. 1, pp. 355-356)

At that time, this replacing of culture and education was not generally accepted by the Athenians; hence the Sophists in Athens were trapped in a predicament, and they were excluded by the citizenry. Protagoras himself describes the difficulties in Athens:

A man has to be careful when he visits powerful cities as a foreigner, and induces their excellent young men to forsake the company of others, relatives or acquaintances, older or younger, and consort with him on the grounds that this conversation will make them better. Such conduct arouses no small resentment and various forms of hostility and intrigue. (*Protagoras* 316c-d)

Socrates is notable in opposing the educational efforts of the Sophists. He has this dialogue with Anytus<sup>35</sup> in the *Meno*:

---

<sup>35</sup> Anytus can't endure being ridiculed by Socrates, so in the first place stirred up Aristophanes and his friends against him; then afterwards helped persuade Meletus to indict Socrates on a charge of impiety and corrupting the youth. According to Favorinus in his *Miscellaneous History*, the indictment was brought by Meletus, and the speech was delivered by Polyuctus. In addition, according to Hermippus,



Socrates: "...and there are plenty of others besides Protagoras, some before his time and others still alive. Are we to suppose from your remark that they consciously deceive and ruin young men, or are they unaware of it themselves? Can these remarkably clever men - as some regard them - be mad enough for that?" (*Meno* 92a)

Anytus: "Far from it, Socrates. It isn't they who are mad, but rather the young men who hand over their money, and those responsible for them, who let them get into the Sophists's hands, are even worse. Worst of all are the cities who allow them in, or don't expel them, whether it be a foreigner or one of themselves who tries that sort of game." (*Meno* 92a-b)

Besides, Protagoras holds that he is different from the other Sophists whom Socrates criticizes for treating the young men badly,<sup>36</sup> because these young men, who have just left school, are immediately plunged into special studies again and educated in arithmetic, astronomy, geometry and music. However, Protagoras, who differs from Hippias<sup>37</sup>

---

the speech was written by Polycrates the Sophist; but some say that it was by Anytus himself. Antisthenes, in his *Successions of Philosophers*, and Plato, in his *Apology*, say that there were three accusers, Anytus, Lycon (who was a demagogue) and Meletus. Anytus was roused to anger on behalf of the craftsmen and politicians, Lycon on behalf of the rhetoricians, Meletus of the poets. Diogenes Laertius, *Lives of Eminent Philosophers*, with an English Translation by R.D. Hicks, Vol.1, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, c.1995), p. 169.

<sup>36</sup> *Protagoras* 318e; Jaeger says that Protagoras here claims that the Sophist Hippias, the teacher of "liberal arts" (liberalen Künste), is a corrupter of the young. Jaeger, *Paideia*, Zweiter Band, S. 386, Fußnote 27.

<sup>37</sup> Hippias is a famous representative of "liberal arts", in particular of what was later called Quadrivium, which are arithmetic, geometry, astronomy and music. Jaeger, *Paideia*, Zweiter Band, S.171; cf. English translation, Vol. 2, (New York; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986), p. 112.



in teaching them the special skills such as natural science and astronomy, cultivates them to be equipped with the best abilities to manage their own household both in leading (*prattein*; zu führen) and in speaking (*legein*; zu reden), with a view to become a real power in the polis.<sup>38</sup> (*Prot.319a*) In response to Socrates' question to him as to whether Hippocrates follows him from the day he joins him, then in what particular subject and in what particular art will he become better and better day after day, (*Prot.317e-318a*) Protagoras answers:

Knowledge (to *mathema*; die Kenntnis) is prudence not only concerning his own personal affairs so that he may best manage his household matters; but also concerning the affairs of polis so as to become the most powerful person in the polis, both in act and in word (*prattein kai legein*). (*Protagoras 318e-319a*)

According to Jaeger, Protagoras discriminates the other Sophists' technical arts (*Kunst*) and specialties (*Sachverständnis*) from his own social sciences (*der soziale Wissenszweig*). The remarkable difference between Protagoras and other Sophists, for example Hippias, is that the curricula from which the other Sophists teach in quality are the means by which they prepare their students for particular occupations in the future. However, Protagoras instructs his students in how to become beautiful and good men. He emphasizes that the studies he offers are not for pursuing some particular occupation in the future, but for

---

<sup>38</sup> According to Robert W. Wallace, arithmetic, astronomy, geometry and music were also philosophical topics of periods before 450. Robert W. Wallace, 'The Sophists in Athens', p. 208.



preparing for their political careers instead. Hence, the students do not learn particular technical studies (in bestimmte technische Studien) from him.<sup>39</sup>

Additionally, Jaeger demonstrates Protagoras' assertion that the young men in Athens wished to learn ability (die Fähigkeit), that is, to be able to cope with their own personal affairs correctly and to lead the affairs of polis successfully both in act and in word.<sup>40</sup> Therefore, to become a beautiful and good man (kalos kagathos) amounts to becoming a politician, because a politician is a virtuous man. Protagoras emphasizes that his essence of education (das Wesen der Bildung) teaches his students to pursue 'the interest of individuals' (das Interesse der Individuen) and 'the interest of polis' (das Interesse des Staats)<sup>41</sup> by virtue of acts and words, that is, he instructs his students to achieve their individual successes in affairs of polis. This is not only his promise to his students, but is also the art of his self-advertisement. In the *Protagoras* he answers Socrates' question as below:

Socrates: "Do I follow you? I take you to be describing the art of politics, and promising to cultivate men to be good citizens. (hypsichneisthai poiein andras agathous politas)"

Protagoras: "That promise is exactly what I proclaim to do. (to epaggelma<sup>42</sup> ho epaggellomai)" (*Protagoras* 319a; cf. *Gorgias*

<sup>39</sup> Werner Jaeger, *Paideia*, Zweiter Band, S. 171-172.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid, S. 172.

<sup>41</sup> The phrases of "the interest of individuals" and "the interest of polis" are drawn from Hegel, *Vorlesungen über die Geschichte der Philosophie I*, S. 416.

<sup>42</sup> According to Jaeger, "to epaggelma" is the "promise" (das Versprechen), which the



449b)

Hence, Sophists travel around between poleis to engage in their self-promotion; they seem to have their own stands which are in lieu of schools to prosecute teaching as a business or profession; the youth of the city-states are instructed by them.<sup>43</sup> In addition, they ask their students to pay fees for their teaching, Protagoras says:

On this account I have adopted the following method of assessing my payment. Anyone who comes to learn from me may either pay the fee I ask for or, if he prefers, go to a temple, state on oath what

---

teacher makes to teach some certainties (etwas Bestimmtes) to his students. Its verb is “epaggellomai” and “hypischneisthai” (319A4) whose meaning is the same as “announce” (ankündigen). In Latin, “epaggellesthai technēn” is “profiteri”, which describes the occupation of teaching activities of Sophist as a “professor” in the Roman Empire. Jaeger, *Paideia*, Zweiter Band, S. 385 - 386, fußnote 17. Furthermore, Jaeger points out ‘this kind of epaggelma pertains to the occupation of the travelling Sophists; and a self-advertisement (Selbstreklame) is necessary for the sake of absence of a regular professorial stand to guarantee fixed income. As we know, other wandering professions, such as doctors, advertise their skills in the same way (see Jaeger, *Paideia*, Zweiter Band, S. 21.), and for that period of readers, it did not sound so strange as it does in the present-day. First of all, we have to get accustomed to that period of Sophists, which had settled schools, such as the school of Plato and of Isokrates. A teacher usually travelled to visit students, and when he stayed in the city-states, he provided the young men with opportunities to hear his lectures. The epaggelma is the clearest proof that a class of people (eine neue Menschenklasse) had arisen. These new human beings devoted themselves to educating young men professionally. Until then, this phenomenon had still existed in private relationship: a young man associates privately with older men of his acquaintance and there is the relationship of Socrates with his young friends. It was rather old-fashioned and unprofessional. Hence, Plato uses lots of charms and ironies to expound this new force of attraction (die Anziehungskraft des Neuen) to the figure of Hippocrates.’ Werner Jaeger, *Paideia*, Zweiter Band, S. 169 - 170.

<sup>43</sup> Hegel, *Vorlesungen über die Geschichte der Philosophie I*, S. 410; cf. English translation by E.S. Haldane, Vol. 1, p. 356.



he believes to be the worth of my instruction, and deposit that amount. (*Protagoras* 328b-c)

This is reflecting a social phenomenon: the main purpose of the itinerant Sophists is to acquire financial wealth by means of their instruction, instead of regarding education as a vocation.<sup>44</sup> Their ends are to make money; instruction is their means to obtain it, and Socrates cannot agree with that. He holds that the motivation of the Sophists in charging fees is the same as that of a doctor prescribing drugs for his patients' illness. The patients intend to take the medicines not because they desire to take them, but for the purpose of health, that is, taking medicines is their means to recover from illness. They take medicines because the behaviour of taking medicines is able to provide them with benefits, not for the sake of the behaviour of taking medicines itself. (*Gorg.*467c) Rather, with relation to the activities of teaching, the noticeable distinction between Socrates and the Sophists is that Socrates regards education as a vocation; and his teaching attitude is one of lifelong devotion. However, the Sophists viewed teaching as an occupation to provide a livelihood. In the *Gorgias* Socrates draws a parallel between the businessmen who sail the seas for the purpose of

---

<sup>44</sup> The distinction between 'vocation' and 'occupation' is that 'occupation' means to grasp something as tightly as possible or to occupy a place as forcefully as possible. It is derived from the Latin word "capere", which means "seize" and "grasp" or to take something or some place by force or guile. 'Vocation' originates from the Latin word "vocare", which means "call" and "summon". Its noun is "vox", meaning "voice". Thus, vocation means that a person carries on his job for the sake of being called. For example, a person determines to be a pastor because of hearing the call of God. He is summoned by God; hence, he gives himself over to discharging his duties because God bestows the responsibilities on him, not for the purpose of gaining money. Otherwise his attitude to his career is one of occupation.



making money and the Sophists who regard education as an occupation for remuneration. He says:

They (businessmen - writer) do not will what they do on each occasion. For who wills to sail and suffer dangers and troubles? But they will, in my opinion, that for the sake of which they sail, namely wealth, for it is for wealth's sake that they sail. ... If a man acts with some purpose, he does not will the act, but the purpose of the act. (*Gorgias* 467d)

In order to remove the veil of the Sophists, Socrates compares them to the sailing businessmen who venture abroad not only for the sake of making money, but also for the sake of selling their knowledge (to *mathēma*; die Kenntnis) with a view to gaining rich profits. Therefore, wealth is the Sophists' goal; and teaching is just their means or excuse to achieve their ends. In other words, Sophists who engage in teaching are not doing so for the sake of educating, but for the sake of such activities which manage to provide them with profits; and the purpose of motivation for the Sophists is money, instead of education itself. From this perspective, the mission of education for Socrates is totally different from that of the Sophists. Hence, he criticizes the Sophists for regarding their declared profession as an occupation that is making money.

However, Socrates does not totally oppose the charging of fees, saying:



For a man who received any other service - swiftness of foot, for instance, through a trainer - might perhaps deny the trainer his due recompense, if he had given him instruction freely without any agreement that he should receive his fee as nearly as possible at the time when he had taught his pupil to be swift-footed. (*Gorgias* 520c-d)

Here Socrates implies that if an instructor has stipulated in advance that he will charge fees after his students learn the skill that he has advertised, the students have to pay him accordingly. It is the same with the art of architecture. The architects are not ashamed to charge fees if they provide the polis and the clients with architectural plans and blueprints. (*Gorg.* 520d) However, it is shameful for an adviser to charge fees of one who asks how he may become as good as possible and best administer his own family or his city-state, as it is for the adviser to decline his services to those who cannot pay. (*Gorg.* 520e) In other words, Socrates insinuates that Protagoras' occupation, in which he takes such pride, is shameful as he only offers his advice to those students who are able to pay him. But after the students pay, their virtues are neither elevated nor improved. Hence, Socrates accuses Protagoras for not returning his services back to his students because they do not gain positive feedback from him, so those services do not leave a good mark on his students. (*Gorg.* 520e)

## II. Sophists as teachers of the art of rhetoric

Rhetoric, as its name implies, is an art which relates to speaking or



words. The word “rhētorikē” is composed of two separate ancient Greek words, “rhētōr” and “technē”. In this regard, Harvey Yunis points out that rhētorikē technē more properly means the “rhetor’s art” than “art of rhetoric”, because the word rhetor literally means “speaker”.<sup>45</sup> Also, in order to further understand the implication of the word “rhētōr”, we can expound on the verbs “rheō” and “erō” separately to fathom its original meanings. The former refers to “the river is flowing” or “the water of the river is streaming”. The latter means “proclaim” or “promise”. Thus, a rhetor is a person who is glib in tongue; and his mouth is like a torrent of proficient persuasion. Furthermore, he declares that he is expert in the art of rhetoric and promises to teach this to his students if they want to learn from him.

Harvey Yunis declares that in Athens, ‘rhetor’ was not only a political term, but also defined ‘a citizen who volunteered to address the assembly either to move a proposal or to contribute to the debate’<sup>46</sup>. Moreover, ‘the term was also used more loosely to designate those notable citizens who regularly or frequently moved proposals or participated in debates, and thus repeatedly put themselves in the public eye as political leaders; and thus rhetor also means “politician”’.<sup>47</sup> In addition, he mentions that ‘etymology reveals meaning: behind the art of rhetoric as it was ultimately fashioned lies that art of being a politician, that is, of being a politician specifically as politicians

---

<sup>45</sup> Harvey Yunis, ‘The Constraints of Democracy and the Rise of the Art of Rhetoric’ in the *Democracy, Empire, and the Arts in Fifth-Century Athens*, p. 229.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid.



functioned in Athenian democracy'<sup>48</sup>. Hence, it can be assumed that the art of rhetoric is political activity, and Sophists are experts of this art. Gorgias proclaims that he is proficient at this art and can make his students experts too.<sup>49</sup>

Harvey Yunis further points out that 'Sophists, both Athenian and non-Athenian, contributed to rhetorical pursuits in Athens, but Athenian democratic politics provided the impetus'<sup>50</sup>, and 'Plato's treatment of Gorgias is the earliest instance in which the sophist is explicitly regarded as a teacher of and expert in the art of rhetoric'.<sup>51</sup>

#### A. The art of rhetoric

In the *Gorgias* 'What is rhetoric?' (ti estin hē rhētorikē;) is Socrates' question to Gorgias. This is of the same form as the question he asks Hippocrates, 'What is a Sophist?' in the *Protagoras*. This is the essential characteristic of Socrates' questioning.

Responding, Gorgias begins by pointing out the discrepancy between rhetoric and craft (ergasia). As far as Gorgias is concerned, the nature of rhetoric not only includes medicine and gymnastics, but also calculation, arithmetic, geometry and many other arts. (*Gorg.* 450d) These subjects are different from crafts, such as sculpture and drawing, because crafts

---

<sup>48</sup> Ibid.

<sup>49</sup> *Gorgias* 449b.

<sup>50</sup> Harvey Yunis, 'The Constraints of Democracy and the Rise of the Art of Rhetoric', p. 234.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid, p. 226.



do not employ words to create their arts, and do not pertain to the art of rhetoric. Rhetoric as a science (*hē epistēmē*), which relates to words, makes people articulate and makes them capable of judging the subject matter of their discourse. (*Gorg.* 449d) For example, the science of medicine, in Gorgias' view, neither elucidates illness, nor 'reveals to the sick what treatment will restore their health' (*Gorg.* 449e). Instead, it is only words related to illness; hence, it does not empower one to judge the disease, nor enable him to discuss appropriately his patients' illness with respect to what kind of treatment is suitable for the patient. In other words, according to Gorgias, medicine is words about diseases. (*Gorg.* 449e-450a)

Gymnastics is the same. Gymnastic discourses are not concerned with what kinds of exercises are good or bad for bodily condition. Gymnastics, for Gorgias, 'is concerned with words that have to do with its own subject matter'. (*Gorg.* 450b) To be more precise, gymnastics is concerned with words that make people capable of judging about its subject matter. (*Gorg.* 450a-b) Hence the whole action (*hē praxeis*) and the validity are accomplished through words. (*Gorg.* 452a)

In fact, both medicine and gymnastics are the *objects* of rhetoric, instead of the *aims* of rhetoric. The genuine aims of Sophistic rhetoric are 'to convince the judges in court, the senators in Council, the people in the Assembly, or in any other gathering of a citizen body', (*Gorg.* 452e) because once a person possesses such ability (*dunamis*), he is able to make the doctors and the trainers his slaves. Also, he will make the businessmen earn money for him, not for themselves, as he is able



to speak and persuade the crowd. Therefore, rhetoricians persuade the experts who possess a special art, and rhetoric is able to achieve persuasion in the soul of its audience. (*Gorg.* 453a) And thus “the essence of the art” (*Gorg.* 455c) of the rhetors is to provide opinions to those who ask for them. Gorgias declares:

The orators are the counsellor and conquer the opinions with regard to these things. (*Gorgias* 456a)

In many situations, for instance, the words of orators can persuade a patient to take medicine and to accept an operation at the suggestion of the Sophists,<sup>52</sup> (*Gorg.* 456b) especially the likes of Gorgias, who has rich experience. Hence, in Gorgias' view, ‘when there is a dispute in the assembly or in any other mass meeting (Massenversammlung) in order to determine which of the two, doctor or Sophist, shall be chosen to be an expert (Sachverständige) in a specialized field (Gebiet), the expert himself does not win out, but the orator instead’<sup>53</sup>. In addition, ‘neither the architects nor the shipbuilders - whose skill Socrates praises as an example - built the fortifications and harbours of Athens. Instead, it was Themistocles and Pericles who persuaded the people, and the rhetoric gave the power (Macht) to them to do so’<sup>54</sup>. In other words, ‘rhetoric bestows the power on its agents who govern it’<sup>55</sup>.

In light of the above, Socrates draws the discrimination between a

---

<sup>52</sup> Cf. Werner Jaeger, *Paideia*, Zweiter Band, S. 190.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid.; cf. *Gorgias* 456b-c.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid.; cf. *Gorgias* 455d-e.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid.



learned thing (memathēkenai) and a believed thing (pēpisteukenai), between a false belief (pistis<sup>56</sup> pseudēs) and a true belief (pistis alēthēs), and between a false science (epistēmē pseudēs) and a true science (epistēmē alēthēs). (*Gorg.* 454d) Persuasive rhetoric is opinion which people have believed; it is a false science. In other words, rhetors use many accepted beliefs to persuade the ignorant crowd. They cannot use rhetoric to teach the crowd what is the essence of justice and injustice because they themselves do not clearly and truly understand these beliefs; hence they can only use it to persuade the crowd what justice and injustice are. (*Gorg.* 454e-455a) Rhetoric can only persuade the ignorant, namely, the crowd. Thus, to the experts, rhetors are just the same as the ignorant. (*Gorg.* 459a) On the other hand, Socrates further makes Gorgias admit that science is different from belief. The former is true all the time, while the latter is sometimes true and sometimes false. Its truth or falsity is based upon whether the fortune (tychē), resulting from applying or following it, is good or bad. Therefore, there are two forms of persuasion. One is belief, which is produced by rhetoric, without understanding, and the other is science. (*Gorg.* 454e-455a) From this viewpoint, Socrates criticizes the rhetors who have been selling their beliefs, which have been sometimes true and sometimes false, to the ignorant crowd, through persuasion. They have not been

---

<sup>56</sup> Plato in the *Politeia* puts forward the idea that the soul has four sections: The highest is reason (noēsis), the second is understanding (dianoia), the third is belief (pistis), and the last is picture or conjecture (eikasia). Plato, *Politeia* VI 511e, Wissenschaftlich Buchgesellschaft. According to Socrates, science must contain the conditions of universality and necessity, but conjecture lacks in either both conditions or in one of them; hence it is not eternal, nor immutable. Its falsities or truths are based on whether the accidental conditions and factors accord with the facts or not.



selling science. Jaeger shows that Socrates defines rhetoric as ability (Fähigkeit), which persuades audiences not through truth, but with suggestions through words of bare deceptive appearance (durch Worte eine bloße Scheingewißheit) and influences the ignorant crowd by the magic of this tempting appearance (durch den Zauber dieses verlockenden Scheins).<sup>57</sup> Hence, ‘when Socrates implies the danger of misuses of speaking violence with this characteristic’<sup>58</sup>, Gorgias as the teacher of rhetoric defends himself forcefully:

If a man becomes a rhetorician and makes a wrongful use of this faculty and craft, you must not, in my opinion, detest and banish his teacher from the polis. For he imparted it for a good use, but the pupil abuses it. And therefore it is the man who abuses it whom we should rightly detest and banish and put to death, not his instructor. (*Gorgias* 457b-c)

With reference to this, Jaeger points out that when Gorgias said rhetors imparted his art to his pupils with “just application” (“gerechter Gebrauch”), then he obviously pre-supposed two issues. The first is that he himself as a teacher of the art knew what was good and just, and second, that his students either possessed similar science (ein gleiches Wissen) originally or learned it from him.<sup>59</sup> In other words, if rhetors are more understanding and more convincing than the learner, such as doctors, among the ignorant, then the ignorant (i.e. the rhetors) are more

---

<sup>57</sup> Werner Jaeger, *Paideia*, Zweiter Band, S.190.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid., S.191.



persuasive than the initiate among the ignorant crowd. (*Gorg.* 458e-459b) In this way, ‘rhetoric has no need to know about things themselves, how do things stand, but merely to discover a contrivance of persuasion, so as to appear among the ignorant to have more knowledge than the initiate’. (*Gorg.* 459b-c) Thus, Gorgias as an instructor of rhetoric, causes his students who did not know these things before they came to him, seem to know these things in front of the crowd, and if they are not good, then he makes them appear to be good. (*Gorg.* 459e) In order to reveal Gorgias’ contradiction, Socrates, who employs the concept of art, further forces Gorgias to admit this analogy: the man who has learned the art of carpentry is a carpenter, similarly, the man who has learned the art of medicine is a doctor. Based on this reason, the man who has learned justice from Gorgias is a just man; hence, without any question the rhetor who was instructed by Gorgias never abuses his science (epistēmē; Erkenntnis) to do injustice. (*Gorg.* 460b-461a) Therefore, when Gorgias admits Socrates’ analogy, his confession is obviously contradictory to his defence.

## B. Socrates’ view of rhetoric

Prior to discussing this topic, it is essential to understand the meaning of the word “technē” in ancient Greek culture. In the *Gorgias* Chaerephon<sup>60</sup> and Polus have the following conversation:

---

<sup>60</sup> When Chaerephon asked the Pythian priestess who was the cleverest man in Athens, she gave a famous response to him: ‘Of all men living, Socrates is the most wise.’(andrōn hapantōn Sōkratēs sophōtatos) As a result of that, Socrates was envied by many people, who in particular believed that they were themselves wiser



Chaerephon: "...If Gorgias were an expert (or a learner) in the same art as his brother Herodicus, what should we rightly call him? By the same professional name as his brother?"

Polus: "Of course."

Chaerephon: "Then we should be correct in calling him a doctor?"

Polus: "Yes."

...

Chaerephon: "But, as it is, in what art (*technē*) is he expert (*epistēmōn*), and by what name should we correctly call him?"

Polus: "There are many arts among mankind experimentally devised by experience, for experience guides our life along the path of art (*kata technēn*), inexperience along the path of chance (*kata tychēn*). And in each of these different arts different men partake (*metalambanousin*) in different ways, the best men following the best arts.<sup>61</sup>" (*Gorgias* 448b-c)

From this conversation, we can make two points about the word "technē". First of all, *technē* is science that can be learned from experts. Everyone who has learned the arts from the specialists, can, after they themselves become expert in such art, be called by the name of their

---

than any others. But Socrates proved that they were ignorant. According to Plato's *Meno*, Anytus was one of the many that Socrates saw as an ignorant. Diogenes Laertius, *Lives of Eminent Philosophers*, with an English translation by R.D. Hicks, Vol. 1, pp.168-169.

<sup>61</sup> Aristotle in his *Metaphysics* Chapter One quotes this sentence of Polus and further explicates it. He holds that 'experience (*hē empeiria*) seems pretty much like science (*hē epistēmē*) and art, but real science and art come to men through experience; for "experience made art", as Polus says, "but inexperience luck" (he d' *apeiria tychēn*).' Aristotle, *Aristotlis Metaphysica*, W. Jaeger ed., 981a1 - a5, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1957), pp.1-2



profession, and they are experts in their fields. For example, a person, who has learned the art of medicine from a doctor who is acknowledged as an expert of medicine, after he has obtained such art and achieved the qualification, can himself be called a doctor. Therefore, *technē* is necessarily concerned with experiences, not with nature (*hē physis*). Second, *technē* is not luck. On the contrary, it requires our following of successive endeavours; and we can only learn it with repeated practice. In brief, “*technē*” is ‘a kind of professional competence as opposed to instinctive ability (*physis*) or mere chance (*tyche*).’<sup>62</sup>

In German, “*technē*” is translated into “Kunst”. Jaeger states that the concept of Kunst does not adequately convey the meaning of the Greek word, although there is a common direction between Kunst and *technē* both in application and in practice. However, he says that *technē* stands in complete contrast to individual creativity (*individuell Schöpferisch*), which is destitute of conceptual rule to follow (*keiner begrifflichen Regel Unterworfenen*),<sup>63</sup> namely, *technē* is not an individual creativity, instead it has conceptual rule to which one is subjected. So Jaeger says that ‘for us, it includes the word Kunst, which involves the element of definite science and ability (*das Moment des festen Wissens und Können*). For us, *Techne* is more closely bound up with the concept of specialized science (*der Begriff des Fachwissens*)’<sup>64</sup>. In addition, Jaeger further points out that ‘in Greek the word *Techne* has more areas of application than our word Kunst. When man thinks of every practical

<sup>62</sup> F. E. Peter, *Greek Philosophical Terms: A Historical Lexicon*, (New York: New York University Press; Oxford: University of London Press Limited, 1967.), p. 190.

<sup>63</sup> Werner Jaeger, *Paideia*, Zweiter Band, S. 192.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*



occupation (Beruf) that is based on definite specialized science (Fachwissen), he not only thinks of painting and sculpture, architecture and music, he just as much or even more, thinks of medicine, the art of war or the art of the helmsman. The word thus expresses a practical exercise (eine solche praktische Hantierung) and occupational activity (Berufstätigkeit), which is not merely based on bare routine, but also upon general rules and fixed science (Wissen), to reach the sense of theory (Theorie<sup>65</sup>) that is often found in Plato's and Aristotle's philosophical terminology, especially where opposed to bare experience (Erharung). On the other hand, *Techne* distinguishes from science (Episteme) - pure science (die reine Wissenschaft) - by such a way, this theory is always seen as the service for a practice (als im Dienste einer Praxis stehend gedacht wird)<sup>66</sup>.

After examining the word “*technē*”, now let us analyze how Socrates criticizes Gorgias' occupation of which he is so proud. Socrates at the outset denies that rhetoric is an art. However, he asserts that rhetoric is part of an action (to pragma<sup>67</sup>) which is not an art, but an experience.

<sup>65</sup> Theorie (theory) in Greek is “*he theōria*” which means “beholding” or “contemplation”. Its verb is “*theōreō*” meaning to “behold” or “observe”. If we divide the word “*he theōria*” into two parts, it is comprised of “*ho theos*” and “*horaō*”. The former means “god”, and the latter means “look” or “see”. Therefore, Theorie means engaging in mental contemplation and a process of spiritual observation.

<sup>66</sup> Werner Jaeger, *Paideia*, Zweiter Band, S.192 - 193. *Techne* is similar to experience (*empeiria*); they have a common practical character. Ibid, S. 389, Fußnote 21.

<sup>67</sup> “to pragma” is translated into the German as, “das Handeln” and “die Tätigkeit”. The former means “behaviour”, “action” or “bargaining”, while the latter means “activity”, “occupation” or “work”. Here I prefer to translate the term as ‘action’ which incorporates the meaning of occupation and activity, with a view to imply that Gorgias sees the activity of his instruction as an occupation by which he gains



He defines this action as fawning (*kolakeia*). (*Gorg.* 463a-b) In addition to rhetoric, there are other parts concerned with flattery, to wit cookery, cosmetics and sophistry,<sup>68</sup> that is, flattery is comprised of four parts which are rhetoric, cosmetics, sophistry and cookery.<sup>69</sup> The purposes of flattery are not only to give us feelings of gratification and pleasure, but also to help us obtain approval from the crowd.<sup>70</sup> (*Gorg.* 462b-d) Therefore, in reality they are not art, for example, ‘the purpose of cookery wins satisfaction in virtue of arousal of desires’.<sup>71</sup> Instead ‘they are only a routine ability or skill (*ein routiniertes Können*).’<sup>72</sup> Thus, in Socrates’ view, rhetoric, sophistry, cosmetics and cookery are only routine skills with a knack of ingratiating, and which are craft, instead of art or *technē*. And ‘the mutual relations of these four types of flattery suddenly become clear-cut at the moment, since Socrates describes the rhetoric of polis (*politische Rhetorik*) as a delusion of true art (*das Trugbild einer wahren Kunst*).’<sup>73</sup> The rhetoric of polis is ‘the shadow of a part of the art of polis.’ (*Gorg.* 463d-e) Likewise, the three other kinds of flattery turn out to be shadows of the true arts (*Trugbilder wahrer Künste*) which are necessities of human life.<sup>74</sup> In other words,

---

riches. Moreover, the root of pragmatism comes from the term “to pragma” which means “a thing done”.

<sup>68</sup> Sophistry means the art of sophists. The word is comprised of “ho *sophistēs*” and “*technē*”, and its verb is delivered by “*sophizō*”, which not only means “teach” and “make wise or learned”, but also means “deceive” and “beguile”. Hence the art of the Sophists is not only in making men clever at speaking, but also in making them beguilers and deceivers.

<sup>69</sup> *Gorgias* 463a-c; cf. Werner Jaeger, *Paideia*, Zweiter Band, S.193-194.

<sup>70</sup> Cf. Werner Jaeger, *Paideia*, Zweiter Band, S.193.

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>73</sup> *Ibid.*, S. 194.

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid.*



Socrates holds that cookery and cosmetics pander to the body, while rhetoric and sophistry fawn on the soul.

According to Socrates, both body and soul have a good condition of health and an apparent condition of health. The latter can only be noticed by doctors and a few physical trainers, most people are not able to detect it. Likewise, the soul. Whether cookery or rhetoric, both give over to pleasure and ignore the best things, because rhetors do not need to know what kind of constructions are the best for the polis, but only ingratiatingly perceive what kinds of constructions are able to make the citizens happy. Chefs do not know what kind of food is best for the body, but only ingratiatingly notice what kinds of foods manage to please their customers. But only doctors and a few gymnasts know what kinds of foods and what kinds of exercises are good for their patients. (*Gorg.* 464a-465a) Hence, the lives of both the body and the soul need a special art to take care of them respectively. The art of polis is responsible for taking care of the soul; however, as for the art of taking care of the body, Socrates doesn't give it a corresponding name. But both of these arts, the care of the body and the care of the soul, are separated into two subordinate parts: one is the care of the healthy soul and healthy body; the other is the care of the sick soul and sick body. Gymnastic training takes care of healthy bodies, whilst medicine has in its charge sick bodies; similarly, legislation takes care of the healthy soul, whereas the practice of justice is in charge of the sick soul.<sup>75</sup> (*Gorg.* 464e-465a) Jaeger says that these four arts, gymnastics, medicine, legislation and the practice of justice, serve the welfare and

---

<sup>75</sup> Cf. *Ibid.*



preservation of the body and the soul.<sup>76</sup>

Due to cosmetics disguising itself as gymnastics, and cookery disguising itself as medicine, people possess the apparent condition of physical health. Similarly, owing to sophistry pretending to be legislation and rhetoric pretending to be justice, people have the apparent condition of soul health as well. (*Gorg.* 465b-c) Although relatively speaking, sophistry is closely concerned with rhetoric, in essence, there are discrepancies between them. So people, including the Sophists themselves, confuse rhetors with Sophists as a result of lacking the ability to distinguish sophistry from rhetoric. Rhetoricians are not able to employ rhetoric to teach their students what is, and what is not, justice, because they pretend to know what justice is; they only use sophistry to persuade the ignorant crowd. In the same way, sophists pretend to know the requirements of the polis, hence they are only able to use their sophistry to legislate to their own advantage, and they do not manage to use rhetoric to legislate the advantage of the polis itself. (*Gorg.* 465c-468d) Rhetors, chefs, Sophists and make-up men do not really know the essence of things; they only ingratiatingly perceive the appearances of those things. The flattery of these four shadows ‘act based on bare experience, not as do the real arts, in accordance with fixed principles, nor based upon the science (die Erkenntnis) of what is truly healthy for the nature of mankind’<sup>77</sup>. Therefore, they are not arts. Both rhetors and Sophists pretend to consider the welfare of the polis, but actually they just pursue their own individual interests. Rhetoric and

<sup>76</sup> Ibid.

<sup>77</sup> Ibid.



sophistry are the means for them to gain their interests, hence Sophists just pursue their own advantages; their aim is money. The four ingratiating shadows, which are sophistry, rhetoric, cosmetics and cookery, 'all of these do not provide the well-being of human being (dem Besten des Menschen) with services, but only make an effort to arouse peoples' pleasure'<sup>78</sup>. Hence, they are not art, but routine skills.

Socrates reveals that Gorgias disguises himself as a rhetor by means of rhetoric. Gorgias actually uses the tricks of sophistry to deceive the young Athenians so as to earn money. He is, from Socrates' perspective, a Sophist, instead of a rhetor. Socrates further emphasises that the eloquence of the Sophists is a knack that is trained by a succession of exercises, instead of true rhetoric and bare *technē*. According to Jaeger, the concepts of *technē* based upon Socrates' view have the following fundamental features: 'First, *technē* is science (das Wissen) which is founded upon the science of the real nature of its object (die Erkenntnis der wahren Natur ihres Gegenstandes). Second, *technē* is competence, and is able to lay down the explanation of its action, because it occupies the science of grounds (die Erkenntnis der Gründe). Finally, it serves the well-being of its object'.<sup>79</sup>

<sup>78</sup> Ibid.

<sup>79</sup> Ibid., S. 194-195. Jaeger points out that Plato, in his *Gorgias* 465a, sums up his analysis of the concept of *technē*. According to Jaeger's interpretation, Plato's model of the nature of a true *technē* is medicine: see *Gorgias* 464a and 464d. Jaeger explains that 'it is from medicine that he takes the concept of therapy and of goal (der Begriff der Therapie und des Zielens (stochazesthai)) in accordance with well-being (das Beste), as well as the description of well-being as welfare or a good healthy condition. The "political art", which is the aim of newly established philosophy and culture, is thought of as a medicine of the soul (eine Medizin der Seele).' Ibid., S. 390, fußnote 30.



In Socrates' view, the function of sophistry in our souls is the same as the function of cookery in our bodies; consequently, the arts of Sophists, such as Protagoras, Gorgias and Pericles, do not qualify for the above-mentioned features of *techne*. Therefore, they master the art of the shadows instead of the true arts.

### III. Conclusion

Socrates asks the question 'ti estin hē rhētorikē;' and 'ti estin ho sophistēs;' instead of 'tis estin hē rhētorikē;' and 'tis estin ho sophistēs;' because his purpose is to inquire into what the essence (*ousia*) of rhetoric or Sophist is.

According to Socrates, the educational attitudes of the Sophists, both Protagoras and Gorgias, are the same as those of the early famous wise men, such as Homer and Theognis. They wield the name of rhetoric as a veil to conceal the truth that they use sophistry as a means to deceive the youth of Athens. The Sophists and the Athenian politicians, like Pericles, master either sophistry, or shadows of rhetoric, or both, instead of the art of true rhetoric. That is, in Socrates' view, the Sophists do not master the *technē* or art, they do not possess the essence of rhetoric or the science of rhetoric, what they possess is the belief of rhetoric, i.e. experience and luck, hence the purpose of their education is the pursuit of money and they regard their job as an occupation, not a vocation.

In brief, Socrates sees Sophistic rhetoric as nothing more than mere flattery, and a symptom of a sick soul, which is an apparent condition of



---

the sick soul. He holds that the Sophists do not possess the true rhetoric, but the false one - Sophistry.



#### IV. Bibliography

1. Aristotle, *Aristotlis Metaphysica*, W. Jaeger ed., Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1957.
2. Grant, Michael, *Greek and Roman Historians*, London and New York: Routledge, 1995.
3. Guthrie, W.K.C., *The Sophist*, London: Cambridge University Press, 1971.
4. Hegel, Georg Wilhelm Friedrich, *Lectures on the History of Philosophy - Greek Philosophy to Plato*, Volume 1, translated by E. S. Haldane, Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 1995.
5. ——— *Vorlesungen über die Geschichte der Philosophie*, Frankfurt am Main : Suhrkamp Verlag 1971.
6. Hornblower and Spawforth, *The Oxford Classical Dictionary*, 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition Revised, Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2003.
7. Jaeger, Werner, *Paideia: the Ideals of Greek Culture*, Volume 1 & II, translated by Gilbert Highet, New York; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986.
8. ——— *Paideia—Die Formung Des Griechischen Menschen*, Zweiter Band, Berlin: Walter De Gruyter & Co., 1944.
9. Kaegi, Adolf bearbeitet, *Griechisch-deutsches Schulwörterbuch*, München und Leipzig: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1931.
10. Kerferd, G.B., *The Sophistic Movement*, London: Cambridge University Press, 1981.



11. Kitto, H.D.F., *The Greeks*, London: Penguin Books, 1951.
12. Laertius, Diogenes, *Lives of Eminent Philosophers*, with an English translation by R.D. Hicks, Vol.I-II, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1995.
13. Peters, F.E., *Greek Philosophical Terms: A Historical Lexicon*, New York: New York University Press, 1967.
14. Plato, *The Collected Dialogues of Plato*, edited by Edith Hamilton and Huntington Cairns, Princeton University Press, 1963.
15. Plato, *Platon Werke in acht Bänden Griechisch und Deutsch*, bearbeitet von Heinz Hofmann, Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1990.
16. Plutarch, *Plutarch Live - Pericles and Fabius Maximus Nicias and Crassus, III*, with an English translation by Bernadotte Perrin, edited by G.P.Goold, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1996.
17. Smyth, Herbert Weir, *Greek Grammar*, 1265, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1920.
18. Wallace, Robert W., 'The Sophists in Athens' in the *Democracy, Empire, and the Arts in Fifth-Century Athens*, Deborah Boedeker and Kurt A. Raaflaub ed., London: Harvard University Press, 1998.
19. Yunis, Harvey, 'The Constraints of Democracy and the Rise of the Art of Rhetoric' in the *Democracy, Empire, and the Arts in Fifth-Century Athens*, Deborah Boedeker and Kurt A. Raaflaub ed., London: Harvard University Press, 1998.



## 摘要

此論文——聚焦在柏拉圖的《普羅達哥拉斯》與《高爾吉亞斯》兩篇對話錄——以蘇格拉底與智者之間的差異為出發點，透過由蘇格拉底所提的以下兩個問題來闡明他們的教育態度：「甚麼是智者」以及「甚麼是演說術」，藉此展現職業與志業的差異。因此，此論文之主要的工作是以德國學者 Werner Jaeger 的《教育》一書去分析他們的教育方法之差異，由此去探究蘇格拉底如何批評智者的教育，藉此，我們假定的技藝與運氣的概念可以被彰顯出來，技藝與工藝的差異可以被說明清楚，以及知識與科學的差異可以被闡明。

關鍵字：教育、技藝、知識、德性、科學

