Eloquence notes:

Plato’s distrust and condemnation of eloquence is deeply embedded within his epistemological world view revolving around notions of Truth and truth, his differentiation of rhetoric and philosophy, and his lived experienced of Athenian democracy.

early work,

…[and are] moral relativists

Gorgias and other sophists were generally democrats, and Plato preferred an oligarchic government – one of an elite class of philosophers (20).

All people, claimed certain sophists, are able to learn how collaboratively to govern a city (polis) and nobility of birth and high economic status are irrelevant

…intended to make the speaker a good person, whether public or private……it was the Greeks who discovered that rhetoric could be used for bad

the eloquence connected to the form of rhetoric which Plato condemned,

What is the use of eloquence?

‘it is a rare thing for glib speech and an insinuating appearance to accompany authoritative conduct’ (1.3);

‘Being firm, resolute, honest, and deliberate in speech is close to authoritative conduct’ (13.27);

Distrust of eloquence is also found outside of Confucianism as she cites Mohist thought: “Truthful words are not beautiful…beautiful words are not truthful” (The Mohists—Mozi, ca478, as cited in Xu, 2004, p 116).

Here again, even outside of Confucianism, exists a history of distrust in persuasive speech.

, termed the Late spring, Autumn Period and Warring Period

Moreover, “[Plato] dismisses [rhetoric’s] ‘lower’ manifestations as morally unsound, and as both based on and pandering to ignorance, and assimilates its ‘higher’ form to his own preferred way of doing philosophy” (Waterfield, Phaedrus xxxvi).

‘To know what you know and what you do not know—this then is wisdom’ (); ‘A person who disputes with a ready wit often earns the enmity of others…what need is there of eloquence?’ (); and ‘It is rare indeed for someone to go wrong due to personal restraint”’ ().

Ames and Rosemont’s introduction describe the Confucian philosophy on bearing knowledge, stating: “as 15.29 tells us: ‘It is the person who is able to broaden the way, not the way that broadens the person’ (46), thus making “glib speech” perceived as manipulation, wherein internal change would “broaden the person” and deviate from transcendental Truth, or at least risk deviation from the hierarchical order of which Confucianism adamantly adhered.

Furthermore, Xu (2004) argues the distrust of verbal eloquence is most extensively reflected upon within Confucian texts (115).