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KRISTINE S. BRUSS

Persuasive *Ethopoeia* in Dionysius's *Lysias*

Abstract: Dionysius of Halicarnassus's account of *ethopoeia* at *Lysias* 8 is often cited as evidence of Lysias's mastery of character portrayal, but the passage itself has received little in-depth analysis. As a consequence, Dionysius's meaning has at times been misinterpreted, and some of his insights on characterization have been neglected. When the account is examined closely, three unique points of emphasis emerge which, taken together, constitute a particular type of characterization: persuasive, as opposed to propriety-oriented, *ethopoeia*. Making this distinction promotes conceptual clarity with regard to *ethopoeia* while calling attention to Dionysius's insights on the role of style and composition in the creation of persuasive *ethos*.

Keywords: *ethopoeia*, *ethos*, style, character

One of the first extant works in which the term *ethopoeia* appears is *Lysias*, written by the Greek literary critic and historian Dionysius of Halicarnassus in the first century BC.¹ In the essay, Dionysius, an avowed Atticist, praises the renowned Greek speechwriter for a number of stylistic virtues, including lucidity, simplicity, and vividness.² He then remarks, "I

¹The term *ethopoeia* is attested in one earlier work, *Problemata*, attributed to Aristotle. In that text, the author (generally thought not to be Aristotle) addresses variations in temperament and attributes them to the temperature of one's "black bile," observing that "hot and cold are the greatest agents in our lives for the making of character (*ethopoion*)" *Arist. Pr.* 30.1. Beyond this early reference to *ethopoeia*, the word does not appear with any regularity until the later Greek period.

²Dionysius makes clear his commitment to Attic, or ancient Greek, standards of rhetorical taste in his introduction to *On the Attic Orators*. There, he describes so-called "Asian" oratory as "vulgar, frigid, and banal" (2). For more on the "Asian-Attic"

also ascribe to Lysias that most pleasing quality, which is generally called characterisation (ῆθοποιία). I am quite unable to find a single person in this orator's speeches who is devoid of character or vitality (οὔτε ἀνηθοποίητον οὔτε ἄψυχον, 'neither unethopoeticized nor lifeless')" (*Lys.* 8).³ Today, thanks to the account of Dionysius, descriptions of Lysias invariably mention his masterful *ethopoeia*.⁴ As William Wait observes, the characters of Lysias "stand out as clearly and distinctly as if sketched by some skillful writer of fiction."⁵

Lysias might be uniformly recognized as a master of *ethopoeia*, but what that term means, particularly as employed by Dionysius, is another question. As Michael Edwards and Stephen Usher note, "There is room for argument as to what ancient critics meant when they used the word *ethopoiia* and whether it accurately describes what Lysias actually did."⁶ *Ethopoeia*, literally, "character making" (*ethos*, "character" + *poiein*, "to make"), is commonly described as dramatic characterization, which involves the fitting or plausible representation of a speaker's (or other character's) distinctive traits.⁷ The connection between *ethopoeia* and faithful representation is well illustrated by Edward Cope, who, in his influential discussion of varieties of Aristotelian *ethos*, regards Aristotle's discussion of character in book 3 of the *Rhetoric* as *ethopoeia*.⁸ For Cope, such character-drawing is akin to dramatic portraiture, "which belongs equally to

controversy, see Quintilian, *Institutes of Oratory* 12.16–26; Cicero, *Brutus* 51, and Cicero, *Orator* 27. Dionysius's critical essays on the Attic orators are aimed at providing orators with appropriate models of Attic style.

³Dionysius of Halicarnassus, *Critical Essays I*, trans. Stephen Usher (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1974). Subsequent references to *Lysias* and other essays by Dionysius (all found in the 2-volume Loeb edition) will be included in the text.

⁴See, e.g., R. C. Jebb, *The Attic Orators from Antiphon to Isaeos*. Vol. 1 (London: Macmillan, 1876); K. J. Dover, *Lysias and the Corpus Lysiacum* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1968); M. Edwards and S. Usher, trans., *Greek Orators I: Antiphon and Lysias*. (Chicago: Bolchazy-Carducci, 1984); Christopher Carey, ed., *Lysias: Selected Speeches* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1989); S. C. Todd, trans., *Lysias* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2000).

⁵William Wait, *Lysias: Ten Selected Orations* (New York: American Book Company, 1898), 18.

⁶*Greek Orators*, 129.

⁷Jakob Wisse calls this the "modern sense" of *ethopoeia*. See *Ethos and Pathos from Aristotle to Cicero* (Amsterdam: Hakkert, 1989), 58, n. 233.

⁸Edward M. Cope, *An Introduction to Aristotle's Rhetoric* (London: Macmillan, 1867), 108–113. The other two varieties of Aristotelian *ethos*, according to Cope, are persuasive proof through character and the character of audiences.

poetry and painting.⁹ Descriptions of *ethopoeia* in ancient Greek *progymnasmata* likewise emphasize faithful portrayal; in such exercises, students are encouraged to imitate the character of assigned speakers, reflecting “what is distinctive and appropriate to the person imagined,” be it Achilles or an anonymous farmer (*Herm.* 9.21).¹⁰ Modern analyses of Lysias’s speeches reinforce this view, presenting convincing textual evidence of Lysias’s masterful ability to dramatize his characters.¹¹

Lysias clearly excels at suitable, distinctive characterization, and for this reason, it might be tempting to conclude, as some scholars have, that this is what Dionysius had in mind with his discussion of *ethopoeia*; however, this would be a mistake.¹² Although Dionysius does, in fact, praise Lysias for his ability to put “words in [the speakers’] mouths which suit their several conditions,” including “age, family background, education, occupation, way of life,” he makes this observation *not* in his discussion of *ethopoeia*, but of propriety. *Ethopoeia*, for Dionysius, is concerned with a wholly different sense of characterization, namely, the creation of persuasive *ethos*.¹³ Although a number of scholars have accurately noted this difference, they have tended not to elaborate on Dionysius’s account, likely because he is only a passing figure of interest in their studies.¹⁴ Yet, as I argue

⁹Ibid, 113. Cope asserts that this third type of *ethos*, which involves representation of “the special characteristics of the individual” as well as generic markers of class, “belongs to style, and accordingly only appears in Bk. III” (pp. 112–113). Cope thus draws a clean line between *ethopoeia* and the creation of persuasive proof through character, the first variety of *ethos* in the *Rhetoric*.

¹⁰For texts of the *progymnasmata*, see George A. Kennedy, trans., *Progymnasmata: Greek Textbooks of Prose Composition and Rhetoric* (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2003).

¹¹See, e.g., Stephen Usher, “Individual Characterisation in *Lysias*,” *Eranos* 63 (1965): 99–119; L. L. Forman, “Ethopoiia in *Lysias*,” *Classical Review* 10 (1896): 105–106; Christopher Carey, “Rhetorical Means of Persuasion,” in A. O. Rorty, ed., *Essays on Aristotle’s Rhetoric* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996), 399–415. See also note 51 in this essay.

¹²See William Levering Devries, *Ethopoiia: A Rhetorical Study of the Types of Character in the Orations of Lysias* (Baltimore: diss. Johns Hopkins University, 1892) for an apt example of this sort of misinterpretation. Devries uses evidence from Lysias’s practice to define Dionysius’s meaning rather than relying on a careful interpretation of Dionysius’s own words.

¹³In other words, Dionysius associates *ethopoeia* with the first variety of Aristotelian *ethos*—persuasive proof through character—not with the third, as Cope does.

¹⁴See, e.g., Usher, “Individual Characterisation,” 99, n. 2; Wisse, *Ethos and Pathos*, 58, n. 233; Carey, *Lysias*, 10; Todd, *Lysias*, 7; Dover, *Lysias*, 76–77. Dionysian *ethopoeia* receives a bit more attention in Hans-Martin Hagen, *Ἠθοποιία: Zur Geschichte*

in this essay, Dionysius's account is important in its own right, not only for its unique role in discussions of *ethopoeia*, but for the novel perspective it offers, more generally, on the creation of persuasive *ethos*.

In what follows, I examine Dionysius's account of *ethopoeia* in *Lysias*, noting the features that make it distinctive. To promote a clear distinction between senses of *ethopoeia*, I propose that the characterization Dionysius describes can be understood most precisely as persuasive *ethopoeia*, the function of which is to create trustworthy speaker-centered *ethos* through reasonable thoughts, standard style, and artless composition.¹⁵ The classificatory label "persuasive" is inspired, in part, by *Lysias*'s status as an orator, but more significantly, by the direct parallels between Dionysius's account of *ethopoeia* and Aristotle's explanation of persuasive *ethos* in the *Rhetoric*. Although all forms of *ethopoeia*, including those composed for literature, histories, and classroom exercises, can be considered persuasive in some sense, the label is particularly fitting for describing the *ethopoeia* of speechwriters, whose work is designed to accomplish persuasive ends through actual performance by the very person being characterized.¹⁶

When the account of Dionysius is examined closely, three unique points of emphasis emerge. The first of these features, as suggested by prior comments, is the focus on persuasive proof through character, not propriety. Although Dionysius acknowledges the importance of propriety in *Lysias*'s prose, he addresses *ethopoeia* in a separate section of his essay, suggesting a clear distinction between the two stylistic virtues. The second distinctive feature of Dionysius's account is his

eines rhetorischen Begriffs (Erlangen-Nürnberg: diss. Friedrich-Alexander-Universität, 1996).

¹⁵The move I am making here is not unlike efforts to identify types, or senses, of *ethos*; see, e.g., Cope, *Introduction*; William M. Sattler, "Conceptions of Ethos in Ancient Rhetoric," *Speech Monographs* 14 (1947): 55–65. The labels in such schemes may be imperfect, but they do help to distinguish different senses of a concept.

¹⁶For studies of *ethopoeia* in non-oratorical contexts, see, e.g., Lorna Hutson, "*Ethopoeia*, Source-Study and Legal History: A Post-Theoretical Approach to the Question of 'Character' in Shakespearean Drama," in Martin McQuillan, Graeme Macdonald, Robin Purves, and Stephen Thomson, eds., *Post-Theory: New Directions in Criticism* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1999), 139–160; Charles Forster Smith, "Character Drawing in Thucydides," *American Journal of Philology* 24 (1903), 369–387; Graham Zanker, "Characterization in Hellenistic Epigram" in Peter Bing and Jon Steffen Bruss, eds., *Brill's Companion to Hellenistic Epigram* (Leiden: Brill, 2007), 233–249; E. Amato and J. Schamp, eds., *Ethopoiia. La représentation de caractères entre fiction scolaire et réalité vivante à l'époque impériale et tardive* (Salerno: Helios Editrice, 2005).

emphasis on style, or word choice, as a means of creating persuasive proof through character. As described by Dionysius, the style of persuasive *ethopoeia* focuses not on the fitting representation of a character's manner of speaking (as is the case with propriety-oriented *ethopoeia*) but rather on unaffected, plain-spoken naturalness. The third unique feature of the account, arguably the most noteworthy, is Dionysius's attention to the critical role of artless composition, or word arrangement, in the portrayal of favorable *ethos*. Effective *ethopoeia*, according to Dionysius, is not only persuasive but also aesthetically pleasing, as indicated by his emphasis on lifelike, charming composition. The term *apsychos* (unanimated, lifeless), in fact, appears to be unique to Dionysius's account, which underscores the aesthetic dimension of persuasive *ethopoeia*.

Although the primary impetus for this examination is to produce a clearer understanding *ethopoeia*, particularly in Dionysius's *Lysias*, the study also aims to foster greater appreciation for Dionysius's insights regarding the role of style and composition in the creation of persuasive *ethos*. In the *Rhetoric*, Aristotle states that *ethos* exists "whenever the speech is spoken in such a way as to make the speaker worthy of credence" (2.1.4; ital. added).¹⁷ While Aristotle addresses *what* to say, he offers limited guidance on *how* to say it. Dionysius fills this gap with an account of character-making reflective of his strong interest in composition as well as his commitment to Attic standards of style. As a result, he is an important voice in discussions of character, style, and persuasion in ancient Greek rhetorical theory.

THE FIRST ELEMENT: PERSUASIVE ETHOS

Dionysius addresses *ethopoeia* at *Lysias* 8, wherein he attributes to Lysias that "most pleasing quality" (ἡ εὐπρεπεστάτη ἀρετή; "most fitting virtue") called characterization (ἠθοποιία), adding that he is "quite unable to find a single person in this orator's speeches who is devoid of character (ἀνηθοποίητον) or vitality (ἄψυχον)." Put differently, all of the characters in Lysias's speeches (presumably meaning the speakers themselves rather than characters appearing in the narration) possess recognizable character and are presented in a lifelike and animated manner. Dionysius thus defines *ethopoeia* indirectly in

¹⁷Aristotle, *On Rhetoric: A Theory of Civic Discourse*, 2nd ed., trans. George A. Kennedy (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007). Subsequent references will appear in the text.

these lines as a stylistic virtue aimed at creating a persuasive and lifelike sense of character. Dionysius's inclusion of "vitality" as a characteristic of *ethopoeia* might suggest that he sees colorful individuality or authenticity in Lysias's characters, but translator Stephen Usher argues to the contrary, maintaining in a footnote on *Lysias* 8 that "ἡθοποιία never means individual or personal characterisation."¹⁸ Instead, Usher argues, *ethopoeia* involves "favourable characterisation, portraying the moral qualities which will win the audience's good will, e.g. ἐπιεικεία (Aristotle, *Rhetoric* 1.2.4)."¹⁹ Although Dionysius makes no explicit reference to Aristotle at *Lysias* 8, his description of *ethopoeia* clearly supports Usher's claim.²⁰ As Dionysius explains, "there are three departments or aspects in which this quality [*ethopoeia*] manifests itself: thought, language and composition (διανοίας τε καὶ λέξεως καὶ τρίτης τῆς συνθέσεως), and I declare him [Lysias] to be successful in all three. Not only are the thoughts he ascribes to his clients worthy, reasonable, and fair (χρηστὰ καὶ ἐπιεικῆ καὶ μέτρια), so that their words seem to reflect their good moral character (τῶν ἡθῶν), but he also makes them speak in a style which is appropriate to these qualities" (*Lys.* 8).

Dionysius's second trio of Greek terms in the passage above—*chrestos* (upright), *epieikes* (reasonable), and *metrios* (moderate; even-tempered)—clearly reflects the sense of *ethos* Aristotle describes at *Rhetoric* 1.2.4; the term *epieikes*, in particular, directly links *ethopoeia* to Aristotelian *ethos*. At *Rhetoric* 1.2.4, Aristotle presents his initial account of *ethos*, or persuasion through character, explaining:

There is persuasion through character whenever the speech is spoken in such a way as to make the speaker worthy of credence (ἀξιόπιστον); for we believe fair-minded people to a greater extent and more quickly [than we do others], on all subjects in general and completely so in cases where

¹⁸See Usher, "Individual Characterisation," wherein he addresses this claim more fully.

¹⁹See n. 3 above, p. 33. Usher's conclusion is generally sound, although technically, good will is not the result of the portrayal of moral qualities; rather, it is one of three elements of *ethos* that Aristotle discusses at *Rhetoric* 2.1.5–7. *Epieikeia*, or fair-mindedness, may well contribute to good will, but in the *Rhetoric* passage to which Usher refers, fair-mindedness creates an impression of trustworthiness, not good will.

²⁰Dionysius may not mention Aristotle's *Rhetoric*, but he was clearly a diligent student of Aristotle's work, as evidenced by his *First Letter to Ammaeus*. In the letter, Dionysius disputes a claim, purportedly circulated by a Peripatetic philosopher, that Demosthenes learned rhetoric from Aristotle. Dionysius supports his argument, in part, with various quotations and examples from Aristotle's *Rhetoric*, through which he displays a detailed familiarity with the text.

there is not exact knowledge but room for doubt. And this should result from the speech, not from a previous opinion that the speaker is a certain kind of person; for it is not the case, as some of the handbook writers propose in their treatment of the art, that fairmindedness (*ἐπιείκεια*) on the part of the speaker makes no contribution to persuasiveness; rather, character (*ἥθος*) is almost, so to speak, the most authoritative form of persuasion. (*Rh.* 2.1.4)²¹

As Aristotle makes clear, speakers create persuasion through character by speaking in a way that makes them appear trustworthy (*axiōpiston*).²² When the truth is in doubt, as is the case in forensic pleadings, the fair-minded, reasonable speaker will be most persuasive. The task of the ethopoet, then, is to create this sort of character when writing for a client. Although Dionysius provides no specific illustrations of this quality from Lysias's speeches, they are not difficult to find. In "Against Simon," for example, the defendant, accused of assault, conveys a sense of merciful character by observing, "My attitude towards disputes like this is that although I had often been abused and assaulted by Simon [the prosecutor], and had even had my head broken, nevertheless I did not venture to take legal action" (*Lys. Or.* 3, 40; Todd trans.). Intensifying the impression of reasonableness and moderation, the same defendant later tells the jury that "it would be a terrible thing if you were to impose such severe penalties, including expulsion of citizens from their fatherland, when people are wounded while fighting because of drunkenness or quarreling or games or insults or over a *hetaira* (courtesan)—the sorts of things that everyone regrets when they recover their senses" (43). Such thoughts illustrate the sort of morally persuasive character well-suited for the courtroom.

²¹ Aristotle's other account of *ethos* occurs at *Rhetoric* 2.1.5–7, wherein he identifies practical wisdom, virtue, and good will as the three elements of *ethos*. Although the two accounts can be understood as constituting Aristotle's general account of persuasive *ethos*, William Fortenbaugh makes a compelling case for understanding each account as genre-specific, with forensic *ethos* described at 1.2.4 and deliberative *ethos* at 2.1.5–7; see "Aristotle's Accounts of Persuasion through Character," in C. L. Johnstone, ed., *Theory, Text, and Context: Issues in Greek Rhetoric and Oratory* (Albany: SUNY Press, 1996), 147–168. Dionysius's description of *ethopoeia*, which focuses primarily on the qualities Aristotle describes at 1.2.4, supports the idea of a type of *ethos* particularly well-suited to courtroom proceedings.

²² Cope explains that the sense of *epieikes* in this passage is "equitable," referring to "one who has a leaning to the merciful side and of an indulgent disposition, as opposed to one who takes a strict and rigorous view of an offence." See Edward M. Cope, *The Rhetoric of Aristotle* (Salem, NH: Ayer Company, 1877), 30.

Dionysius elaborates on the role of well-chosen thoughts in the creation of persuasive *ethos* at *Lysias* 19, one of only two other passages outside of *Lysias* 8 that includes the term *ethopoeia*.²³ Dionysius here turns his attention to “what are called rhetorical proofs . . . the factual, the emotional, and the moral (τὸ πρᾶγμα καὶ τὸ πάθος καὶ τὸ ἥθος).”²⁴ With respect to the latter, Dionysius observes:

He [*Lysias*] also seems to me to show very notable skill in constructing proofs from character (τῶν ἡθῶν γε πιστεῖς). He often makes us believe in his client's good character by referring to the circumstances of his life and his parentage, and often again by describing his past actions and the principles (προαιρέσεων) governing them. And when the facts fail to provide him with such material, he creates his own moral tone, making his characters seem by their speech (ἡθοποιεῖ) to be trustworthy and honest. He credits them with civilised dispositions (προαιρέσεις) and attributes controlled feelings to them; he makes them voice appropriate sentiments, and introduces them as men whose thoughts befit their status in life, and who abhor both evil words and evil deeds. He represents them as men who always choose the just course (τὰ δὲ δίκαια προαίρουμένους ποιῶν) and ascribes to them every other related quality that may reveal a respectable and moderate character (ἐπιεικέες . . . καὶ μέτριον ἥθος).

Dionysius's remarks in this passage reinforce his earlier comments regarding the fair-mindedness of *Lysias*'s clients, and in so doing, solidify the connection between persuasive *ethopoeia* and *ethos* as a means of persuasion. The influence of Aristotle's theory of *ethos* is unmistakable in this passage, particularly in the comment that *Lysias* “creates his own moral tone, making his characters seem by their speech to be trustworthy and honest,” which echoes Aristotle's observation at *Rhetoric* 1.2.4. In another noteworthy link to Aristotle, Dionysius uses forms of the word *proairesis*, or choice, three times in the passage. *Lysias* attributes to his clients strong principles and

²³The other occurs at *Lysias* 13, wherein Dionysius summarizes *Lysias*'s praiseworthy qualities covered to that point, including “the investment of every person with life and character” (phrased in the negative in the Greek text: τὸ μηδὲν ἄψυχον ὑποτίθεσθαι πρόσωπον μηδὲ ἀνηθοποίητον, literally “to represent a person as neither lifeless nor lacking in character”).

²⁴These three proofs mirror Aristotle's three means of persuasion—*ethos*, *logos*, and *pathos*—with the exception of the substitution of *pragma* (“that which has been done,” LSJ) for the more familiar *logos* (argument). William Grimaldi adopts the term *pragma* in his discussion of the Aristotelian *pisteis*, arguing that the label is fitting, in part, because logical proof “is elucidated by Aristotle in such a way (1356a 19–20) as to justify some such term.” See “A Note on the *Pisteis* in Aristotle's *Rhetoric*, 1354–1356,” *The American Journal of Philology*, 78 (1957): 188–192 (p. 189).

deeds; they “always choose the just course,” as Dionysius observes. This is precisely what Aristotle advises in the *Rhetoric* with respect to creating character in judicial narratives. According to Aristotle, “The narration ought to be indicative of character [*ethike*]. This will be so if we know what makes for character [*ethos*]. One way, certainly, is to make deliberate choice [*proairesis*] clear: what the character is on the basis of what sort of choice [has been made]” (*Rh.* 3.16.8).²⁵ That character, in the speeches of Lysias, is fair-minded, moderate, and trustworthy, precisely what is required for success in the courtroom.

As the foregoing discussion makes clear, when Dionysius speaks of *ethopoeia*, the “character” in character-making is persuasive *ethos*, an emphasis that distinguishes his account from other ancient accounts of characterization, which, as noted earlier, focus on the fitting imitation of a speaker’s attributes. To sharpen this distinction, I turn now briefly to other well-known accounts, beginning with Aristotle’s discussion of propriety (*to prepon*) at *Rhetoric* 3.7.1–7. In the passage, Aristotle remarks, “The *lexis* will be appropriate if it expresses emotion and character and is proportional to the subject matter” (*Rh.* 3.7.1). He goes on to explain that

there is an appropriate style for each genus and moral state. By *genus* I mean things like age (boy, man, old man; or woman and man or Spartan and Thessalian) and by *moral state* [*hexis*] the principles by which someone is the kind of person he is in life; for lives do not have the same character in accordance with [each and] every moral state. If then, a person speaks words appropriate to his moral state, he will create a sense of character. A rustic and an educated person would not say the same thing nor [say it] in the same way. (*Rh.* 3.7.6–7)

Initially, this passage appears to be quite consistent with *Lysias* 19, particularly with respect to choosing words appropriate to a speaker’s moral state. There is a question, however, about whose character Aristotle is describing at *Rhetoric* 3.7.1–7. Whereas Dionysius is clearly describing persuasive speaker-centered character cre-

²⁵Aristotle makes a similar connection between choice and character in the *Poetics*, wherein he defines character as “that which reveals moral choice—that is, when otherwise unclear, what sort of thing an agent chooses or rejects” (*Poet.* 6; see also *Poet.* 15). One way of revealing character, as noted in the *Rhetoric*, is through maxims, which Aristotle defines as assertions “about things that involve actions and are to be chosen or avoided in regard to action” (*Rh.* 2.21.2). Aristotle concludes, “If the maxims are morally good, they make the speaker seem to have a good character” (*Rh.* 2.21.16).

ated by a speechwriter, Aristotle's account, presented in his book on style as a matter of propriety, makes no direct mention of persuasive proof through character. Elaine Fantham, in fact, has argued convincingly against the claim that Aristotle's remarks apply to the work of speechwriters, citing as evidence his examples of Spartans, Thessalians and women, none of whom could have appeared as litigants in an Athenian court. More plausibly, says Fantham, Aristotle is addressing dramatic characterization, as in the narrative of a court case.²⁶

The emphasis on dramatic characterization continues in later accounts of *ethopoeia*. Quintilian, for example, defines *ethopoeia* in book 9 of the *Institutes of Oratory* as "the representation of the characters of others" (*Inst.* 9.2.58).²⁷ He associates the figure with the "gentler emotions" (consistent with his description of *ethos* in book 6 in the *Institutes*) and notes that *ethopoeia* can be used for humorous effect or, when representing one's own words and deeds, to make a point. His two examples, neither more than a few lines long, illustrate *ethopoeia* as a rhetorical technique suitable for briefly characterizing others or oneself within a narrative. A bit earlier in book 9, Quintilian presents *prosopopoeia*, a closely related figure of characterization, in similar fashion. According to Quintilian, *prosopopoeia*, or impersonation of others, adds variety and animation to a speech (*Inst.* 9.2.29). *Prosopopoeia* can be used, he says, to represent the inner thoughts of opponents, recreate conversations, create characters who voice words of pity or reproach, or give voice to the dead, gods, cities, and nations.²⁸ The focus here, as with *ethopoeia*, is on brief charac-

²⁶See "Ciceronian Conciliare and Aristotelian Ethos," *Phoenix*, 27 (1973): 262–275 (pp. 271–272). Fantham's argument rebuts George Kennedy's assertion that *Rhetoric* 3.7.1–7 includes the persuasive portrayal of character by speechwriters. See Kennedy, *Art of Persuasion*, 90–91.

²⁷Quintilian notes that *ethopoeia* is called mimesis by some. Quintilian addresses *ethos*-based imitation in book 6 of the *Institutes*, arguing that "it is quite right also to use the word *ethos* of the sort of school exercises in which we often represent countrymen, superstitious men, misers, and cowards according to our theme. For if *ethos* means *mores*, then when we imitate *mores* we base our speech on *ethos*" (*Inst.* 6.2.17). See *The Orator's Education*, trans. and ed. Donald Russell (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2001).

²⁸See *Institutes* 9.2.29–37; 9.2.58–59; 4.2.107, and 3.8.49–54. See also 11.1.31–44, which addresses propriety of characterization. Quintilian concludes, "In short, it is not only that there are just as many varieties of *Prosopopoeia* as there are of Causes: there are more, because in *Prosopopoeia* we simulate the emotions of children, women, nations, and even things which cannot speak, and they are all entitled to their appropriate character."

ter portrayals in a narrative, not the full-length ghosting of speaker character practiced by Lysias.

Ethopoeia and *prosopoeia* appear, as well, in the ancient Greek *progymnasmata* of authors including Aelius Theon, pseudo-Hermogenes, and Aphthonius. Although these writers differ somewhat in their descriptions of characterization, all of them emphasize plausible imitation rather than persuasive proof through character. Effective characterization, according to Theon, requires that “one should have in mind what the personality of the speaker is like, and to whom the speech is addressed” (115; Kennedy 47). Echoing Aristotle, Theon addresses various factors to take into account when choosing appropriate words for a given speaker: “Different ways of speaking would also be fitting *by nature* for a woman and for a man, and *by status* for a slave and a free man, and *by activities* for a soldier and a farmer, and *by state of mind* for a lover and a temperate man, and *by their origin* the words of a Laconian, sparse and clear, differ from those of a man of Attica, which are voluble” (116; Kennedy 48, ital. in original).

Pseudo-Hermogenes and Aphthonius likewise underscore propriety of portrayal in their descriptions of *ethopoeia*, but they add that *ethopoeia* can be ethical or pathetic or mixed. As explained by pseudo-Hermogenes, ethical portrayals “are those in which characterization of the speaker is dominant throughout; for example, what a farmer would say when first seeing a ship” (21; Kennedy 85). Although character dominates such portrayals, it is not likely the same as the persuasive *ethopoeia* created by Lysias. As Hermogenes points out, students must base their characterizations on what is distinctive about the character being imitated; he says nothing about portraying elements of persuasive *ethos*. His example of an exercise—“what a farmer would say when first seeing a ship”—further suggests that characterization in the *progymnasmata* is oriented toward personality rather than persuasive proof.²⁹ If persuasive proof were the aim, a more fitting exercise might be: “what words a man would say when accused of murder.”

When the account of Dionysius is compared to other accounts of ancient *ethopoeia*, his explicit emphasis on the portrayal of persuasive moral character emerges as a distinctive feature. This is not to say that Lysias excelled only with persuasive characterization, however. As noted earlier, Dionysius praises Lysias for his propriety, noting that in this area, “Lysias’s style yields to that of none of the other

²⁹Aphthonius provides a similar example of an ethical *ethopoeia*: “what words a man from inland might say on first seeing the sea” (*Aph.* 45; Kennedy 116).

ancient orators" (*Lys.* 9). Dionysius's description of Lysias's propriety may seem like an elaboration of the speechwriter's ethopoetic art, particularly in light of its consistency with other ancient accounts of *ethopoieia*, but Dionysius discusses *ethopoieia* and propriety as distinct virtues, suggesting that he has something different in mind with both. Notably, the word *ethopoiea* does not appear in the discussion of propriety at *Lysias* 9, and when Dionysius offers a summary of Lysias's virtues at *Lysias* 13, he includes both "the investment of every person with life and character" (τὸ μηδὲν ὑποτίθεσθαι πρόσωπον μηδὲ ἀνηθοποίητον) and "the choice of arguments to suit the persons and the circumstances" in his list, reinforcing the separation of the two stylistic virtues. Both propriety and persuasive *ethos* are relevant to character portrayal, but the two concepts should not be conflated in Dionysius's *Lysias*.

THE SECOND ELEMENT: NATURAL STYLE

Dionysius's discussion of persuasive character, the first element of persuasive *ethopoieia*, clearly reflects the influence of Aristotle's theory of *ethos* in the *Rhetoric*. With his discussion of style, the second element of his scheme, Dionysius moves beyond Aristotle's theory, identifying the specific types of words that contribute to the creation of persuasive character.³⁰ At *Lysias* 8, after identifying the qualities of character that are critical in Lysias's portrayals, Dionysius observes that the orator "makes [his clients] speak in a style which is appropriate to these qualities [uprightness, reasonableness, and moderation], and which by its nature displays them in their best light." Note here the criterion by which Dionysius judges appropriateness of ethopoetic style. Such style is fitting not because it suits various characteristics that distinguish individuals, as is the case with propriety-oriented characterization, but because of the contribution it makes to persuasive proof through character. In describing this style, Dionysius identifies the types of words that create persuasive character, asserting that "clear, standard, ordinary speech which is thoroughly familiar to everyone (τὴν σαφῆ καὶ κυρίαν καὶ κοινὴν καὶ

³⁰Although Aristotle addresses style and character in various passages in the *Rhetoric*, he makes few explicit connections between style and the creation of *ethos* as a means of persuasion. See Kristine Bruss and Richard Graff, "Style, Character, and Persuasion in Aristotle's *Rhetoric*," *Advances in the History of Rhetoric* 8 (2006): 39–72.

πᾶσιν ἀνθρώποις συνηθεστάτην)“ is best suited to this task.³¹ In contrast, “All forms of pompous, outlandish and contrived language are foreign to characterization (ὁ γὰρ ὄγκος καὶ τὸ ξένον καὶ τὸ ἐξ ἐπιτηδεύσεως ἅπαν ἀνηθοποιήτων).” Characterization, in other words, requires conversational language—everyday, familiar talk through which the speaker’s humanity is conveyed. The contrast between ethopoetic words (clear, standard, and ordinary) and unethopoetic (pompous, outlandish, and contrived) points to a need for speakers to identify themselves with listeners and to seem as unpracticed and “real” as possible. This sort of character would have been particularly useful in the ancient Greek courtroom, where, due to a strong anti-professional bias in the culture, litigants spoke for themselves. In such circumstances, maintaining the image of a “legal virgin” worthy of a fair hearing was of paramount importance.³² If a speaker’s performance suggested art instead of amateurism, it might cast suspicion on his character, thereby giving listeners reason to doubt his trustworthiness.

Dionysius’s discussion of style at *Lysias* 8 is limited to the lines mentioned above. To provide a fuller account of his ideas about style, I will draw on passages elsewhere in *Lysias* and in several of Dionysius’s other essays that help to elucidate the terms of interest.³³ I begin with the language that Dionysius considers ethopoetic: clear, standard, and ordinary. At *Lysias* 4, Dionysius praises Lysias’s style for being clear (*saphe*), identifying clarity as a quality worth imitating. To illustrate this point, Dionysius compares Lysias to the historian Thucydides and the orator Demosthenes, remarking that the latter two “were brilliant narrators, but much of what they say is enigmatic and obscure, and requires an interpreter. Lysias’s style, however, is uniformly clear and lucid, even to a reader who is supposed to be totally removed from the sphere of political debate.”³⁴ This observa-

³¹Dionysius’s language here reflects the influence of earlier critics, such as Demetrius of Magnesia. In *Dinarchus*, Dionysius quotes Demetrius’s observation that the orator’s word choice “portrays moral character in standard language” (*Din.* 1).

³²Christopher Carey discusses the ideology of the legal virgin in his overview of forensic oratory in the Greek courts. See *Trials from Classical Athens* (London: Routledge, 1997), 12.

³³As noted by Casper de Jonge, Dionysius’s critical commentary in his early works, including *Lysias*, is not as precise or well-elaborated as in his later works, which feature a more technical critical vocabulary and stronger analytical framework. See Casper C. de Jonge, *Between Grammar and Rhetoric: Dionysius of Halicarnassus on Language, Linguistics, and Literature*, Mnemosyne Supplements, vol. 301 (Leiden/Boston: Brill, 2008), pp. 251–252, 262–263.

³⁴Dionysius makes liberal use of comparisons like this one in his work as a critic. He defends this method in his *Letter to Gnaeus Pompeius*, wherein he observes that

tion is consistent with remarks in Dionysius's *Thucydides*, wherein he faults the historian for his "metaphorical, obscure, archaic, and outlandish" word choices (*Thuc.* 24), and in his *Demosthenes*, wherein he observes that the orator at times shares with Thucydides a tendency to express thoughts indirectly, "not simply and plainly, as is the normal practice of other writers, but in language removed and divorced from what is customary and natural and containing instead expressions which are unfamiliar to most people and not what nature demands" (*Demos.* 9).

Dionysius attributes Lysias's clarity to "the wealth and superabundance of standard words which he uses" (*Lys.* 4). He extols the virtues of standard (*kyrios*, in this context "strict" or "literal") language at *Lysias* 3, contrasting it with metaphorical, figured (*tropikos*) speech. According to Dionysius, Lysias excels at making subjects "seem dignified, extraordinary and grand while describing them in the commonest words without recourse to artificial devices." Dionysius provides a number of examples of speakers who used artificial language to ornament their speech, to ill effect. Writing about Lysias's predecessors, including Gorgias, Dionysius notes, "They used a plethora of metaphors, exaggerations and other forms of figurative language, and further confused the ordinary members of their audiences by using recondite and exotic words, and by resorting to unfamiliar figures of speech and other novel modes of expression."³⁵ Artificial language not only obfuscates, but, more directly relevant to *ethos*, may compromise favorable regard for the speaker.

Dionysius provides a fitting example in his essay on Isocrates, wherein he sharply criticizes the orator for his "juvenile use of figures of speech," through which "realism is sacrificed to elegance" (*Isoc.* 12). Addressing persuasive effects, Dionysius remarks: "I certainly doubt whether these affected, histrionic and juvenile devices could be of any assistance either to a politician advising on matters of war and peace or to a defendant whose life is at stake in a law-court; on the contrary, I am sure that they could cause considerable damage. Preciosity (*χαριεντισμός*) is always out of place in serious discussion and in unhappy situations, and tends to destroy all sympathy for the speaker (*πολεμιώτατον ἐλέω*)." The speaker who voices his opinions in elegant and figured language might create the impression of being

"many things which appear fine and admirable when considered on their own turn out to be less good than they had seemed when they are set side by side with other things that are better" (1).

³⁵In *On Literary Composition*, Dionysius refers to words of this sort as a "poetical vocabulary," capable of lending charm to poetry but at times used to excess by prose writers. See *Comp.* 25.

more concerned about art than the serious matters at hand. Such expressions, according to Dionysius, are “untimely” (*abros*).³⁶ The trustworthy speaker, in contrast, uses ordinary language, with no adornment or ornamentation that might betray his amateur status or cast doubts upon his sincerity.

To this point, the discussion of style has focused on ethopoetic words—clear, standard, and ordinary—and their opposites. Dionysius also mentions three types of unethopoetic words at *Lysias* 8: pompous (*onkos*), strange (*xenon*), and contrived (*ex epitedeuseôs*). The latter two terms, “strange” (or foreign) and “contrived,” reinforce ideas already noted in the discussion of standard, ordinary style. Language should not contain unfamiliar foreign expressions, as in the speeches of Gorgias, for that will confuse ordinary listeners. Neither should it seem contrived, for that is unnatural. The one new term in the series is *onkos*, which has several meanings, any one of which could plausibly contribute to unpersuasive character. As noted in LSJ, *onkos* generally means bulk or mass, a quality that runs counter to the simplicity for which Lysias is praised. With respect to style, specifically, *onkos* can mean “loftiness and majesty,” on the one hand, and bombast on the other (consistent with Usher’s choice of “pompous”).

Dionysius’s comment about the “preciosity” of Isocrates’ style lends support to an interpretation of *onkos* as lofty, but the term could also conceivably mean “self-important” or “bombastic,” much like it has been translated. If the aim of ethopoetic style is to create an impression of favorable moral character, then arrogant, boastful wording would undoubtedly be out of place. The boastful speaker is likely to inspire envy or resentment, thereby compromising the chances of appearing upright, reasonable, and fair-minded. Dionysius offers indirect support for this interpretation with a curious digression in *Lysias* regarding the questionable authorship of two speeches attributed to Lysias (*Lys.* 12). In support of his claim that Lysias did not, in fact, write the speeches in question, both involving the general Iphicrates, Dionysius states, “I surmise that they are the work of Iphicrates himself, who was certainly a brilliant general, and was also by no means to be despised as an orator. Moreover, the style in both speeches contains much vulgar army slang, and reveals

³⁶Dionysius supports his criticism of Isocrates’ untimely use of figures with the testimony of Philonicus the grammarian, who likens Isocrates to “a painter who portrays all his subjects wearing the same clothes and adopting the same pose” (*Isoc.* 13).

not so much the nimble wits of the rhetorician as the headstrong and boastful character of the soldier." In this case, the presence of boastful language (*alazdoneia*, having "the character of a braggart," LSJ) is a red flag; the skilled rhetorician would likely have avoided such language, as well as the army slang, in an effort to highlight the moderate and morally persuasive character of the speaker. The best words for such a portrayal (however *onkos* might be interpreted) do not draw attention to themselves but rather to the fair-minded qualities of the speaker.

As one might expect, Dionysius's description of style in his model of *ethopoeia* differs from other ancient accounts that focus on propriety rather than persuasive character. Aristotle, for example, offers no advice on particular wording suitable for character portrayal, saying only that words must be well-suited to a speaker's moral state and genus (*Rh.* 3.7.6). He might have elaborated on his observation that "a rustic and an educated person would not say the same thing nor [say it] in the same way," but instead leaves it to readers to speculate about specifics. The authors of *progymnasmata* offer style advice similar to Aristotle's: style should suit the nature of the particular type of character being portrayed. Illustrating this principle, Theon remarks that "the words of a Laconian, sparse and clear, differ from those of a man of Attica, which are voluble. We say that Herodotus often speaks like barbarians although writing in Greek because he imitates their ways of speaking" (116; Kennedy 48). In each of these cases, the style is suitable to a character type—Laconian, Athenian, barbarian. Notably, some authors of *progymnasmata*, such as Aphthonius, offer advice similar to Dionysius's, directing students to adopt a style that is "clear, concise, fresh, pure, free from any inversion or figure" (35; Kennedy 116).³⁷ The desirability of this style is addressed by Nicolaus the Sophist, who observes that "to be fussy about style is alien to emotion" (66; Kennedy 166). Such is the case, as well, with style and character in Dionysius's *Lysias*. When persuasive *ethos* is the aim, style should be clear, simple, and uncontrived, whatever the character type.

³⁷While Aphthonius argues for a style free of figures, Ps.-Hermogenes advises, "Let both figures and diction contribute to the portrayal" (22).

THE THIRD ELEMENT: LIFELIKE COMPOSITION

The third and final element of Dionysius's account of persuasive *ethopoeia*, lifelike composition, reinforces the importance of uncontrived language in the creation of persuasive *ethos*. This element is arguably the most striking feature of Dionysius's account, primarily because it draws attention to the role of composition, which, as Dionysius maintains, was a neglected subject at the time he was writing. In *On Literary Composition*, a treatise on effective word arrangement, Dionysius points out that, while style "has been the subject of many serious investigations," composition has not received similar attention (*Comp.* 2). He further observes: "When I decided to write a treatise on this subject, I tried to discover whether my predecessors had said anything about it . . . but nowhere did I see any contribution, great or small, to the subject of my choice, by any author of repute" (*Comp.* 4). He then reports "asserting [his] independence" and striking out on his own path.³⁸ The same might be said about his account of *ethopoeia*. With his attention to lifelike composition, he puts a distinctive Dionysian stamp on discussions of ancient characterization.

In *On Literary Composition*, Dionysius maintains that composition, more so than style, produces "pleasing, persuasive, and powerful effects in discourse" (*Comp.* 2). He employs similar language at *Lysias* 8 when addressing natural, unaffected composition. According to Dionysius, *Lysias*'s word arrangement

is absolutely simple and straightforward. He sees that characterisation (*ῆθος*) is achieved not by periodic structure and the use of rhythms, but by loosely connected sentences. As a further general comment on this quality, I may say that I do not know of any other orator—at least any who employs a similar sentence-structure—with greater charm (*ῆδιον*) and persuasiveness (*πιθανώτερον*). The distinctive nature of its melodious composition seems, as it were, not to be contrived or formed by any conscious art (*ἀποκρίτως τις εἶναι καὶ ἀτεχνίτευτος*), and it would not surprise me if every layman, and even many of those scholars who have not specialised in oratory, should receive the impression that this arrangement has not been deliberately and artistically devised, but is somehow spontaneous and fortuitous (*αὐτομάτως δέ πως καὶ ὡς ἔτυχε*). Yet it is more carefully composed than any work of art.

³⁸Some scholars have disputed Dionysius's claim of independence, pointing to Stoic influences on his ideas regarding composition. See, e.g., Dirk Schenkeveld, "Linguistic Theories in the Rhetorical Works of Dionysius of Halicarnassus," *Glotta* 61 (1983): 67–94.

Lysias is a master of the art of artlessness, which he achieves through simple, loosely constructed sentences that imitate the language of ordinary talk. Carefully wrought periods and rhythms may be appropriate for the rhetoric of display, but not for the portrayal of persuasive character.³⁹

Dionysius offers a useful textual example of the power of artless syntax in his essay on the orator Isaeus. In the essay, Dionysius compares two speech introductions, one by Isaeus and one by Lysias, asserting that the comparison will allow readers to test his judgment. He concludes that Lysias's words are pleasant because of their simplicity. Pointing to a particular line from the speech, Dionysius declares that it is "even more unaffected and like the words any ordinary man would use" (*Is.* 7). Isaeus, on the other hand, writes in a more elevated style that bears the marks of rhetorical art. Dionysius quotes a line from Isaeus—"Listen to a brief explanation from me, so that none of you may suppose that I interfered in Eumathes's affairs in a spirit of petulance or from other wrong motive"—then asserts, "'Spirit of petulance,' 'wrong motive,' and 'interfered in Eumathes's affairs' seem to have been artificially rather than spontaneously introduced." The language seems too carefully chosen, an unconvincing representation of natural, spontaneous conversation. No orator excels Lysias in the art of artlessness, which Dionysius makes clear in his final comments at *Lysias* 8. After describing Lysias's masterful skill at creating the illusion of spontaneous speech, Dionysius concludes that "the student of realism and naturalism would not go wrong if he were to follow Lysias in his composition, for he will find no model who is more true to life (τὴν ἀλήθειαν οὖν τις ἐπιτηδεύων καὶ φύσεως μιμητῆς γίνεσθαι βουλόμενος οὐκ ἂν ἀμαρτάνοι τῇ Λυσίου συνθέσει χρώμενος· ἑτέραν γὰρ οὐκ ἂν εὔροι ταύτης ἀληθεστέραν)" (*Lys.* 8).⁴⁰ A more literal translation of this line underscores the mimetic talent required in character-making: "Therefore someone practicing the truth and wishing to become an imitator of nature (φύσεως μιμητῆς) would not go wrong using the composition of Lysias. For he could not find another [composition technique] truer than that one."

The connection between artless composition and truth in these lines calls to mind Alcidas's *On the Sophists*, a fourth-century treatise

³⁹See Carey, *Lysias*, 66 for examples of this composition style, drawn from Lysias's *On the Murder of Eratosthenes*. Carey notes that the style, which features short sentences and a lack of elaboration, "befits a simple man."

⁴⁰For a discussion of Dionysius's views on natural style and composition, see de Jonge, *Between Grammar and Rhetoric*, ch. 5.

tise with which Dionysius was likely familiar.⁴¹ In the essay, Alcidas, a pupil of Gorgias and rival of Isocrates, addresses the persuasive implications of artificial composition, noting, “For speeches which have their text carefully worked out and are more like poetry than prose and have abandoned both the spontaneous and that which more closely resembles the truth (τὸ μὲν αὐτόματον καὶ πλέον ἀληθείας ὅμοιον) and seem to be moulded by and consist in pre-fabrication fill the minds of their hearers with distrust and resentment” (12).⁴² The speech that sounds scripted suggests advance preparation and rhetorical expertise, and as such, would have compromised good will and destroyed the illusion of amateurism so prized in democratic Athens.⁴³ In light of the suspicion with which ancient Athenians regarded written speeches, Lysias’s ability to mimic extemporaneous, natural style undoubtedly served his clients well. Indeed, Alcidas points to speechwriters as proof of his contention about the power of natural composition, saying, “those who write speeches for the courts seek to avoid precision and mimic the style of extempore speakers (μιμοῦνται τὰς τῶν αὐτοσχεδιαζόντων ἐρμηνείας), and they seem to be doing their best writing when they produce speeches which least resemble scripts” (13). The extemporaneous speaker, unlike the speaker with carefully crafted sentiments, arouses no suspicion that reality might have been altered and is thus more believable. In Dionysius’s estimation, no one employs this style of composition with greater persuasiveness than Lysias.

⁴¹Dionysius’s familiarity with Alcidas is attested in his *First Letter to Ammaeus*, wherein he observes, “I should not want them [those who study civil oratory] to suppose that all the precepts of rhetoric are comprehended in the Peripatetic philosophy, and that nothing important has been discovered by Theodorus, Thrasyarchus, Antiphon and their associates; nor by Isocrates, Anaximenes, Alcidas or those of their contemporaries who composed rhetorical handbooks and engaged in oratorical contests” (2).

⁴²Translation adapted from J.V. Muir, trans. and ed., *Alcidas: The Works and Fragments* (London: Bristol Classical Press, 2001). Aristotle makes a similar observation, advising that speakers should “compose without being noticed and should seem to speak not artificially but naturally. (The latter is persuasive, the former the opposite; for people become resentful, as at someone plotting against them, just as they are at those adulterating wines)” (*Rh.* 3.2.4).

⁴³Johann Schloeman points out a tension in ancient Greece between the expectation that speeches should uphold an “ideal of amateurism” yet at the same time be entertaining, which demands the very rhetorical skill and careful preparation that, if obvious, creates distrust. See “Entertainment and Democratic Distrust: The Audience’s Attitude toward Oral and Written Oratory in Classical Athens,” in Ian Worthington and John Miles Foley, eds., *Epea and Grammata: Oral and Written Communication in Ancient Greece* (Leiden: Brill, 2002), 133–146.

The effects of Lysias's artless composition are not only persuasive, however; they are also charming. As Dionysius states, "I do not know of any other orator—at least any who employs a similar sentence structure—with greater charm or persuasiveness." By drawing attention to charm at *Lysias* 8, Dionysius makes a novel move, departing from the theories of his ancient Greek predecessors and introducing an aesthetic dimension to persuasive *ethopoeia*.⁴⁴ As J. W. H. Atkins points out, "nowhere does Dionysius reveal a keener artistic sensibility; for this quality in Lysias [his charm] was one that had been passed over by Roman critics, who had praised merely his simplicity, his elegance and polish."⁴⁵ The novelty of Dionysius's move is underscored by his difficulty in describing charm. At *Lysias* 10, Dionysius opines that charm (*charis*) is Lysias's "finest and most important quality, and the one above all which enables us to establish his peculiar character" (*Lys.* 10). In elaborating on this quality, Dionysius observes that it "blossoms forth in every word he [Lysias] writes" but is "beyond description and too wonderful for words." He compares charm to other hard-to-define concepts such as beauty and good melody, then advises readers who wish to learn more "to banish reason from the senses and train them by patient study over a long period to feel without thinking" (*Lys.* 11).⁴⁶ Charm is a hallmark of Lysias's art, an excellence which "would improve the expressive powers of anyone who adopted and imitated [it]" (*Lys.* 10), including those whose aim is effective characterization.

Dionysius's discussion of persuasive, charming, true-to-life composition helps to explain one other novel feature of his account: his use of the term *apsychos*, which appears in his initial description of *ethopoeia*. Recall Dionysius's observation that he has found no speakers in Lysias's texts who are "devoid of character (*ἀνηθοποίητον*) or [devoid of] vitality (*ἄψυχον*)." He echoes this idea later in his essay with a summary of Lysias's stylistic virtues, one of which is "the

⁴⁴Following Usher's translation, I am employing "charm" here, but the Greek term *hedus* can be translated as "pleasantness" or "attractiveness," as it is in Dionysius's *On Literary Composition*. Dionysius often uses the term *charis* when he is discussing charm, as illustrated by the following line from *On Literary Composition*: "Under attractiveness (*τὴν ἡδονήν*) I list freshness, charm (*τὴν χάριν*), euphony, sweetness, persuasiveness, and all such qualities." Whether one translates *hedone* at *Lysias* 8 as charm or pleasantness, the term suggests an aesthetic dimension of *ethopoeia*.

⁴⁵*Literary Criticism in Antiquity: A Sketch of Its Development*, vol. 2 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1934), 125.

⁴⁶Dionysius offers a more well-developed account of attractiveness as an end of composition in his treatise *On Literary Composition*, ch. 11–12.

investment of every person with life and character" (*Lys.* 13). Significantly, *apsychos*, "lifeless" or "inanimate," appears in no other ancient account of *ethopoeia* discussed in this essay, and Dionysius rarely uses it elsewhere in his works on rhetoric, suggesting a strong association of animation with the persuasive *ethopoeia* of Lysias.⁴⁷ This association is well-illustrated in *Dinarchus*, wherein Dionysius provides guidance for determining whether a speech was authored by Lysias or Dinarchus: "If he sees that the speeches are adorned with excellence and charm, and contain his [Lysias's] careful choice of words and no lack of animation (τὸ μηδὲν ἄψυχον) in what is said, let him confidently assert that these are by Lysias. But if he finds no such qualities of charm or persuasiveness or precision of language or close adherence to reality (<τὸ> τῆς ἀληθείας ἀπτόμενον), let him leave them among the speeches of Dinarchus" (*Din.* 7). In this passage, *apsychos* is defined, by implication of the antithetical pairings, as lack of "close adherence to reality," the very opposite of the lifelike, mimetic quality that Dionysius associates with Lysias at the end of *Lysias* 8.

Dionysius's observation regarding lifelike character portrayal in Lysias raises an interesting question: How can a critic centuries removed from the texts of interest determine whether a portrayal is true-to-life?⁴⁸ Perhaps Dionysius, in his careful study of Lysias's texts, noticed some of the subtle syntactical variations that contemporary scholars, equipped with more advanced conceptual categories, have labeled "individuality," and on that basis declared Lysias's portraits to be animated.⁴⁹ While this possibility cannot be completely dis-

⁴⁷"*Apsychos*" appears in the works of Aristotle and Theon, but not in their discussions of *ethopoeia*. In the *Rhetoric*, Aristotle employs the term when describing *enargeia*, or "bringing-before-the-eyes"; he notes that *enargeia*, "as Homer often uses it, is making the lifeless living (τὸ τὰ ἄψυχα ἐμψυχα ποιεῖν) through the metaphor (*Rh.* 3.11.2). In the *progymnasmata* of Theon, the term occurs in discussions of *encomia* (with respect to "inanimate things like honey, health, virtue, and the like"; sec. 112) and *ecphrasis* (which, in comparison to *topos*, deals with "inanimate things"; sec. 119). In the rhetorical works of Dionysius, forms of *apsychos* appear at *Lys.* 8, *Lys.* 13, *Lys.* 17 (the form of Lysias's introductions are "οὐκ ἄψυχος οὐδ' ἀκίνητός"), *Din.* 7 (see text above), and *Dem.* 20 (on the lifeless style of Isocrates); the term also appears at *Dem.* 4 (an editorial insertion) and *Ars. Rhet.* 2.6 (of questionable Dionysian authorship).

⁴⁸Lysias (ca. 445–ca. 380 BC) began writing speeches in 403. Dionysius (ca. 60–after 7 BC) wrote in Rome from roughly 30–7 BC.

⁴⁹L. L. Forman, for example, argues that the speaker in "For the Disabled Man" (*Lys. Or.* 24) is an individual because, of all of Lysias's characters, he alone places the word *pas* (every; all) after, rather than before, the noun, which is the expected syntactical pattern. Stephen Usher points to similarly subtle markers of individuality

counted, especially in light of Dionysius's keen interest in texts, he makes no mention of such features in his writings. More likely, his judgment about the lifelike nature of Lysias's characters simply reflects his expectations regarding fourth-century Greek oratory, particularly with respect to oral performance. Dionysius was undoubtedly aware, as he read the texts of Lysias, that the speeches were written for performance by the very person being characterized; he thus would have been looking for evidence of an oral composition style that would enable such a performance. Dionysius makes a remark to this effect in his essay *Demosthenes*. After addressing common knowledge about Demosthenes' efforts to improve his delivery, Dionysius states: "Now, what has this to do with his literary style? someone might ask: to which I should reply, that his style is designed to accommodate it [his delivery]" (*Dem.* 53). Likewise, the composition of Lysias was designed to accommodate performance, enabling the speaker to deliver the speech in a seemingly spontaneous, heartfelt manner.

Lysias himself apparently recognized the relationship between performance and composition, as suggested by the following anecdote in Plutarch's "Concerning Talkativeness":

Lysias once composed a speech for a litigant and gave it to him. The man read it through a number of times and came to Lysias in despair and said that the first time he read it the speech seemed to him wonderfully good, but on taking it up a second and third time it appeared completely dull and ineffectual. "Well," said Lysias laughing, "isn't it only once that you are going to speak it before the jurors?"⁵⁰

If uttered repeatedly, Lysias's words may fall flat, but when read with the expectation of a one-time oral performance, the words spring to life, gaining their characteristic charm and persuasiveness. Dionysius clearly appreciated the difference between words intended for the ear and those intended for the eye, as Ronald Reid notes; his ability to "see" orality explains his praise of the lifelike quality of Lysias's speeches.⁵¹ In this interpretation of *apsychos* portrayal, Lysias's char-

in Lysias's speeches, suggesting that short syllables in "Against Simon" (*Lys. Or.* 3) signal shyness and nervousness, while polysyndeton in "On the Death of Erasthenes" (*Lys. Or.* 1) indicates mental confusion. See Forman, "Ethopoeia," and Usher, "Individual Characterisation."

⁵⁰Plutarch, "Concerning Talkativeness" in *Plutarch's Moralia*, vol. 6, trans. W.C. Helmbold (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1939), sec. 5.

⁵¹Reid argues that Dionysius's identification of three types of composition style—the austere, the polished, and the well-blended—reflects the development of literate

acters are deemed lifelike not on the basis of their distinctive individual characteristics but rather on the degree to which they sound unscripted. Lysias, “the most persuasive of all the orators” (*Lys.* 10), executed this style more admirably than anyone else—hence Dionysius’s inclusion of *apsychos*, whose opposite, animation, is an ideal of persuasive *ethopoeia*.

CONCLUSION

To date, the ethopoetic practice of Lysias has received more attention than the account that fueled his reputation, yet Dionysius’s account deserves to be recognized for more than its role in the narrative of Lysianic excellence. Through his critical praise of Lysias’s ethopoetic skill, Dionysius calls attention to a distinctive type of characterization, persuasive *ethopoeia*. Arguably, all ethopoetic activity can be understood as dramatic, for all forms of *ethopoeia* involve scripting words for another character. The types differ, however, in their approach to “character,” which underscores the need for classification. Whereas propriety-oriented *ethopoeia* focuses on external character traits, persuasive *ethopoeia* focuses on trustworthiness of character, consistent with Aristotle’s description of *ethos* at *Rhetoric* 1.2.4. Lysias, a speechwriter, exemplifies the latter type, creating impressions of trustworthy *ethos* in practical oratory through reasonable thoughts, standard diction, and artless word arrangement. Of particular importance in persuasive *ethopoeia*, as suggested by the latter two elements, is ordinary, seemingly spontaneous language that does not call attention to itself or reflect negatively on the character of the speaker but rather contributes to an impression of moderation and fair-mindedness. The style of persuasive *ethopoeia* artfully mimics nature, and in so doing, enables convincing performance.

Dionysius’s comments on composition deserve special mention, for with these remarks, he makes his most unique contribution to a theory of effective characterization. Lysias’s mastery of the art of artlessness, through which he makes his speakers sound natural and unscripted, creates effects that, according to Dionysius, are not only persuasive but charming and lifelike. With his attention to charm and animation, Dionysius expands the vocabulary of characteriza-

consciousness in ancient Greece. See “Dionysius of Halicarnassus’s Theory of Compositional Style and the Theory of Literate Consciousness,” *Rhetoric Review* 15 (1996): 46–64.

tion, adding an aesthetic dimension to the portrayal of persuasive *ethos*. Although Dionysius is not typically remembered as an innovator, he makes an important contribution to ancient Greek rhetorical theory with his attention to charm and animation, a unique point of emphasis among ancient accounts of *ethopoeia*.