of oral and literate as mutually exclusive modes of creation. It is likely to have a far-reaching impact on the studies of 'oral' poetry as well as of 'written' texts.

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NEW MODEL RHETORIC

E. SCHIAPPA: *The Beginnings of Rhetorical Theory in Classical Greece*. Pp. x + 230. New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1999. Cased, $30. ISBN: 0-300-07590-1.

We have been here before with Thomas Cole's *The Origins of Rhetoric in Ancient Greece* (Baltimore, 1991), though it has to be said that Schiappa's version of what he calls 'the origins-of-*rhētorikē* thesis' is more nuanced and theoretically aware than that of Cole. With astonishing self-confidence, S. sets out to disprove or show flaws in no less than seventeen commonly held claims in the history and development of rhetorical theory. Some of these claims turn out to be made of straw or already past their sell-by date. For example, S. is right to challenge claim 14 that 'the Sophists were relativists who eschewed any positive notion of "truth" in favor of subjectivism', but there are few scholars or critics who would make such a sweeping, terminologically anachronistic, and vague generalization anyway. He is also right to question claim 11 that there was a commonly identified group of individuals in the fifth century known as the sophists, when such a claim involves the insistence that sophistry was an identifiable pre-Platonic school for which people like Hippias and Gorgias had membership cards, whilst Socrates' card had 'philosopher' on it. The problem is that few scholars would now make that claim in the first place.

So, the first difficulty with this book is that much of it seems intent on debunking a standard account of the history of rhetoric to which many classicists have never subscribed. Nevertheless, S. does sometimes find aspects of this account in certain canonical works, such as George Kennedy's *A New History of Classical Rhetoric* (Princeton, 1994), and he can be forgiven for wanting to revise simplistic or outdated views, which have a habit of reproducing themselves.

For S. the most distorted and distorting element of the standard account is that rhetorical theory originated with the Sophists of the fifth century. He argues that the word *rhētorikē* was certainly not coined until the fourth century and probably first occurred in Plato's *Gorgias*. This is a well-worn area of controversy and S. does a good job in defending his view that Socrates' reference to 'so-called rhetoric' does not mean that the term was already well-known at the time when *Gorgias* was written. S. is not committed to arguing that the *Gorgias* coins the term but he does insist that it is not conceived before the beginning of the fourth century. One of his key arguments is that *rhētorikē* does not occur in *Clouds* or the *Dissoi Logoi*, where one would most expect to find it. The problem with this is that *rhētorikē* does not occur in places where one would expect to find it *after* the beginning of the fourth century either. There are plenty of occasions when fourth-century Athenian orators attack opponents for being sophists and clever speakers but they never invoke the term *rhētorikē*. As S. himself is happy to concede, *rhētorikē* is a term which is almost exclusively confined to the writings of Plato and Aristotle.

For S., this fact of fourth-century coinage has important consequences: the terms and problems constituting what we would normally call 'rhetorical theory' had not yet been formed in the era of the early sophists. By appealing to Kuhnian

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and Foucauldian accounts of disciplinarity and linguistic theories of naming, S. contends that the relevant fifth-century material (Gorgias' *Helen*, the *Dissoi Logoi*, Aristophanes' *Clouds*) is 'prediscipliniary'. You cannot have a discipline of rhetoric (meaning rhetorical theory or discourse as opposed to rhetorical practice) until you have named the object of your discipline.

As is often the case for claims with bolt-on Foucauldian ideas, there are dangers here. To be fair, S. is aware of some of them: 'I do not want to imply that once someone coined the word *rhētorikē* there followed a puff of smoke and a discipline came into being' (p. 27). But S. insists that the coinage of the term *rhētorikē* really makes a difference to our understanding of the history and development of rhetorical theory and practice in classical Greece. Even if he is right in suggesting that the term was coined in or around early Platonic writing, it is far from clear that the coinage makes such a big difference. To be sure, Plato and Aristotle use the term to construct theories of what good and bad rhetorical practices are. But for the orators, the terms *sophistēs* (sophist), *logographos* (speech-writer), and being *deinos legein* ('clever at speaking') are what mark an opponent as a threat. Essentially, this vocabulary takes up the same set of prejudices and concerns which are voiced in Aristophanes' *Clouds*. Put simply, Gorgias' *Helen* and the *Dissoi Logoi* exemplify sophistic theories of argument and persuasion, and *Clouds* and the orators enact constructions of those theories as dangerous for civic and democratic society.

When S. sets so much store by the coinage of the term *rhētorikē*, he misses the point that 'disciplines' (especially 'emerging' ones) do not have stable definitions or names from a single point of view. This means that the identification of the point at which they are formed or can be said to have emerged from a 'prediscipliniary' state may also vary in accordance with the place from which we view those 'disciplines'. Furthermore, it is not clear to me that there is a stable or straightforwardly recognizable Greek term for 'discipline' which would insulate S. from the charge of projecting post-eighteenth-century categories of thought and study onto the ancient world.

For S., it is important to classify Plato, Isocrates, and Aristotle as engaging in fourth-century 'disciplinary efforts', while Gorgias' 'prediscipliniary' status, once recognized, allows us to see his prose style more positively and to give his *Helen* its rightful characterization, not as a piece of mature rhetorical theory but as a tentative, unsophisticated, but significant act of theorizing about discourse in general (rather than 'rhetoric' in particular). S. emphasizes these points by dubbing Gorgias a 'prose rhapsode' and by claiming that it is of little importance that the *Helen* is sealed with the claim that it is a *paignion* (game). Here, S. wants to protect his Gorgias from the tedious 'serious'/'playful' dichotomy, but ends up sounding rather desperate: 'If the manuscript had, at some point in time, lost this last word, the speech's importance would not have been changed one whit' (p. 131).

S. is right to distinguish Gorgias from fourth-century treatises and homilies on political discourse, rhetoric, and philosophy. His chapters on Isocrates as an advocate of practical (speech-based) philosophical endeavour and Aristotle's transformation of prose and poetic forms of civic eulogy into the depoliticized handbook category of 'epideictic' are excellent. But it is doubtful that these chapters needed the 'origins-of-*rhētorikē* thesis' to support them. Nor did they require the dubious claim that the invention of rhetorical theory was co-extensive with the invention of a 'discipline'.

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