

Polus comes back on the scene and he's very upset. He thinks Socrates is being a bully and so asks Socrates to start giving some answers. So we're back to the what is rhetoric? Question but this time Polus wants Socrates to answer instead of ask the questions. Socrates argues that rhetoric is not a profession or an art at all but really a kind of method for flattering others and that it is actually bad for us.

Why does he think that? Here we're given an analogy with the body and soul and the arts that correspond to them. Both have a healthy condition and both can be diseased. There are professions that actually make them healthy and then there are professions that only appear to make them healthy but in fact do them harm:

Body	Soul	
Strength, free of disease	Truth and rationality	Condition of health
Medicine	Philosophy	Profession for health
Cookery	Rhetoric	Profession for harm

How is this analogy supposed to work? If the body and soul have healthy states then we can understand how medicine and cookery are meant to work. Medicine can make us actually free of disease and can keep us fit and strong by eating foods that are genuinely good for us. Socrates thinks cookery is a harmful profession because it feels good to do, food can taste really good, but it can also work to make us unhealthy. But, like rhetoricians, if a master chef and a dietician were to compete in a cookoff, most people would rather eat the master chef's food. This is because rhetoric and cookery are about flattery, they aim at convincing the ignorant, but they do not care about what is good.

The same is meant to be true for the soul. If we are better off when we know Truth and can reach it ourselves then philosophy, if it is a method for reaching truth, is supposed to be good for us. Rhetoric, however, according to Socrates, only makes us *feel* like we have truth. We are convinced of truth without actually having knowledge. This is why it is bad. But Polus isn't ready to admit that rhetoric is bad. He repeats Gorgias' argument about the power of rhetoric. A skilled rhetorician can give herself ultimate power and do whatever she wants AND still be loved by those she holds power over. Socrates thinks Polus is now contradicting himself. The master rhetorician is not to be envied because she does not actually have any power because she cannot do anything she wants. Why? Again we have an argument.

1. Punishment is an evil [Polus commits himself to this]
2. Tyrants are happy [Polus also commits himself to this]
3. Tyrants are unjust [Polus give us an example of this]
4. Committing injustice is more *disgraceful* than suffering it [Polus agrees to this premise]
5. One disgrace is worse than another if it *either* is more painful or more evil [Socrates' premise]
6. Suffering injustice is more painful than committing [everyone agreed to this]
7. ∴ Committing injustice is more evil than suffering it [from 4,5,6]
8. Tyrants are evil [from 3 and 7]
9. Just punishment lessens evil [justice is defined in this way]
10. Good is better than Evil [An assumption]
11. Just punishment is good for the receiver [because it makes them less evil]
12. Unpunished tyrants are more disgraceful than punished tyrants [from 3, 5, 8, 9, 10]

Why did we go through all this argument? Remember that Polus had been saying that rhetoric is good because it gives us ultimate power over people. It let's us do whatever we want, kill whomever we want. Also, premise 4, that committing injustice is more painful than suffering injustice, will play a critical part in Socrates' decision to accept the decision of the courts in the apology in another dialogue.

Well now Socrates has had Polus admit that tyrants are evil and are made better by being punished. This means that it is NOT GOOD that rhetoric can give you the power of the tyrant. Polus' initial position contradicts what he says now. Justice, via punishment, removes injustice and the removal of injustice is good even though it may be unpleasant. Just as some medical treatments are good for you (they restore health) but painful.

There is no value in rhetoric then if rhetoric is understood purely as the art of persuasion. Philosophy, as Socrates understands it, is immune to these criticisms because it seeks out truth not persuasion.