

<b>Zeitschrift:</b>	Entretiens sur l'Antiquité classique
<b>Herausgeber:</b>	Fondation Hardt pour l'étude de l'Antiquité classique
<b>Band:</b>	25 (1979)
<b>Artikel:</b>	Classicizing rhetoric and criticism : the pseudo-dionysian exetasis and mistakes in declamation
<b>Autor:</b>	Russell, D.A.
<b>DOI:</b>	<a href="https://doi.org/10.5169/seals-660796">https://doi.org/10.5169/seals-660796</a>

#### **Nutzungsbedingungen**

Die ETH-Bibliothek ist die Anbieterin der digitalisierten Zeitschriften auf E-Periodica. Sie besitzt keine Urheberrechte an den Zeitschriften und ist nicht verantwortlich für deren Inhalte. Die Rechte liegen in der Regel bei den Herausgebern beziehungsweise den externen Rechteinhabern. Das Veröffentlichen von Bildern in Print- und Online-Publikationen sowie auf Social Media-Kanälen oder Webseiten ist nur mit vorheriger Genehmigung der Rechteinhaber erlaubt. [Mehr erfahren](#)

#### **Conditions d'utilisation**

L'ETH Library est le fournisseur des revues numérisées. Elle ne détient aucun droit d'auteur sur les revues et n'est pas responsable de leur contenu. En règle générale, les droits sont détenus par les éditeurs ou les détenteurs de droits externes. La reproduction d'images dans des publications imprimées ou en ligne ainsi que sur des canaux de médias sociaux ou des sites web n'est autorisée qu'avec l'accord préalable des détenteurs des droits. [En savoir plus](#)

#### **Terms of use**

The ETH Library is the provider of the digitised journals. It does not own any copyrights to the journals and is not responsible for their content. The rights usually lie with the publishers or the external rights holders. Publishing images in print and online publications, as well as on social media channels or websites, is only permitted with the prior consent of the rights holders. [Find out more](#)

**Download PDF:** 13.01.2026

**ETH-Bibliothek Zürich, E-Periodica, <https://www.e-periodica.ch>**

## IV

D. A. RUSSELL

### CLASSICIZING RHETORIC AND CRITICISM: THE PSEUDO-DIONYSIAN *EXETASIS* AND *MISTAKES IN DECLAMATION*

#### I

A very great deal of what survives from antiquity of literary theory and criticism comes in fact from the classicizing period of the early empire, and it would be quite wrong of me, I think, to attempt to survey it here in the space of a single, brief *exposé*; what I propose to do instead is to take one example of rhetorical, classicizing criticism, and analyse it in some detail. I have chosen a Greek example, and I shall therefore say nothing about the developments of Roman literary taste in this period, though they are of course much better documented and much more precisely datable than the Greek. And it is an unfamiliar example, for it consists of the tenth and eleventh chapters of the pseudo-Dionysian *Ars rhetorica* (= Dionysii Halicarnassi *Opuscula*, edd. H. Usener et L. Radermacher, II, 359-387). I shall abbreviate their titles: Περὶ τῶν ἐν μελέταις πλημμελουμένων will be called *Mistakes*, and Περὶ λόγων ἐξετάσεως, *Exetasis*, i.e. 'Examination'.

But first a word about the general scene. I take it that Dionysius and Longinus, despite their radical disagreements in taste and emphasis, may be regarded as typical 'neoclassical

critics'. Both assert the inferiority of the Hellenistic literature which preceded them, and proclaim a return to purer ideals. Both employ, as their main critical tool, some version of the distinction of stylistic tones which we know as the doctrine of *χαρακτῆρες*. Both regard some forms of literature—tragedy and epic—as in general higher than the literature of realism and comedy. But they do not consider criteria like those of concentration and aesthetic unity for judging between *genres* which Aristotle used when he tried to reverse Plato's preference for the non-dramatic over the drama. Again, both profess to be writing for the potential orator. They are therefore not only what modern writers would call 'practical critics'—i.e. they handle detail by a sort of 'close reading' technique—but practical critics of the rhetorical kind, constantly trying to point out what features in the literature they are discussing should be imitated or avoided. For this reason, they are not concerned with poetics as a separate discipline, or with the theoretical problems concerning poetry as *mimesis* which Aristotle, in particular, raised and answered. Finally: both regard certain moral qualities as essential to literary excellence. For Longinus, this needs no demonstration, for he makes it abundantly clear that literary *έψος* can only be achieved by a person who has some *grandeur of soul*. But it is also true, though in a somewhat different way, of Dionysius. We have only to look at the preface to his collection of essays *On the ancient orators*. When he sings the praises (I 1 ff. U.-R.) of the old φιλόσοφος ῥητορική, now so happily revived in Augustan Rome, he means the serious moral writing of Isocrates, the education of high-principled public men. In his evaluation of the classical Attic orators and historians, he always has this moral object in mind.

Thus two educational demands—for rhetorical effectiveness and moral acceptability—dominate most surviving Greek criticism in the period we are considering. Aristotelian poetics is largely forgotten. For Longinus, poetry is distinguished

from oratory not as being an imitative art, or as possessing any claim to generality, but simply as a mode of discourse, restricted by metre, but lacking the controls of sense and content imposed on oratory by the real world. Alexandrian aestheticism, again, was seen to be in some sense an enemy. Longinus (35, 4) deliberately turns the Callimachean image of the great river and the pure spring on its head. He would rather have the Rhine and the Danube than any little spring, however holy. Of course, there were many schools and differences of taste. Dionysius and Longinus are opposed in their evaluation of Plato, and this was a matter of crucial importance. Others differed in their analysis of the causes of the decline which everyone deplored. But on the whole, there is, as one would expect, a very general consensus concerning literary values, and a disinclination to ask awkward theoretical questions that might interfere with the rhetorical and moral study of the classical inheritance.

The two little treatises which I propose to discuss are part of this consensus. Most of what they say is conventional enough; but they are, so far as I am aware, unique in attempting to present a sort of system of criticism, involving both moral and rhetorical criteria. Though this is limited in scope, as we shall see, not to say naïve in conception, it is a curiosity of the history of criticism, and deserves a somewhat fuller analysis than it usually gets.

The date of the pseudo-Dionysian *ars* has been variously judged. The first seven chapters, which constitute a treatise on epideictic speeches, are probably of the second or third century, and seem to be earlier than the more sophisticated, and less heavily moralizing, Menandrian treatises on the same subject. The two chapters on *λόγοι ἐσχηματισμένοι* which follow have no clear clues as to date, nor is the relation between them satisfactorily understood. In style and in some points of content, they seem quite close to the two chapters with which we are concerned. These have themselves often been regarded

(so, most recently, C. O. Brink, *Horace On Poetry*, II: *The 'Ars Poetica'* (Cambridge 1971), 191) as first-century work. But there are close parallels (pointed out by H. Rabe (ed.), *Hermogenis Opera* (Leipzig 1913), pp. xi-xii) between them and the Hermogenean treatise Περὶ μεθόδου δεινότητος. One of these parallels (385, 15 U.-R. compared with Hermogenes, p. 417, 1 ff. Rabe) seems to me hardly explicable on the assumption (which Rabe prefers) of a common source, but far more likely to be good evidence for the view that our work is the later. Even if Περὶ μεθόδου δεινότητος is not by Hermogenes, it is unlikely to be earlier than the Antonine age. So we are probably dealing here with a book of the Second Sophistic, two centuries or so later than Dionysius himself. This conclusion is strengthened, I think, by the precision which the author appears to demand of the student in the verbal mimesis of Attic classics: he is expected to know a Eupolidean word from an Aristophanic, a Lysianic word from one appropriate to Demosthenes or Antiphon (386, 15 ff. U.-R.). This suggests the pedantic Atticist lexicography of the second century.

Does this comparatively late date, if it is right, diminish the value of the book as a testimony to what we call classicizing literary attitudes? I think not. The literary culture of the Second Sophistic was an elaboration of that initiated by Dionysius and his contemporaries, not in any way a reaction against it. There were, as I have indicated, various schools of taste; and it is noticeable that our author shows more warmth in his admiration for Plato than one would expect in an associate of Caecilius and Dionysius—but no more, after all, than we actually find in Longinus. So far as our knowledge of Greek criticism and rhetoric goes, we should, I suspect, think of the co-existence of various schools of thought in the period from Augustus (or earlier) to the Neoplatonists, rather than of any easily recognized development. The genuine doubt that one must always have about the date of Περὶ ὕψους is an indication that this is the right attitude. Even if the book we are con-

sidering is of the second or early third century, it contains little or nothing that is out of tune with the views of Dionysius and his contemporaries.

But a further difficulty may be felt. The subject of *Mistakes* is not literature in general, or even oratory, but declamation, the composition of speeches in character as part of an imaginary forensic case or a reconstructed historical situation. As for *Exetasis*, though it claims (375, 5-6) to deal with « anything we read, hear or in any way come across », its approach is clearly the same, and its criteria of  $\lambda\circ\gamma\omega\nu\ \chi\rho\iota\sigma\iota\varsigma$  have been formed with this type of composition primarily in mind. It is important, I think, to remind ourselves how central declamation is to the development and the general concept of literature throughout the period we are considering. It is of course most familiar in Latin, from the elder Seneca, the Quintilianic *Declamations*, and the forceful ridicule directed against the practice of the schools by Petronius, Tacitus and Juvenal. But its history in Greek practice is far longer and more varied. It is reasonable to see the beginnings in the earliest phase of Greek rhetoric, in Antiphon's *Tetralogies*. The masterpieces of the Greek *suasoria* are to be found in Aristides, or perhaps in Libanius. The vast collection of *controversiae* preserved in the  $\delta\iota\alpha\iota\varphi\epsilon\sigma\iota\varsigma\ \zeta\eta\tau\eta\mu\alpha\tau\omega\nu$  of Sopatros (Chr. Walz (ed.), *Rhetores Graeci*, Vol. VIII) closely resembles, but does not derive from, the Senecan tradition. It would appear that, from quite an early period, the  $\mu\epsilon\lambda\acute{e}\tau\eta$ , whether *suasoria* or *controversia*, deliberative or forensic, involved a very natural attempt to combine instruction with amusement. The actual cases of the Attic courts were sometimes colourful enough, and the corpus of the orators itself contains speeches whose *raison d'être* seems to lie in entertainment by sensationalism or humour; declamation exaggerates this, and steps out of the real world altogether into an imaginary community, peopled by war-heroes ( $\alpha\varphi\iota\sigma\tau\epsilon\iota\varsigma$ ), pirates, rapists and tyrannicides, as well as honest virgins, repressive fathers and unscrupulous men of wealth. To a considerable extent, this is the

world reflected in New Comedy, the outstanding form of imaginative literature in early Hellenistic times.

Quintilian was right (X 1, 71) to notice a special relevance of New Comedy to declamation. He observed that Menander was more useful to the declaimer than to the practical orator, because the declaimer has to represent various characters, according to the particular subject that he has been set. This is in effect the point from which our author starts; the key to success as a declaimer is, he insists, understanding of  $\hat{\eta}\vartheta\circ\varsigma$ , not control of facts (359, 3 ff.). Now when a rhetor sets a pupil a *controversia* or *suasoria* subject, he expects a modicum of what would nowadays be called creative writing. This cannot lie in plot-construction, for the story is given. It may lie in epigrammatic ingenuity, the detection of piquancy or paradox inherent in the situation, or in vivid descriptions of the more dramatic scenes. These are the aspects most familiar from the Roman declaimers. Our author's interests lie elsewhere: observe his slighting reference (359, 13) to  $\tau\grave{\alpha}\ \kappa\alpha\lambda\circ\mu\mu\epsilon\nu\alpha\ \hat{\epsilon}\pi\varphi\omega\eta\mu\alpha\tau\alpha$  as a wholly inadequate way of representing character. His emphasis, as we shall see, is on the unity of the whole speech, and on the portrayal of  $\hat{\eta}\vartheta\circ\varsigma$  both in the whole and in the parts. What he has to say is, if not original and individual, at least conceived in opposition to what he considers unsatisfactory practice. It leads him to draw, it would seem, on the theory of comedy developed by Aristotle and his successors, and dimly known to us through Horace, Plutarch and the ancient commentaries on Terence. It leads him also to make points which have obvious relevance outside the narrow rhetorical sphere: we may reasonably hope to learn from him how he and his fellow teachers viewed the classical literature—what he calls  $\tau\grave{\alpha}\ \beta\iota\beta\lambda\iota\alpha$ —from which they professed to derive their standards, and of which they demanded in their pupils an accurate and quite extensive knowledge.

There is, I think, one other way in which this author to some extent sets himself against some earlier rhetorical tradition

and exhibits what we may regard as a typically classicizing attitude. Declamation took shape in Hellenistic times, well before the first attempts to create an imitative and archaizing prose literature. In the hands of the Greek declaimers known to Seneca, like the characteristic 'Asianist' Hybreas, it displayed two features to which reformers, like Dionysius, might well take objection: impurity of language and lack of proper moral commitment. Hybreas' handling (Sen. *Contr.* I 2, 23) of the *controversia* concerning the lady who claims a priesthood as a virgin, after a period of compulsory prostitution as a pirate's captive, exploits the situation with few inhibitions. Moralists often complained of the undesirability of declamation subjects and the traditional treatment of them; our author's insistence on a high moral tone (*φιλόσοφον ἥθος, μεγαλοπρεπές*) answers this complaint by requiring the declaimer to keep to the strictest standards. There is indeed quite a wide spectrum of permissiveness among ancient rhetors: our man, like the author of the Dionysian *Περὶ ἐπιδεικτικῶν*, is at the more prudish end. In the second century, as in the English nineteenth, classical education often linked linguistic with moral impeccability in a firm structure of precept and exhortation.

## II

I propose now to analyse *Exetasis*, supplementing it where necessary from *Mistakes*. The transmitted order, in which *Mistakes* comes first, is the reverse of the natural one, for it is clear that *Exetasis*, which sets out the whole scheme, precedes *Mistakes*, which takes it for granted and uses it.

*Exetasis* begins with protreptic commonplaces. Young and old alike (cf. Epicurus, *Ep. ad Men.* 122) are in peril in regard to the evaluation of literary works (*λόγων κρίσις*). We are inconsistent and irrational; our decisions lack independence. Principles are needed. The author evidently will not accept

the rôle assigned by Dionysius and Longinus to irrational aesthetic sensibility (cf. D. M. Schenkeveld, in *Mus. Philol. Londin.* 1 (1975), 93 ff.), the accumulated but inevitably inarticulate sense which comes only from long experience. He proposes to set down definite rules of procedure, namely the Scheme of the Four Headings, ἥθος γνώμη τέχνη λέξις, which, he claims, enables the student to pass judgement on anything he reads or hears—that is to say, on classical texts as well as on contemporary exercises. ἥθος is of two kinds: a general or philosophical ἥθος, in other words the overall moral tendency of the work; and a particular or rhetorical ἥθος, consisting in speaking of the given subject in a way suitable and appropriate to speaker, audience, content and opponent. ἥθος in this second sense (377, 7 ff.: cf. 359, 3-6) is a very much more serious problem to the rhetor than the facts of his case, which supply him with the material basis of what he is to say; moreover it is a problem amenable to a theoretical approach (*διαίρεσις*, 'division'), which can be learned and applied to any occasion.

The requirement concerning ἥθος in the first sense amounts to an expectation that the moral tendency of the speech shall be such as to encourage virtue and discourage vice (375, 12-13). Literature is full of characters who are just and unjust, temperate and intemperate, brave and cowardly, wise and foolish, gentle and irascible: i.e. representations of the cardinal virtues and corresponding vices, together with the much-discussed subject of anger and its restraint. Take away the names of the characters (375, 22), and the result is practical moral philosophy, which teaches us to avoid some examples and imitate others. It is the poet's business to make the lesson clear: the fates of the adulterer Paris and the treacherous Pandarus (376, 1-9) are an awful warning. Again: «if you leave out the names, and examine the differences of characters, you will voyage through the (classical) books ( $\tauὰ \betaιβλία$ ) as in a theatre of life». The idea that the 'names' are incidental, and that the essence of the story exists without them, recalls Aristotle's

remark on the practice of comedy (*Po.* 9, 1451 b 10); but we should perhaps think rather of Dio Chrysostom, *Oration LV*, where 'Socrates' and Homer are shown to set names to the characters through whom they seek to teach moral lessons (note especially LV 12: ἐξὸν ἀφελεῖν τὰ ὄνόματα of 'Socrates'; LV 15: the example of Pandarus). If I understand our author right, he takes it for granted that the representation of moral characteristics, such as are the subject of philosophy, necessarily has a moral purpose, namely the encouragement of virtue and discouragement of vice. As Wilhelm Süss (*Ethos*, 222 ff.) pointed out, this is to state a general theme of literary criticism, not a principle of rhetoric. We have here something different from the common demand that the orator shall be 'a good man'. So not only are the qualities which fall under φιλόσοφον ἥθος distinct from those which he is to enumerate as ῥητορικὸν ἥθος; the purpose for which they are introduced is different also. Our author claims both Plato (*Phdr.* 245 a) and Thucydides as authorities for his point of view: « history is philosophy derived from examples » is his paraphrase of the sentence in which Thucydides tries to explain the utility his work will have for posterity (I 22-23).

What he means by ῥητορικὸν ἥθος is again, in itself, fairly simple. He lists the headings under which the speaker's ἥθος should be considered: nationality (ἔθνος), family position (γένος), age (ήλικια), moral character (προαιρεσις), fortune (τύχη), and profession (ἐπιτήδευσις). These six headings—or seven, since ἔθνος is divided into a more general classification (Greek or barbarian) and a more detailed one (Athenian or Egyptian)—cover all the questions which can be asked. This is, naturally, in the central tradition of rhetorical teaching, going back to Aristotle's enumeration of the kinds of γένος and ἔξις which are relative to ἥθικὴ λέξις (*Rh.* III 7, 1408 a 25 ff.), and often discussed in connection with Horace's *Ars poetica* 114 ff. (v. C. O. Brink, *Commentary*, 190 ff.). Fairly close to the detailed treatment given here is Theon's version in his account of the

progymnasma of prosopopoeia (*Rhetores Graeci*, ed. L. Spengel, II pp. 115 ff.). But our author claims a certain originality, as rhetors usually do, however slight the justification. He does in fact add a little to our knowledge of taste in these matters. For example: Theon (p. 116, 7) observes that Herodotus, though he writes in Greek, sometimes expresses himself βαρβαρικῶς<sup>1</sup>. Our author (378, 6) provides an example, namely Candaules' remark to Gyges (Herodotus, I 8) that «ears are less trustworthy to men than eyes». The 'barbaric' element in this is supposed to consist in the use of the concrete terms 'eyes' and 'ears' instead of the abstract 'sight' and 'hearing'. Again (378, 3), when Plato (*Ti.* 22 b), makes the Egyptian say to Solon, «You Greeks are always children, for you have no learning that has grown grey ( $\piολιόν$ ) with time», this is supposed to illustrate a certain 'rusticity' or 'roughness' in the barbarian speaker. Yet again (378, 10), Anacharsis' description of Greek athletic practice as 'madness' is the saying of a barbarian. These examples are not all on the same footing. The last-named is simply a shocking opinion bluntly put, not a peculiar way of talking. Nor does any of them involve any grammatical incorrectness or 'barbarism' in the ordinary sense. The Herodotus and Plato examples seem to me to show a sense, perhaps natural in a late Greek man of letters, at home in a highly abstract language, that the vividly concrete is somehow uncouth and 'un-Hellenic'. One thinks of later reactions to the concrete and vulgar language of Scripture.

It is an important point for our author that these seven headings have to be combined ( $\chiρᾶσις \ \etaθῶν$ ). The personages in a declamation possess more than one such characteristic each. The rich man in the story will also be a political enemy of the poor man, perhaps also a father, and the scene must of

<sup>1</sup> We may note *en passant* that Longinus (4, 7) refers to this topic. When he declares that Herodotus' expression ἀλγηθόνας δοφθαλμῶν *cannot* be justified by the consideration that the speakers are «barbarians and drunk», he is opposing the common teaching of the rhetors.

course be laid in some defined country or city, luxurious Ionia or treacherous Thessaly, or whatever it may be. This is of course far short of a requirement for the individualization of the character, but it is at least a demand for a certain degree of realism. According to *Mistakes* (359, 10 ff.), failure to take this point spells complete failure to deal with the problem of *ἥθος* (οὐδὲ ἀγωνίζεσθαι τοῖς *ἥθεσιν*), for without this *χρᾶσις*, there is nothing left but those incidental *ἐπιφωνήματα*, which do nothing to make the *ἥθη*, as they should be, the 'soul' of the speech (360, 1).

The problem which naturally arises when one reflects on this doctrine is that of the relation between the 'philosophical' and 'rhetorical' kinds of *ethos*. I have already indicated that it cannot be regarded as a difference between moral and non-moral qualities in the characters represented. *Mistakes* (360, 7 ff.) endeavours to put forward an answer. It is an error, we are told, not to make the «one great *ἥθος*» the basis of the whole structure. Failure to do so leads to the complete loss of the high tone (*τὸ μεγαλοπρεπές*) which should be consistently maintained. This appears to mean that lack of moral commitment—in the sense of encouragement of virtue and discouragement of vice—entails a lack of dignity in the whole. It does not however seem as if any particular stylistic *χαρακτήρ* or *ἰδέα* is meant; our author is not concerned with these things. His *μεγαλοπρεπές*—in this respect resembling Longinus' *ὑψός*—is independent of linguistic or stylistic features, but dependent on a moral attitude. What follows (360, 8-17) is an analogy meant to illustrate the relationship between this overall moral position and the individual instances of indignation, pity, wit and so forth which the speech must contain. In a word, these are to be controlled by it in the way that emotions, in real life, ought to be controlled by reason (*λογισμός*). Now this states a view of the unity of a speech to which I know no close ancient parallel (cf. in general, C. O. Brink, *Horace On Poetry*, II: *The 'Ars Poetica'*, 77 ff.). It seems to be different both from

the Platonic view according to which the parts of a speech should fit together in the way that the parts of an animal do, and it should be seen to have a head and a foot in the right place (*Phdr.* 264 c)<sup>1</sup>, and from the similar Aristotelian theory (*Po.* 7, 1450 b-1451 a) that a tragedy must have « beginning, middle and end », with its successive parts bound together by necessary or probable connections. Nor again does it resemble the view of a work of art as a *kosmos* of discordant elements, conspiring together to form a whole, as for example in Macrobius' description of the *Aeneid* (*Sat.* V 1, 19) as a *concordia dissonorum*, a harmony of opposing styles, constituting a whole in the same way as the earth is a whole made up of sea and land, mountain and plain. Instead, one is tempted to call it a statement of an even more general literary theory than these. It seems to say that the unity of a speech or a poem depends not only on the fact that the parts should cohere to effect a single purpose, but also on the nature of that purpose, to wit that it should reflect the reason-controlled life.

But there are indeed difficulties in interpreting what is, on any count, a confused and pretentious argument. The doctrine would be clearer if we could feel sure of the sense of 360, 18-361, 12. At 360, 18 the author turns to Plato, who achieves the goal by « positing as a basis » (ὑποθέμενος) the philosophical ἡθος, i.e. a clear moral lesson, and combining with it the characters of sophists, statesmen, craftsmen, and various people of different ages, sex and status. Here indeed it is a matter of different characters saying things appropriate to their natures, and so contributing to the development of the overall argument. The agricultural metaphors of the farmer Demodocus (381, 4 ff. = *Theages* 121 c) form a trivial but apt enough example. There is no difficulty in interpreting Plato like this. Indeed, it was a common and obvious observation that the different ἡθη in Plato combined in this way: Albinus' *Eisagoge* (2) states it

<sup>1</sup> Cf. 364, 13 for our author's own view of this precept as a counsel of perfection.

clearly. Dio Chrysostom, in the essay cited above (*Or. LV*) explains how the Socratic dialogue represents persons suffering from emotional disturbances ( $\pi\acute{\alpha}\theta\eta$ ) as a vivid way of representing the  $\pi\acute{\alpha}\theta\eta$  themselves. This kind of interpretation does not depend on any specifically Neoplatonist metaphysics or method of allegory, and its presence here offers no reason for assigning a late date to the book. But of course, like Longinus and the author of the pseudo-Dionysian chapters on *Epilektika*, but notably unlike Dionysius himself, our man is an enthusiast for Plato, and regards Demosthenes as his imitator (360, 23; 361, 3; 364, 9: see *infra*, pp. 127-8), and he now proceeds to apply this doctrine to the orator in accordance with this view:

« Demosthenes also posited this as a basis, and is thus consistently grand ( $\mu\acute{e}g\alpha\lambda\omega\pi\varrho\epsilon\pi\acute{\eta}\varsigma$ ) in his speeches, positing the character of the statesman in his deliberative speeches, and combining that of the flatterer ( $\chi\acute{o}\lambda\chi\acute{e}\nu\omega\tau\varsigma$ ) with this. . . »

Two problems remain here. First: in what sense does Demosthenes incorporate the character of the flatterer? By flattering the *demos* himself? Or by contrasting the behaviour of his opponents in politics with his own? The latter answer suits both the facts and our author's argument better. Secondly: what was said about private forensic speeches in the corrupt and defective sentence at 361, 1-3? There are too many uncertainties to be sure:  $\delta\acute{\iota}\alpha\varphi\acute{e}\rho\omega\eta$  and  $\pi\acute{o}\alpha\chi\acute{\theta}\eta\eta\omega\eta$  are suspect, the position and length of the lacuna doubtful. But the general sense required by the context is perhaps clear enough. Demosthenes, like Plato, should be shown to understand how to convey the value of an opinion by associating it with the worth of a character, either by lending credit to a colleague in the case ( $\tau\omega\eta\sigma\acute{u}\alpha\gamma\omega\varrho\epsilon\omega\tau\varsigma$ ) or by taking it away from an opponent. Similar doctrine is found in *Exetasis* (383, 1), in a different context, in connection with the speech of Thersites in the second book of the *Iliad*. Homer, we are told, « desired to destroy the justice of Achilles' case, and therefore gave him an unpopular and ridiculous advocate ( $\sigma\acute{u}\eta\gamma\omega\varrho\eta\eta$ ), so that the

rightness of the cause should disappear under the baseness of the advocate». This kind of thinking is also to be found, in a different sort of educational writing, in Plutarch's *De audiendis poetis* (18 E-20 D); it represents an attitude to literature characteristic of ancient education, and especially of these classicizing periods which we are considering.

## III

The kernel of our author's literary views is contained in these confused but suggestive discussions about  $\eta\vartheta\circ\varsigma$ . The following sections on  $\gamma\nu\omega\mu\eta$  (*Exetasis* 382, 15-384, 21, with *Mistakes* 361, 18-362, 16) and  $\tau\acute{e}\chi\nu\eta$  (*Exetasis* 384, 22-385, 13 with *Mistakes* 362, 17-365, 2) raise few new issues. The theory of  $\gamma\nu\omega\mu\eta$  in *Exetasis* is disarmingly simple: «not too much, not too little, no contradictions... measure and safety». Homer, *rhetoricae inventor*, teaches this by calling Thersites «the man of unmeasured words»,  $\delta\mu\epsilon\tau\rho\epsilon\pi\heta\varsigma$ . *Mistakes* is somewhat more explicit. It points out the error of confusing conciseness with inadequacy (we recall Horace, *Ars poetica* 25: *brevis esse labore, / obscurus fio*) and of spending too much time on facts which are admitted or which derive naturally from the characters of the agents. But all this is a matter of practical rhetoric, directed at an audience to be persuaded; it has not much application to literature in general.

$\tau\acute{e}\chi\nu\eta$ , for this author, is specifically the doctor's skill of «hiding the knife and administering the drug in pleasing food». The image is familiar from Lucretius (I 936 ff.: H. A. J. Munro, *ad loc.*, cites imitations in later writers) but its application here is not, as in Lucretius, to choice of words and charm of verse, but exclusively to questions of arrangement and tactics. The speaker must avoid the bare enumeration of his points, and not «proceed from  $\alpha$  to  $\omega$  like a *grammatikos*». Rigid insistence on  $\delta\iota\alpha\iota\rho\epsilon\sigma\iota\varsigma$  ('division') is rejected, and the tone suggests polemic against rhetors who made too much of the systematic approach;

it would be unwise to put a name to these opponents, but it is perhaps worth recalling the practice of Seneca's *Latro* (*Contr. I Praef.* 21) who laid out the heads of his discourse clearly in advance, so that any deviation from them in his actual speech could be readily detected. Instead, our author pleads for flexibility. There are occasions when weak arguments should be concealed by the juxtaposition of stronger ones, and when digressions and cross-references are valuable. It will sometimes be more effective to offer proofs and preparatory arguments before stating the proposition which you wish to convey; it often happens that a statement is weakened by inadequate justification following it, whereas a preliminary build-up may lend strength to it when it finally comes.

Another fault (364, 13) is the failure to observe « necessary connection », which Plato (*Phdr.* 264) had demanded. Plato's requirement that the arguments used should not be « thrown down at random » but the speech should have an 'organic' unity is, it would appear, a counsel of perfection, rarely attained in practice. Indeed, Plato's condemnation of Lysias on this count is valid against « all our rhetoric » (364, 20), and only Demosthenes, Plato's imitator, succeeds in evading it. It would be interesting to know how the author might have demonstrated this; he refers us to his Περὶ μιμήσεως (364, 24)—and thereby gave a later scholar a handle for attributing the book to Dionysius (359, 2), much as Περὶ ὕψους (as is usually thought) came to be attributed by someone to Dionysius on the ground of its casual reference to a Περὶ συνθέσεως. It is suggestive, however, that another treatise in this corpus (VIII 8: pp. 305-6) sets up a comparison between Plato's *Apology* and the *De corona*, based on the point that both combine various purposes—defence, attack, encomium and advice—in somewhat the same way: both are λόγοι ἐσχηματισμένοι, not simple treatments of a single problem. The supposition that Demosthenes was influenced by, or a pupil of, Plato was clearly one of importance to rhetors, and seems to go back to the Hellenistic biographer, Hermippus,

no very reliable authority: it is often repeated in later texts (e.g. Plut. *Dem.* 5, 7; [Dem.] *Ep.* V 3; Cic. *Brut.* 31, 121; *Orat.* 4, 15; Tac. *Dial.* 32; Diog. Laert. III 47; Quint. XII 2, 22; etc.). It must have played a part in the debates about the value of Plato as a writer which occupied Dionysius and his contemporaries a good deal; it is slightly surprising that it does not appear in Περὶ ὕψους, though of course we have to remember the long lacunae.

## IV

We pass finally to λέξις (*Exetasis* 385, 15-386, 20 with *Mistakes* 365, 3-367, 10). The discussion in *Exetasis* is incomplete, but can partly be reconstructed from the summary (387, 12 ff.) and from *Mistakes* and the Hermogenean Περὶ μεθόδου δεινότητος (p. 417 Rabe). The main scheme covered the basic virtues of clarity and purity, and also the skills of saying things « in many ways » (πολλοστῶς) and « with variety » (ποικίλως). It makes no attempt to deal with the various emotional tones or χαρακτῆρες. There is thus no account of the three *genera dicendi*, and it does not seem to be envisaged that the judgement passed on a speech might rest on the author's choice of appropriate *ἰδέαι* and his handling of them. Nor is word-arrangement (σύνθεσις) discussed. Figures (σχήματα) are omitted in *Exetasis*, added as a brief appendix in *Mistakes* (367, 11-15). The author in fact concentrates on a single stylistic problem. Two opposing errors of word-selection must be avoided. One consists of the exclusive pursuit of the 'natural and familiar', ignoring the fact that common speech neither expresses one's meaning clearly nor produces a vivid visualization of the circumstances. The other lies in taking to one's bosom (ἐναγκαλίζονται: 365, 10) every recondite word, taking pride in what one supposes to be archaism (ἀρχαιότης) and not realizing that these recondite words are found only sporadically in the classical texts themselves, which for the most part consist of

perfectly ordinary and familiar words. Recondite vocabulary is found in the classics for a variety of reasons. Sometimes, usage has changed, and words that now seem odd were once familiar. Sometimes, technical necessity requires the use of a word which rarely occurs. Sometimes there is an element of parody (*κατὰ μίμησιν τὴν πρὸς ἐτέρους, καθάπερ ἐν ἴδιωματι κωμῳδίας*: 366, 8). These circumstances do not apply to us: we have no call to 'roll out' out-of-the-way words either because we must or for fun (*παιζοντες*); what leads to their use in contemporary writing is the tastelessness of the late-learner (*δψιμαθία καὶ ἀπειροκαλία*). However, it is natural that one should want to display one's scholarship, and make use of the *copia verborum* acquired from tragedy, comedy, philosophy or history. Moreover it is true that 'philosophical' or 'historical' words are found sometimes in oratory. What is not always observed is the reason why Demosthenes employs them. This is always because they conduce to vividness (*ἐνάργεια* is preferable to the variant *ἐνέργεια* in 367, 4). There is also a special way of handling them, namely by juxtaposing more familiar terms which help to conceal the novelty, or else by confessing and apologizing for it.

*Exetasis*, as we saw, distinguishes *τὸ πολλοστῶς λέγειν* from *τὸ ποικίλως λεγειν*: the former involves controlling synonyms and avoiding too much repetition, the latter using words from various types of writing. The writer should apparently be able not only to identify words from various genres (*ἰδέαι* [367, 8]: it should be noted that *ἰδέα* is not used in Hermogenes' sense of 'stylistic tone' anywhere in these treatises) but also say what is appropriate to individual authors: Aristophanes, Cratinus, Eupolis and Menander among comedians; Lysias, Demosthenes, Aeschines, Antiphon among orators. This implies the use of lexica which not only cite words as Attic but refer to the authors in whom they are found. Considering the writer's general opposition to archaism (cf. 365, 12), this is a surprising concession to a pedantic fashion.

## V

This author has been very variously judged. To some (e.g. W. Kroll, in *RE* Suppl.-Bd. VII 1116; Ed. Norden, *Die antike Kunstprosa*, 358) he has seemed intelligent and rewarding, to others (notably W. Süss, *Ethos*, 222 ff.) an enterprising bungler. Süss is of course right in showing how the writer's boldness in attempting a system leads to basic confusions of terminology. The overworked term  $\eta\theta\sigma\zeta$  is reduced to almost meaningless vagueness.  $\Phi\iota\lambda\sigma\sigma\phi\omega\nu\eta\theta\sigma\zeta$  is no longer the morally determined personality of the speaker, as it would be in the Aristotelian tradition, but that characteristic of the speech which enables the critic to draw moral lessons for the «pursuit of virtue and avoidance of vice»: it is, therefore, «ein Leitfaden der literarischen Kritik, nicht ein Postulat der Rede». Süss however confines his analysis to *Exeisis*, and so does not consider the attempt in *Mistakes* to construct theoretical links between  $\eta\theta\sigma\zeta$  in this sense and  $\delta\eta\tau\sigma\iota\kappa\delta\eta\theta\sigma\zeta$ . The theory of unity advanced there, however imprecise, does seem to say something about literary works in themselves rather than about them as useful moral texts; they are to be judged by the degree to which they reflect the structure of the life of reason, not simply by their content of useful examples. This, like the simpler view, is of course the attempt of the rhetor to defend his discipline as a moral, and not merely a technical, education. No single feature is more typical of the classicizing spirit, in the period we are considering, than this moralizing stance. But in the process our author has, I would suggest, shown sufficient concern for, and insight into, some of the general issues of criticism to merit attention in any history of the subject, and in particular, to be seen as a specially self-conscious and articulate representative of the teachers and readers of the age of 'imitation'.

## DISCUSSION

*M. Gelzer*: Herr Russell, ich möchte zunächst danken für die fesselnde Interpretation des bisher gänzlich vernachlässigten pseudo-dionysischen Traktats. Unser Autor kennt, wie Sie ausgeführt haben, Platons *Phaedrus*. Auf S. 360, 18 beruft er sich ausdrücklich auf Plato. Ich frage mich, ob er damit nicht auch auf Platons Lehren verweist, und nicht nur auf das Beispiel, das Plato mit seinen Dialogen gegeben hat. Der Autor redet (360, 8 ff.) davon, dass  $\delta\acute{e}v \psi\chi\eta\acute{e}$  der  $\lambda\acute{o}g\acute{e}sm\acute{o}s$  herrschen müsse, und  $\vartheta\mu\acute{m}\acute{o}s$  und  $\acute{e}\pi\vartheta\mu\acute{m}\acute{a}$  diesem gehorchen sollten. Dann verweist er (360, 13 f.) auf die Philosophie und den  $\lambda\acute{o}g\acute{e}sm\acute{o}s$ , der dem  $\lambda\acute{o}g\acute{o}s$  unterworfen sein müsse. Das scheint auch auf den *Phaedrus* zu verweisen, auf das Seelengespann, in dem  $\psi\chi\eta\acute{e}$   $\kappa\psi\beta\vartheta\varphi\acute{m}\eta\acute{e}$  der  $\nu\acute{o}\acute{m}\acute{o}s$  ist (247 c ff.), und wo der Wagenlenker die Pferde zu zügeln hat. Die verschiedenen Typen, die unser Autor aufzählt (360, 18 ff.), könnten dann auch an die verschiedenen Lebenstypen erinnern, die im *Phaedrus* (246 d ff.) dadurch entstehen, dass die Seelen sich nach ihrer Erschaffung bei der Prozession im himmlischen Raum verschiedenen Göttern und Dämonen anschliessen. Unser Autor will das philosophische  $\tilde{\eta}\vartheta\acute{o}s$  mit solchen verschiedenen Typen verbinden.

Dann möchte ich, angeregt durch Ihre Anfangsbemerkungen, hinweisen auf die Ähnlichkeit der Kritik dieses Autors mit derjenigen, die uns in der *Epitome* von Plutarchs  $\sigma\acute{u}\gamma\chi\varphi\acute{m}\acute{a}$  des Aristophanes und des Menander begegnet. Dort wird (1, 853 C ff.) an Aristophanes besonders ausgesetzt, dass er in seinem Stil alles vermenge, Tragisches, Komisches, Schwulst und Banalität etc., und dass bei ihm nicht jeder Typ die für ihn schickliche und ihm eigentümliche Redeweise habe, wie etwa der König den Pomp, der Redner seine Überzeugungskraft, die Frau das Einfache, der Privatmann seine Prosa, der Bauer seine Grobheit, und auch die Alterstypen Vater und Sohn nicht etc.; sondern jeder Person teile er die Worte wie

durch den Zufall der Lotterie in einem Durcheinander zu. Der Vorwurf ist, dass die Typen nicht in sich einheitlich sind, und nicht kohärenten  $\eta\theta\eta$  entsprechen. Die Ansprüche, die dahinter stehen, scheinen dieselben zu sein wie die, die unser Pseudo-Dionysios stellt. Wenn das zutrifft, so könnte das vielleicht auch wieder ein zusätzliches Argument dafür abgehen, unseren Autor ins zweite Jahrhundert zu datieren.

*M. Russell*: Yes: Professor Gelzer's connection of the passage on  $\lambda\gamma\iota\sigma\mu\circ\varsigma$  as the controller of the  $\eta\theta\circ\varsigma$  with the myth in Plato's *Phaedrus* is a valuable piece of interpretation which does indeed help to clear up this problem.

*M. Zanker*: Die moralisierende Tendenz eignet auch den Mythen-Darstellungen des 2. Jhdts. n. Chr. in zum Teil aufdringlicher Art. Besonders gilt das für die grossformatigen Reliefbilder (z. B. die Gruppe der sogenannten Spada-Reliefs. Vgl. W. Helbig, *Führer durch die öffentlichen Sammlungen klassischer Altertümer in Rom* II (Tübingen 1966), 755 ff.) und die frühen mythologischen Sarkophage. Der moralisierend-belehrende Charakter wird vor allem bei den mythologischen Reliefbildern durch bildnerische Mittel und Gegenüberstellungen betont. Der Autor der *Exeisis* könnte seinem Zögling vor solchen Bildern gesagt haben: Wenn Du die mythischen Namen weglässt und die Charaktere, Handlungen und psychischen Situationen miteinander vergleichst, kannst Du die Bildergalerie als ein Theater des Lebens lesen.

*M. Maurer*: Der Gedanke, dass an den Mythen die Namen verzichtbar und nur die  $\eta\theta\eta$  wichtig seien, scheint mir zu denjenigen Impulsen aus der Antike zu gehören, die erst spät und auch dann nur auf für uns unergründlichen Wegen in der Neuzeit angekommen sind<sup>1</sup>. Aristoteles unterscheidet im neunten Kapitel der *Poetik*

<sup>1</sup> Man wüsste z.B. gern, auf welchem Umweg die Quintilianische Lehre von der Fruchtbarkeit der Komödie für die (inzwischen: Kanzel-)Beredsamkeit bei Goethe angelangt ist, dessen Wagner «es» hat «ofters rühmen hören, / Ein Komödiant könnt' einen Pfarrer lehren» (*Faust I*, v. 526 f.).

grundsätzlich zwischen der Komödie, in der die Namen in der Tat erst nachträglich zum plot hinzugefügt werden, und der Tragödie, die aus Gründen der grösseren Glaubwürdigkeit an die bekannten mythischen Namen anknüpft (obwohl er Ausnahmen anführt und zulässt). Das Mittelalter und die Renaissance legen auf eben dieses  $\pi\mu\vartheta\alpha\nu\sigma\sigma$  (9, 1451 b 16) so grossen Wert, dass etwa Dante, nachdem das Genus der Jenseitsvision bis dahin weitgehend mit namenlosen Beispielfiguren ausgekommen war, seine drei Jenseitsreiche mit unzähligen namhaften historischen und mythischen Beispielfiguren bevölkert, mit der ausdrücklichen Begründung:

‘Però ti son mostrate in queste rote,  
Nel monte e ne la valle dolorosa  
Pur l’anime che son di fama note,  
Che l’animo di quel ch’ode, non posa  
Né ferma fede per esempio ch’zia  
La sua radice incognita e nascosa,  
Né per altro argomento che non paia.’

(Paradiso XVII 136-142)<sup>1</sup>

In spätmittelalterlichen Texten überwiegen eher die Namen, und der plot wird nur in Umrissen, wenn überhaupt in Erinnerung gerufen; der von Aristoteles im neunten Kapitel der *Poetik* als Beispiel einer historischen Figur angeführte Alkibiades erscheint bei Villon in der *Ballade des dames du temps jadis*, unter dem verballhornten Namen « Archipiada », in einer langen Beispielliste aller derjenigen, die auch ‘dahinmussten’. Noch Madame de La Fayette zieht es vor, in ihren Erzählungen bei völlig frei erfundener Handlung zumindest die Namen bekannter französischer Adelsfamilien einzusetzen (*La Princesse de Montpensier* [1662], « Le Libraire au lecteur »: « [...] L’Auteur ayant voulu [...] écrire des aventures inventées à plaisir, a jugé plus à propos de prendre des noms connus

<sup>1</sup> Vgl. dazu eingehend H. FRIEDRICH, *Die Rechtsmetaphysik der Göttlichen Komödie* (Frankfurt/M. 1941), 21-41.

dans nos histoires que de se servir de ceux que l'on trouve dans les romans [...] »). Man muss bis ins 18. Jh. warten, bis Diderot ein 'drame sérieux' schafft, dessen Protagonisten ein praktisch namenloser 'père de famille' oder 'fils naturel' sind.

Es fällt im übrigen auf, dass der Autor von *Περὶ ὕψους* im Gegensatz zum Pseudodionys fast ausschliesslich vom ἥθος — oder vielmehr vom πάθος (vgl. 29, 2) — des erhabenen Redners, und eigentlich nur überleitend zu Beginn des neunten Kapitels generell vom Vorkommen erhabener Gesinnung spricht. Dort wird sogar ausdrücklich ein Beispiel von nichtverbalem ὕψος angeführt — das Schweigen des Aias in der Nekyia — und aus dem ausserliterarischen Bereich ein königliches Wort Alexanders des Grossen zitiert. Das französische 17. Jh., auf moralische wie auf literarische Normen bedacht, hat in dieser Beschränkung 'Longins' — dass er nur « le sublime dans le discours » erörtert habe — einen Mangel gesehen, dem der Père Rapin mit seinem Traktat *Du grand ou du sublime dans les mœurs et dans les différentes conditions des hommes* (1687) abzuhelfen versucht.

*M. Bowersock* : Mr. Russell's illuminating analysis of a little known rhetorical tractate calls attention to the essential conservatism of teaching in this domain over a long period of time. We may agree with Mr. Russell that the author is representative of his own time without our having any very clear idea of when that was. A few hints—the use of lexica of Attic words, the dislike of archaism—do indeed point to the second century A.D., but there is no good reason why this author could not be lodged just as well in the first century or the third. I am not sure that this is so much an indication of our ignorance as proof of continuity.

*M. Russell* : I am inclined to hold that the differences in attitudes to classical literature between the Augustan age and the end of the 2nd century were not very great, and that therefore this author's comments could be taken as representative of rhetorical thinking over a long period.