

connections to ontological and epistemological questions. As a result, truth is frequently neglected, and *logos* or rationality is separated from truth.

In the third and last part of the book, which concerns the form of debate, Billings examines how *agōn* (ἀγών), “struggle”, and *sophia* (σοφία), “wisdom”, “skill”, or “expertise”, are interconnected in ancient Greek drama, and how *sophia* was understood. Regarding *sophia*, new forms of intellectual authority appeared beside religious tradition in the fifth century BCE, and led to the trend of intellectualism. At the time, one of the forms *sophia* took was agonistic debate. Billings uses the term *agōn sophias*, which concerns the different meanings of *sophia* and debates on what it means to be *sophos*. In this part of the book, he discusses how the term appears in Euripides’ *Antiope* and *Bacchae* and in Aristophanes’ *Frogs*.

In the conclusion, Billings explores the classical discussion between the righteous and intellectual but reclusive Socrates, and Callicles, who advocates natural superiority and personal gain. This debate, which appears in Plato’s *Gorgias*, reflects the *agōn sophias* concerning Socrates’ and Callicles’ opposed views about the ultimate good.

Billings’ book has many strengths. It is well written, its argumentation is sound, it is wide ranging, it is diligently researched, and, above all, it is stimulating. Overall, it has no significant faults, and it unquestionably succeeds in its aims. I have in fact only minor complaints. First, brief commentaries regarding Giorgio Colli’s *La nascita della filosofia* (1975) and Albert Camus’ *Le Mythe de Sisyphe* (1942) might have been useful. Second, although the index is clearly adequate, some minor words are missing, such as καταβάλλω, *sophismata* and *stasis*. Third, I would like to have read more about direct or indirect connections between drama and pre-Socratic natural philosophy. Overall, Billings’ study, with its novel approach, is a valuable and versatile resource. It is undoubtedly a useful addition to research concerning the complex relationship between early Western philosophical thought and ancient drama.

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VANESSA ZETZMANN: *Tragische Rhetorik: Darstellungsweise und dramatische Funktionen scheiternder Reden in der attischen Tragödie*. Hypomnemata 211. Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, Göttingen 2021. ISBN 978-3-525-33607-6; ISBN (e-book) 978-3-647-33607-7. 292 S. EUR 90.

Zetzmann’ *Tragische Rhetorik* is a broader version of her dissertation on the agonistic speeches in old Attic tragedy (Philipps-Universität Marburg, 2020). Agonistic speeches were an important

part of Attic tragedy, but they can sometimes be somewhat tedious to follow for modern audiences. However, agonistic speeches are not mere squabbles or confrontative disputes, but also include efforts at persuasion and interesting arguments for and against certain positions.

The book consists of three chapters in addition to the conclusions (Chapter Five) and the Introduction (Chapter One), which includes the presentation of such methodological tools as the sociopsychological concept *Theory of Mind* (that is, our varied capacity to analyse and understand others' minds – such as their emotions and intentions – applied to characters in drama, e.g. Jason in *Medeia* constantly making the wrong assumptions about his wife's intentions, which finally leads to tragic consequences (see p. 190)), the so-called politeness theory (pp. 28–30), which features different politeness strategies used in conversation to avoid confrontation, and the so-called *metapragmatism*, which is the most central framework of Zetzmann's book. Furthermore, the text analyses in Chapters Two and Three are conducted from the point of view of *Authoriale Rezeptionslenkung*, that is, how the author guides the reception of his drama, especially with the help of rhetoric: Chapter Two discusses Aeschylus' four tragedies (*Seven Against Thebes*, *Suppliants*, *Agamemnon*, and the pseudo-Aeschylean *Prometheus Bound*), and Chapter Three examines Sophocles' *Antigone* and *Philoctetes* as well as Euripides' *Hippolytus* and *Medea*. Both chapters also contain a clear summing up (*Zwischenfazit*) – that is, the adaptation of the methodological instruments presented in the introduction – and end with a subchapter on agonistic speech in Aeschylus, although not in Sophocles and Euripides.

Chapter Four (with a long title: *Zwischen Kanonisierung und Fluidität des Mythos: Vorläufiges Schreitern als narratives Instrument und Reflexionsrahmen für literarische Mythenbearbeitung*) presents a discussion on myths in the Aristotelian sense (plot and potential plots) through an analysis of the texts: agonistic speech is seen as a narrative device and a framework for how a literary work plays with myths, in contrast to their "canonizing". Alternative plots are often made explicit by the so-called "if not" situations (εἰ μὴ) – a narrative device presented by Irene De Jong: characters may suggest alternative course of actions, which may then not be carried out (e.g., Philoctetes and Neoptolemus are ready to abandon the Trojan War and return home, but change their minds due to Heracles' intervention, *Soph. Phil.* 1367–1395, pp. 240–242).

Pragmatism as such can be seen as an obvious tool for interpreting drama and, in a way, is operative every time we read dramatic dialogue: it means those explicit or implicit references to the individual and social situations of the characters in question, which we interpret from the dialogue. It naturally has a close connection to Austin's speech-act theory, in which linguistic actions are seen not as "mere" words but as actions that can influence future actions. However, *metapragmatism*, for its part, analyses the meta level of the speech; that is, those utterances that refer to the speech itself, when the speakers (the characters in the drama) refer to their own or their interlocutors' speeches. One simple example presented by Zetzmann is Philoctetes' line to Neoptolemus: "Therefore you

speak utter nonsense' (Soph. *Phil.* 1280, see p. 31). Zetzmann lists three functions of a metapragmatic statement in agonistic speech (p. 192, p. 261): it may clarify the situation to the dramatic interlocutor (and the audience), as well as show how the speaker positions himself on the level of cooperation; furthermore, it may present an external criterion for us to estimate the rhetorical utterance (that is, we are prompted to consider whether Neoptolemus is truly speaking "utter nonsense" from the rhetorical point of view). One of Zetzmann's conclusions from her drama analyses is that these kinds of metapragmatic statements are especially numerous in *Philoctetes*, and are most often uttered by the main character himself (p. 185, see also p. 284).

All in all, Zetzmann succeeds in illuminating the functions of agonistic speech as a narrative device, not only as a device to characterise the interlocutors or to take the plot forward, but also including fresh interpretations of myths, when characters present alternative courses of action, as well as elucidating the dramatic situation by commenting on their own or their interlocutor's utterances among their agonistic speeches.

In addition to a list of all of the metapragmatical verses found in the analysed tragedies (pp. 286–287), the book contains two tables (pp. 284–285): the first one counts the numbers of metapragmatical verses in the analysed tragedies – in *rhexis* as well as in stichomythia and in the speeches of specific characters – whereas the second table gives the total percentages, according to which Euripides' (analysed) tragedies contain a bit more metapragmatical verses than those of Sophocles.

The titles of the subchapters 5.1.1–5.1.6 are for some reason missing in the Contents. The list of abbreviations of ancient authors and their works (p. 281) could have been replaced by a simple reference to the OCD. Due to the numerous methodological tools used in this book, an Index of topics would have been helpful.

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Zwischen Assur und Athen: Altorientalisches in den Historien Herodots. Herausgegeben von HILMAR KLINKOTT – NORBERT KRAMER. SpielRäume der Antike 4. Franz Steiner Verlag, Stuttgart 2017. ISBN 978-3-515-11743-2; ISBN (e-book) 978-3-515-11752-4. 243 S. EUR 49.

Zwischen Assur und Athen: Altorientalisches in den Historien Herodots is a collection of nine research articles. The focus of the articles is to analyse the Eastern and specifically Persian roots, connections and influences of selected stories in both the chronological and ethnological parts of Herodotus' *Histories*.