

What has Socrates accomplished through the dialectical discussion with Callicles?

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The Dialectical discussion with Callicles in *Gorgias* is a climax of the Socratic inquiry. Socrates refutes Callicles thoroughly, confidently asserts the objective truth of his claims, but disclaims knowledge: “I myself don’t know how these things are.” (*Gorg.* 509A) Moreover, while Callicles recognizes he is forced to accept the truth of Socrates’ claims, he is not convinced. The Dialectical discussion with Callicles displays all of the features of the Socratic inquiry. I want to demonstrate an intrinsic connection between the truth in the Socratic dialectic and the idea that interlocutors are not persuaded, and insist that this connection is the nature of the Socratic dialectic.

First, we will make sure that the Socratic dialectic is coercive, in comparison with the persuasiveness of *Gorgias*’ non-coercive rhetoric. From a scene in which Callicles complains “What a bully you are, Socrates” (*Gorg.* 505D), it is clear that Socrates does not succeed in persuading his interlocutor. So arguments in Socrates’ discussion are something interlocutors are ‘forced to accept while not persuaded’. Next, we will analyze the structure of Socrates’ discussion whereby Socrates drags his interlocutor to the truth by receiving assents and developing an argument. To be refuted in Socrates’ discussion is to be chased off through interlocutors’ own assents, so tugged by means of ‘logos’ from their original opinions. This is nothing but to step into the truth, where one will be aware of his own ignorance. Socrates calls his interlocutor a ‘touchstone’ (*Gorg.* 487E) because Socrates himself is tested in the face of his interlocutor’s differing opinion. Then, we will confirm that our examination of life and quest for knowledge become one through the interlocutors’ assents. Finally, the Myth at the dialogue’s ending is set not for supplementing arguments, but rather because a thorough resolution does not have to be achieved through dialectical discussion. I will explain that, by the presence of dialectical remainders, the myth is compelling us to be involved in Socrates’ discussion.