cultural studies of power and authority. Her text provides substantive examples and authoritative insight into arguments made by composition pedagogues about the ethical and practical value of dialogue in everything from pedagogy to, here, the regulation and articulation of danger. This book deserves a wide audience of readers, as it contains a variety of arguments and examples that support much of what the field has argued for some time: share power and access so that many can benefit, and respect the various ways knowledge is made and transferred by those doing the labor.

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**Works Cited**


Reviewed by Dion C. Cautrell, The Ohio State University, Mansfield Campus

In her foreword Carolyn R. Miller positions *Rhetoric and Kairos* as a response to skepticism about rhetoric’s remaining too thoroughly “rooted in a particular historical period, a particular language, a particular set of cultural purposes” (xi). For Miller the collection addresses concerns about “the ancient emphasis on practical production rather than theory and interpretation; the accompanying ‘ideology of human agency’ that characterizes ancient rhetoric; and the ‘thinness’ or abstract quality of the ancient productionist vocabulary that can easily be applied to anything and thus conveys little of real critical interest” (xi). Overcoming these limitations, however, may not engage some critics’ unease over “how satisfactorily that particular framework [ancient rhetorical theory] can be ‘globalized’ to become the universal hermeneutic it is often claimed to be in recent theory and criticism” (xi). The included essays do tend toward hermeneutics, but that tendency might as easily bolster critics’ arguments as refute them. The desire to (over)extend *kairos* (“right timing, due measure”) does not necessarily prove its, or rhetoric’s, useful-
ness beyond classical models of textual production. Even so, several contributors complicate the relationship between Rhetoric and Composition and other fields by exploring rhetoric’s continuing hermeneutic value.

While interest in *kairos* has increased steadily—due largely to James L. Kinneavy, of whom more later—*Rhetoric and Kairos*’ main objective seems, despite Miller’s formulation, to be a recovery of the concept for an audience unaware of its ubiquity or varied applications. The volume’s first three-fifths focus largely on ancient thinkers like Protagoras and Quintilian. Two exceptions to this trend are worth noting, however, because they (re)situate *kairos* outside of discourse per se. Richard Leo Enos’s “Inventional Constraints on the Technographers of Ancient Athens” presents the literacy constraints imposed on Greek technographers by the timekeeping methods associated with primary orality, while Catherine R. Eskin’s “Hippocrates, *Kairos*, and Writing in the Sciences” explores the centrality of *kairos* to the *Corpus Hippocraticum*—the texts associated with the physician Hippocrates and his successors.

Although Enos and Eskin ground their work in ancient Greek practices, the arguments they develop are equally useful in the context of current debates about the rhetorical dimensions of time and timekeeping (as with writing tests like the revised SAT exam) and of medical care (as related to doctor-patient ethics and rapport). Enos accentuates time’s material impact on ancient Greek discourse: “This study offers archeological and textual evidence that reveals the conventional constraints on writing used in the service of preserving oral discourse in ancient Athens and advances the following claim: when civic writing was used in the service of orality the constraint of time must be used as a factor in Greek rhetoric” (78). Beyond stressing the historical transition from primary orality to literacy—“protoliterate” activity—Enos yokes rhetorical theory to the material conditions surrounding its enactment (77). While rhetoric ideally grants writers influence over how words function in the world, writing remains a technology and, as such, operates under both internal and external constraints. Theories that look to *kairos* only to explain when/how words are deployed overlook literal timing: “Our efforts to understand classical rhetoric have not included a sensitivity to what is called ‘immediate time,’ that is, units of hours and minutes. Our current research in classical rhetoric shows no accounting for, and demonstrates no real awareness of, the momentary in Greek rhetoric” (78-79). Anyone who accepts the interdependence of thinking-writing-doing must surely account for more than discursive timeliness.

More immediately, discourse solicited “in the service of” student evaluation or achievement, for example, stands equally subject to material realities—something Enos mentions all too briefly (78). How much time should student-writers have to complete in-class assignments if teachers hope to encourage effective rhetorical action? How is sustained drafting affected by time constraints and the non-communicative purposes to which student writing is put? Outside the classroom, what are the effects of real-time interaction (in online chat rooms or MOOs, for instance) on student-writers’ texts? Do current theories,
however developed, adequately account for time’s technological dimensions? Enos closes his essay by gesturing toward his study’s broader impact: “if we do have a sensitivity to immediate time in classical rhetoric, such notions as kairos, peristasis ['circumstance'], and prepon ['appropriateness'] will take on greater importance not only in our theoretical understanding of these central concepts, but also in our study of how they played out in the rhetorical situations that brought them into existence” (87). Effective rhetorical practices involve more than organizing theories around concepts like kairos. Theories come alive to the degree that they account for “immediate time,” the very real, quite tangible time dependencies according to which words take shape in the world. It is a lesson that Eskin underwrites in her essay, presented in the context of medical diagnosis and science writing. For her the Hippocratic Collection exemplifies “the recognition of variables—time, weather, age, sex—and the experienced doctor’s usage of judgment in the interpretation of available data” (97), “mak[ing] room for individuality and case specificity” (98). Eskin uses kairos to measure the temporal as well as the rhetorical dynamics of discourse. Rather than read Hippocrates’s texts as kairotic only because of their relationship to language, she spends equal time considering the material constraints affecting patient treatment and, therefore, the Hippocratic texts’ rhetorical characteristics.

Parallels between medical and rhetorical practices in the collection reveal as much about the world in which rhetoric takes shape as about the nature of science writing or of kairos: “Kairos here is clearly aligned with experimentation, with experience, with incident, with phenomena” (99). The lessons for medical ethics, the rhetorics of science, and related areas are manifold. That effective rhetorical action responds to, and fully accounts for, a situation’s singularity may be widely accepted, but as Eskin suggests, material circumstances also affect how/why Hippocrates’s rhetorical practices assume the form they do: “kairos is not just about time, and Hippocrates’s work on medicine deals with more than just when something should be done” (105). For, as Eskin continues, “[f]rom this view of timing also comes certain organizational tendencies in the setting forth of a text. Not just medical writers, but scientific writers are careful to be efficient in their texts, generally choosing a tight organization that allows for little to no deviation” (107). Rhetorical constraints intersect material and professional ones in ways that current theorizing ignores at some peril, intellectual if not physical.

While the essays in the collection’s remaining two-fifths effectively illustrate kairos in various period (con)texts, none of them strikes quite the same balance as Enos’s or Eskin’s. Amélie Frost Benedikt, in “On Doing the Right Thing at the Right Time,” explores the “important objective qualities” of kairos, but her argument rarely escapes the boundaries defined by the collection’s other essays (226). How might non-subjective qualities inform debates about the issues raised by Enos, Eskin, and others? In “Changing Times in Composition Classes,” Carolyn Eriksen Hill recounts her use of “Pythagorean habits of mind” in “bring[ing] my students’ structural or rhetorical problems into the language of the motions and emotions
Hill’s (self-)reflective narrative legitimately considers pedagogy’s human(e) dimensions, but because of its reflective character, the essay provides little tangible direction regarding how to develop a curriculum. What might writing assignments look like? What particular chords should instructors strike in facilitating students’ efforts? Likewise, in “Kairos” Phillip Sipiora twice mentions the ways in which rhetorical grammar informs kairos; however, the point receives no sustained attention, even though it underlies his argument about the Biblical New Testament. As with other essays in the collection, Sipiora’s provokes, but it never quite moves readers beyond the specific topics/texts being investigated.

I raise these final concerns, despite the volume’s overall usefulness, because of context’s importance to the work of James L. Kinneavy, who (as the foreword notes) passed away before this volume was released. His “Kairos in Classical and Modern Rhetorical Theory” serves him in good stead, a tribute to his devotion to kairos. Whatever else readers make of the collection, we would do well to remember Kinneavy’s contributions and to support the project for which he agitated so vigorously:

I am firmly convinced that rhetoric desperately needs the notion of kairos. I have made several pleas for its reincorporation into the systematic study of composition, because I see it as a dominant motif in disciplines related to our own . . . . The concept of situational context, which is a modern term for kairos, is in the forefront of research and thought in many areas. . . . [I]t may be that modern treatments of situational context can learn something from the handling of the same topic in antiquity. I would argue that they can, particularly in the realms of the ethical and the educational. (74 n4)

Kinneavy believed that words matter in the world, but he also recognized that the world matters as much to words, for no text escapes its time(s) and timing, even as writers may struggle to reach some unknown posterity.

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For several years I have wondered why, despite the numerous historical accounts of college composition in the United States, our field has not produced a