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TOWARD AN UNDERSTANDING OF SOPHISTIC THEORIES OF RHETORIC

Even though the available evidence suggests that the Sophists did not use the term *rhêtorikê* to describe their teachings, a recovery of their ideas about rhetorical theory is both possible and desirable. It is possible because the fifth-century Sophists' *logos* was an obvious predecessor to (even if it cannot be limited to) fourth-century *rhêtoreia* and *rhêtorikê*. It is desirable for historical reasons: to improve our understanding of what the Sophists accomplished and how their doctrines were subsequently interpreted or distorted.

In this chapter I want to further the process of recovering sophistic ideas and practices concerning discourse by distinguishing between two interpretive approaches toward sophistic rhetoric and by correcting what I believe are false starts toward achieving an historical understanding of the Sophists' contribution to the early history of rhetorical theory.

HISTORICAL RECONSTRUCTION AND CONTEMPORARY APPROPRIATION

In the past three decades there has been a virtual explosion of interest in the Sophists and rhetoric. Heinrich Gomperz's 1912 classic *Sophistik und Rhetorik* recently has been reissued, and the first-ever full-length

study of the sophistic tract *Dissoi Logoi* has appeared.¹ Traditional Platonic disregard for the Sophists has partially given way to respect for the aesthetic and philosophical aspects of sophistic rhetoric. For example, the relationship between the Sophists' stylistic concerns and the Greek transition from orality to literacy has been explored, and the Sophists' influence in Aristotle's *Rhetoric* is in the process of being documented.² John Poulakos' seminal "Toward a Sophistic Definition of Rhetoric" attempted to identify a "sophistic view proper" of the art of rhetoric.³ Several essays examine the philosophical aspects of specific Sophists' rhetoric, including that of Gorgias and Protagoras.⁴ Other exemplary individualistic studies explore Antiphon's contributions to argument and legal advocacy, Gorgias' *Encomium to Helen*, and Protagoras' "stronger and weaker" *logoi* fragment.⁵

Part of the renewed interest in research on the Sophists has been directed toward incorporating sophistic insights into contemporary rhetorical theory. Robert L. Scott's influential "On Viewing Rhetoric as Epistemic" combined Stephen Toulmin with Gorgias and Protagoras to provide one of the most provocative theories of rhetoric in recent decades.⁶ More recently the Sophists have inspired new perspectives on historiography, political theory, an existential "rhetoric of the possible," the "rhetoric of the human sciences," composition theory, the history of consciousness, and an ideological basis for cultural criticism.⁷

An important bit of conceptual orientation is in order concerning the interpretive approaches utilized in studies of sophistic rhetoric. To put it simply, I believe that we need to be clear about what we are doing when reading or writing a work concerning the Sophists, and we need to make sure our methods match our goals. Specifically, it is important for students of rhetoric to differentiate between two approaches to the study of the Sophists of ancient Greece. Those approaches can be described as the construction of neosophistic rhetorical theory and criticism, and the historical reconstruction of sophistic doctrines.

There is an important difference between appreciating sophistic thinking as contributing to contemporary rhetorical theory and criticism, and reconstructing specific sophistic theories or doctrines about rhetoric. While both activities involve interpretation, they differ in that the former activity involves modern application and extension of sophistic thinking, while the latter deliberates over matters of historical fact. Though both activities are worthwhile intellectual endeavors, our scholarship can profit by keeping the two distinct.

Richard Rorty has drawn a useful distinction between historical recon-

struction and rational reconstruction (or “contemporary appropriation”).⁸ In the case of ancient philosophy, historical reconstruction requires some fidelity to the methods and practices of classical philology because it attempts to reconstruct past thinkers’ ideas as much as possible in their own words and intellectual context. As described by Stephen Makin, “An *historical reconstruction* of some philosopher’s thought gives an account of what some past thinker said, or would have said, to his [or her] *contemporaries*. The thinker is not treated as reeducated into our techniques and positions.” On the other hand, “a *rational reconstruction* treats a thinker (in many cases, dead) as within *our own* philosophical framework. We might include in a rational reconstruction of a philosopher’s thought principles that the philosopher never formulated.”⁹

Contemporary appropriation and historical reconstruction differ in terms of goals and methods. Since the goal of historical reconstruction is to recapture the past insofar as possible on its own terms, the methods of the historian and, in classical work, the philologist, are appropriate. Since the goal of contemporary appropriation is to provide critical insight to contemporary theorists, the needs and values of current audiences justify less rigidity and more creativity in the process of interpreting how dead authors through their texts speak to live, contemporary audiences.

The differences between historical reconstruction and contemporary appropriation in rhetorical studies can be made readily apparent through a contrast between different approaches to Aristotle’s *Rhetoric*. Works such as W. M. A. Grimaldi’s *Studies in the Philosophy of Aristotle’s Rhetoric* and his commentary on the *Rhetoric* clearly are aimed at bringing the modern reader closer to a historically grounded understanding of Aristotle’s original thinking.¹⁰ Though modernists generally eschew efforts to discover an author’s “intentions,” it is clearly the case that historical reconstruction aims at re-creating how the author and his or her contemporaries understood the text.

By contrast, Neo-Aristotelian theory and criticism adapts Aristotle to the present and hence is only partially committed to a historical understanding of Aristotle’s *Rhetoric*.¹¹ Accordingly, Neo-Aristotelian rhetorical theory can be categorized as an effort toward contemporary appropriation for the purposes of rhetorical criticism. Though Neo-Aristotelian scholars sometimes feud over Aristotle’s intentions, most agree that Aristotle never intended that his work be a guide for rhetorical criticism, and few neoclassical theorists feel bound to stick to the text of Aristotle’s *Rhetoric* in their efforts to inform contemporary rhetorical theory and criticism.¹² No doubt Neo-Aristotelian theorists’ works are

influenced by a particular historical view of the *Rhetoric*, but the important point is that historical view is seldom, if ever, the basis for how the Neo-Aristotelian approach is *evaluated*. Edwin Black’s critique of Neo-Aristotelian criticism is fueled only in part by a belief that Neo-Aristotelian critics have misread Aristotle; his most enduring challenge is that, as practiced, Neo-Aristotelianism no longer meets the needs of today’s rhetorical theorists and critics.¹³

Just as one can distinguish between Neo-Aristotelian rhetorical criticism and the historically grounded reconstruction of Aristotle’s theory of rhetoric, one can also distinguish between the development of neosophistic rhetorical theory and criticism, and the historical reconstruction of sophistic theories of discourse. For example, essays such as Michael C. Leff’s “Modern Sophistic and the Unity of Rhetoric” or Susan C. Jarratt’s “Toward a Sophistic Historiography” are clearly efforts to draw on sophistic thinking in order to contribute to contemporary theory and practice.¹⁴ They are examples of contemporary appropriation to the extent that their value is measured more on creativity and modern utility than strictly on historical accuracy. By contrast, treatments of the Sophists as found in the works of Richard L. Enos, G. B. Kerferd, W. K. C. Guthrie, and George A. Kennedy are clearly efforts at historical reconstruction.

Historical reconstruction can be justified as both intrinsically and instrumentally valuable. It is intrinsically valuable because historical knowledge begins with an understanding of the uniqueness of particular people, places, or events. If the Sophists are worth studying, then they deserve study on their own terms as well as on ours. “It is useful to recreate the intellectual scene in which the dead lived their lives,” declares Rorty, because there is “knowledge—historical knowledge—to be gained which one can only get by bracketing” one’s own historical context as much as possible.¹⁵ Properly done historical reconstruction “helps us recognize that there have been different forms of intellectual life than ours.”¹⁶ As a result, one can learn the difference between “what is necessary and what is the product merely of our own contingent arrangements,” recognition of which is “the key to self-awareness itself.”¹⁷

If the notion of history for history’s sake leaves one cold, an instrumental rationale for careful historical reconstruction is identifiable as well. If the purpose for doing history is to enlighten our understanding of the present, then there is a better chance for enrichment if we treat the past seriously: “Thought is the prisoner of whatever place it is to be found [if] it cannot break the bonds of the present.”¹⁸ It is just those

historical problems that appear to be the least interesting from a contemporary perspective that can be the most revealing “because they contain the elements which were peculiar to an age and no longer inspire curiosity in later ages.”¹⁹ Before we can “use” history, we must first adequately understand it.²⁰

I am not suggesting that historical reconstruction should be done to the exclusion of contemporary appropriation. With Rorty I believe that both ought to be done, but done separately.²¹ Otherwise, historical accounts tend to become self-affirming discoveries of early anticipations of vogueish philosophical theories. There has been a tendency, especially prevalent in the case of the Sophists, to enhance the prestige of current theoretical pieties by linking them to ancient Greek roots. Accordingly, the Sophists as a group have been seen as anticipating “anti-idealist positions, positivism, liberalism, materialisms whether dialectical or otherwise.”²² The case of Protagoras is particularly revealing, as he has been called everything from skeptic to positivist (see chapter 1). The example of Protagoras is powerful testimony to Bloom’s claim that “if we were to study history according to our tastes, we would see nothing but ourselves everywhere.”²³

A further justification for renewed historical reconstruction of sophistic theories of discourse was noted in the previous chapter: the fact that the Greek word for rhetoric (*rhêtorikê*) was not coined until the early fourth century BCE. Accordingly, any historical claim concerning how rhetoric was defined or theorized about during the fifth century BCE (the era of the Older Sophists) must be considered suspect if the claim presumes rhetoric was clearly recognized as a conceptualized, discrete verbal art with a body of identifiable teachings.

The objection could be made that the absence of the word *rhêtorikê* means little. Even without the word *rhêtorikê*, the practice of self-conscious oratory existed, and can be meaningfully discussed today. The absence of a word for gravity in prehistoric time, as one critic has commented, obviously does not mean that in prehistoric time such a force did not exist. Certainly one can grant that a discursive practice now called “rhetoric” existed prior to the coining of the term *rhêtorikê*. While the absence of *rhêtorikê* in the fifth century does not prevent us from appreciating sophistic thinking from the perspective of modern rhetorical theory (via contemporary appropriation), the relatively late appearance of the term nonetheless must be dealt with in any serious historical account of early theorizing about language. As intellectual disciplines evolve, so do their conceptual vocabularies. Accordingly, any serious effort to recon-

struct historically the development of early Greek rhetorical theory must reckon with the late coining of the Greek word *rhêtorikê*.²⁴ To demonstrate the point I now turn to the specifics of the sophistic definition of rhetoric advanced by John Poulakos.

POULAKOS’ SOPHISTIC DEFINITION OF RHETORIC

In this section I examine one of the most recent and prominent treatments of sophistic rhetoric for the purpose of demonstrating the importance of keeping historical reconstructions and contemporary appropriations distinct.²⁵ My argument is that while several of Poulakos’ works are praiseworthy as examples of neosophistic rhetorical criticism, those same works require correction if viewed from the standpoint of *historical reconstruction*. The obvious question is: Is it fair and appropriate to evaluate Poulakos’ influential work on the Sophists as historical reconstruction? The question is important because the charge of anachronism is serious to historical studies but irrelevant to contemporary criticism. I think the evidence offered below is sufficient to make the case that Poulakos, at least part of the time, is engaged in historical reconstruction and hence is accountable to the methodological expectations pertaining thereto. At the very least, it will be made clear that Poulakos’ work is in need of conceptual clarification as to what sort of claims are being advanced.

Poulakos states in his article “Toward a Sophistic Definition of Rhetoric” that “we must reexamine the surviving fragments of and about the Sophists and seek to articulate on probable grounds their view of rhetoric. This essay purports to do just that. More specifically, it purports to derive a ‘sophistic’ definition of rhetoric and to discuss some of its more important implications.”²⁶ The essay is dominated by specific historical claims about what the Sophists taught, were aware of, and sought to do or demonstrate. The Sophists are said to have conceived of rhetoric in a particular manner. Claims are advanced about what specific Sophists did: Antiphon commented on style, Thrasymachus wrote, Gorgias persuaded, Prodicus embellished, Hippias enchanted, Critias spoke, and Protagoras held certain positions. The Sophists are claimed to have been “interested in the problem of time” and have given “impetus to the related concept of *to prepon*.” Poulakos explicitly denies “introducing new ideas in the field of rhetorical theory,” but rather describes his work as articulating and reinforcing the idea that “some of our contemporary concepts about rhetoric originate with the Sophists.”²⁷ This particular

essay by Poulakos is not offered as a hypothetical account of a modern version of sophistic theory, but rather contains a series of claims about what the Sophists sought to do and say about rhetoric in their own time. A related essay by Poulakos examines the historical and conceptual relationship between the Older Sophists and Aristotle. Here Poulakos identifies specific concepts or "notions" that the Sophists placed "at the service of rhetoric." These concepts were "developed" by the Sophists and "came to designate . . . rules" for the construction of discourse.²⁸ Poulakos concludes that Aristotle was indebted to the Sophists both conceptually and historically. In light of the above evidence, I think it fair to hold Poulakos' description accountable as historical reconstruction. At the very least, there is sufficient equivocation to merit a discussion of aims and methods.²⁹

Once it is approached as historical reconstruction, a critique of Poulakos' sophistic definition can be based on theoretical and evidentiary concerns. On a theoretical level, I believe Poulakos continues a conceptual tradition that is no longer appropriate for the study of early Greek thought. That conceptual tradition is described by Rorty as "doxography." Rorty complains that many historical accounts of philosophy treat their topics as givens or as conceptual constants. Rorty attributes such a tendency to a sort of natural attitude on behalf of philosophers toward the objects of their analysis: "The idea [is] that 'philosophy' is the name of a natural kind—the name of a discipline which, in all ages and places, has managed to dig down to the same deep, fundamental, questions."³⁰ Hence standard histories of philosophy consist of different philosophers' treatments or theories of X—where X may be epistemology, ontology, rhetoric, etc. Most histories of rhetoric approach their subject in a similar fashion. An example is George A. Kennedy's influential history of rhetoric, which identifies three traditions: technical, sophistic and philosophical. These three views of rhetoric are continuing strands in the long tradition of rhetoric which stretch "throughout the history of western Europe."³¹ The obvious problem is that particular historical nuances can be underestimated by a too-strict application of Kennedy's tripartite scheme.³² Similarities between the traditions are underemphasized and the felt needs of specific historical contexts can be missed.³³

Poulakos' work challenges the sort of portrait of the Sophists that one finds in Kennedy, but does so in such a way that preserves the integrity of Kennedy's tripartite schematization. Poulakos continues the assumption that there is a distinct sophistic view proper of rhetoric which can be compared and contrasted to competing views of rhetoric.³⁴ In the

comments that follow I intend to call into question the notion of a distinct "sophistic view proper" and question whether there could have been one of rhetoric per se. Sophistic theorizing about rhetoric is best understood not as a collective answer to the question "What is rhetoric?" but as a process of asking questions about *logos* and the world. Instead of assuming that the Older Sophists held in common a particular perspective toward the art of rhetoric, we should examine how the Sophists laid the conceptual groundwork for what later became identifiable as rhetorical theory. As Eric Havelock has commented, "Much of the story of early Greek philosophy so-called is a story not of *systems of thought* but of a search for a primary language in which *any system* could be expressed."³⁵ Accordingly, the Kennedy/Poulakos "doxographical" approach errs by presuming that a distinctive sophistic view existed and by treating *rhêtorikê* as a recognized and conceptually discrete art in the fifth century.

I do not mean to imply that it is impossible to generalize about sophistic views of persuasion and discourse. My position is simply that 1) individual studies of the Sophists are a logically prior task to that of constructing a general sophistic view, and 2) there is a subtle but historically significant difference between describing early sophistic efforts at theorizing about *logos* and the world, and later efforts to organize and improve discursive strategies as part of a discrete and clearly conceptualized art of rhetoric. Precisely how much difference can be demonstrated only after much more work is done. The remarks that follow are, I hope, suggestive of the productiveness of a careful historical approach.

Specifically, I think Poulakos makes a number of claims about historically held doctrines that cannot be supported by the available evidence. Poulakos advances the following as the sophistic definition of rhetoric: "Rhetoric is the art which seeks to capture in opportune moments that which is appropriate and attempts to suggest that which is possible." Poulakos' explication of sophistic theory has five distinct elements: "rhetoric as art, style as personal expression, *kairos* (the opportune moment), *to prepon* (the appropriate), and *to dunaton* (the possible)."³⁶

Poulakos claims that the "Sophists conceived of rhetoric primarily as a *technê*, or art." The problem with this characterization is that the term *rhêtorikê*, "art of the rhetor," is of fourth-century origin, not fifth. Prior to the fourth century the key conceptual term for the Sophists was usually *logos* and sometimes *legein*—terms broader in meaning than any ancient conception of *rhêtorikê*. If the Sophists did not conceive of their teachings as an art of rhetoric, then Poulakos' claim that the Sophists

believed that rhetoric's "medium is *logos*" and its "double aim is *terpsis* (aesthetic pleasure) and *pistis* (belief)" is misleading as history because there is insufficient evidence to conclude that for the Sophists *rhêtorikê* was a discrete art with conceptualized means and ends. Accordingly, efforts to construct an authentic sophistic definition of rhetoric must be considered a contribution to the development of a modern neosophistic rhetorical theory rather than a contribution to the history of the Sophists.

The second element of Poulakos' sophistic theory of rhetoric concerns the issue of style. Poulakos is correct in insisting that the Sophists were "highly accomplished linguistic craftsmen." His assumption that stylistic decisions by the Sophists were based on aesthetic considerations requires a minor qualification. Robert J. Connors' essay "Greek Rhetoric and the Transition from Orality" demonstrates that the highly poetic style of the Older Sophists was a direct reflection of the oral modes of composition of fifth-century Greece.³⁷ If the Sophists' discourse seems highly stylized to the modern reader (or even to those reading it in the more literate fourth century), it is because predominantly oral (mythic-poetic) modes of thinking and speaking are foreign to us. Connors points out that there is a direct correspondence between the rise of book-oriented literacy and the decline of the "grand style" of the Older Sophists. Hence sophistic stylistic innovation was closely related to the changing syntax, word meanings, and modes of expression that mark the transition between the mythic-poetic and the rationalistic, literate ways of life.

Friedrich Solmsen's analysis of the different styles of discourse found in Thucydides provides a useful way of understanding the stylistic contributions of the Sophists.³⁸ Solmsen describes three stylistic devices as intellectual experiments of the late fifth century: antithesis, careful word choice, and the use of neuter forms. The development of different forms of antithesis parallels competing ways of conceptualizing about opposites—a dominant theme in early Greek philosophy.³⁹ Innovative antithesis can be found in sophistic fragments as well as in the fragments and works of the Presocratics, Isocrates, and Plato. With respect to word choice and the use of neuter forms Solmsen's analysis supports the claim that the evolving style was a direct result of growing abstraction and more formal approaches to argument. Accordingly, a historical approach to the Sophists must be cautious of form and content distinctions with respect to the texts of the late fifth century since form and content were so closely related. Describing the Sophists as self-conscious stylists can potentially obfuscate the issue.⁴⁰

Poulakos' third element of sophistic rhetorical theory is the concept

of *kairos*, or "the opportune moment." Of the five elements of Poulakos' sophistic rhetorical theory, *kairos* is the term with the most support in the *ipsissima verba* of the Sophists. *Kairos* can be found in the surviving texts of Gorgias and Isocrates, and there is a link to Protagoras—the reliability of which is confirmed by the treatment of *kairos* in the Protagorean-influenced tract *Dissoi Logoi*. As Poulakos acknowledges, the concept of *kairos* can be traced back to the poets and the tragedians.⁴¹ The evidence is a bit thin to suggest that all Sophists used *kairos* in a technical sense. The evidence is adequate to say that certain Sophists were the first to "professionalize" the term in its application to oral prose. In light of the fact that Sophocles used the term in a technical sense with direct reference to a *logos*, it can be safely concluded that the term was professionalized by the last quarter of the fifth century.⁴² Prior to the Sophists *kairos* had a wide range of meanings rendered in context as "due measure," "proportion," or "fitness." Thus, the meaning of "opportune time" found in the Sophists represented an abstraction which advanced the term's analytic usefulness. Though it is clearly modernistic to assert that the sophistic "notion of *kairos* points out that speech exists in time," *kairos* is a term that can be safely identified as belonging to the early conceptual development of rhetorical theory.⁴³

The fourth element of Poulakos' sophistic definition of rhetoric is the concept of *to prepon*, "the appropriate." There is less textual evidence from fifth-century Sophists to support the notion that *to prepon* was a consciously held theoretical concept than there is for *kairos*. Certainly neither *kairos* nor *to prepon* was part of a sophistic theory that explicitly deemed them "the two most fundamental criteria of the value of speech," as Poulakos claims.⁴⁴ There is simply no evidence that suggests that the Sophists, as a group, had advanced a theory of discourse to the level of abstraction implied by Poulakos. As noted previously, a shift in syntax from using a word as an adjective or adverb (such as *preponos*—"fitly," "meetly," or "gracefully") to use of a generic article in the neuter singular paired with a neuter adjective or adverb (such as *to prepon*, "the fitting") is an important linguistic indication of the emergence of an abstract technical sense of a term that signals its professionalization.⁴⁵ A good indication of the status of sophistic theorizing would be the occurrence of *to prepon* in fifth-century fragments or texts. The neuter singular construction *to prepon* appears only in Gorgias' writings prior to Isocrates and Plato. Accordingly, though *to prepon* provides insight into the level of sophistication of Gorgias' theorizing, it cannot be safely regarded as part of a general fifth-century sophistic rhetorical theory. I

do not deny the fact that both *kairos* and *to prepon* may be appropriate terms to describe choices made by sophistic speakers in *practice*. What is at issue here is whether the Sophists advanced *theorizing* about discourse to the point that such terms were used in a technical or professional sense such as that found in Aristotle's *Rhetoric*. The available evidence points to a sophistic theory of *kairos*, but not to *prepon*.

Perhaps it is enough praise of the Sophists' originality to say that they raised issues and sparked ideas that would later become codified into recognizable rhetorical theory. It is neither necessary nor supportable at this point to imply that there was an identifiable "sophistic view proper" of the art of rhetoric in the fifth century.⁴⁶ As Poulakos admits, sophistic approaches to discourse "come down to us as a story, a legacy" rather than as a completed treatise or text.⁴⁷ It should be added that their legacy does not include an identifiable sophistic definition of rhetoric, but rather a variety of incipient theories regarding discourse.

The final element of Poulakos' sophistic theory of rhetoric is the concept of *to dunaton*, which Poulakos renders as "the possible." In his essay "Rhetoric, the Sophists, and the Possible," Poulakos advances three arguments: first, that Aristotle's rhetoric "privileges the actual over the possible"; second, that "sophistical rhetoric exhibits a preference for the possible over the actual"; third, that the desirability of a "rhetoric of possibility" can be found, in part, in the writings of Martin Heidegger.⁴⁸ Poulakos' Heideggerian reading of the Sophists is potentially valuable as neosophistic rhetorical theory. However, no matter how creative and provocative Poulakos' portrayal of a sophistic rhetoric of possibility may be, there are good reasons to reject any historical claim that the Sophists held anything remotely similar to a doctrine of *to dunaton*.

Poulakos offers no sophistic *ipsissima verba* suggesting that any fifth-century Sophist ever used the neuter singular construction *to dunaton* (cf. DK 87 B 44, col. 2). Further, even if some Sophists used the word *dynamis* as "power" or "ability," there is no evidence that it was used in contrast to *energeia* ("actuality"). Prior to Aristotle *dynamis* and *energeia* were not considered polar terms. In fact, the word *energeia* apparently was coined by Aristotle himself, and even in his works some of the possible meanings of *dynamis* and *energeia* overlapped.⁴⁹ The philosophical pairing of potential and actual as opposites originated with Aristotle roughly a century after the acme of the Older Sophists.⁵⁰ In short, not only is it unlikely that the Sophists maintained *to dunaton* as part of a rhetorical theory, it is quite impossible that they consciously

maintained a doctrine which exhibited an explicit preference for the possible over the actual.

One can imagine a defender of Poulakos saying that even if the Sophists did not maintain *to dunaton* at the level of doctrine, their discourse can be reconstructed to articulate a perspective, a rhetoric of the possible, which can be usefully contrasted to Aristotle's rhetoric of actuality. If there were sufficient textual evidence for such a contrast, such a defense would be plausible. But close examination of the evidence for the "possible" and "actual" readings of the Sophists and Aristotle respectively suggests that the defense is inadequate if approached historically. Accordingly, such a defense necessarily would involve a contrast between modern defenders of Neo-Aristotelian and neosophistic theories, but would tell us little of the historical clash between the Sophists and Aristotle.

Poulakos' evidence of a preference for actuality in Aristotle is a series of passages: one concerning *energeia* and *dynamis* in the context of Aristotle's metaphysics, and another with respect to the art of rhetoric. After noting that Aristotle says that actuality is prior to potentiality in definition, time, and essence, Poulakos concludes that for Aristotle "*dynamis* is inferior to *energeia*."⁵¹ This characterization subtly distorts Aristotle's metaphysics, in which *dynamis* and *energeia* are inextricably related. What is "actual" is realized "potential": "they are only two ways of looking at the same thing."⁵² Elsewhere Aristotle says, "Matter is potentiality, form actuality" (*On the Soul* 412a9–10). In Aristotle's metaphysical theory one does not find *energeia* without *dynamis*. Hence, even if one is considered prior to the other, it does not follow that one is inferior to the other in the sense implied by Poulakos. The passages cited by Poulakos with regard to rhetoric do not make the case any stronger. While the passages cited do, in fact, indicate that Aristotle uses forms of the word *energeia* to advocate that speakers ought to make their cases using facts, the context of the passages does not support a reading that Aristotle preferred a rhetoric of actuality *as opposed to* a rhetoric of possibility. Rather, the passages suggest 1) that speakers should know the facts concerning the subject of which they would speak, 2) that facts make one's case easier to prove, and 3) that speakers in the law courts ought to restrict themselves to the facts. The first two propositions would probably be assented to by fifth-century Sophists, provided that the propositions were translated into fifth-century terminology. In fact, the author of the sophistic *Dissoi Logoi* wrote, ca. 400 BCE, that speakers need to have "knowledge of every subject," including the laws,

what is just, and “the facts.”⁵³ In the case of the third proposition, it is straining the text to interpret it as implying that Aristotle opposed some sort of visionary rhetoric. A more plausible reading would be that he was responding to the well-known excesses of the law courts in which juries were bribed, totally irrelevant evidence introduced, and frivolous charges abounded.⁵⁴

Sophistic and Aristotelian views of the aims of discourse have more in common than is implied by Poulakos here.⁵⁵ The comparison ought not be between Aristotle’s advice on message construction (means) and the purpose espoused in sophistic rhetoric (ends); such a comparison is bound to make Aristotle’s *Rhetoric* appear ethically inferior. In fact, Aristotle and at least some Older Sophists would have agreed that rhetoric ought to be used to bring about change for the better. Protagoras advocated substituting a desirable *logos* for an undesirable *logos*.⁵⁶ Aristotle advocated making the potentially virtuous person actually so (*Nicomachean Ethics* 1103a23–b2).⁵⁷ No doubt the philosophies of the Sophists differed significantly from Aristotle’s, but not in the way suggested by Poulakos. When Poulakos claims that “the Sophists privilege the possible over the actual because in the sphere of actuality they usually find pain, misery and suffering; conversely, delight, joy and happiness are to be found in the region of possibility,” surely he does not expect one to believe Aristotle favored the former over the latter.⁵⁸

The preceding analysis has attempted to demonstrate the importance of maintaining a clear line between doing history and creating a theory of rhetoric. Though Poulakos’ essay on the Sophists and “the possible” suggests that the line between historical reconstruction and contemporary appropriation can become rather fuzzy, that fact should not imply that the distinction between the two need not be made. Instead, such fuzziness reinforces the need to keep one’s goals and methodologies clear and distinct. Viewed as historical reconstruction, Poulakos’ argument that the Sophists maintained a doctrinal preference for a rhetoric of the possible is clearly problematic. If the argument is amended and viewed as an effort toward an existentialist, neosophistic theory of rhetoric, a more favorable verdict is possible.

I also do not mean to suggest that contemporary appropriations are completely unrestrained by the available historical record. A critic obviously can undercut his or her credibility by making historical claims that cannot be supported. Makin suggests that good “rational reconstructions” depend on valid historical reconstructions, but I think he underestimates the value of creative, productive readings of historical texts.⁵⁹ Consider the

example of Richard Weaver’s reading of Plato’s *Phaedrus*.⁶⁰ Though Weaver’s essay has been criticized as historically unfaithful, few fair-minded readers would deny that the essay succeeds as an essay on contemporary rhetorical theory. Weaver makes the *Phaedrus* alive and relevant to the issues of his day in a way that would be difficult if the dialogue were examined from a strictly historical perspective. Accordingly, despite the flaws in his treatment as history, I believe his essay demonstrates the utility of a Neo-Platonic reading of the text.

Similarly, Poulakos’ “Sophistic Rhetoric as a Critique of Culture” is clearly an example of a creative, productive neosophistic rhetorical criticism.⁶¹ Here Poulakos weaves together lessons from the history of the Sophists with themes from contemporary theorists in order to make an argument concerning how critics ought to view discourse, power, and culture. The aim of the essay is to oppose the strictures of academic disciplines, not contribute to them by writing a traditional historical or philological account of the Sophists. As was the case with Weaver, historians might squawk over details—but there is little question that Poulakos’ neosophistic critique is provocative.

TOWARD INDIVIDUALISTIC STUDIES OF THE SOPHISTS

To summarize the preceding section, Poulakos’ historical description of sophistic rhetorical theory is in need of amendment. Though the Sophists were obviously interested in *logos*, it is historically inaccurate to say they held a common theory concerning the art of rhetoric. Furthermore, *to dunaton* played no documentable role in sophistic thinking, and sophistic style was part of the cultural shift from mythic-poetic to more rationalistic modes of expression. *To prepon* may have been a part of Gorgias’ rhetorical theory, but the evidence is insufficient to claim it was part of a commonly held sophistic theory of rhetoric. *Kairos* as “the opportune moment” represents a genuine conceptual development by the Sophists toward a fifth-century theory of *logos*.

Since virtually no rhetorical doctrine can be identified that is common to all fifth-century Sophists, it is more appropriate to speak of the “world view” or “educational movement” of the Older Sophists than of a specific sophistic definition or theory of rhetoric. The best way to recover distinctly sophistic contributions to the historical development of rhetorical theory is to augment general studies of the Sophists as a group by examining the Older Sophists individually, acknowledging that not

one but many incipient rhetorical theories were developed during the fifth century.

A careful reading of Poulakos' work suggests that his portrayal of a sophistic theory of rhetoric draws most heavily from the surviving texts of Gorgias. Poulakos' sophistic definition of rhetoric and his description of five distinct elements of a sophistic theory of rhetoric would be much harder to challenge if two changes were made; namely, that the scope of the historical claims was narrowed to Gorgias and the word *rhêtorikê* was withheld from the description. The amended claims better fit the extant historical evidence, and it must be acknowledged that it is possible that the Sophists had little doctrine or theory in common. It is more appropriate to speak of the various philosophies, practices, and doctrines of the Sophists than of a specific sophistic theory of rhetoric. Accordingly, a close examination of the individual Sophists is a logically prior task to that of constructing a general sophistic view of discourse.

The conventional list of Older Sophists—Protagoras, Gorgias, Prodicus, Thrasymachus, Hippias, Antiphon, and Critias—is used by Poulakos in his essays concerning sophistic rhetorical theory.⁶² Even within this limited group of fifth-century thinkers one finds a good deal of variety in doctrine. A brief review of the testimony about the seven Older Sophists will demonstrate the breadth and diversity of their thought.⁶³

All seven theorized on matters one would now call scientific—both physical and biological. Protagoras, Antiphon, and Hippias showed interest in mathematics, and the latter two made original contributions to geometry. Protagoras, Gorgias, Prodicus, and Thrasymachus are reported to have discussed the emotions. Critias, Antiphon, Protagoras, and Gorgias left fragments directly pertaining to Eleatic philosophical doctrines. At least Protagoras, Prodicus, and Critias offered anthropological explanations of religion. All seven Older Sophists continued the efforts of earlier presocratic philosophers to reform use of language and to privilege prose over poetic forms of discourse; yet, like other Presocratics, they were constrained by the expectations and the linguistic resources of a predominantly oral culture. The result was a hodgepodge of discursive practices and theories such that a single theory of discourse or rhetoric cannot be easily extracted.

There was considerable variety among the Sophists concerning matters of style. The fragments from Protagoras suggest that he wrote highly memorable aphorisms, and, if Plato's portrayal in the *Protagoras* is accurate, he also made use of myth and narrative. Protagoras is also credited with a variety of "firsts" in discourse: the first to use the Socratic

method, the invention of eristic, the first to utilize question and answer, and the first to use debate or "antilogic." Gorgias' highly poetic grand style is well known; he is also credited as the inventor of extemporaneous oratory. Prodicus emphasized correct speech (*orthoepia*)—a clear example of the new rationalistic approach of *logos*—but his speech "The Choice of Heracles," as retold by Xenophon, shows obvious affinities with the mythic-poetic tradition. Of Thrasymachus there remain only secondhand reports which suggest he had a "good mix" of plain and grand style, while other reports say he had a "condensed diction." Hippias apparently wrote in a variety of formats, including poems, epics, tragedies, and prose. There is also good evidence that Hippias used written prose in novel ways, including the first doxography, the first list of Olympic winners, and possibly the first etymological study. Antiphon was the first to compose written speeches for others to use in the law courts. He was famous for coining new words, and he may have been the first to use discourse for what would now be called counseling or therapeutic purposes. Critias wrote in both verse and prose, and he may have written dramas as well. A book of aphorisms is attributed to him, and he, like Antiphon, was well known for coining new words. In sum, the Sophists excelled in all common forms of discourse, and each contributed to the development of new genres. Given that fifth-century Athens was in transition between mythic-poetic and rationalistic traditions, their divergence in styles reflects differences in the manner and extent to which each Sophist advanced *logos* over poetic *mythos*. For example, Protagoras, Gorgias, and Critias analyzed and possibly critiqued the epic poets, but there is no solid evidence that the other four Sophists did the same.

The diversity among Sophists is no less clear concerning clearly rhetorical matters. For example, Protagoras, Gorgias and Critias may have discussed *kairos* in connection with public speaking, but there is no clear evidence that other Sophists did so. There are scattered reports of Sophists publishing "commonplaces," but it is unlikely that they were called such in the fifth century. The closest to a book of commonplaces may have been Antiphon's set introductions to speeches for use in the law courts.

There has been a tendency to assume that because Aristotle divided rhetoric into forensic, deliberative, and epideictic, sophistic teachings concerning discourse can also be discussed within those categories. Once again, however, the originality of each Sophist is missed by imposing such an anachronistic schematization on sophistic works. For example, a variety of sources, both ancient (though post-fifth century) and mod-

ern have claimed that the Sophists were interested primarily in forensic rhetoric. Stanley Wilcox has thoroughly answered such claims by citing evidence of sophistic teaching and practice that fit the other Aristotelian categories.⁶⁴ The shortcoming of Wilcox's rebuttal is that he still accepts the applicability of fourth-century categories to fifth-century thought and practice. The confusions introduced by applying fourth-century rhetorical categories to fifth-century Sophists can be illustrated by summarizing the several Sophists' different concerns with what would later be called forensic rhetoric.

There is no surviving fragment from Protagoras that refers to the courts. It is true, however, that Protagoras and Pericles were acquainted and that Pericles was highly successful in advancing his career by successful lawsuits. Plato's portrayal of Protagoras suggests that success in the courts may have been part of an overall civic *aretê* taught by Protagoras. But none of this evidence indicates that Protagoras had or promulgated a theory of forensic speaking or even thought of legal pleading as a special type of discourse.

The only evidence concerning Gorgias and the law courts is similarly indirect and without implication that Gorgias thought of pleading as a special type or form of *logos*. There is suspect evidence from Plato in the *Gorgias*. There is also the extant "Defense of Palamedes"—the precise role of which in Gorgias' teaching is unknown. There is no evidence directly connecting Prodicus or Hippias to the teaching of forensic rhetoric, and there is, at most, uncorroborated evidence from Plato connecting Thrasymachus to forensic rhetorical practice. Antiphon and Critias were the only Older Sophists from Athens and hence able to speak in the law courts. Critias probably did, at least to defend himself before his death, but any further forensic rhetorical theory or practice by Critias is unproved. Antiphon was the first to compose speeches for others to deliver in court, and he spoke in court as well. Several of the Sophists reportedly wrote on the subject of justice, though there is no evidence of attempts at systematic definition prior to Plato.⁶⁵

To characterize sophistic teaching as concerned primarily with forensic discourse is a misleading oversimplification. The various Sophists' interests in *logos* differed, and categorizations of rhetorical forms were missing from their treatments of discourse. To identify each of the Older Sophist's central theme or focal term illustrates the variety of their interests in the nature of *logos* and the differing directions that *incipient* rhetorical views were taking:

Protagoras	<i>Dissoi Logoi</i>
Gorgias	<i>Logos as apatê</i>
Prodicus	<i>Orthoepia</i>
Hippias	Polymathy
Antiphon	<i>Antilogiai</i>
Critias	<i>Logos and thought</i>
Thrasymachus	<i>Logos and power</i>

These admittedly speculative identifications of the various Sophists' special interests show how difficult it is to describe sophistic rhetorical thinking in any single way. The object of sophistic studies should not be to redeem or condemn the Sophists, any more than the study of any ancient Greek philosopher should be to redeem or condemn a given class of thinkers. The object should be a thorough and comprehensive recovery of each Sophist's thinking as far as the available evidence permits. Selective interpretation of data to create a favorable picture of the Sophists as a class is as wrong as selectively interpreting the data to do the opposite. What is needed are more data and an effort to understand sophistic thinking in its own context as best one is able. As Kerferd argues, individualistic studies are the best way to overcome the negative legacy much of history has bequeathed to the Sophists:

Perhaps too much attention has been given in the past to attempts to arrive at general characterisations of the Sophists and the sophistic movement. This is not so because general characterisations are in themselves in any way improper. But they must be based on detailed studies of the actual evidence concerning individual Sophists. Such evidence is often deficient, inadequate and difficult to interpret. But the same is true of the Presocratics generally, yet in their case detailed scholarly investigations and reconstructions can hardly be said to have been seriously deterred. A similar detailed approach to individual Sophists is now demanded, since only in this way will it be possible to go behind traditional Receptions.⁶⁶

Poulakos carefully distinguishes between fifth-century Sophists and fourth-century Sophists—a distinction C. J. Classen points out is present in Aristotle's writings as well.⁶⁷ Such a distinction accepts the premise that not all Sophists were alike and hence adds support to the conclusion that individualistic studies of the Sophists are now needed. The following chapters exemplify such a method by analyzing the extant fragments of Protagoras and summarizing his contributions to early Greek philosophy and rhetoric.⁶⁸

NOTES

1. T. M. Robinson, *Contrasting Arguments: An Edition of the Dissoi Logoi* (Salem, NH: Ayer, 1979).
2. Robert J. Connors, "Greek Rhetoric and the Transition from Orality," *PR* 19 (1986): 38–65; Richard L. Enos, "Aristotle's Disservice to the History of Rhetoric" (Paper presented at the Speech Communication Association Convention, Washington DC, 1983), and "Aristotle, Empedocles, and the Notion of Rhetoric," *In Search of Justice: The Indiana Tradition in Speech Communication*, ed. R. Jensen and J. Hammerback (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1987), 5–21; John Poulakos, "Aristotle's Indebtedness to the Sophists," *Argument in Transition: Proceedings of the Third Summer Conference on Argumentation*, ed. David Zarefsky, Malcolm O. Sillars, and Jack Rhodes (Annandale, VA: Speech Communication Association, 1983), 27–42.
3. John Poulakos, "Toward a Sophistic Definition of Rhetoric," *PR* 16 (1983): 35–48.
4. Richard A. Engnell, "Implications for Communication of the Rhetorical Epistemology of Gorgias of Leontini," *WJSC* 37 (1973): 175–84; Richard L. Enos, "The Epistemology of Gorgias' Rhetoric: A Re-examination," *SSCJ* 42 (1976): 35–51; Bruce E. Gronbeck, "Gorgias on Rhetoric and Poetic: A Rehabilitation," *SSCJ* 38 (1972): 27–38; David Payne, "Rhetoric, Reality, and Knowledge: A Re-Examination of Protagoras' Concept of Rhetoric," *RSQ* 16 (1986): 187–97. See also Michael Gagarin, *Antiphon the Athenian* (Austin: U. of Texas Press, 2002); Bruce McComiskey, *Gorgias and the New Sophistic Rhetoric* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois U. Press, 2002); Scott Consigny, *Gorgias, Sophist and Artist* (Columbia: U. of South Carolina Press, 2001).
5. Richard L. Enos, "Emerging Notions of Argument and Advocacy in Hellenic Litigation: Antiphon's 'On the Murder of Herodes,'" *Journal of the American Forensic Association* 16 (1980): 182–91; Michael Gagarin, "The Nature of Proofs in Antiphon," *CP* 85 (1990): 22–32; John Poulakos, "Gorgias' 'Encomium to Helen' and the Defense of Rhetoric," *Rhetorica* 1 (1983): 1–16; Alexander Sesonske, "To Make the Weaker Argument Defeat the Stronger," *JHP* 6 (1968): 217–31.
6. Robert L. Scott, "On Viewing Rhetoric as Epistemic," *CSSJ* 18 (1967): 9–16; Michael C. Leff, "In Search of Ariadne's Thread: A Review of Recent Literature on Rhetorical Theory," *CSSJ* 29 (1978): 73–91.
7. Susan C. Jarratt, "Toward a Sophistic Historiography," *PrelText* 8 (1987): 9–26; John S. Nelson, "Political Theory as Political Rhetoric," *What Should Political Theory Be Now?* ed. Nelson (Albany: SUNY Press, 1983), 169–240; John Poulakos, "Rhetoric, the Sophists, and the Possible," *CM* 51 (1984): 215–26; Michael C. Leff, "Modern Sophistic and the Unity of Rhetoric," *The Rhetoric of the Human Sciences*, ed. John S. Nelson, Allan Megill, and Donald N. McCloskey (Madison: U. of Wisconsin Press, 1987), 19–37; Richard L. Enos, "The Composing Process of the Sophist: New Directions for Composition Research," *Occasional Paper* (Berkeley: Center for the Study of Writing, 1989); Susan C. Jarratt, "The Role of the Sophists in Histories of Consciousness," *PR* 23 (1990): 85–95; John Poulakos, "Sophistical Rhetoric as a Critique of Culture," *Argument and Critical Practices: Proceedings of the Fifth SCA/AFA Conference on Argumentation*, ed. Joseph W. Wenzel (Annandale, VA: Speech Communication Association, 1987), 97–101.
8. Richard Rorty, "The Historiography of Philosophy: Four Genres," *Philosophy in History: Essays on the Historiography of Philosophy*, ed. Richard Rorty, John B. Schneewind, and Quentin Skinner (Cambridge: Cambridge U. Press, 1984), 49–75.
9. Stephen Makin, "How Can We Find Out What Ancient Philosophers Said?" *Phronesis* 33 (1988): 122; emphasis added.
10. William M. A. Grimaldi, *Studies in the Philosophy of Aristotle's Rhetoric* (Wiesbaden: Franz Steiner, 1972), and *Aristotle's Rhetoric: A Commentary*, 2 vols. (New York: Fordham U. Press, 1980, 1988). See also Keith V. Erickson, *Aristotle: The Classical Heri-*

- tage of Rhetoric* (Metuchen, NJ: Scarecrow Press, 1974), and *Aristotle's Rhetoric: Five Centuries of Philological Research* (Scarecrow Press, 1975).
11. Sonja K. Foss, *Rhetorical Criticism: Exploration and Practice* (Prospect Heights, IL: Waveland Press, 1989), 71–80. On the use and abuse of classical rhetoric in contemporary theorizing, see Kathleen E. Welch, "A Critique of Classical Rhetoric: The Contemporary Appropriation of Ancient Discourse," *Rhetoric Review* 6 (1987): 79–86.
 12. See, e. g., G. P. Mohrmann and Michael C. Leff, "Lincoln at Cooper Union: A Rationale for Neo-Classical Criticism," *QJS* 60 (1974): 459–67.
 13. Edwin Black, *Rhetorical Criticism: A Study in Method* (New York: Macmillan, 1965).
 14. Jarratt, "Historiography"; Leff, "Modern Sophistic."
 15. Rorty, "Four Genres," 50.
 16. *Ibid.*, 51.
 17. Quentin Skinner, "Meaning and Understanding in the History of Ideas," *History and Theory* 8 (1969): 52–53.
 18. Allan David Bloom, "The Political Philosophy of Isocrates" (Ph.D. diss., University of Chicago, 1955), 233.
 19. *Ibid.*
 20. Alasdair MacIntyre, *Whose Justice? Which Rationality?* (Notre Dame: Notre Dame U. Press, 1988).
 21. Rorty, "Four Genres," 49.
 22. Kerferd, *SM*, 13.
 23. Bloom, "Isocrates," 233.
 24. An analogy from the history of science can help clarify the significance of an evolving conceptual vocabulary from the different standpoints of historical and rational reconstruction. What to us is now oxygen was to phlogiston theorists in the eighteenth century "dephlogisticated air." From the standpoint of modern chemists, it does no harm to "rationally reconstruct" phlogiston theory using the concepts of modern chemical theory in order to understand what the phlogiston scientists were really doing. However, the transition from "phlogiston" to "dephlogisticated air" to "oxygen" is precisely what commands the attention of the historian of chemistry. One cannot fully understand the theoretical evolution of chemistry in a historically defensible manner by superimposing a later-developed conceptual vocabulary.
 25. One measure of the importance of Poulakos' work on the Sophists and rhetoric is that it won a national research award: See "SCA Awards Presented at Annual Meeting," *SPECTRA Newsletter* 22:1 (Jan. 1986), 1.
 26. Poulakos, "Toward," 35.
 27. *Ibid.*, 46.
 28. Poulakos, "Indebtedness," 31.
 29. An example of Poulakos' equivocation can demonstrate the tension between the historical and contemporary objectives in his work. In an essay on Gorgias' *Encomium to Helen*, Poulakos offered a series of specific historical grounds for believing that Gorgias' speech was intended to be a cleverly veiled defense of the art of rhetoric in the fifth century, yet he concluded the essay by shifting to the position that the speech may be read as such *now* regardless of Gorgias' intent. If I am correct about the dating of the term *rhētorikē*, then Poulakos' historical claim that Helen represented the feminine art *rhētorikē* (just as Penelope represented *philosophia* elsewhere in Gorgias' writings) is plainly false, though his attenuated claim that the speech can now be read accordingly is still intact. See Poulakos, "Gorgias," 4–7, 15–16.
 30. Rorty, "Four Genres," 63.
 31. George A. Kennedy, *Classical Rhetoric and Its Christian and Secular Tradition from Ancient to Modern Times* (Chapel Hill: U. of North Carolina Press, 1980), 3–17.
 32. Edward Schiappa, *The Beginnings of Rhetorical Theory in Classical Greece* (New Haven: Yale U. Press, 1999).

33. Carole Blair and Mary L. Kahl, "Revising the History of Rhetorical Theory," *WJSC* 54 (1990): 149–52.
34. Poulakos, "Toward," 37.
35. Eric A. Havelock, "The Linguistic Task of the Presocratics," *Language and Thought in Early Greek Philosophy*, ed. Kevin Robb (LaSalle, IL: Hegeler Institute, 1983), 8; emphasis added.
36. Poulakos, "Toward," 36.
37. Connors, "Greek Rhetoric"; Tony M. Lentz, *Orality and Literacy in Hellenic Greece* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois U. Press, 1989).
38. Friedrich Solmsen, *Intellectual Experiments of the Greek Enlightenment* (Princeton: Princeton U. Press, 1975), 83–124.
39. G. E. R. Lloyd, *Polarity and Analogy* (Cambridge: Cambridge U. Press, 1966).
40. See Poulakos, "Indebtedness," 31–32; "Toward," 37–38. There are two senses in which one can be said to have a "self-conscious" aesthetic. 1) In a *general* sense, as Carroll Arnold pointed out to me, all language-users use informal rules of thumb of what "sounds right" to guide their oral and written compositions. If this is the sense Poulakos intends, then my earlier critique missed the mark (in "neosophistic Rhetorical Criticism or the Historical Reconstruction of Sophistic Doctrines?" *PR* 23 [1990]: 202–3). However, such a general sense would also have the effect of rendering Poulakos' comments trivial. If *all* speakers and writers are self-conscious stylists, then Poulakos is hard pressed to find a unique sophistic aesthetic. 2) A more *specific* sense of self-conscious style would present Poulakos with a different problem. As I have just argued, the stylistic changes in the prose discourse of the Sophists cannot be attributed to a sophistic appreciation of style that is divorced from content. We should not anachronistically assume that there were explicit aesthetic theories competing in fifth-century Greece in the sense that, say, rococo and minimalism could be viewed as competing choices today; see Barbara Hughes Fowler, *The Hellenistic Aesthetic* (Madison: U. of Wisconsin Press, 1989). My thanks to Wynne Wilbur for her assistance on this point.
41. Poulakos, "Indebtedness," 31, 41 n34. See also William H. Race, "The Word Καυρός in Greek Drama," *TAPA* 111 (1981): 197–213.
42. Richard C. Jebb, *Sophocles: The Plays and Fragments, Part 6* (Cambridge: Cambridge U. Press, 1894), 174–75.
43. Poulakos, "Toward," 40. On *kairos* as "the appropriate time" see Race, "*Kairos*," 211–13.
44. Poulakos, "Indebtedness," 31.
45. Havelock, "Task," 55; Bruno Snell, *The Discovery of the Mind*, (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1953), ch. 10. Cf. Andreas Graeser, "On Language, Thought, and Reality in Ancient Greek Philosophy," *Dialectica* 31 (1977): 360.
46. Poulakos, "Toward," 37.
47. Poulakos, "Indebtedness," 30.
48. Cf. Manfred S. Frings, "Protagoras Rediscovered: Heidegger's Explication of Protagoras' Fragment," *JVI* 8 (1974): 112–23. For doubts about the usefulness of postmodern readings of classical rhetoric, see George A. Kennedy, "Some Reflections on Neomodernism," *Rhetoric Review* 6 (1988): 230–33, and Robert L. Scott, "Non-Discipline as a Remedy for Rhetoric?" *Rhetoric Review* 6 (1988): 333–37.
49. LSJ s.v. *energazomai* and *energōs*; Daniel W. Graham, *Aristotle's Two Systems* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987).
50. Guthrie, *HGP VI*, 119–29.
51. Poulakos, "Possible," 217–18.
52. Guthrie, *HGP VI*, 123.
53. Robinson, *Contrasting Arguments*, 137–41.
54. Richard Garner, *Law and Society in Classical Athens* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1987), 59–71, 139.

55. Poulakos acknowledges Aristotle's debt to the Sophists on certain matters in his "Indebtedness."
56. See chapter 6 of this book.
57. Guthrie, *HGP VI*, 345–49.
58. Poulakos, "Possible," 221.
59. Makin, "How Can We?"
60. Richard Weaver, *The Ethics of Rhetoric* (Davis, CA: Hermagoras Press, 1953), ch. 1.
61. Poulakos, "Culture."
62. Poulakos, "Indebtedness," 40 n2; "Toward," 47 n1.
63. The following discussion of the Older Sophists is based on the texts and fragments preserved in DK and found in Rosamond Kent Sprague, ed. *The Older Sophists* (Columbia: U. of South Carolina Press, 1972). As is defended in Sprague's book, I assume that Antiphon the Sophist and Antiphon the Orator were one and the same.
64. Stanley Wilcox, "The Scope of Early Rhetorical Instruction," *HSCP* 46 (1942): 121–55.
65. Eric A. Havelock, *The Greek Concept of Justice* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard U. Press, 1978).
66. Kerferd, *Legacy*, 3. It might be objected that individualistic studies of the Sophists are at odds with modern efforts to restore sophistic thinking to its proper place in the history of philosophy. As Poulakos has pointed out, Aristotle typically attacks the Sophists as a class rather than individually, "and this allows the contemporary reader to regard any one member of the class as an exception or a qualified case" ("Possible," 215). The objection may be answered on several grounds. To begin with, there is no assurance that general treatments of the Sophists can avoid negative characterizations of the class as a whole. On the contrary, Kerferd has ably documented how a variety of efforts to describe a general sophistic philosophy have resulted in oversimplified and negative schematizations (*Legacy*, 1–6; *SM*, 4–14). Efforts at describing a common sophistic rhetorical theory similarly tend to contrast a sophistic rhetorical theory with those of Plato and Aristotle. Such efforts tend to favor sophistic details that provide contrast with Plato and Aristotle while minimizing points of similarity. The result is a loss of accuracy in favor of scope or, more commonly, a theory of rhetoric that appears wholly inferior to that of Plato or Aristotle. Additionally, individualistic treatments of the Sophists will appear to be exceptional only if not all of the Sophists are studied. After all, the conventional list includes only seven Older Sophists; hence it should not be difficult to assess the Older Sophists as a class after a series of individual studies have been done. Perhaps in the dialectic between general and specific studies both values of accuracy and scope can be optimized.
67. C. J. Classen, "Aristotle's Picture of the Sophists," in Kerferd, *Legacy*, 7–24.
68. For Poulakos' response to my comments, see his "Interpreting Sophistical Rhetoric: A Response to Schiappa," *PR* 23 (1990): 218–28. I have responded in "History and Neosophistic Criticism: A Reply to Poulakos," *PR* 23 (1990): 307–15.