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'The power of persuasion in Plato'

Monday 28 May, 5pm: Beves Room, King's College

The author

Jill Frank is Associate Professor of Political Science and Director of the Classics in Contemporary Perspectives Initiative at the University of South Carolina, Columbia. She researches and teaches ancient and modern political theory, specialising in the texts and contexts of the classical world with a view to enriching contemporary democratic theory and practice. Having published *A Democracy of Distinction: Aristotle and the Work of Politics* (Chicago, 2005), and articles on ancient political theory, she is currently writing a book on authority focused on the dialogues of Plato. "The Power of Persuasion in Plato" is part of a chapter of this book.

The paper

Against the view that the goal of Plato's dialogs on rhetoric is to displace rhetoric by and/or subordinate it to philosophy, "The Power of Persuasion in Plato" reads these dialogs as articulating a philosophy of rhetoric or a rhetorical philosophy. Attending to these dialogs' varying representations of persuasion, this paper focuses on the Republic to elaborate a mode of persuasion that, by way of what Socrates calls "free and beautiful conversations," may, like the dialog's account of philosophy, bring about justice in the souls of speakers and listeners alike and in their city.

Related Literature

Primary

Plato's Republic by Allan Bloom (Basic Books, 1968); G.M.A. Grube, rev. C.D.C. Reeve in Plato's Complete Works, ed. John M. Cooper (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1997)

Paul Shorey (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1935); along with the Greek text and commentary by James Adam (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1902).

Secondary

Berger, Harry. Jr. "Facing Sophists: Socrates' Charismatic Bondage in Protagoras," *Representations* 5 (1984):66–91.

Blondell, Ruby. *The Play of Character in Plato's Dialogues* (Cambridge University Press, 2006).

Buxton, R.G.A. *Persuasion in Greek Tragedy: A Study in Peitho* (Cambridge University Press, 2010).

Ferrari, G.R.F. *Listening to the Cicadas: A Study of the Phaedrus* (Cambridge University Press, 1990).

Kennedy, George. *A New History of Classical Rhetoric* (Princeton University Press, 1994).

Nightingale, Andrea Wilson. *Genres in Dialogue: Plato and the Construct of Philosophy* (Cambridge University Press, 1995).

Schofield, Malcolm. *Plato: Political Philosophy* (Oxford University Press, 2006)

Tarnopolsky, Christina H. *Prudes, Perverts, and Tyrants: Plato's Gorgias and the Politics of Shame* (Princeton University Press, 2010)

Yunis, Harvey. "The Protreptic Rhetoric of the Republic" in G.R.F.Ferrari, ed., *The Cambridge Companion to Plato's Republic* (Cambridge University Press, 2007), 1-26.

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Zuckert, Catherine. *Plato's Philosophers: The Coherence of Dialogues* (University of Chicago Press, 2009).