

Gorgias

Encomium of Helen: Sophistry

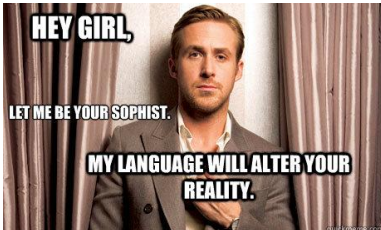
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SOPHIST/SOPHISTRY (OED)

- SOPHIST:
 - One who is distinguished for learning; a wise or learned man.
 - In ancient Greece, one specially engaged in the pursuit or communication of knowledge; esp. one who undertook to give instruction in intellectual and ethical matters **in return for payment**.
 - One who makes use of fallacious arguments; a specious reasoner.
- Sophistry:
 - The type of learning characteristic of the ancient Sophists; the profession of a Sophist.
 - The use or practice of specious reasoning as an art or dialectic exercise.
 - Specious but fallacious reasoning; employment of arguments which are intentionally deceptive.

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O-okaay... o.O?



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Augustine vs. Gorgias

Augustine asks: What is the relationship between SIGNS and TRUTH?

Gorgias asks this question too, and adds:

What is the relationship between WORDS and POWER?

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RHETORIC and REASON

WHAT strategies does Gorgias use to make his case for Helen?

Consider:

- Naming (39);
- The association of words and force (40);
- Pathos (the appeal to the emotions) (40).

SO WHAT: What is the relationship between RHETORICAL strategies and

- The Platonic idea of REASON;
- The Augustinian idea of HERMENEUTICS?

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Are You Persuaded?

What does the text DOTO YOU?

Do you buy the argument?



6

EPIDEIXIS

EPIDEIXIS: an exercise used to demonstrate and teach the principles of rhetoric.

- Students would be expected to be able to argue equally well on either side of a debate.

What is the relationship between REASON and "REASONABLENESS?"

What is the relationship between EPIDEIXIS and TRUTH?

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Rhetorical Strategies

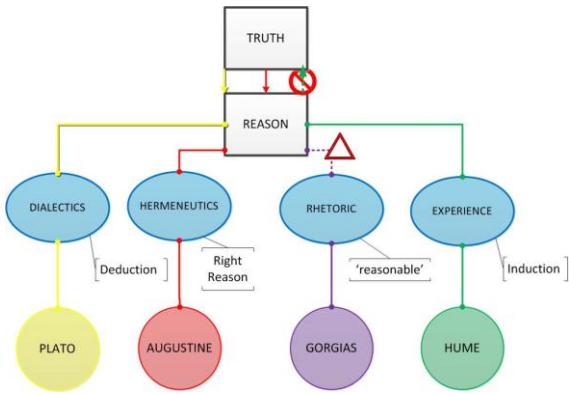
- Naming: "crime" vs. "misfortune" (39).
- Words → Force: "persuasion, which has the same power, but not the same form as compulsion" (40).
- Pathos: "through words the soul feels its own feelings for good and bad fortune in the affairs and lives of others" (40).

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Language, Reason, Truth

- "written with skill" vs. "spoken with truth"
- **Epideixis** (a demonstration of rhetorical skill):
 - Epitomized by the rhetorician who can argue equally convincingly for BOTH SIDES;
 - DETACHES argument from REASON;
- **Rhetoric** (skillful manipulation of affect through language):
 - SUBSTITUTES "reasonableness" for reason

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