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OF THE THIRD SOPHISTIC

This essay, written in the tradition of Michel de Montaigne, postulates that it is productive to compare democratic societies in ancient Greece and modern democracies, especially these in post-communist Eastern Europe in general and Bulgaria in particular, because they both provide the fertile soil for Sophistic and rhetorical discourses of the type criticized by Plato, Aristotle, and Aristophanes. Jocularly, the study assumes that after the First and the Second Sophistic that thrived in antiquity, we could speak of a Third Sophistic blossoming in the post-communist era. The essay sketches seven main points: first, it speaks of Sophistic in general; next, it interprets Gorbachev's glasnost and perestroika within the framework of Plato's political theory of the noble lie and his criticism of the Sophists; third, it mentions the connection of the Sophistic parlance with the apophatic and the cataphatic language; then it points out some links between Sophistic and relativity; fifth, it notes the link of modern Sophistic with polyvalent types of logic; sixth, it outlines some features of the post-communist intellectual jargon; and, finally, it portrays two types of contemporary Sophists.