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Rhetorical Ventriloquism: The Representation of Dialectic and Philosophy in Cicero's *Tusculan Disputations* and Boethius' *The Consolation of Philosophy*❖

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ABSTRACT

The Romans, in contrast to the Greeks, are generally practical and endeavor collectively to lay stress on the persuasive art of rhetoric—at least, until the fading of the Republic. Curiously, they have also exhibited conflicting attitudes toward how to better position rhetoric in relation to philosophy. That is, there persists a sense of anxiety over securing a rhetorical identity even to the day of Quintilian, who still has to figure out how rhetoric can be related to philosophy properly in his *Institutio Oratoria*—with self-contradictory assertions, though. In reality, increasing attention has been devoted to philosophical studies as the Romans turn to the Empire: they come to realize the need of cultivation by dint of philosophy. This paper then sets out to examine Cicero's *Tusculan Disputations* and Boethius' *The Consolation of Philosophy* to investigate the role of philosophy in the Roman context. In particular, this paper will analyze whether dialectic proper has been well applied in these two texts since both authors defer to Platonic philosophy, which is predominantly informed by dialectic argumentation. It is found that, although they both hold Plato in high esteem, Cicero's and Boethius' dialectical practice remains nominal, in turn undermining their attempts to extol philosophy.

KEY WORDS: dialectic, philosophy, rhetoric, *Tusculan Disputations*, *The Consolation of Philosophy*

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修辭腹語：西賽羅《圖斯庫蘭的爭論》及波其武《哲學的慰藉》中辯證與哲學的再現

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摘　要

與希臘人相比，羅馬人——至少在共合時期勢微之前——普遍來說較為務實且致力於修辭(作為說服術)的推廣。有趣的是，他們對於修辭之於哲學的定位卻也顯現出矛盾的態度。亦即，當中總是存在著對於修辭身分的焦慮感；縱使是坤體良，他在《辯才之養成》中對於修辭與哲學的說法仍多所相互牴觸。實際上，當羅馬人轉向帝國時期，哲學研究已受到愈多的關注：他們終而體認到透過哲學達成教化的需求。這篇論文即在此脈絡下檢視西賽羅《圖斯庫蘭的爭論》及波其武《哲學的慰藉》中哲學的角色。尤其是分析這兩位作者是否適當地應用了他們所推崇的柏拉圖哲學引以為特色的辯證式論理。本文發現，雖然西賽羅及波其武敬重柏拉圖，他們之再現辯證僅為名義上的，進而損害其對哲學的頌揚。

關鍵詞：辯證、哲學、修辭、《圖斯庫蘭的爭論》、《哲學的慰藉》

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The Romans, in contrast to the Greeks, are generally practical and endeavor collectively to lay stress on the persuasive art of rhetoric—at least, until the fading of the Republic. Curiously, they have also exhibited conflicting attitudes toward how to better position rhetoric in relation to philosophy. That is, there persists a sense of anxiety over securing a rhetorical identity even to the day of Quintilian, who still has to figure out how rhetoric can be related to philosophy properly in his *Institutio Oratoria*—with self-contradictory assertions, though.[1] In reality, increasing attention has been devoted to philosophical studies as the Romans turn to the Empire: they come to realize the need of cultivation by dint of philosophy. This paper then sets out to examine Cicero's *Tusculan Disputations*[2] and Boethius' *The Consolation of Philosophy*[3] to investigate the role of philosophy in the Roman context. In particular, this paper will analyze whether dialectic proper has been well applied in these two texts since both authors defer to Platonic philosophy, which is predominantly informed by dialectic argumentation. It is found that, although they both hold Plato in high esteem, Cicero's and Boethius' dialectical practice remains nominal, in turn undermining their attempts to extol philosophy.

Reverence, Anxiety, and Texts

Ever since philosophy and rhetoric symbolically disjoin each other in Plato's *Apology*[4]—in the tradition of Platonism, at least—philosophy forfeits its voice on the public scene, presumably in the *agora*. Rhetoric, by contrast, not only finds its philosophical status in Aristotle's *Art of Rhetoric*, but continues to flourish in the work of Hermogoras of Temnos, culminating in its transfer as "a comprehensive system (*techne*)" to the hands of Romans (Calboli and Dominik 4).[5] On the other hand, philosophy meets a half-hearted

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* This paper is a revision of Chapter Four of the author's doctoral dissertation.

[1] *Institutio Oratoria* will be cited as *IO* hereafter.

[2] *Tusculan Disputations* will be cited as *TD* hereafter.

[3] *The Consolation of Philosophy* will be cited as *CoP* hereafter. One thing to note is that, while English quotes are taken from P. G. Walsh's translation, Latin quotes are from the Loeb edition.

[4] Socrates, the philosophical avatar, is sentenced to death in this dialogue.

[5] The extant major rhetorical texts that come down to Romans include, besides the works by Aristotle

reception from the practical Romans. As Cicero observes, while the Greeks hold geometry in high esteem, "we Romans have restricted this art to the practical purposes of measuring and reckoning" (*TD* 1.2.5). Philosophy then sets off the usefulness of rhetoric in the forum and the court. But, their tepidity could have also stemmed from a distrust of philosophy: the three philosophers who visit Rome around 156 or 155 BC "displeased old-fashioned Romans like Cato the Elder" for their speeches have attracted myriads of Roman citizens (May and Wisse 21).[6] It is not until "at quite a late period," as Cicero notes, that philosophy "became the object of their [Romans] aspiration" (*TD* 4.1.1), arising out of, firstly, the need for the cultivation of young men from the nobility, and secondly, the "slight" decline of rhetoric in the late Republic. This aspiration is epitomized by figures such as Cicero and Boethius. They revere, foremost, the fountainhead of philosophy—Plato, and his doppelganger, Socrates. As for Cicero, "he [Plato] would crush me by the mere weight of his authority: he has . . . produced such a number of proofs . . . and beyond doubt he seems to have convinced himself" (*TD* 1.21.49). The interlocutor A in *TD*, apparently a young man coming to Cicero for cultivation, is likewise drawn to Plato (1.16.39). Boethius, in his accusation of Fortune, justifies himself by explaining that "I follow the injunction of Socrates, and regard it as impious either to hide the truth or to give entry to falsehood" (*CP* 1.4.24). In point of Roman history, philosophy then emerges in the Roman mind at the turn from the Republic to the Empire and stays with Boethius, "Last of the Romans, first of the scholastics" (claimed by Lorenzo Valla in the 15th century, qtd. in Chadwick xi).

Parallel to such reception is a thematic call from the renowned Roman orators for the union of philosophy and rhetoric. Cicero's youthful rhetorical text, *De Inventione*[7], has begun with a philosophical lead-in that "for centuries became the classic statement of the nature of rhetoric" (Kennedy 91).[8] His

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and Hermogoras of Temnos, Anaximenes' *Rhetorica ad Alexandrum* as well (Calboli and Dominik 4).

[6] These three philosophers are Diogenes the Stoic, Critolaus the Peripatetic, and Carneades the Academic. It is also interesting to note that the later Academic, Philo of Larissa, head of the then Academy (characterized by skeptical inquiries), flees Athens and comes to Rome in 88 BC, leaves an everlasting influence on Cicero (May and Wisse 7).

[7] *De Inventione* will be cited as *DI* heareafter.

[8] This text is disparaged by Cicero himself as an immature work even though it shows an unceasing concern with the need to subsume philosophy into rhetoric (Kirby 14).

most mature work on rhetoric, *De Oratore*[9], is also noted, not for its innovations in rhetorical skills, but, rather, for its appeal to philosophize rhetoric. In both texts, Cicero emphasizes that persuasive techniques are most effective when merged with philosophical knowledge. For the first century AD orator Quintilian, claimed to be a master-hand at Latin rhetoric by the emperor Vespasian, an accomplished orator also requires philosophical training during the formative years. Likening the rhetorical edifice to architecture, he contends that just as a building is comprised of its superstructure and foundation, so oratory—as the subject *par excellence*—stands on the basis of preliminary ones like geometry and music (*IO* 1.10.6). However, philosophy takes priority in these prefatory studies. This, as he admits, is inspired by Cicero, who "has clearly shown . . . that the same men were regarded as uniting the qualifications of orator and philosopher" (*IO* 1.pr.13). In resorting to Chrysippus, Quintilian then claims that when a child is trained to be an orator, his nurse is ideally a philosopher, who can speak correctly and therefore will not compromise his probable achievements in the future (*IO* 1.1.1-5).

This union apart, the attention dedicated to philosophy is also exemplified in the attempt to make Greek philosophy known to the Roman world. The introduction is palpably carried out with a palpable attention to Romanness. Book 3 of Cicero's *De Finibus*[10], for instance, holds special import in that it is the only extant unbroken exposition of Stoic doctrines, but more conspicuously, here Cicero strives to create Latin terminology for Greek philosophy (Morford 54), as also evidenced in his conceptualization of the Greek word *pathos* in *TD* 3.4.7. Boethius, in emulating Cicero, is nevertheless inclined to Plato and Aristotle:

> I would put into the Roman tongue every work of Aristotle that has come down to us and write Latin commentaries on all of them. . . . I would by translating and commenting set out in an orderly way and chiefly with commentaries. I would also put into Latin all the dialogues of Plato. That being done, I would then go on to bring into harmony the teachings of Aristotle and Plato. . . . (qtd. in McInerny 3)

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[9] *De Oratore* will be cited as *DO* hereafter.

[10] *De Finibus* will be cited as *DF* hereafter.

As a matter of fact, Boethius merely produces a Latin *Organon*, curiously excluding Aristotle's *Art of Rhetoric*, a work supposedly relevant to logic as well. This is not necessarily due to the fact that he is not recognized as an orator. The reason is possibly that, compared with philosophy, rhetoric has been in a sense assiduously studied and exhausted. Moreover, though he does not specifically study rhetoric as a subject, Boethius has approached it with a logical view in his *In Ciceronis Topica*. Besides, his saturation in a rhetorical culture is so obvious that it cannot be ignored, as discernible in his *CoP*. Yet, among all the endeavors to introduce Greek philosophy, as in the case of Cicero, Boethius also intends to provide philosophy with Latin terminology: he wishes to put Aristotle "in Romanum stilum" (into the Roman tongue) and Plato in Latinam formam ("into Latin") (qtd. in McInerny 3). These two goals, as the translator guides the reader, both seem concerned with language. However, the use of *stilum* (*stilus*: a writing instrument and later, style) and *formam* (*forma*: shape, form) appears to express more than can be said about the mere transition between two linguistic systems: Boethius takes care to make philosophy look Roman, assimilating but not accommodating Greek thoughts. In the end, his translation project is rewarding, for the king Theoderic on one occasion lauds him thus: ". . . you introduced a Roman toga into the throng of Greek cloaks; and in your hands Greek teachings have become Roman doctrine" (qtd. in Barnes 73).

To unite two "incompatible" subjects—or why should one bother to unite them if they are already compatible with each other?—and to translate philosophy not only into the Latin language but also into a Roman manner inevitably implies tension and anxiety. In subsuming philosophy into their rhetorical system, the Romans have fashioned a rhetorical identity confronting Greek philosophy despite the fact that Roman oratory is deeply indebted to the Greeks. And yet, now the Romans try to turn that contrapuntal relationship to their own favor. Such a case generates a problematic complex that is structural in nature: union in opposition. Quintilian himself exemplifies such an instance. He has, as indicated above, incorporated the teaching of philosophy at an early stage into the cultivation of an orator. This naturally relates to his emphasis on the moral soundness of the orator in *IO*. In it, for example, when Quintilian defines rhetoric as "the art of speaking well" ("bene dicendi scientia," *IO* 2.14.5, or "ars bene dicendi," *IO* 2.17.37), the use of "bene" does imply both artistic excellence and moral goodness" (Kennedy

101). The supremacy of philosophy is nevertheless undermined by his other statements. For example, already in his preface, Quintilian has maintained with assurance that "it is surely the orator who will have the greatest mastery of all such departments of knowledge and the greatest power to express it in words" (*IO* 1.pr.17). He is here claiming what the Gorgias in Plato's *Gorgias*[11] has not claimed: orators are not just acting in lieu of professionals by dint of suasory speech; they also act *as* professionals with the Platonic *episteme*. It is thus not unexpected that he would describe philosophers as trespassers of knowledge, which he thinks is originally the domain of orators (*IO* 2.21.13). These contradictory statements only indicate that the rhetorical identity claimed by the Romans vis-à-vis Greek philosophy remains unfixed and unsecured.

The tense relationship well testifies to Cicero himself, the greatest Roman (or even Western) orator. In *TD*, he urges Romans, with their devotion and intelligence, to "wrest the now failing grasp of Greece the renown won from this field of study [philosophy] and transfer it to this city" (2.2.5). Furthermore, once the Romans are able to master philosophical studies, "we shall have no need even of Greek libraries" (*TD* 2.2.6). Eventually, Cicero crowns himself with the title of philosopher—"We philosophers" (*TD* 4.34.71)—and aligns himself with the Platonic tradition in uttering "our Plato" (*TD* 4.34.71). Quintilian continues this Ciceronian anxiety over an implied lack of philosophical achievement in being an orator and reiterates in his *IO* that since orators act as professionals, let them "be such as to have a genuine title to the name of philosopher" (1.pr.18). Cicero thus relives the problematic complex (in the form of opposition in union, though). One thing to note is that Cicero's revered Plato is more than purely an avatar of philosophy; he is for Cicero also an avatar of rhetoric. In his earlier as well as seminal rhetorical text *DO*, Cicero admits that he finds Plato to be "a supreme orator" after poring over his *Gorgias* (1.47). Intriguingly enough, in his later and probably most philosophical text *TD*, Cicero questions his interlocutor, asking, "We cannot, can we, surpass Plato in eloquence" (1.11.24)? Such imaging of Plato as orator only muddles the complex mentioned above further and shows that Romans have scruples about their rhetorical identity.

What follows then examines in greater detail how the Romans envisage themselves when they proclaim to philosophize. For this reason, this study

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[11] *Gorgias* will be cited as *Gorg.* in quotes.

chooses two philosophical texts for analysis: one is Cicero's *TD* and the other is Boethius' *CoP*. As a matter of fact, the appeal to the study of philosophy is nothing singular in the two texts. Cicero's *DI* and the anonymous *Rhetorica ad Herennium*[12] likewise feature an attempt to accentuate the importance of philosophical investigations. The former calls for devotion to philosophy; as to the latter, the author replies to his friend Gaius Herennius, who "spurred" him to write a book on public speaking, that actually "the little [time] that is vouchsafed to me I have usually preferred to spend on philosophy" (*RaH* 1.1.1). They constitute, moreover, the two basic texts for approaching rhetoric in the Middle Ages (Wagner 16).[13] Despite their accent on philosophy, though, these two texts are technical *per se* in that they focus on the subjects of rhetoric (invention, arrangement, expression, memory, and delivery) and rules for discourse.

Equally famous for appeals to philosophy are Cicero's *DO* and Quintilian's *IO*.[14] As mentioned earlier, their intent to incorporate philosophy into oratory is already clear. Besides, these two texts are pronounced in their delineation of an ideal orator instead of merely pinpointing rhetorical strategies, hence recalling and redressing Plato's repeated criticism of orators. *DO* is even more compelling for its employment of the dialogic format that is traditionally used to frame philosophical discussions, evoking, as May and Wisse argue, "memories of…the *Gorgias* and *Phaedrus*" (4). A sort of transgression is thus implied in terms of generic integrity. But, as also the case for *IO*, *DO* is explicitly rhetorical in purpose and therefore irrelevant to this study.

For that matter, Cicero's *TD* and Boethius' *CoP* pertain to the study concerning that problematic complex not just for their overt concern with philosophy but also for their silence on the utility of rhetoric. *TD* is in a sense the most philosophically complete work composed by Cicero (Morford 52,

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[12] *Rhetorica ad Herennium* will be cited as *RaH* in quotes.

[13] *RaH* has to wait until the ninth century to become a popular text for rhetoric (Camargo 99). It is the earliest extant Latin treatise on rhetoric (Calboli and Dominik 4). *RaH* comes to challenge the supremacy of *DI* in the mid-eleventh century so much so that the popularity of its Book IV is such that *elocutio* (figurative ornamentation) tends to become rhetoric proper; Camargo then identifies the difference between *DI* and *Rah* as that between *rhetorica vetus* and *rhetorica nova* (99).

[14] These two texts become popular in the Renaissance "when interest in Cicero's *De Oratore* revived and the full text of Quintilian's *Institutio Oratoria* was recovered [at the Abbey of St. Gall in 1416]" (Camargo 115).

59). The influence of his *DF* is more far-reaching while his *TD* synthesizes the discussions in the former and reflects his peculiar philosophical flavor. The silence in regard to rhetorical utility becomes conspicuous in *CoP*, in which Boethius the prisoner seeks the help of Lady Philosophy to cope with his misfortune; such help, in reality, finds its source in Christian faith. And yet, *CoP* is so unpretentiously philosophical in tone that even the element of Christianity seems a passing interest in the text.[15] As G. R. Evans points out, *CoP* poses "a challenge to Christian scholars because it appears to show a Boethius…returning to philosophy under the pressures of political imprisonment and despair at the end of his life" (4).[16] Jean Gerson's *On the Consolation of Theology* in the 14th century is thus an attempt to correct Boethius and point out where the consolation should lie (Evans 11). In light of this, one can contend that both Cicero and Boethius now turn the contrapuntal relationship between philosophy and rhetoric to the advantage of the former while playing down the latter's voice. However, it is such silence on the part of rhetoric that this study wishes to undermine—by arguing that Cicero's as well as Boethius' textualization of philosophy acts out the same problematic complex in texts that try to secure a rhetorical identity. In particular, this study will also examine the dialectical argumentation as exerted in *TD* and *CoP*, to see how Plato's dialectical philosophy is practiced through Cicero's and Boethius' avowed adherence to Plato/Socrates.

Philosophical Resonances

One may well begin with the correspondence between Cicero's *TD* and Boethius' *CoP*. It has been suggested that Boethius might very possibly have taken *TD* as a model as he pens *CoP* (he has been engaged in emulating Cicero with regard to introducing Greek philosophy to Romans). Firstly, there is the use of the dialogue form via which the Romans and especially Cicero set up philosophical dialogues (*DO* is a singular instance of treating rhetoric

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[15] The discussions of logic in Boethius' *De Topicis Differentiis*, though philosophical, are irrelevant here.

[16] This has been observed by a host of critics. Apart from Evans' claim that *CoP* remains a storehouse of philosophical teachings (32), Seth Lerer regards it as a treatise on epistemology (11). For Anna Crabbe, *CoP* is "a theological treatise without specific allegiance" (238). As for Henry Chadwick, its emphasis on philosophy is "an evidently conscious refusal to say anything distinctively Christian" (224). Finally, Ralph McInerny views *CoP* as surprising for "the absence of any appeal to the author's faith" (224).

in the dialogue form); secondly, Cicero's tendency to personify philosophy segues into the figure of Lady Philosophy in *CoP*; thirdly, *CoP* follows *TD* in its adoption of a five-book format that structures the progressive movement of philosophical exploration (Lerer 33). This modeling in form is further supported by the appeal to the theme that philosophy can resist the fickleness of fortune either domestic—Cicero's loss of his beloved daughter Tullia—or political—Boethius' imprisonment for being accused of treason.[17] Yet, as will be argued later, Cicero's purpose in his addressing Brutus prior to each Book might well be political and on account of ineffective rhetoric near the end of the Republic. The political inertia as felt by Cicero and Boethius thus underlies the philosophical pursuits in *TD* and *CoP*.

Nonetheless, in point of philosophical consequence, there is one correspondence that appears to have escaped the notice of critics. That is, common to the philosophical movements in *TD* and *CoP* is a "narrative partition" dividing each text into two philosophical events. The partition in *TD* appears in the final Book, where Cicero addresses Philosophy (hence the aforementioned personification):

> O, philosophy, thou guide of life, o thou explorer of virtue and expeller of vice! Without thee what could have become not only of me but the life of man altogether? Thou hast given birth to cities, thou hast called scattered human beings into the bond of social life, thou has united them first of all in joint habitations, next in wedlock, then in the ties of common literature and speech, thou hast discovered law, thou hast been the teacher of morality and order: to thee I flee for refuge, from thee I look for aid, to thee I entrust myself, as once in ample measure, so now wholly and entirely. (5.2.5)

This paean to philosophy becomes dramatized in Boethius' *CoP*, in which Lady Philosophy figures as the councilor and mentor of Boethius, who faces imminent death. In other words, Cicero's conceptual address to philosophy

[17] In Cicero's case, the textual relation to Tullia can only be implicit because the dialogic progression is rather impersonal. But, his repeated references to *Consolatio*—composed to mourn his daughter—suffice to suggest that the use of philosophy to counter distress in *TD* somehow originates from his effort to confront domestic misfortune. It is also *Consolatio*, now lost, that inspires a sequence of Cicero's philosophical works to come.

materializes into the scenario in *CoP*. Similarly, there is also a narrative partition for Boethius. Rather than occurring in the form of a paean, it appears as a hymn to God led by Lady Philosophy herself, who, in order to bring Boethius to a higher level, prays,

> Father of earth and sky, you steer the world
> By reason everlasting. You bid time
> Progress from all eternity. Yourself
> Unshifting, You impel all things to move.
> No cause outside Yourself made you give shape
> To fluid matter, for in You was set
> The form of the ungrudging highest good.
> From heavenly patterns You derive all things.
> Yourself most beautiful, You likewise bear
> In mind a world of beauty, and You shape
> Our world in like appearance. You command
> Its perfect parts, to form a perfect world. (3.9.m1-12)[18].

This invocation to God forms a transition from Stoic ethics to Platonic metaphysics: Before the hymn, Lady Philosophy has been urging Boethius to bear misfortune; after it, however, she tries to account for Neo-platonic transcendence.[19] Moreover, the prayer itself has been set in a Platonic façade, especially in the use of "reason" to mark out the divine and in the appropriation of a cosmogony derived via Platonic *eidos*. The partition is remarkable too in that, right after the prayer, the dialogue between Boethius and Lady Philosophy starts to employ the Platonic two-world argument. In *CoP* 4.10.m16-7, Lady Philosophy then contrasts "the blest light" and "Phoebus' rays" and denies the brightness of the latter. This contrast is striking: before the hymn Phoebus' light is brought up when Lady Philosophy wipes Boethius' tears for him so that he may recognize her (*CoP* 1.3.m9). Thus, the prayer can be said to lead the dialogue to a metaphysical level that is no longer concerned with worldly matters. Cicero's paean in *TD* works very

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[18] The "m" in citation refers to the Latin "metrum," meaning "verse" in English.

[19] The existence of Stoicism and Platonism in *CoP* has been observed by critics (see Chadwick 228 and Morford 239), but they have failed to point to the relative positions of the two thoughts in it, which are predicated upon this prayer.

much in the same way. Though lacking in the literary implications of *CoP*, it does illustrate a thematic transition from Stoicism (on forbearance) to Platonism (on virtue and happiness) in a similar way.

With all these philosophical events in *TD* and *CoP*, however, this study will limit its discussion to the correlation of such events with Platonism since Plato and Socrates serve as Cicero's and Boethius' princes of philosophy. The first resonance in the texts, though observably Stoic in nature, echoes Plato's misgiving about pernicious emotions in the *Laches* (*CoP* 1.7.m21-4n). The first four books of *TD* are, structurally, dialogues in which the teacher figure M refutes the student figure A's arguments about (wise) men's susceptibility to emotions, ranging from the fear of death, pain, distress, to other forms of emotional disturbance. M then declares that once the soul resorts to reason, as wise men always do, men free themselves from emotional commotions (*TD* 3.7.15). The antimony between emotion and reason aptly inaugurates Boethius' *CoP*. Immersed in his own woes, Boethius is found "putting the last touches to my tearful lament" (*CoP* 1.1.1), agonizing over "Fortune's harsh and cruel treatment" (*CoP* 1.4.2). But, as this display of emotion arises from the misunderstanding of the divine plan, Lady Philosophy asserts that she will break up "the darkness of deceiving emotions" in the first event so that Boethius can "acknowledge the brightness of the true light" (*CoP* 1.6.21). In the second event, Lady Philosophy again highlights the destructiveness of emotions when humans cannot use reason to see "the light of the highest truth," which constitutes, simultaneously, their free will (*CoP* 5.2.10). From this, one can infer that *CoP* is in a way a dramatized dialogue centered on how philosophy undertakes to overcome emotions, especially for one whose death is impending. These attempts to expel emotions under the aegis of reason correspond to Platonism at yet another level. As Socrates implements dialectic, it is a rule for him to keep the attention of the interlocutors riveted on the argument (*logos*)—however agitated and embarrassed they might become when confronted with Socrates' definitional interrogatives. Although such does not explicitly claim to disencumber them from emotions, Socrates' insistence on the purity of *logos* suggests that contaminated reason impedes the search for *episteme*.

Meanwhile, Boethius' show of emotion in the opening of *CoP* reminds one of Plato's *Republic*. Boethius' emotional abandonment is accompanied by the muses of poetry. But, as Lady Philosophy appears and notices Boethius'

unbearable and shameful condition, she dismisses the muses with harshness, asking who on earth has authorized "these harlots of the stage to approach this sick man" (*CoP* 1.1.8). This is truly an enactment of the Platonic scheme of expelling the poets from the republic. Moreover, the anger of Lady Philosophy is perhaps not so unexpected, because the poetry in which Boethius indulges himself so as to parade his emotions is precisely "the lowest possible rung on the poetic order," namely, the Ovidian elegy on love and lament (Crabbe 244-5). Boethius is in a sense farthest from the *eidos* and his dialogue with Lady Philosophy thus serves as a journey enabling him to reach the true light and the divine heights. Though not as dramatic, Cicero also introduces the Platonic theme when M cautions A that one should be careful about weaving poetry into discourse. M holds that poetry would confine men to "a life passed in the shade of effeminate seclusion" and that "the strength of manliness is completely sapped" for poets "represent brave men wailing" and "enervate our souls" (*TD* 2.11.27). "Plato was right then," he continues, "in turning them out of his imaginary State" (*TD* 2.11.27). Poetry is associated with emotion, which in turn blinds the vision of the divine. One is thus presented with an oxymoron in which the "sweetness" ("dulcis") of poetry is in fact ruinous (*CoP* 1.1.9; *TD* 2.11.27).

After the narrative partitions, the Platonic themes on virtue and happiness are brought up both in *TD* and *CoP*. In Plato's *Gorgias*, Socrates has tried to establish to Polus the equation between goodness and happiness. Only those who pursue the correct good can become happy; punishment is hence a source of happiness to the wicked, who desire but misrecognize the good. The reference to the *Gorgias* is specific in Cicero, who directly quotes *Gorg*. 470D-E to demonstrate the correlation between virtue, the good, and happiness (*TD* 5.12.34-5). Unwanted emotions, then, result from "a mistaken notion of what is good," a judgment that does not base itself on reason (*TD* 5.15.43). So, in this philosophical resonance, M draws A's attention to the metaphysics of Plato as particularly evidenced in the *Gorgias*. Very much in the same way, Lady Philosophy leads Boethius to this metaphysical level by appropriating the Socratic argument delineated above. Aware of its incompatibility with plebian ideas, she instructs Boethius that "the wicked . . . are happier if they suffer punishment than if no deserved punishment constrains them" (*CoP* 4.4.13). Reference to the *Gorgias* is straightforward here and indicative enough of the continuation. Also for instance, Lady

Philosophy imparts that even though the good is desired by all men alike (*CoP* 3.11.38), "only the wise can implement their desires, and wicked men can follow their inclinations but cannot fulfill their longings" owing to their misrecognition of the good (*CoP* 4.2.45). She *does* attribute this to the teaching of Plato (*CoP* 4.2.45). But, whether in *TD* or *CoP*, it is discernible in the above instances that philosophy seems for the most part operative mainly in the extirpation of emotions. Boethius, in particular, has been sentenced to death under the plotting of the wicked. Consequently, even though Boethius has not translated or commented on any work of Plato, he too has transformed Platonism into the potent and stirring *CoP*.[20]

In Platonism, however, these teachings are possible only on the condition that they are revealed to the interlocutors via the showing of the process of their construction through dialectic.[21] As Cicero tells Brutus, he has constructed the philosophical discussions in the five dialogues between M and A with "the old Socratic method of arguing against your adversary's position," that is, dialectic (*TD* 1.4.8).[22] At the beginnings of the dialogues, the M figure sets out to refute the argument maintained by the A figure. In the midst of their dialectic, M realizes Socratic leitmotifs in argumentation accordingly. For instance, M proclaims his fearlessness in "admitting my ignorance where I am ignorant" (*TD* 1.25.60). Similarly, following Socrates' verbal belligerence, Cicero addresses Brutus by saying, "lets us lend it [philosophy] our support and submit to contradiction and refutation" (*TD* 2.2.5). And M, taking up this determination, avers: "I long to be refuted" (*TD* 3.19.46). The recourse to dialectic is quite unstated in *CoP*, but certain textual evidence does point to the use of the Socratic method. To begin with, Seth Lerer argues that Lady Philosophy's appearance is in order that Boethius the prisoner can find a voice, that is to say, to dialecticize. At the outset, Boethius muses over his misfortune in silence penning his "tearful lament" ("signarum") (*CoP* 1.1.1). "The meaningful markings ["insigniti" (*CoP* 1.1.4)] of Philosophy's gown" then contrast with the empty, emotion-bound elegy and prepare Boethius for meaningful verbal activity, that is, dialectic (Lerer 98). In

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[20] Of course, the influence of Neo-platonism in formulating these Platonic arguments is hardly negligible.

[21] As John M. Cooper maintains, "For Plato, philosophical ideas without a philosophical methodology conferred only a limited and dubious title to the status of philosopher" (77).

[22] The manifest reference to dialectic begins not until Book 4 of *TD*.

the exchanges that follow, however, the dialogic format is simply ordinary. One has to wait until Book 3 for the conversation to pick up the tempo and rigor that approximates dialectic. For instance, in *CoP* 3.3, dialectic is employed to drive home the argument that worldly possessions cannot dispel want. Interestingly, the narrative partition appears just after a few chapters later in the same Book. It is as if dialectic has anticipated the emergence of Platonic metaphysics. The other Platonic themes include, firstly, *CoP* 3.9, where they arrive at the argument that all forms of happiness are one and the same (after this appears the prayer), and secondly, *CoP* 4.7, in which we find the argument that every visit of fortune is good. In all, the dialogic moves in *TD* and *CoP* continue the Platonic theme that dialectic proceeds as propaedeutic to philosophy and ultimately completes it.

From Resemblance to Similitude

This Foucauldian subtitle is raised for the sake of arguing that Cicero and Boethius have departed from their model and created a Roman kind of philosophy at the textual level. Accordingly, this section will deal with surface variations undermining both authors' homages to Plato/Socrates. Furthermore, in the section that follows, this study will contend that, amid the philosophical movements in *TD* and *CoP*, rhetorical logos is at work to liquidate dialectical logos so that philosophy becomes a text bereft of Socratic dynamism.

In the first place, it is intriguing to note that dialectic operates in conjunction with rhetoric. In *TD*, for instance, though Cicero has promised Brutus to employ "the old Socratic method" in Book 1—and indeed the philosophical discussions between M and A are conducted in the Socratic manner—there is a bizarre shift in Book 4. In it, as M wishes to elaborate the meaning of the Greek word *pathos*, he asks A whether he should "spread the sails of eloquence at once or push on first for a little with oars of dialectic" (*TD* 4.4.9). This inclusion of oratory would contradict the purpose of a philosophical dialogue guided by Socratic dialectic. A replies, to one's relief, that he prefers for the moment "This last way, to be sure" (*TD* 4.4.9). Dialectical integrity is thus temporarily maintained, only to be dismantled shortly afterwards when A tells M that "for the present we are waiting for the sails you just now mentioned and a clear run" (*TD* 4.14.33). The dialogue then turns to speechifying. The exceptional reference to the conjunctive use of rhetoric and dialectic in Book 4 actually point out the pattern of all the

conversations in the five dialogues of *TD*. That is, after some dialectical exchanges, the format of give-and-take is replaced by the spread "sails of eloquence." Lerer also observes this of *TD*, calling it a tendency to turn from "disputatio" to "oratio" (41).

Boethius' *CoP*, on the other hand, is by any account reticent on the conjunction between rhetoric and dialectic, but it is noticeable that after the dialectical instance in 4.7, Book 5 is only an exposition on the reconciliation between free will and Providence. This part remains superficially dialogic in form, but the relationship between Boethius and Lady Philosophy is no longer that between arguers, but rather that between the unlearned and the expounder. For the moment, Boethius signifies lack and doubt, waiting for Lady Philosophy's explanations. Lerer argues that this transition testifies to Boethius' final choice of Aristotle's philosophical demonstration, a kind of argument that suffices to claim its own truth—since Boethius is conversant with Aristotelian logic (7). The text implies quite the opposite, though. In *CoP* 4.6.5, as Lady Philosophy tries to impart the full meaning of fate and Providence to Boethius, she shows a keen awareness of "being constrained by the narrow limits of time." It can be read as Boethius' own consciousness of his upcoming execution. And yet, it also fails to underpin Lady Philosophy's explanation in Book 5 as philosophical demonstration at the textual level—in the sense that its supposedly timeless validity has been subjected to time's rule. Therefore, Lady Philosophy's speeches are fittingly the display of rhetorical logos, causing *CoP* to undergo the same transition from *disputatio* to *oratio*.

The juxtaposition of dialectic and rhetoric is obviously antithetical to dialectical philosophy. But the major problem with this conjunction is perhaps more intricate than the coalescence between rhetoric and philosophy. For the Romans, the nexus between dialectic and rhetoric appears to be organic. Cicero's "sails of eloquence" and "oars of dialectic" have compressed rhetoric and dialectic into one image (boat-riding): they are merely outgrowths of the same thing. This composite image is echoed by Quintilian. In *IO*, he distinguishes between rhetoric and dialectic on the basis of the length of speech: rhetoric, the continuous; dialectic, the concise (2.20.7). Moreover, citing Zeno, Quintilian recaps the nexus between these two forms of speech as "the open hand" and "the closed fist" (*IO* 2.20.7). From such comparison, one can see that dialectic is not as far as philosophy is from rhetoric for the Romans. As one returns to Plato, the distinction between continuous and

concise speeches is exactly what Socrates himself has maintained in the dialogues, where he invariably asks his interlocutors to answer briefly instead of speechifying (thus being rhetorical).[23] However, this difference is true only in form because, for an orator like Quintilian, dialectic may be one form of verbal expression, not necessarily related to the pursuit of philosophy. Cicero himself has shown himself as not confining dialectic to philosophy, and for Quintilian, rhetoric suffices to articulate philosophy. The role of dialectic as speech even becomes secondary to rhetoric in Boethius' *CoP*.

With dialectic detached from Platonic philosophy, one may re-examine the relationship between them in *TD* and *CoP*. As indicated above, philosophy is strictly bound with the methodology of dialectic in Platonism. Dialectic is then implemented to clarify philosophical teachings in its search for the typical forms (with their explanatory power) of knowledge. In this sense, dialectic serves as a philosophical art (*techne*) that can pinpoint its signified knowledge (*episteme*). As an art proper, dialectic is therefore indicative of a confirmed and unchanging realm of knowledge. For Plato, rhetoric does not function as an art precisely because it cannot point to a typical form of knowledge. So, *techne* always has *episteme* as its aim. At first sight, this squares with the movements within *TD* and *CoP*: M and Lady Philosophy both use dialectic to accomplish Platonic metaphysics. Even if it is true that *oratio* replaces *disputatio* in the two texts, one has to be aware that the organic nexus between them does not count as an antithesis to both authors' intent to correlate dialectic and philosophy. The fundamental problem lies in what dialectic aims at in the texts. Dialectic, so to speak, proceeds to console Cicero and Boethius: the *techne* does not argue to retrieve *episteme*. It is, strangely, a soothing *pathos*. In addition to the intertextual implication that the *TD* is a philosophical work consequent upon Cicero's *Consolatio*, it sets out to console with the instruction at the end of Book 1: "let us busy ourselves . . . with all that tends to alleviate distresses, terrors, lusts, for there is the richest fruit of the whole field of philosophy" (1.49.119). The theme of an alleviating philosophy appears as well in Cicero's address to Brutus (*TD* 2.1.1). At the

[23] As a matter of fact, as Plato's *Sophist* shows, the format of question-and-answer (*elenchus*) is not a prerogative of dialectic as in the sixth definition of "sophist." This study thus decides to confine the term "dialectic" to the Socratic method. After all, elenchus is laden with rhetorical implications whereas dialectic has its specific status (indicative of recognizing the *eidos* in addition to question-and-answer) in Plato's dialogues. G. B. Kerferd endorses this view: as shown in the *Phaedo* and *Republic*, Plato approves of using *elenchus* for the purpose of *dialectic* (65); *elenchus* and *dialectic* thus have to be seen as different from each other.

very end of *TD*, Cicero again aligns philosophy with consolation (5.41.121). Note particularly that the first and third statements are made between M and A, meaning that their dialectical procedure has been drawn to a consolatory philosophy and in this way connected to the exterior concerns of the text.

Probably inspired by the consolatory nature of philosophy as performed via dialectic, Boethius' *CoP*, as the title suggests, is an undisguised claim to solicit philosophy for the sake of consolation. Before the narrative partition, Lady Philosophy's major task has been to ease Boethius' emotional agitation. After it, questions about the harmony between fortune, free will, and Providence are discussed and explained, but more importantly, Lady Philosophy's concluding speech reads like an exhortation to believe and be relieved rather than a verification of Socratic knowledge that is built on layers of refutation and contradiction:

> . . . . God continually observes with foreknowledge all things from on high, and his eternal vision, which is ever in the present, accords with the future nature of our actions, and dispenses rewards to the good and punishments to the wicked. . . . So avoid vices, cultivate the virtues, raise your minds to righteous hopes, pour out your humble prayers to heaven. As long as you refuse to play the hypocrite, a great necessity to behave honourably is imposed on you, for your deeds are observed by the judge who sees all things. (*CoP* 5.6.45-8)

Obviously, this passage shows little of the logical moves involved in dialectical argumentation. Instead, Lady Philosophy merges Platonic metaphysics with Christianity and advises Boethius on how to behave when confronted by an ominous fate. First of all, such an ethical message, though pertinent to Socratic teachings, does not bear directly on the dyad of *techne* and *episteme*. Further still, Lady Philosophy's tone is pedagogic and suasive, with a view to reassuring Boethius. This appeal to solace recalls the Roman *suada* (persuasion, *peitho* in Greek), which is cognate with *suavis* (sweet and pleasant) (Calboli and Dominik 3). Hence, the Socratic dialectic is here turned to questions about *pathos*, not *logos*.

The problem with the employment of dialectic in *TD* consists yet in the mode of philosophical operation. As defined above, the Socratic *episteme* shapes well with the typicality of the *eidos*, which dialectic as a true *techne*

must attain, giving rise to the certainty of knowledge as opposed to the rhetorical probability that operates in relation to the interactions between *ethos*, *logos*, and *pathos*. The application of probability in *TD* is particularly striking—since Cicero frequently mentions his adoption of this mode either himself or through the mouth of M. For instance, before the first dialogue begins, Cicero tells Brutus that he will bring about dialectic because Socrates thinks "in this way the probable truth was most readily discovered" (*TD* 1.4.8). The amalgamation is apparently contrary to Platonic dialogism, in which the truth is whole, intact, and certain. Naturally, "probability" forms the basis of M's dialogical progression with A. As in the inception of the first philosophical discussion, M indicates, quite candidly, that the following ruminations over death as a good but not an evil are sheer suppositions, since "further than likelihood I cannot get" (*TD* 1.9.17).[24] This way of argumentation not only disrupts the Socratic certainty via dialectic but also casts doubt on the sincerity of arguing for the usefulness of philosophy as a source of consolation. Even though it is true that Cicero's philosophical training at the New Academy has followed skepticism, bridging probability with the Socratic emphasis on the *eidos* is truly paradoxical.

The mode of philosophical operation in *CoP*, however, is another issue for the reason that neither Boethius nor Lady Philosophy has touched upon certainty or probability. But, if one approaches *CoP* from the perspective of belief (*pistis*), there might be some hint of the operative mode implied by Boethius. As is recognized, Socrates powerfully opposes the appropriation of beliefs by orators since they indicate nothing certain or typical. The theme is taken up by Lady Philosophy, who regards Boethius' suffering as "the penalty for your mistaken belief" (*CoP* 2.5.3). She thinks that a correct understanding of fortune's nature will enable Boethius to reevaluate his present anguish. Similarly, Lady Philosophy argues that public office has no inherent worth; it is respected and honored only because of "the desultory beliefs of men"—"so when they journey abroad among people who do not regard them as distinctions of worth, the bubble is pricked there and then" (*CoP* 3.4.13). But, this is not to be taken as a denial of probability in dismissing wrong beliefs. What is of consequence to Lady Philosophy is instead the compliance with

[24] Examples like these are numerous in the *TD*: 1.15.35, 2.2.5, 4.4.7, 4.21.47, 5.4.11, 5.6.33. In these places, Cicero seems rather content with being assertive regarding probable truths, ones either similar to truths that are certain or merely mathematically probable.

correct beliefs. Accordingly, Book 1 of *CoP* is structurally significant in that here she has to carry out the first step of consolation, that is, to make sure Boethius believes that the world is superintended by reason. Lady Philosophy becomes surprised to "find it utterly astonishing that you [Boethius] are sick, when your beliefs are so wholesome" (*CoP* 1.6.6). Such confirmation of correct beliefs, dovetailed with the transition from *disputatio* to *oratio* in general, makes the entire book rotate around this central belief, turning the rest of *CoP* into an interpretive footnote for Boethius' endorsed belief. There is no Socratic refutation and contradiction for this belief so that in this way *CoP* concerns rhetorical probability implicitly.

In the same vein, for Cicero, there is the difference between correct and wrong beliefs. Particularly in Book 3, when he tackles the alleviation of distress, the cause of emotional disturbance constantly has something to do with wrong beliefs. In his address to Brutus before the third dialogue begins, Cicero complains that "as soon as we come into the light of day . . . we at once find ourselves in a world of iniquity amid a medley of wrong beliefs" (*TD* 3.1.2). This constitutes a thematic movement in the dialogue that follows. For instance, M speaks of distress as an evil lying in belief but not in nature (*TD* 3.15.31). Again, M reiterates this theme by illustrating that distress is considered "a sort of conviction of duty" as instructed by mothers and teachers (*TD* 3.27.64). Cicero, in the mouthpiece of M, even cites his own *Consolatio* to claim that nurture, not nature, breeds distress by beliefs (*TD* 3.28.71). Finally, M sums up near the end that "Whatever evil there is in distress, it is not due to nature, but brought to a head by a judgment of the will and by mistaken belief" (*TD* 3.33.80). On the other hand, one may notice that M uses beliefs quite offhandedly whenever they might help convince A. Since *TD* abounds with such examples, it is enough to take a look at M's synoptical claim that, "None the less we must above all make use of the opinions of thinkers who in the method they use and the opinion they adopt show a highly courageous and so to speak manly spirit" (*TD* 3.10.22). The pervasive handling of beliefs without examining their dialectical soundness seems, at last, to subvert Cicero's initial assertion to utilize the "old" Socratic dialectic. Boethius' Lady Philosophy, "so advanced in years" (*CoP* 1.1.1) achieves nothing better: the dialectical occurrences in *CoP* simply serve to corroborate a previously accepted belief.

To relate dialectic to probability and beliefs consequently causes an

inner tension with the vouched use of the Socratic method and simultaneously produces a philosophy that is systematic, notional, and normative. For Cicero and Boethius, philosophers are no more than expositors; they do not need to argue. M, for instance, tells A to entreat "the teachers of virtue"—the philosophers—for comments on love (*TD* 4.33.70).[25] This advice promptly dissociates teachers of knowledge, who, like Socrates, argue to seek *episteme*, a correct understanding of the world that regulates human behavior spontaneously. The role of dialectic becomes dubious, neither philosophical, for it does not act as a precondition of philosophy, nor rhetorical, since it is a less grand form of speech—as in the image of "oars" and "a closed fist." The problematic complex born from the union of philosophy and rhetoric eventually intensifies the differentiation between "to know" and "to speak," leaving dialectic in the lurch.

Rhetorical Ventriloquism: Inversion of the Logos

This section purposes to inspect two only too noticeable tropes deployed by Cicero and Boethius in *TD* and *CoP* alike: the figure of medicine and that of femininity. They serve fundamentally to further disillusion the two authors' reverence for Platonism. Unlike the surface differences above, these tropes are the rhetorical undercurrents in the narrative design of the dialogues that speak for philosophy as in ventriloquism. Surely they do not constitute ventriloquism merely because of being tropes; their articulation by proxy is possible because they transgress methodological integrity. To account for such subtle displacement, this study will then resort to Roman Jakobson's model of the speech event.

The consolatory aspect of philosophy is, to begin with, cast in the language of medicine. It is also in Book 3 of *TD*—where correct beliefs are sought to ease emotions aroused by unsound opinions—that Cicero uses the trope of medicine on this process. As he grumbles to Brutus before the third dialogue begins,

> Seeing, Brutus, that we are made up of soul and body, what am

[25] The stress on ethics is in reality a sustained concern for Cicero. As C. E. W. Steel argues, Cicero has tried to fashion the idea of "morally upright Romans" with a view to delivering Rome from deterioration (226). Such also echoes Cicero's "deification of the perfect speaker"—bearing philosophical knowledge—in *DO* (Wardy 100), who seems capable of reviving the Senate in the final period of the Republic.

> I to think is the reason why for the care and maintenance of the body there has been devised an art . . . whilst on the other hand the need of an art of healing for the soul has not been felt so deeply . . . . (*TD* 3.1.1)

The art of healing the soul, as he indicates to Brutus later, is unquestionably the practice of "philosophy" (*TD* 3.3.6). Sustaining this trope, M expounds that just as physicians think that they can cure a disease upon finding the cause, so too philosophers think that they can alleviate agitation by identifying the cause of distress (*TD* 3.10.23). The theme of Book 3 runs then that the "pathogen" of worrying emotions originates from defective beliefs. So, the soul will persist in the limbo of grief if it fails to grasp philosophical teachings (*TD* 3.6.13). In sum, in order to withstand popular beliefs amidst the necessity of feeling sadness on some occasions, M stipulates three steps within philosophy: realizing that there is no evil, discussing common or individual fortune, and showing the folly of grieving to no avail (*TD* 3.32.77). The exercise of reason to fight annoying emotions is encapsulated as the "Socratic remedy" ("Socratica medicina") in Book 4, where other forms of mental disorders are also discussed and philosophically treated (*TD* 4.11.25). All these instances show that Cicero has fused philosophy and medicine together at the textual level: medical terminology is used to contextualize philosophy at the same time that Cicero "Latinizes" Platonism.

In the case of the *CoP*, Lady Philosophy does not come just to comfort Boethius; her consoling process is literally also a practice of healing. The following statement may well explain the purpose of Lady Philosophy's visit:

> This welter of disturbed emotions weighs heavily on you; grief, anger, and melancholy are tearing you apart. So in your present state of mind, you are not as yet fit to face stronger remedies. For the moment, then, I shall apply gentler ones, so that the hard swellings where the emotions have gathered may soften under a more caressing touch, and may become ready to bear the application of more painful treatment. (*CoP* 1.5.11-2)

Note that Lady Philosophy translates Boethius' condition into a medical context in which emotions as tumors have to be treated. Moreover, the process is divided into two phases squaring precisely with the two movements before

and after the narrative partition. The "gentler" treatment refers to the pacification of emotions while the stronger one to the understanding of the harmony among chance, free will, and Providence. What lies behind this trope, however, is a studied application of medicine to the philosophical context. For, firstly, this ancient medicine is practiced in the belief of "mild medicine first" (Chadwick 228). Next, before the prescription, Lady Philosophy has diagnosed Boethius' degenerate condition as "loss of energy" (*CoP* 1.2.5)—which is "associated with bodily disease" (*CoP* 1.2.5n). Then in the first step, Lady Philosophy sets out to ask Boethius some easy questions (to find out whether his beliefs are correct) "so as to probe and investigate" his mind (*CoP* 1.6.1)—exactly what a physician does before prescribing medicine (*CoP* 1.6.1n). Therefore, the affinity between philosophical teaching and medical treatment is conspicuous enough to make philosophy almost an instance of medicine.

The trope of femininity impresses, too. Let us turn to Quintilian first. As mentioned above, when the union of rhetoric and philosophy is discussed, this study cites Quintilian as an example. In particular, he advocates that a would-be orator should be taught philosophy by his nurse lest the formation of his character render him incompetent as an expert at speech. This scheme changes into a trope whereby philosophy is a gendered embodiment in *TD* and *CoP*: it is maternal and feminine. Regardless of grammatical gender, M makes a grandiose claim that philosophy is "the mother of all arts" ("omnium mater atrium") (*TD* 1.26.64), signifying the Quintilian scheme in which philosophy is the foremost subject to be taught (though his anxiety overturns this by transferring everything to rhetoric). Also, in keeping with the consoling process, philosophy as a mother figure is fittingly a nursing one as well. However, it seems that Boethius' *CoP* best exemplifies the trope of femininity. Steeped in woes, Boethius is surprised to find a lady overlooking him from high above), "most awe-inspiring to look at" and "so advanced in years" (*CoP* 1.1.1). This woman, after wiping Boethius' tears, turns out to be his "nurse Philosophy" (*CoP* 1.3.2). In the case of *CoP*, Lady Philosophy is even an interlocutor speaking directly to Boethius. The trope of femininity thus forms the setting in which a male Roman (perhaps an orator) exchanges views with a Greek woman (philosopher).

The above tropes certainly imply a host of interpretations, but, with a view to their intertextuality with Platonism, one is first obliged to focus on a

particular aspect of the Socratic dialectic. Before a dialectical conclusion can be reached, it is usual with Socrates to adopt "analogical apparatuses" to deliberate over definitional questions. For instance, in the *Gorgias*, Socrates seeks to pin down the subject dealt with by rhetoric by bringing up a series of analogies such as weaving and music. The stalemate confronting Gorgias is that he cannot offer a satisfactory answer as to what rhetoric relates to—unlike weaving, which concerns the making of clothes, or music, which handles tunes (*Gorg*. 449D). Even when Gorgias answers that it relates to speech, Socrates refutes him yet again by pointing out that there are still other arts besides rhetoric which are concerned with speech (*Gorg*. 450B). These analogies thus serve as a basis for locating another definitional entity. Each term that Socrates attempts signifies accordingly a "type"—representative of the *eidos*. Socrates then finds it presumptuous when Gorgias blatantly prides himself on being able to be appointed physician with a doctor present (*Gorg*. 456B). Each analogical apparatus signifies an ideal form but here Gorgias transgresses the epistemic boundary by displacing one with the other. It is why Socrates opposes rhetoric: instead of trying to track down the type of a term, an orator might very possibly designate any type for a term as long as the argument is persuasive. Dialectical logos is thus indicative—in contradistinction to the designative rhetorical logos. It is in this respect that this section argues mainly that the tropes of medicine and femininity as marshaled in *TD* and *CoP* function outside the terrain of analogical apparatuses. They have been used to designate a logos that is not their own. In particular, the medical treatment offered by Lady Philosophy muddles the line between the medical and the philosophical, a line which Socrates has tried to maintain in face of the challenge from Gorgias with its metaphorical transposition. The feminization of philosophy, therefore, also confuses the analogous but hardly compatible types.

In a further sense, the antimony between analogical apparatus and metaphorical appropriation can be affirmed by Roman Jakobson's theorization of the poetic function of language. By it, a speech event is characterized as the semiotic caliber of messages (Jakobson and Halle 70). Jakobson opposes it to the metalingual function of language, which features, firstly, the code whereby communication is maintained, and secondly, the suggested or manifested predications that define a linguistic sequence (Jakobson and Halle 69). These two functions then represent two "diametrical" maneuvers: while the

metalingual achieves an equation by setting a sequence, the poetic exploits an equation to create a sequence (Jakobson and Halle 71). For instance, "rose" as a symbol of secrecy and silence alludes to Cupid's presenting Harpocrates with a rose to solicit his silence concerning Venus' love affair. This sequence obviously leads to an equation between rose and secret. But, when "under the rose" (*sub rosa*) is used in sentential construction, the "rose" points to an equation now employed to build a sequence with the meaning of secrecy in it. There is thus the distinction between "selection" and "combination" (Jakobson and Halle 71): while the poetic function relies heavily on the former for the salience of signs, the metalingual relies on the latter for patterns of reference. In a like manner, dialectical logos is seen to engage in the construction of patterns of reference and forms the major feature of Socrates' reliance on the metalingual function of language for *episteme*. Conversely, rhetorical logos is for the most part antithetical to metalanguage; it aims at reference by choosing patterns of reference as chance sees fit. The medicalization and feminization of philosophy in *TD* and *CoP* give way to such an operation of rhetorical logos in that their narrative sequences are created foremost by dint of the equation between philosophy and medicine or a woman figure, which, nevertheless, are placed at the analogical level by Socrates. Transgression occurs, naturally, by substituting combination for selection.

A smaller yet equally important example of such transgression is Cicero's and Boethius' interpretation of "virtue." One recalls that Plato's *Meno* starts with Meno's question regarding the teachability of virtue that is nevertheless transformed by Socrates into an inquiry into the definition of it. For, if one fails to grasp the *eidos* of virtue—to build a sequence—it is impossible to know whether it can be taught or learned. In order to demonstrate the fortitude with which virtue can endow a person, M should point out the consanguinity between virtue (*virtus*) and man (*vir*) and claim that the manly aspect of virtue can aptly serve men in scorning death and pain (*TD* 2.18.43). This claim is, as Socrates might judge, brought about by rhetorical logos to argue by equation. The avoidance of combination is again evident in *TD* 5.5.12, where M fails to pinpoint the definition of virtue by directly redressing A's argument that virtue is insufficient to create a happy life—truly ironical, since *Meno* has been explicitly mentioned early in the first Book (*TD* 1.24.57). To encourage Boethius, Lady Philosophy too confuses

two types in relating virtue (*virtus*) to strength (*vires*) (*CoP* 4.7.19). Altogether, these two texts have implicitly manufactured a semiotic network in which the equivalence between *virtus*, *vir*, and *vires* predominates over the metalingual aspect of each word in their syntactic structures and constitutes therefore a transgression of the Socratic dialectical logos, which sets out to maintain the integrity of each predication in accordance with their signifiers.

Ironically, the semiotic network itself engenders another tension at the textual level: in the feminization of philosophy, both Cicero and Boethius simultaneously devise an exhortation to be virile so as to comply with virtue. Being virtuous, then, signifies a manly spirit unharmed by effeminacy. This implication immediately brings one back to the problematic complex in which oratory includes and excludes philosophy almost in the same instant, thus being symptomatic of the Roman anxiety. The anxiety, as shown here, appears rephrased as misgivings over the intactness of a male identity so that philosophy becomes marginalized again—as feminine—in the strange and overworked union. The not-too-positive envisioning of femininity is testified by Cicero's incessant association of emotions with womanishness in Book 2—on failings in the endurance of pain (*TD* 2.20.46, 2.21.48, 2.22.52, 2.23.55, 2.24.58). Boethius is not clear in this respect, but let one turn to his depiction of Lady Philosophy. As he is writing his lamentations,

> . . . a lady seemed to position herself above my head. She was most awe-inspiring to look at, for her glowing eyes penetrated more powerfully than those of ordinary fold, and a tireless energy was reflected in her heightened colour. At the same time she was so advanced in years that she could not possibly be regarded as a contemporary. Her height was hard to determine, for it varied; at one moment she confined herself to normal human dimensions, but at another the crown of her head seemed to strike the heavens, and when she raised it still higher, it even broke through the sky, frustrating the gaze of those who observed her. Her robe was made from imperishable material, and was sewn with delicate workmanship from the finest thread. She had woven it with her own hands. . . . But. . . a film of dust covered it, like those ancestral statues that are grimy with smoke. At the lower edge of the robe was visible in embroidery the letter *Π*, and the neck of her garment bore the letter *Θ*;

> between them could be seen the depiction of a ladder, whose rungs allowed ascent from the lower letter to the higher. But the robe had been ripped by the violent hands of certain individuals, who had torn off such parts as each could seize. In her right hand she carried some books, and in her left a scepter.
> (*CoP* 1.1.1-6)

The Boethian portrayal of Lady Philosophy is too indispensable; it gives rise to a host of pictorial illustrations of philosophy in the Middle Ages, especially features such as *Π* and *Θ* and a ladder overlapping the body of Lady Philosophy. The Greek letters, as Crabbe specifies, stand for practical and theoretical philosophy respectively and symbolize the way Boethius will take as Lady Philosophy leads him from ethical to metaphysical inquiries (243). *Θ*, however, as Chadwick indicates, can also signify death ("thanatos") since it is a Roman custom to place this mark on prisoners (225). The ladder is then a passage for Boethius to reach Platonic metaphysics and, simultaneously, demise. In spite of the regal overtones of the portrayal above, Boethius also finds this Lady's robe covered with "a film of dust"—echoing Cicero's claim that "Philosophy has lain neglected to this day" (*TD* 1.3.6)—and ragged because "the mobs of Epicureans, Stoics, and the other schools did their best to plunder his [Socrates'] inheritance" (*CoP* 1.3.7). The violence done to the Lady is reflective too of the Roman hostility to Socratic philosophy, as cautioned by Epictetus: "Nowadays this activity [of practicing dialectic] is not very safe, and especially in Rome" (2.12.17). In general, these images show that philosophy is powerless and it gains power only when Boethius promotes it. That is to say, the seeming competence of Latin philosophy derives fundamentally from Boethius' putting Platonism "in Latinam formam." Otherwise, philosophy, as a woman, is further enfeebled in face of a Roman male.

Repeated negotiations between male and female identities play a crucial role in Roman culture. On an appropriate day, freeborn boys are led by their fathers to the "forum Romanum," donning "toga virilis" for the first time in a rite of passage, and the very day "links the male body with place, dress and male bonding" (Richlin 92).[26] Moreover, as the Roman forum is a place

[26] The boys exchange "their boyhood toga bordered with purple for the white toga worn by men" (May and Wisse 7).

where rhetoric is practiced, that change of dress also marks a palpable association between man and oratory. Under this circumstance, Cicero's indirect censure of femininity and Boethius' too vivid picturing of Lady Philosophy in tattered clothes can be seen as reasserting the authority of "Sir Rhetoric": the gaze that sees a devastated philosophy is from a man wearing "toga virilis." The two texts are thus framed in a grander cultural context—because Boethius, though separated from Cicero by more than five hundred years, still sees philosophy neglected. Their attempts to revive it are not only futile, but misdirected by rhetorical logos in its glossing over of discrete domains of types. The "forma" promised by Boethius for Platonic philosophy turns out to be effeminate, ripped, and incapable, no better than Quintilian's description of the philosophers he sees: "they sought to disguise the depravity of their characters by the assumption of a stern and austere mien accompanied by the wearing of a garb differing from that of their fellow men" (*IO* 1.pr.15). These images reflect a desire to speak for philosophy—since disabled—in "toga virilis," just as Gorgias has done for Helen in his *Encomium of Helen*.

The Latin "forma," specifically, represents the rhetorical forms that implicitly work to empower the debilitated philosophy, hence facilitating philosophical discussions. For Cicero, underlying the philosophical dialogues is "a declamation of my old age," as he reveals to Brutus (*TD* 1.4.7). Namely, he regards the following dialectic between M and A as the rhetorical *declamatio*, whereby, given a theme, school children are required to deliver a speech for an imaginary audience. The narrative effect is, rather than a mixture of forms, indicative of subversion and subsumption of Greek philosophy since the ensuing dialogues are defined beforehand as rhetorical. Besides, the use of declamation has a double implication. Firstly, due to the fact that it is a form of school practice, declamatory speeches are usually not taken seriously and might possibly undermine the serious intent of *TD*. Yet, also due to its nature as an exercise, declamation serves as a method by which one has to practice arguing all sides of a case to be a competent orator in the future. Therefore, according to Erik Gunderson,

> Declamation offers fantasies of transgression and reparation. In declamation we learn not about reality at Rome but rather about how one plays with that reality in order to negotiate or to refigure one's imaginary relationship to that reality. These

> fictive dramas are thus also rehearsals of the real drama of Roman subjectivity. (19)

The reality confronting Cicero is a depraved Rome. The half-hearted tone of declamation provides obliquely a proposal to save Rome from evils: philosophy can make men happy, and at the extra-textual level, it is also redeeming. The exhortation to philosophy in *TD* then comes to be an attempt to rethink Romanness by way of the Ciceronian accent on virtue, which remains, as it seems, incongruous with the Roman way of life. In other words, philosophy still fails to make an entry into the Roman forum, and the only thing that can ensure its mere presence is the declamatory form, which articulates and disempowers philosophy at the same time.

Although Boethius is no avowed orator, his engagement with rhetoric cannot be mistaken. Before Lady Philosophy's therapeutic dialectic begins, Boethius is told, "If you seek the physician's help, you must uncover the wound" (*CoP* 1.4.1). He breaks out into a kind of forensic speech accusing iniquitous Fortune, including exordium, narration, proof, refutation, and peroration (*CoP* 1.4.2n). Boethius launches his accusation, suspecting Lady Philosophy's ignorance of the iniquitous Fortune. The following narration and proofs concerning this accusation are blended, alternating between reference to his case of being accused of treason and his persistence in fulfilling philosophical teachings. Next, in refutation, Boethius contrasts his efforts with his veneration for philosophy. His peroration has it that while the wicked are not punished, the innocent get no reward when in compliance with Plato or Socrates. This rhetorical procedure then subtly transforms the succeeding dialectic into a defensive in answer to Boethius' indictment. So, the dialogue between Boethius and Lady Philosophy, after all, takes place in a rhetorical setting in which philosophy has to justify its own place and fortune's good will. Moreover, the implied imbalance between the offensive and the defensive tallies with the reduced circumstances of Lady Philosophy. It is only through the prompting of rhetoric that the neglected and slighted philosophy can speak.

Rhetorical devices are at hand, too. In the opening of Book 2, Lady Philosophy falls silent (*CoP* 2.1.1). This is an oratorical strategy called "aposiopesis," employed to indicate passion, anger, anxiety, or scruple (See *IO* 9.2.54). After this, Lady Philosophy applies the first step of treatment with gentler medicine; she claims, peculiarly, "Let me now apply the persuasion of

sweet-sounding rhetoric" (*CoP* 2.1.8). The adoption of rhetoric by a supposed dialectician runs forthwith counter to the integrity of each type, e.g., the line Socrates has tried to distinguish between a doctor and an orator. More intriguing is the device the Lady utilizes. She uses "impersonation": "But I should like to raise with you a few arguments in Fortune's own words, so consider whether her demand is just" (*CoP* 2.2.1). What comes next is then Madame Fortune's apology for her own play with Boethius' misfortune. She argues mainly that there is nothing that belongs to Boethius himself, so that he has lost nothing of his original possessions. The impersonation surely challenges the analogical apparatuses in Socratic dialectic and testifies again to the transgression of types. The impersonation itself intimates yet other infringements. One is that, while Lady Philosophy impersonates Fortune, she endorses the idea that an orator can be a doctor by giving soothing words "as a poultice for the pain" (*CoP* 2.3.3). Such tolerance of the usurpation of the role of the medical profession by orators would be condemned by Socrates as deceptive—let alone the neglected *episteme*. Textually, this impersonation also intensifies the femininity of Lady Philosophy by allowing a woman to play the part of a woman. More dramatically, the Lady's description of Madame Fortune's relation to Boethius denotes more than argumentation and persuasion: it relates to the question of *fidelity* concerning Fortune (Crabbe 253). Boethius becomes pathetic simply because he has chosen the wrong mistress (*CoP* 2.3.9-10). In turn, he is now obliged to follow the faithful Lady Philosophy, who will never abandon the poor man—note that she has been Boethius' nurse. In a nutshell, the rhetorical device of impersonation epitomizes and aggravates the contrapuntal relationship between man and woman, rhetoric and philosophy, Romans and Greeks, power and inertia. In highlighting the latter, the former inevitably reassert themselves.

Conclusion: Penning Oratory

This study has shown that the use of rhetorical logos to create equivalence between types characterizes *TD* and *CoP* in the sense that dialectical logos is rendered incapable of generating combinations. Accompanying the inversion of the logos is a series of contrapuntal relationships symptomatic of the problematic complex. Cicero and Boethius have approached the possibilities of unions and oppositions, though the image of a male Roman orator perpetually wins through. Here, in this concluding

section, this study wishes to propose a contrapuntal relationship between writing and speech in these two texts.

The contrapuntal relationship between writing and speech is a problem for the reason that it invokes concurrently the problematized connection between philosophy and rhetoric. The devotion to philosophy, it appears, constitutes a tradition that always exerts itself in spare time. For instance, the author of *RaH* begins with the claim that "My private affairs keep me so busy that I can hardly find enough leisure to devote to study, and the little that is vouchsafed to me I have usually preferred to spend on philosophy" (1.1.1). Cicero, as well, professes that "if in the active business I have been of service to my countrymen, I may also, if I can, be of service to them in my leisure" (*TD* 1.3.5). He is of course referring to the philosophical studies carried out between M and A. As for Boethius, when he accuses Madame Fortune of fickleness, he moans that he suffers ill-treatment even though he has applied in public affairs "what I had learned in sequestered leisure" (*CoP* 1.4.7). These examples constitute what Lerer calls "the tradition of otium"—referring to

> the leisure granted the intellectual nobleman for the pursuit of the life of the mind. The harried official, beset by daily dilemmas but longing for the refuge of books, becomes a trope in Latin writing from Cicero through the sixth century. (21)

And, even though *CoP* has been composed in imprisonment, its philosophical message still connects to the tradition of "otium." For, Lady Philosophy reminds Boethius that "This very locality, which you label your place of banishment, is the hearth and home of people who dwell here" (*CoP* 2.4.17). This house-arrest evokes not so much torment and torture as ease and comfort and relates leisure and philosophy. A certain contrapuntal nexus emerges therefore between public and private, naturally returning one to the nexus between rhetoric and philosophy, and further, to that between speech and writing. Cicero is obviously most productive of philosophical writings when he leaves the public scene and especially after the death of his daughter. As for Boethius, once Lady Philosophy reminds him that the power of ill fortune cannot possibly lead to the omission of the enjoyment of human achievements such as the day when his two sons are appointed twin consuls and he gives an encomium to King Theoderic, winning "high praise for your originality of

thought and your power of utterance" (*CoP* 2.3.8). This clearly serves as a distinct foil to Boethius' later "devoiced" philosophical pursuit. In brief, the Roman tradition of "otium" is a trope not only for pestered officials seeking relief from public affairs but also, particularly in the cases of Cicero and Boethius, for time to spend in philosophy and writing. The reasons why Cicero and Boethius turn to philosophy and writing are not difficult to surmise. Both are, in a sense, forced to them owing to political disempowerment. In lamenting over the neglect of philosophy, Cicero also implies that there are but few opportunities for him to practice his oratory in the Roman forum. In a letter to his friend Varro, Cicero suggests to him:

> To you I have the same advice to offer as to myself. Let us avoid men's eyes, even if we cannot easily escape their tongues. The jubilant victors [Caesar and his company] regard us as among the defeated, whereas those who are sorry for the defeat of our friends feel aggrieved that we are still among the living.
>
> (*Letters to Friends* 2.177)

This letter suffices to explain that the ill-disposed political climate compels Cicero to seek solitude lest his opponents plot against him one way or another. Boethius' case is more desperate: in order to save Albinus, he is charged with treason and sentenced to death.

The recourse to philosophy seems then not just an attempt to console themselves but a criticism of the wicked and the unjust political players. So, the initial disjunctive move to philosophy is conjunctive in nature, and the use of rhetorical logos is the very medium to project that concern onto the public area. More fundamentally, this logos is conveyed in the written form. For Boethius, "I have committed the sequence of events, and the truth about them, to paper for later scrutiny, so that they cannot be hidden from posterity" (*CoP* 1.4.25). As for Cicero, the procession of dialogues is intended, as the structure of *TD* suggests, to address Brutus in a written format in which the exchanges between M and A are recorded. A written text, therefore, arises to override a spoken text for both authors, once more at variance with the Socratic drive to type—since firstly, there is little dialogism involved, and secondly, a written text is far more removed from the *eidos* than from the spoken logos.

So far as Cicero is concerned, however, his writing in leisure is not that ineffective. His political aspiration—teaching virtue to save Rome from

depravity—comes to a head by way of Brutus. He assassinates Caesar, and very symbolically, his first utterance to the crowd after the murder should be a cry of "Cicero" (Butler 104). It is as if the name of Cicero suffices to explain everything, and in Shane Butler's words, "Brutus' gesture not only blends deed with text but also, eerily, blood with ink" (111). Among others, the dedication of *TD* to Brutus turns out to be an action that has been largely achieved by oral rhetoric. Thence, however, philosophy and dialectic remain exclusively outside the Roman forum; they are merely strategic uses for rhetoric to re/dress itself before reverting to the public. "Penning oratory" then appears an apt footnote for the philosophical dialogues such as *TD* and *CoP*.

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