TONGUE, NIB, BLOCK, BIT: RHETORICAL DELIVERY AND TECHNOLOGIES OF WRITING

DISSERTATION

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ABSTRACT

This dissertation argues that the rhetorical canon of delivery is inherently a technological discourse. That is, theories of delivery (traditionally pertaining to vocal tone and inflection, physical gesture, posture, dress, and the like) have historically fostered the cultural reception of emergent writing technologies by prescribing rules that cause old and new communications media to resemble one another, thus helping new technologies gain cultural relevancy. By considering various historical "case studies" throughout the Western rhetorical tradition, this dissertation analyzes rhetorical delivery as a site wherein given technologies of writing (chirography, print, or hypertext) enter the cultural sphere. Such key moments of technological and epistemological flux include: 1) the shift from an oral to a literate culture in Ancient Greece, 2) the early modern Western European shift from manuscript to print culture, 3) the growth of print into a dominant communication medium in the nineteenth century, and 4) our current shift away from the hegemonic influence of print to the proliferation of electronic and digital media such as television, radio, film, and the Internet. These emergent technologies are fostered by the surrounding rhetorical treatises and handbooks of the time, which apply features and conventions idiomatic to the new technology to the pre-existing technology (and vice versa) so that culture more readily accepts this transformation in technological dominance. Not only is this
dynamic affected by explicit references to delivery, it is also affected by implicit rules
prescribing how the material dimension of a media form should be shaped, or hidden
theories of delivery.

An analysis of this sort is predicated upon a Heideggerian view of technology
that sees its "essence" not in terms of the evolution of technics and machinery, but
primarily in the "relational" aspects of a society that allow such machinery to present
itself to our world in a particular way. First and foremost, then, technology is cultural,
and as such, it is a construction supported by certain types of discourses, institutions,
and power relations between individuals-relationships that often go unquestioned.
With specific respect to technologies of communication, rhetoric has historically
stood in an optimal position (as discourse, institutionalized discipline, and embodied
practice) to serve as a kind of external support for these emergent technologies.
Rhetorical theory helps to reconcile cultural misgivings or unfamiliarity with a newly
emerging technology by adapting to that technology in order to foster its cultural
dominance and naturalization. Such adaptive maneuvers are theorized here as
mechanisms of “remediation,” an extension of a theory of formal media interaction
concerned with this interaction as it occurs on the formal level, this revised concept
refers to the discursive and cultural context surrounding a particular technology.
Dedicated to my parents, Warren and Vickie McCorkle, for standing behind me, and my beloved partner Ashley, for standing beside me.
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CHAPTER 1

READING RHETORICAL DELIVERY AS

TECHNOLOGICAL DISCOURSE

Serendipity, I've come to believe, is a force worthy of attention. In the midst of some non-scholarly reading at the outset of my project (a fortune cookie, actually), I happened upon an alleged ancient Chinese proverb that summed up perfectly for me the trajectory of this dissertation. Not more than one week after this discovery, I found the proverb quoted again, this time in a book I had been using in my research. It read:

The wise man points to the moon,
the fool looks at the finger. (Debray 102)

In light of the above proverb, this dissertation is admittedly the work of a fool—a look at the pointing finger rather than the glimmering moon, or a look at the forces that help create the conditions for a particular phenomenon's existence rather than at the phenomenon itself. More specifically, this dissertation argues that the rhetorical canon of delivery is and has been inherently a technological discourse. That is, delivery has historically served as a site that helps foster the cultural reception of certain emergent technologies of writing.
This is not a project of historical recovery, but rather one of reinterpretation, one that considers various historical “case studies” throughout the Western rhetorical tradition and offers an analysis of rhetorical delivery as a site by which given technologies of writing (chirography, print, or hypertext) enter the cultural sphere. Such key moments of technological and epistemological flux include the shift from an oral to a literate culture in Ancient Greece, the early modern Western European shift from manuscript to print culture, the growth of print into a dominant communication medium in the late-eighteenth/early nineteenth centuries, and our current shift away from the hegemonic influence of print to the proliferation of electronic and digital media such as television, radio, film, and the Internet. These emergent technologies are fostered by the surrounding rhetorical treatises and handbooks of the time, which apply features and conventions idiomatic to the new technology to the pre-existing technology (and vice versa) so that culture more readily accepts these shifts in technological dominance.

In offering a rationale for rereading the history of rhetorical delivery as inherently technological, this introduction considers a body of recent rhetorical scholarship that redefines delivery to include not only the control of vocal and bodily form in the embodied rhetorical performance, but also as the paratextual or extra-textual features of a given text (features such as the choice of a particular typeface or the inclusion of graphical elements within the text), the idiomatic elements of a particular medium, or the manipulation of those elements within a particular medium. From this starting point, questions emerge that allow us to re-theorize the role
delivery plays in the cultural reception of technology cross-historically: Why are rhetorical scholars of the late-twentieth/early twenty-first century formulating theories of delivery that equate the canon with medium and design? What historical/contextual conditions have allowed them to arrive at this point? What specific role has our cultural interaction with electronic technologies played in this conversation?

These questions establish a heuristic with which we can investigate similar moments of technological flux throughout history (i.e., the shift from an oral to a literate culture, or from manuscript to print to digital culture) as productive sites of inquiry into the interplay of rhetoric and technology. More specifically, this introduction outlines a methodology for looking at these sites as historical case studies, with a particular focus on how rhetorical treatises dealing with delivery help to foster cultural acceptance of a new technology—in other words, reinterpreting delivery as a technological discourse. At different moments in the history of rhetoric, delivery has been defined in various manners, and its relative importance in the entire rhetorical process has fluctuated greatly, a fluctuation occurring roughly in tandem with paradigmatic shifts in writing technologies. Consider that in ancient Athens, where oral performance was the paradigmatic mode of communication, delivery was initially held in highest regard, but that importance waned in the wake of a growing literate culture. Although delivery was again recognized as an important part of rhetoric in Ancient Rome and beyond, this status began to slip once again during the Middle Ages, as more and more attention was paid to the writing-based side of the
rhetorical spectrum and handbooks on grammar, letter writing and poetics began proliferating. This writing-centric trend led to the highly influential move by Petrus Ramus and his followers to re-order the domain of rhetoric, hence refocusing the discipline primarily upon stylistic matters, the reign of tropes and figures that would color the discipline for the next few centuries. The impact of Ramus’s treatises in the mid-sixteenth century left rhetorical theory with little to call its own, and although delivery was included in that domain, it became overshadowed by a poetic approach that focused on composing figurative language. Concurrent with the explosion of print culture in the late eighteenth/early nineteenth centuries, the elocutionary movement brought about renewed interest in how the voice and body could be employed to deliver literary and poetic texts, serving as an embodied support for the growing belletristic movement. Now, in the midst of our more recent proliferation of electronic and digital writing technologies, current rhetorical theory as exemplified by the work of Kathleen Welch, Victor Vitanza, Kathleen Jamieson, and similar-minded scholars treats delivery as the collective elements peculiar to a particular medium of expression—the extra-textual features of a given text—be it spoken, bound in print, broadcast over television, or floating in cyberspace. The role that the rhetorical canon of delivery (alternately hypokrisis or actio) plays in these interactions as a cultural/technological agent, then, is the central focus of this investigation.

An analysis of the sort proposed here is predicated upon a Heideggerian view of technology, one that sees its “essence” not in terms of the evolution of technics and machinery, but primarily in the “relational” aspects of a society that allow such
machinery to present itself to our world in a particular way (what he terms “Enframing”). As a kind of philosophical first premise from which to begin discussing the connection between technology and rhetoric, I turn to Heidegger’s “The Question Concerning Technology” (1949). In this essay, Heidegger distinguishes between technology as an instrumental presence and the essence of technology:

[T]he essence of technology is by no means anything technological. Thus we shall never experience our relationship to the essence of technology so long as we merely conceive and push forward the technological, put up with it, or evade it. Everywhere we remain unfree and chained to technology, whether we passionately affirm or deny it. But we are delivered over to it in the worst possible way when we regard it as something neutral; for this conception of it, to which today we particularly like to do homage, makes us utterly blind to the essence of technology. (4)

Although Heidegger’s language of essentialism clashes with our contemporary poststructuralist paradigm, which openly acknowledges the socially constructed and highly context-bound character of our understanding of the world, his point remains valid, especially if we consider it within the spirit of a social-constructivist view of what constitutes reality and essences. First and foremost, technology is cultural, and as such, it is a construction supported by certain types of discourses, institutions, and power relations between individuals—interrelationships that often go unquestioned or, worse still, unnoticed.
Furthermore, Heidegger's belief that the transmission of culture happens primarily through the use of language, that “all ways of thinking, more or less perceptibly, lead through language in a way which is extraordinary,” gives us a rationale for questioning technology at the level of language, for language creates the very reality of technology (3). While I take pause at Heidegger’s totalizing claim, I do agree that the functional, day-to-day reality of living in the world, our deeply imbedded ideological sense of the way things work, is transmitted through a complex web of cultural narratives that both informs and reinforces that sense of reality. Cynthia Selfe reads Heidegger similarly when she writes that the so-called self-evident ideological connections between science, social progress, and technology that begin to take shape most fully in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries are formed by the countless repetition of common cultural narratives, resulting in a kind of "reality effect." For example, Selfe alludes to the typical advertising hyperbole surrounding marvels of the Industrial Revolution such as the cotton gin as indicative of a common cultural master-narrative that equates quantitative increases in productivity and profitability with a qualitatively enhanced lifestyle. Selfe fleshes out this context by drawing on the historical scholarship of Kenneth Gergen and James Wiser, who see the ideology of an outdated Romanticism displaced by the new rationalism associated with science. She writes,

[T]he project of science had to do primarily with the practical challenge of bringing the natural world under human control, “imposing design upon the formless matter of nature” ([Wiser,] 63). And when science was applied to practical fields of health, warfare,
and manufacturing, it bore the most “impressive fruits” in the engineering of technologies that improved the quality of human lives: “Medicine and sanitation were improving life chances, better weapons improved new conquests, and innovations in technology—electric lamps, sewing machines, motion pictures, radio, motor cars, and then airplanes—promised a utopia on earth” (Gergen 29). Science and technology were applied as well to the effort of increasing literacy and the effectiveness of public education. (116)

Of course, Selfe’s characterization of the technological turn in the nineteenth century applies primarily to Western culture of North America and Europe, and marks a deep-seated secularized position supported by the most influential institutions of that culture: economic, political, educational, and so on. In her own self-aware hyperbole, Selfe worries that, "Indeed, as Martin Heidegger has noted, by the mid-twentieth century our understanding of technology as a way of solving social problems has grown so strong that it eclipsed all other ways of responding to the world" (116). Rhetoric, practical theories of how to use language to persuasive effect, cannot but be inherently technological; recall Aristotle's labelling of rhetoric as a techne, a kind of “knowing-how” applied to one of the earliest modes of communication. Beyond looking at rhetoric itself as a technology of language, we can also examine rhetoric as something which supports, aids, and abets other technologies. With respect to technologies of communication in particular, rhetoric has historically stood in an optimal position (as discourse, institutionalized discipline, and embodied practice) to serve as a kind of external support for these emergent technologies.
This study proposes that the discipline of rhetoric, because it is so intimately interested in modes of communication, functions as a discrete discursive and practical site that reconciles our cultural misgivings or unfamiliarity with a new technology; rhetoric does so by adapting to an emergent technology to foster its acceptance, naturalization, and dominance. Considering how rhetorical theories of delivery function as technological discourses that validate new technologies—as well as how technical/technological shifts contribute to the redefinition or revaluation of delivery—brings a necessary perspective to a history of delivery that our discipline is still coming to write. By calling into question the technological dimensions of previous modes of textual production, this study will recover nascent or underexamined ideas about how the physicality of texts persuade readers and provide a starting point for further study of the canon's role in shaping textual production for future technological changes that are, as of yet, unimagined.

In addition to demonstrating how one particular cultural site supports technological shifts at various historical moments, this study contributes to the field of rhetoric by extending our map of the historical landscape in rhetorical scholarship and suggesting a more comprehensive review of the canon of delivery across the tradition.¹ There exist many important contributions to the discipline’s understanding of the fifth canon, but I argue that we can build upon that existing historical groundwork by recognizing that during different eras, elements that we might associate with delivery today (i.e., manipulating the material, performative elements of a given rhetorical text) were quietly operating in other areas of rhetorical
theory. Additionally, this study offers direction for future scholarship regarding the 
connection between technology and, not just delivery, but rhetoric as a whole—a 
connection being made presently, but perhaps not understood within a more 
expansive historical context.

**Pointing to the Moon: Histories & Theories of Shifts in Technology**

Recent scholarship in new media/technology theory offers useful conceptual 
models for explaining how shifts in writing technologies occur. Works such as 
*Transmitting Culture* (2000), and Friedrich Kittler’s *Grammophone, Film, Typewriter* 
(1999) formulate theories of technological change that foreground its reciprocal, 
*interactive* nature. This recent scholarship stands in contrast to many of the so-called 
“great leap” theories of technological shifts embodied by the likes of Walter Ong, 
Elizabeth Eisenstein, Lewis Mumford, or Marshall McLuhan, theories that 
characterize the emergence of new technics and media as radical departures from the 
technological status quo, as revolutionary shifts of kind rather than degree, and as 
causal forces rather than the outcomes of cultural production or changes in 
epistemology.

As a complementary schema to the reciprocal theories of media interaction 
forwarded by Johnson, Bolter, and the like, consider Ronald Deibert’s theory of 
“ecological holism,” which postulates the “social embeddedness of technology” (39).
Deibert prefers the *longue durée* historical perspective developed by the *Annales* school of historians, which is concerned with looking at deep cultural and institutional structures that, over an extended period of time, articulate a particular epistemology or *mentalité* of an epoch. Deibert considers how the moves from parchment to printing and from printing to hypermedia influence “world order transformations.” By looking at such superstructural elements over time as geophysical environment (climate, natural resources, population), technology and technics, institutional and organizational structures, and webs of beliefs and social epistemology, Deibert notes that these categories don’t necessarily have discrete boundaries (37-39). Such a theoretical lens proves useful for studying the interaction of rhetorical delivery and technology because it establishes a model of interaction wherein technological shifts do not occur simply by virtue of technical merit alone, but are instead incorporated into a complex system of interrelated factors. Preexisting technologies and emergent technologies borrow from and build off of one another in a dialogical relationship. Deibert’s narrative self-consciously places technology in the role of protagonist, so that instead of being seen as a neutral tool, technology is interpreted as an active influence on the social context from which it emerges. Deibert ably explains how technologies serve as epistemological agents throughout history, bringing about changes in world order—the hegemony of the Catholic Church, the rise of the Western European nation-state, or the proliferation of a multi-nodal global network. Deibert does not fully articulate how this cause/effect relationship between technology and epistemology can be read reciprocally, however.
In other words, how do epistemologies create the conditions whereby emergent technologies are formed in the first place? This study pays particular attention to the reciprocity in this dynamic between technics and the surrounding cultural forces.

The notion of a context-dependent theory of technological development is not exclusive to Deibert. One of the principle contentions supporting Steven Johnson’s *Interface Culture* is that shifts in the mode of textual production happen on something of a continuum, and that technologies and their attendant media mutually reinforce and define one another through the phenomenon that Johnson calls “media seepage.” In describing this interaction, Johnson points to those texts he calls “metaforms,” a genre that is extra-cognizant of its own boundaries within a particular medium. For Johnson, a metaform marks an epistemological shift that carries with it the promise of a new, emerging technology. Johnson specifically refers to the epidemic of badly regarded television programs which has sprung up in recent years—*Beavis and Butthead, Talk Soup, The Daily Show, Mystery Science Theater*—as shows formally structured to be self-conscious of their own medium. He writes,

> If our metaforms turn out to be underachievers by the usual cultural yardsticks—and all the early returns indicate that they will—this deficiency suggests a more interesting pattern, one that comes close to functioning as a general law in the evolution of media types. The metaforms seem so disappointing because they are taking on a symbolic task that exceeds the capacity of their medium. The new parasites remain parasites because they are, in a word, too *hot* for their environment. They float across our television screens as hints and
intimations, a glimpse of the future shrouded in the worn, restrictive garments of the past, like a Cubist body rigged together with corsets and lace. They are ghosts of technologies to come. (34)

Of course, Johnson situates the shift between television and computers, but the analogy works as well when we consider the technology of print in lieu of the television screen. Johnson alludes in passing to this relationship when discussing the Dickensian novel, with its thematic structure of associative “links” that ground virtually all development in the plot. However, he does not adequately address the medium itself, what Jerome McGann (1991) terms the “bibliographic code”: the actual physical attributes of a printed text, such as page layout, binding, gilt page edges, incorporation of plates . . . in short, how a printed text is designed. Moreover, Johnson’s theory doesn’t adequately describe the feedback loop involved in “media seepage.” In other words, it doesn’t acknowledge the mutual interaction of media and, because of this, takes on the undertone of a progressive, technologically deterministic theory. In part, this dissertation builds on Johnson’s theory by highlighting the reciprocal nature of media interaction, not only at the technical and formal levels, but also in terms of how they are inserted into culture by rhetorical theories dealing with delivery.

An extension of Johnson’s theory can be found in Jay Bolter and Richard Grusin’s Remediation (2000), which also offers a theoretical foundation for discussing shifts in technologies, although the book primarily focuses on different classes of technology (i.e., painting, film, and other visual arts, as well as virtual reality and web design). The theory of remediation is defined by the authors as “the
formal logic by which new media refashion prior media forms,” a logic comprised of two strategies: hypermediacy (which exaggerates its mediated form to the viewer) and immediacy (which hides its mediated form from the viewer) (273). Bolter and Grusin argue that the oscillation of these two strategies is the key to understanding how new media refashion old media, a phenomenon which happens not only at the technical level, but also in terms of how we “read” the medium in question. Bolter and Grusin contend that “Although each medium promises to reform its predecessors by offering a more immediate or authentic experience, the promise of reform inevitably leads us to become aware of the new medium as a medium. Thus, immediacy leads to hypermediacy. The process of remediation makes us aware that all media are at one level a ‘play of signs’, which is a lesson that we take from poststructuralist literary theory” (19). This dissertation extends Bolter and Grusin’s theory by arguing that rhetorical theories, particularly theories pertaining to delivery, are discursive methods contributing to the formal process of remediation.

Consequently, the history of media and technology is one of remediation: early photography sought to emulate the aesthetic and formal characteristics of nineteenth-century portraiture; the principles of perspectival painting inform virtual reality landscapes; modern web pages often copy the design language of graphic arts developed for the world of print. Bolter and Grusin elaborate that the phenomenon of remediation is superstructural as well, not just appearing at the level of the isolated text or media product. They write,

Furthermore, media technologies constitute networks or hybrids that can be expressed in physical, social, aesthetic, and economic terms.
Introducing a new media technology does not mean simply inventing new hardware and software, but rather fashioning (or refashioning) such a network. The World Wide Web is not merely a software protocol and text and data files. It is also the sum of the uses to which this protocol is now being put: for marketing and advertising, scholarship, personal expression, and so on. These uses are as much a part of the technology as the software itself. For this reason, we can say that media technologies are agents in our culture without falling into the trap of technological determinism. New digital media are not external agents that come to disrupt an unsuspecting culture. They emerge from within cultural contexts, and they refashion other media, which are embedded in the same or similar contexts. (19)

In short, as new technological and mediated forms enter the cultural sphere, they adopt and adapt the look and feel of established technologies as a means of negotiating that entry—at times touting their difference from what came before, at others claiming their sameness. Disclaimers to the contrary aside, critics of the remediation theory have pointed out that it, too, has a progressive character about it—a bias suggesting that the more “high-tech” a medium is, the closer it comes to mimicking reality successfully (to offer one example, Bolter and Grusin discuss the higher degree of immediacy present in virtual reality compared to the technology of perspectival painting developed during the Renaissance). To articulate the reciprocal nature of media interaction, which this project proposes, is a useful theoretical contribution to the study of media history building on the work of Bolter and Grusin.
Jay Bolter’s *Writing Space: Computers, Hypertext, and the Remediation of Print* (second ed., 2001) reapplies Bolter and Grusin’s formal theory of remediation specifically to the technologies associated with writing. Seeking to undo the divisiveness of early hypertextual scholarship in the early 1990s (scholarship which has since been characterized as over-exaggerating the distinctions between printed and electronic writing), Bolter argues that the different writing technologies owe much to each other in terms of their formal characteristics—“In short, electronic hypertext is not the end of print; it is instead the remediation of print” (46). In fact, in the chapter of *Writing Space* titled “Hypertext and the Remediation of Print,” Bolter acknowledges that this symbiotic relationship is in keeping with similar technological shifts throughout history, and that what we see in this interaction is more akin to a changing of the guard rather than a storming of the castle:

In this late age of print, the two technologies, print and electronic writing, still need each other. Print forms the tradition on which electronic writing depends, and electronic writing is that which goes beyond print. Print now depends on the electronic too, in the sense that printed materials find it necessary to compete against digital technologies in order to hold their readers. For this reason print is becoming hypermediated, as it incorporates verbal genres and gestures in self-conscious imitation of and rivalry with electronic media, especially the World Wide Web. Although at this cultural moment print still seems “simple” and “natural” in comparison with electronic hypertext, print’s ironic claim to being the natural medium of communication may not last. It seems increasingly natural to represent all sorts of information as hypertext on the World Wide Web. (46)
A consistent feature of this scholarship is the notion that new technologies have a reciprocal relationship with dominant technologies. Rather than springing fully formed into the cultural sphere and supplanting a preexisting technology, a new technology emerges in dialogue with the established technology, adopting its features and characteristics so as to appear familiar to society; for instance, early printed books initially emulated the ornate aesthetic of illuminated manuscripts. For the most part, however, the theories submitted by Bolter and Grusin, Johnson, Deibert, and others attend to the formal or technical dimensions of these technological shifts and do not explore, as Heidegger’s lesson suggests, how these technologies are represented and even given shape at the cultural level. For that, we must turn and fix our glance upon the pointing finger.

**Looking Back at the Pointing Finger: Recent Redefinitions of Rhetorical Delivery**

If, as Heidegger asserts, the essence of technology is social, then the discipline of rhetoric has historically occupied the position of gatekeeper for newly emerging technologies of writing and communication. As a means of naturalizing these new technologies, the canon of delivery proves especially useful, providing a contact zone between the most natural, unmediated vehicle of language (the body) and unnatural, foreign technologies newly appearing within the cultural sphere. This conflation between body and machine, then, serves as one of the more consistent means of remediation for writing technologies. By re-reading the canon of delivery as a
technological discourse—that is, as a mechanism by which an emergent technology gains easier acceptance within culture at large—my aim is to expand the contemporary redefinition of delivery to mean medium or extra-textual manipulation. Although new electronic and digital writing technologies may have allowed contemporary rhetorical theorists to see more clearly the connection between delivery and non-verbal texts, rhetoric has always been concerned with the manipulation of material and formal elements of non-verbal texts, as well as applying those rules back upon verbal performance under the guise of aesthetics or logics. Historically speaking, we have only recently drawn the explicit connection between this conversation about controlling the material dimensions of written texts and the fifth canon.

The canon of delivery, traditionally conceived of as those elements of oratory involving bodily gesture, countenance, and vocal inflection, has enjoyed a status within the realm of rhetoric that, at best, could be described as volatile. Delivery has been esteemed in one cultural moment, denigrated the next, and altogether ignored in another. Although sporadic interest exists today, contemporary rhetorical scholarship in English Studies has not been especially concerned with investigating the canon of delivery in an era when the written word stands as the paradigm for rhetorical performance. This professional attitude can be attributed to the lingering influence of current-traditional rhetorics developed in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries that focus primarily on the classical rhetorical canons of invention, arrangement, and
style, leaving delivery to fall under the purview of newly formed speech departments (or to simply wither away, as with the remaining rhetorical canon of memory).

John F. Reynolds’ edited collection, entitled *Rhetorical Memory and Delivery: Classical Concepts for Contemporary Composition and Communication* (1993), addresses this inattention to the entirety of classical rhetorical theory by arguing for a resurrection of the “problem canons” in contemporary rhetoric and composition on the grounds that changes in media forms and literacy practices have once again made delivery and memory viable players in the rhetorical process. Winifred Horner, in the introduction to *Rhetorical Memory and Delivery*, argues that the discipline needs to pay attention to the overlooked canons by reviving the holistic model of classical rhetoric and applying the canons to every medium of communication:

This current study recognizes that there can be no complete rhetoric without a consideration of all five of its canons. All of them—invention, arrangement, style, memory, and delivery—are necessary for a full understanding of a communication act, whether it be written, spoken, electronic, or some combination of any or all of these. This collection of chapters looks at memory and delivery as they work in synergistic relation with the other rhetorical canons and take on new importance for the study of rhetoric in the twenty-first century. (ix – x)

This call-to-arms is later reinforced when Horner enthusiastically acknowledges the influence of electronic media on rhetorical theory/practice:

A final set of questions that occurred to me as I read this volume involved the impact of electronic media on pedagogy—an essential
part of any rhetorical theory. How do the new electronic media affect our teaching, as surely they must? How will a reexamination of memory and delivery affect our courses? And, finally, what are our responsibilities as scholars and teachers? […] Our responsibility is not to turn our backs on the new media, but to respond to them—even to embrace them and to explore their infinite possibilities. (xi – xii)

Similar enthusiasm echoes from the book’s afterward, where Sheri Helsley explains the consequences of considering delivery *vis-à-vis* new media—namely, an almost fated redefinition of delivery as medium or the manipulation of extra-textual features within a particular medium. She writes,

> When we interpret delivery as presentation or secondary orality, we do important things for ourselves and our students. We restore the recursiveness and synthesis originally envisioned in the interaction of the five canons. We move into important discussions of inevitable technologies and new structures of consciousness in the electronic age. We expose our students to the power of presentation in both encoding and decoding—an issue that has been largely ignored in contemporary education. (158)

Helsley’s opinion is echoed throughout the volume, as several chapters in the Reynolds collection similarly equate delivery with medium or document presentation. In “Reconfiguring Writing and Delivery in Secondary Orality,” Kathleen Welch theorizes that resurrecting delivery will empower students by giving them the tools to analyze texts outside of the print medium. To extend her argument that electronic texts exhibit delivery in such elements as graphics and logotypes, the use of a soundtrack, or a particular video editing technique, Welch claims, “Delivery is a site
for excavating how electronic forms of discourse have changed the way that rhetoric operates now and how strong-text theorists (to use Deborah Brandt’s term from *Literacy as Involvement*) have not taken account of it. Delivery now is secondary orality in the sense that Walter J. Ong develops it in *Orality and Literacy: The Technologizing of the Word*” (22). More than simply a redefinition of delivery, Jay David Bolter’s “Hypertext and the Rhetorical Canons” argues for a reinstatement of delivery as rhetoric’s master canon. In an attempt to overturn what he sees as the monopoly of invention, arrangement, and style over print culture, Bolter theorizes that all of the classical rhetorical canons become subservient to delivery in the unique case of electronic textuality. For Bolter, the static text of the printed page has a kind of stability attached to its very existence; yet this does not hold true for hypertextual modes of writing. Here, the possibility for each individual reader to differently experience the text by following his or her own path through a network of hyperlinked text upsets the notion of a static, linear piece of writing. Bolter’s argument is ultimately a definitional one in that it outlines hypertextual writing as a discrete species of writing, distinct from more traditional written forms in terms of how author and reader interact around the text; he writes, “In electronic rhetoric, delivery once again becomes central, because the text itself is defined in the act of delivery” (99-100).

Also in the same volume, Robert Connors and Sam Dragga each examine the ways that the ethical character of the (physically absent) writer is constituted and conveyed through, respectively, the adherence to and deviation from the conventions
Connors’ “Actio: A Rhetoric of Written Delivery (Iteration Two)” describes the formalized rules accompanying the preparation of a typescript in academic culture—paper bond quality, proper typeface selection, overall cleanliness of the typescript, etc. These rules ultimately present an ethos to those who read the document, “for the realm of actio is the realm of ethos much more than logos or pathos. In presenting readers with manuscripts, writers are creating images of themselves for their readers, images that can support or sabotage their messages” (66). As with Connors, Sam Dragga also redefines delivery to mean the extratextual elements of printed texts (both alphabetic and graphical), which he also equates with issues of ethos. Dragga’s “The Ethics of Delivery,” a qualitative research report, gauges two groups’ (technical writing students and professionals) sense of the ethics of page design in technical and business-related documents. Faced with such ethically problematic situations as changing a font’s point size to make an applicant’s resume fit the required page length, having an able-bodied employee sit in a wheelchair for a recruitment brochure, or creating a chart of decreasing sales figures in reverse chronological order so that at a glance it appears a positive trajectory, these two groups rated the scenarios on a five-point scale from completely ethical to completely unethical. Although Dragga concludes that students were generally less decisive than professionals in their judgments, neither group reached “a consensus on the issues of graphic distortion and the utilization of spacing and typography to direct or divert the audience’s attention. The writing teacher’s intervention is especially critical here” (94). He concludes with a qualitative assessment of incorporating
delivery into technical writing pedagogy and rhetorical theory, saying, “By continuing to investigate the ethics of visual and typographical display and by continuing to question the ethical choices of students and professionals, writing teachers will also assure both writers and readers that the canon of delivery genuinely serves to improve the readability, usability, and memorability of human discourse” (94). Throughout the Reynolds volume, the chapters are consistent; because of the recent explosion of new electronic and digital technologies of writing, delivery no longer means simply the physical and vocal characteristics of embodied speaking, but also the formal, aesthetic, and even logical elements of a given medium of communication.

The tactic of redefining rhetorical delivery certainly doesn’t stop with the writers included in Rhetorical Memory and Delivery, nor does it begin there. In fact, as early as 1976, we can find scholarship supporting an image overhaul for delivery. William Tanner’s “delivery, Delivery, DELIVERY” begins by offering a thumbnail sketch of the history of delivery across the rhetorical tradition, which he ends by suggesting that we reconceptualize the canon so that it takes writing into account. To illustrate that delivery can be used to analyze the physical or material attributes of written texts, he refers to such typographically experimental pieces of writing as the poetry of e.e. cummings, Appolinaire, the imagist and “shape poetry” movements, among other examples.

Other scholarship expands the concept of delivery within the more traditional oratorical context by considering what influence recent electronic technologies such
as radio and television have on the rhetorical process. For example, Kathleen Hall Jamieson’s monograph *Eloquence in an Electronic Age: The Transformation of Political Speechmaking* (1988) investigates the impact of broadcast media on changing standards of eloquence for political oratory. Although primarily concerned with a paradigmatic shift in style from a more masculine, distanced formality to a more intimate, feminized discourse (or, from the “flame of oratory” to the “fireside chat”), Jamieson recognizes the importance of medium as a component of delivery. For example, Jamieson devotes the majority of an entire chapter to analyzing the use of televisual editing techniques (i.e., pans of the audience or fade-out effects), props, set design, and the like that accompanied President Reagan’s noteworthy “Parade of Heroes” speech.

Recent rhetorical scholarship that redefines delivery to mean medium was not entirely focused on producing interpretive analyses of preexisting texts as the Tanner and Jamieson examples indicate; there have also been attempts to apply that theory to the production of student texts in the composition classroom. As a rejoinder to an earlier article by Kathleen Welch that makes the simple claim that “delivery = medium,” John F. Reynolds wrote an article entitled “Classical Rhetoric and Computer-Assisted Composition: Extra-Textual Features as Delivery” for the journal *Computer-Assisted Composition* (1989). This pedagogically oriented article extends Welch’s equation to include the practice of actively preparing written documents for presentation, making delivery not only the work of textual analysis, but also of production. Reynolds justifies his practice of allowing students to manipulate font,
layout, color, and the like as they compose on word processors by claiming, “The full original power of the classical canons is restored only if they can be used for both encoding and decoding. Further, as writing teachers, we must help our students discover not merely their medium, but what to do when using that medium” (106). Even more recently, Horner’s “Reinventing Memory and Delivery” (in Inventing a Discipline: Rhetoric Scholarship in Memory of Richard E. Young, 2000) argues that delivery in print and web-based writing isn’t simply graphics and fonts, but rather the more holistic impression left on the reader of the messenger behind the message; this argument further instantiates the redefinition of delivery as medium or design by implying a fundamental connection to the writer’s ethos.

Perhaps the most persistent and influential scholar working to redefine delivery has been Kathleen Welch. Throughout her oeuvre, Welch’s message has remained remarkably consistent—revivifying all five rhetorical canons for the betterment of contemporary rhetorical theory. The rationale for bringing delivery back into the fold, Welch maintains, hinges upon the theoretical contributions of media luminaries like Marshall McLuhan and Walter Ong who see new technologies as extensions of human beings that mark a return to the oral culture that defined the rhetorical climate of antiquity. Welch writes,

Rather than limiting delivery to the physical gesture and expression that take place during speaking, we can relate it to the idea of medium. This point is made in Patrick Mahony’s article “Marshall McLuhan in the Light of Classical Rhetoric” when he reveals that the fifth canon ultimately signifies medium. Mahony states, “As a theoretician of rhetoric, McLuhan’s main contribution lies in the fact that he has
developed and broadened the fifth category of traditional rhetoric” (p.12). If delivery is regarded as medium, then the dynamics of the canon are reinvested with their original power. (Contemporary, 99)

Welch later articulates the advantages of such a reunion in the face of a proliferation of electronic media when she warns her readers that “refraining from analyzing their operations as powerful sources of delivery, the fifth canon of rhetoric, means that decoders are going to be less sophisticated in dealing with the powerful forms of the newly powerful delivery systems of electric rhetoric” (Electric 158).

By redefining the fifth canon, Welch, Reynolds, Jamieson, and others posit an intriguing connection between rhetorical delivery and technology, a connection that has contributed to a broader and renewed scholarly interest in reappropriating classical rhetorical theories for a modern praxis. Of specific concern to my interest in how older technologies have interacted with rhetorical delivery, however, is that these theories stop short of looking beyond our current moment in history. Missing from this conversation about the revolutionary impact of digital technologies on the theory and practice of rhetoric is an understanding of the cultural conditions allowing for this position to be articulable in the first instance. We are currently in an historical moment that has constructed a roughly analogous relationship between the integumental body and our technologically mediated forms of communication; such an intriguing analogy begs to be pursued further.

I argue that we can reinterpret the history of rhetorical delivery as a site of technological remediation, as part of a complex cultural network of discourses, practices, institutions, and power relations that function to naturalize a new
technology or media form so that it feels increasingly familiar to us. New theories of delivery have not yet acknowledged that this interaction between delivery and various technologies of communication occurs throughout the disciplinary history of rhetoric. To assume that digital/electronic technology has somehow “allowed” us to make such a connection—the technological tail wagging the rhetorical dog, so to speak—glosses over the various ways that delivery has functioned as a discursive and institutional validation of newly emerging technologies at various moments in Western culture. The models of formal media reciprocity established by Bolter, Grusin, Deibert, Steven Johnson, and others—as well as their attendant idea that media forms are revisions or remediations of prior forms—are useful for contextualizing delivery as a technological discourse during paradigm shifts happening across the historical landscape.

A Sidenote on Methodology

Admitting to the complications associated with viewing any phenomenon through the compressed lens of history, this study adopts an historiographical approach that foregrounds its narrative character and acknowledges the interpretive function of any historical mode of emplotment—an approach indebted to the poststructuralist view of writing history as outlined in Hayden White’s highly influential Tropics of Discourse (1978). One comparable methodological model can be found by returning to Ronald Deibert’s Parchment, Printing, and Hypermedia. Opting against a positivist or covering-law methodology, Deibert instead adopts
historical narrative as a mode of explanation for how communication technologies play into world order transformations, or broad cross-cultural epistemological shifts. As Deibert explains the process, “This mode seeks to link occurrences along a temporal dimension, tracing the variables and contingencies that were important in taking the evolutionary path down one road as opposed to another” (44). In other words, this approach to writing history is more overtly speculative and interpretive than it is causal. As the model applies to this work, I examine shifts in writing technologies as a kind of epicenter around which certain cultural discourses are emphasized—in this case, concurrent rhetorical theories of delivery. In the course of exploring why attention to delivery wanes in the face of print culture, why delivery is redefined as electronic writing technologies emerges, and so on, delivery can be read simultaneously as a sign of culture’s coming to terms with a particular technology as well as a site where that coming-to-terms is enacted.

The ultimate trajectory of the series of historical case studies examined in this dissertation suggests patterns by which epistemological shifts occur that lead to emergent technics, technologies, and media; these case studies also show how these shifts work to stabilize new technologies after their advent into the social order. By building upon the narrative of delivery re-emerging in rhetoric to become the extratextual elements of any given medium of expression established by Welch, Connors, Reynolds, and others, I argue that our contemporary moment is not unique. Rather, the role of rhetorical delivery as a remediating influence on emergent technologies of writing has been cast time and time again, each instance occurring
within a complex system of epistemological, philosophical, and political transformations, and not always in so overt a manner as we see today. Ultimately, this model puts history in the service of theory to construct an analytical lens through which to interpret our contemporary relationship with new technologies of writing and communication, particularly our efforts to make sense of them.

Chapter Two, “The Classical Transformation From Speakerly to Writerly Rhetorics,” considers the classical shifts from orality to literacy, speaking to writing, and mythos to logos as constituent parts of a continuum rather than as distinct historical breaks; by doing so, this analysis illustrates the interrelatedness of speakerly and writerly modes of rhetorical performance, thereby demonstrating how theories of delivery became increasingly subservient to standards of written expression in ancient Greece. Although historically the most attenuated canon, delivery was considered to be the most important part of rhetoric in classical times. As chirography became a growing force in ancient Greece (from the sixth to the fourth centuries, BCE), theories of oral rhetoric adapted to make room for writing as an alternate means of rhetorical performance—in fact, Aristotle denigrates delivery by calling it the “vulgar” canon of the art.

Chapter Two focuses on the tensions evident in the paradigm shift from spoken to written communication, complicating the tidy splits advocated by classical literacy scholars of orality and literacy such as Walter Ong and Eric Havelock, as well as the corresponding shifts from an epistemology of mythos to logos and thought processes of parataxis to hypotaxis. Susan Jarratt (1991), Kathleen Welch (1999),
Beth Daniell, and others criticize this “great leap” theory by pointing to the Sophistic epistemological formation of nomos (or “custom-law”) as a middle term straddling the mythos/logos divide, and an analysis of Isocratic rhetoric that considers its writerly and speakerly aspects, both of which help blend the division between oral and literate cultures.

Classical rhetorical theory accounts for this blending of oral and literate cultures in part by reassigning the technological attributes of writing back onto delivery, thereby rendering it familiar or “naturalized.” This chapter analyzes such rhetorical innovations as the invention of the Isocratic sentence and the valuation of kairos as writerly influences on speaking; the ironic Platonic interplay between the hierarchy of rhetoric and dialectic and a theory of metaphysical order informed by literate concepts of transcendence and displacement; and Aristotle’s Rhetoric, which offers an overly detailed analysis of a generalized, absent audience and suggests a shift of importance to the composition of the speech (a move which, although still focusing upon oral speech, at least implicitly treats its writerly nature). All of these innovations point to mechanisms by which writing achieved a growing cultural acceptance in Ancient Greece, in part through its translation back into speakerly modes of rhetorical performance. While writing is not an entirely separate practice from speaking, it serves as a technical extension of speech. Rather than displacing oratory as the primary means of rhetorical performance, writing first exists in a symbiotic relationship with speaking, thus allowing it to germinate, proliferate, and eventually displace oration as the primary concern of rhetoric.
Chapter Three, “Pressing Matter: The Birth of Print, the Façade of Delivery,” examines delivery’s decline in the Early Modern era within the context of a formal shift in writing technologies, from the dominant illuminated manuscript to its eventual decline roughly corresponding with the advent of the printing press in the mid-fifteenth century. This chapter explains the declining interest in delivery during medieval and early modern times as both a reflection of and a means by which writing becomes a naturalized form of communication. This chapter also offers an analytical case study of the long-influential run of Christian rhetoric (Augustine, Basevorn, etc.), in particular the idea of God’s word taking moral precedence over the ethical character of an embodied speaker (whatever that character might be), as an indication of Western culture’s growing acceptance of the handwritten word, which also set the foundation for the eventual acceptance of print.

Additionally, Chapter Three regards the development of the medieval rhetorical arts (not only preaching, but poetics and letter writing as well) as indicators of the growing dominance of writing. In keeping with this trajectory, this chapter looks at post-manuscript era rhetorics of the Renaissance, notably Ramus’s initiation of the split between form and content (a move which further buries the canon of delivery as an afterthought to style), and also explains how the rhetorics of the day correlate with the Mind / Body split initiated by Réné Descartes. In this case, it is delivery’s virtual absence, its downplayed status in rhetorical theories of the time, that helps foster print technology’s eventual hegemonic position; by denigrating the embodied, performed rhetorical act, rhetoric reinscribes that lost attention on writing.
A similarly reciprocal interaction occurs at the level of formal shifts in writing technologies. “Pressing Matter” troubles the progressive character of much of print culture scholarship (Eisenstein, Rubenstein, Febvre and Martin, etc.) by considering shifts and seepages in the design features of the Western European medieval manuscript up until and beyond the advent of the printing press in the fifteenth century. These shifts are indicative of a parallel cultural change in attitude towards textuality, from text as a physical, performative object to text as “invisible” interface through which to glimpse thought, a mindset increasingly evident in the aforementioned rhetorical treatises. The move away from manuscripts exhibiting illuminated characters, symbolic utilization of color, and incorporation of visual elements to those that were primarily colorless, text-dominant, and on cheaper grades of parchment is directly related to broader cultural phenomena of the time. Among such phenomena are an increasingly literate populace and a growing university system, fueling the demand for a wider dissemination of texts than the contemporary technological forces were capable of delivering. These shifts set the stage for the invention of Gutenberg’s press, a technic involving the incorporation of various technologies that existed long before 1450.

Chapter Four, “Harbingers of the Printed Page: Theories of Delivery in the Nineteenth Century,” is a study of the New Rhetoric (Campbell, Blair, Whately) and the elocutionary movement (Austin, Sheridan), two complementary approaches to rhetoric that incorporate an emergent, or at least an increasingly prolific, technology into the theoretical field. One way of reading the elocutionary movement in terms of
its reciprocal relation to writing, then, is not simply as a revived interest in embodied rhetorical performance but as a kind of technological support for print culture itself. As a counterpart to belletrism, elocution is similarly invested in securing the cachet of the literary word. Additionally, the innovations of the New Rhetoric (and its reverberations into the next century) which include an elaborate faculty psychology that formulates language as the natural, organic outcome of the workings of the mind, help illustrate the kinds of tension that media and philosophical changes mount on the discipline when it has to make sense of them. This tension plays out not only on the performing body, but also in the design elements of the machine-printed and handwritten page.

The distinction between these two roughly co-existing rhetorical paradigms suggests a correlation with two other broad-reaching cultural phenomena. On one hand, we have the acknowledged presence of an increasingly dominant technology (printed writing) which results in a seepage between technologies that reaches back into the already established technic of chirography as well as embodied speaking, and works to refigure their physical textuality so that handwriting and oratory adopt the formal, logical, and aesthetic attributes of machine-printed writing. As language regardless of medium becomes increasingly regarded as the transparent articulation of the mind of the writer or speaker, we also see the influence of a philosophical tradition drawing heavily upon the well-regarded Cartesian model of subjectivity that effectively bifurcates the Self into Mind and Body. This correlation becomes further structured as rhetorical theory moves into the latter half of the 19th century (Hill,
Genung, Bain), setting standards that inform American pedagogies of composition well into the 20th century. Among such standardization is the rigorous codification of the individual components of a composition—e.g., the sentence and paragraph—as organic, “natural” units of discourse.

Lastly, Chapter Five, “Delivery Redux in the Age of Digital Writing,” returns to our current moment of technological and rhetorical flux and discusses the demise of print’s hegemonic status within the context of poststructuralist rhetorical theories and the advent of hypertextual writing technologies. Looking at more recent rhetorical theories of delivery (Reynolds, Welch, Jamieson, Connors), this chapter returns to the question of why delivery has undergone a redefinition that no longer exclusively refers to the embodied rhetorical act. I consider this transformation within the context of technical developments in machine-printed and electronic forms of writing throughout the twentieth century: halftone printing, photomontage, experimental typography, computer interfaces that mimic print, and similar illustrations of how the two technologies remediate one another. In part, this chapter argues that the contemporary shift in thinking about delivery is in keeping with larger epistemological shifts in models of subjectivity, no longer an essential part of one’s being, but rather a social (and hence somewhat textualized) construct. These innovations are contextualized alongside poststructuralist rhetorics and philosophies of the twentieth century (Perelman/Olbrechts-Tyteca, Burke, Derrida, Foucault), theories that help usher in a new logic—associative, nonlinear, nonhierarchical—anticipating the hypertextual (and hyper-real) nature of digital communication. This
technical and theoretical climate creates the conditions for scholars such as Connors, 
Reynolds, and Welch to equate medium or design (disembodied rhetorical 
performance) with the heretofore embodied canon of delivery.

Today’s revived interest in and redefinition of rhetorical delivery is worth investigating for two main reasons. On one hand, a closer look at this conversation uncovers, and hence destabilizes, one of our culture’s most tenacious ideological myths about technology, that it is an all-powerful force. As Christina Haas warns us in Writing Technology, scholars studying computers in composition or literacy studies who accept the technological omnipotence myth risk becoming distracted from their critical mission to understand the critical interplay of culture, technology, and associated literacy practices. They instead participate in a conversation about the "justification for technology, rather than a serious inquiry about technology" (35).

Simply because the development of recent writing technologies allow writers to manipulate the materiality of their texts, it does not necessarily follow that the technology created such conditions; it simply made these conditions easier to realize. However we decide to reshape or redefine delivery, we should not accept uncritically the mythology that new technologies are agents dictating how we use them. We should approach such aggrandizing claims with a skeptical eye.

On the other hand, a redefined concept of the fifth canon offers us a sort of heuristic for looking back at delivery across the tradition. What if we were to apply today’s conceptualization of delivery to our interpretation of other important historical moments in the intersection of rhetoric and technologies of writing and
communication? What if we build upon our current disciplinary understanding of
delivery by locating instances where rhetorical theory has prescribed rules affecting
the material, formal dimensions of the non-verbal rhetorical event? Such questions
imply that there are dark spots on our map of the history of delivery. Answering
them provides the discipline with a clearer picture of how delivery functioned to
incorporate new writing technologies into the cultural sphere, even if those functions
were not always explicitly recognized as falling under the jurisdiction of delivery at
the time.
ENDNOTES:

1 Currently, the most thorough cross-historical research on rhetorical delivery can be found in James Fredal's unpublished dissertation "Beyond the Fifth Canon: Body Rhetoric in Ancient Greece" (1998). It extensively describes enculturated practices of oratorical delivery that predate formally codified rhetorical theories of hypokrisis in Ancient Greece and concludes with a brief comparative analysis of the nineteenth-century elocutionary movement. Additionally, Nan Johnson’s Nineteenth-Century Rhetoric in North America (1991) and Gender and Rhetorical Space in American Life, 1866-1910 (2002) both contain sections offering comprehensive explanations of the epistemological and belletristic rationales informing the nineteenth-century elocutionary tradition. H. Lewis Ulman’s Things, Thoughts, Words, and Actions: The Problem of Language in Late Eighteenth-Century British Rhetorical Theory (1994) offers an extensive linguistic/philosophical/epistemological analysis of Thomas Sheridan’s works. Kathleen Hall Jamieson’s Eloquence in an Electronic Age: The Transformation of Political Speechmaking (1990) is a thorough comparative analysis of the transformation of political oratory, specifically the shifts in style and delivery that occurs during the age of mass media, from the 1800s to the twentieth century.

2 Among these saber-rattling screeds condemning print in favor of hypertext’s liberatory artistic and political potential are Michael Joyce’s Of Two Minds (1995), George Landow’s Hypertext 2.0 (1997), and Stuart Moulthrop’s “Writing Cyberspace: Literacy in the Age of Simulacra” (1993).

3 As Ong himself defines the term in Orality and Literacy, “secondary orality” is the stage of cultural consciousness (not simply the development of technics and skills) marked by “present-day, high-technology culture, in which a new orality is sustained by telephone, radio, television, and other electronic devices that depend for their existence and functioning on writing and print” (11).

4 In addition to her article in Rhetorical Memory and Delivery, Kathleen Welch has published a number of articles dealing with the subject dating back to the late 1980s as well as two well regarded monographs: The Contemporary Reception of Classical Rhetoric: Appropriations of Ancient Discourse (1990) and Electric Rhetoric: Classical Rhetoric, Oralism, and a New Literacy (1999).

5 Although I have named a number of works dealing with the connection between delivery and medium/design, this list is by no means exhaustive (Cf. Cook, Ezell, Skopec, Skinner-Linnenberg, listed in the Bibliography). The list does, however, offer a fairly comprehensive view of this particular focus in the field and characterizes the main issues of the conversation.

6 In addition to Deibert’s book, this project is owes a conceptual debt to a rather unlikely pairing of texts: namely, Cynthia L. Selfe’s 1999 Technology and Literacy in the Twenty-First Century: The Importance of Paying Attention and Nan Johnson’s Gender and Rhetorical Space in American Life, 1866-1910 (2002). Both books deal with how a cultural phenomenon is created through discursive practice and institutional power relations—respectively, a complex doxa about technological literacy in our contemporary culture reified by the news media, government, parents, education, business, and so on; and a gender-inscribed conception of appropriate rhetorical space and subject matter in the postbellum United States supported by etiquette manuals, parlor rhetorics, letter-writing handbooks, and even physical space. One important distinction between these studies and the present one is the difference in scope; while Selfe’s and Johnson’s books study a phenomenon’s cultural construction synchronically (by examining one historical moment and looking at how a variety of sites and discourses contribute to that construction), this approach might be more properly be described as a combination of synchronic and diachronic approaches—that is, while it charts several key historical moments in the rhetorical tradition with respect to delivery, it also situates that history within a deep context of technological and cultural influences, or what Deibert has termed a “communications environment” (29).
In Ancient Greece, a culture where the majority of rhetorical acts were performed bodily, the practical and pedagogical attention afforded delivery was significant to say the least. Recall Demosthenes’ purported response in the fourth century, BCE, to the question of the three most important components of speech-making: “Delivery, delivery, delivery.”
CHAPTER 2

THE CLASSICAL TRANSFORMATION FROM SPEAKERLY TO WRITERLY RHETORICS

Figure 1. Sculpture of Demosthenes, ca. 280 B.C.E. The statue is a late Greek copy of an original by Polyeuktos. It portrays the Attic orator Demosthenes in a realistic rather than idealized style, a characteristic of Hellenistic portrait sculpture (Smith). Additionally, the copy includes a scroll not present in the original work. The statue thus serves as an example of remediation, in this case an oblique instance of how writing refashioned speech in Ancient Greece.

In the middle of the fourth century, B.C.E., Ancient Greece found itself at a technological crossroads of sorts. Literally, a rhetorical changing of the guard began to take place between the first two technes of language production at this particular
historical moment.¹ For much of the rhetorical tradition up until this point, delivery—or hypokrisis (translated as acting), the part of rhetoric concerned primarily with vocal inflections and bodily gesture—was central to the process.² Along with the repurposing of alphabetic writing—not for simple bookkeeping or accounting as the Phoenicians used it, but for artistic and rhetorical purposes—chinks start to form in the armor of the fifth canon. The sculpture of Demosthenes opening the chapter (Fig. 1) aptly depicts this change in attitude toward delivery and writing applied to the person of one of delivery’s early champions. The original bronze work portrayed the orator with his hands clasped instead of holding a scroll as he is in the marble copy (Smith). A curious anachronism, the scroll is in fact a copyist's addition, and moreover, a reinscription of the power of writing upon the orator’s body. In a rhetorical domain where the word is no longer necessarily spoken, where it is capable of transcending time and space because of the technological achievement of alphabetic writing, where the result of writing is to “split apart thought and action,” delivery simply does not matter as much as it once did (McLuhan 22). This chapter examines how attitudes towards delivery changed as the technology of writing gained increasing cultural currency in Ancient Greece.

To speak properly of developments in technologies of writing at any given historical moment, it is first necessary to define what is meant when the term “technology” is used, especially as it is so often used in the reductive sense to mean the technics or machinery associated with a particular activity. Technology, of course, means more than the attendant hardware: it also includes the uses to which the
hardware is put, the emerging culture surrounding such uses (i.e., academic disciplines, artisan communities, trade guilds), the artifacts of those cultures, and so on. In Writing Spaces, Jay David Bolter argues that when discussing a particular technology, we should take into account the surrounding context of the technology’s material dimension. Of writing specifically, Bolter states,

The very materiality of writing binds writing firmly to human practices and therefore to cultural choices. The technical and the cultural dimensions of writing are so intimately related that it is not useful to try to separate them: together they constitute writing as a technology. The technology of ancient writing is not only the papyrus, the ink, and the technologies of making book rolls; it is also the styles and genres of ancient writing and the social and political practices of ancient rhetoric. (19)

In particular, this chapter explores the reciprocal dynamic between the technic of alphabetic writing and the developing discipline of rhetoric in Ancient Greece—central to this exploration is the effect that writing’s growing prominence has on theories of delivery. For some, George Kennedy being among them, the very existence of rhetoric is the result of the influence of written composition. Kennedy’s concept of letteraturizzazione, which he defines as the tendency of rhetoric to become less interested in primary oral discourse and more interested in secondary textual forms, is a necessary element for conceptualizing rhetoric, changing it from a mere practice of oratory to a self-aware discipline with its own set of codified rules (15-17). Richard Enos as well notes that the introduction of written composition in Ancient Greece, typically treated by historians as an after-thought for rhetoric,
“occurring long after systems of oral communication were firmly established,” was in fact an essential force in creating rhetoric. Enos claims “that oral and written systems of composition were in operation long before rhetoric was recognized as a discipline, that they inextricably evolved to establish rhetoric, and that their persistent unity helped secure its popular reception and perpetuation” (x).

The evolution of rhetoric into a discipline, however, is not simply the passive end result of the cultural interplay between speaking and writing. It can also be interpreted as an active cultural force that helps instantiate writing as an increasingly relevant form of communication in Ancient Greece. I maintain that this instantiation is accomplished through processes we can understand as a specific type of remediation, an extension of the theory of media interaction posited Jay Bolter and Richard Grusin. For Bolter and Grusin, remediation involves the dialectical interplay of “immediacy” (the tendency of a media form to emulate reality, such as the three-dimensional effect produced when one views a photograph through a nineteenth-century stereoscope) and “hypermediacy” (the tendency of a media form to foreground its mediated characteristics, as in the multimedia barrage of text, computer graphics, and televisuals comprising any given moment on CNN) between old and new media forms. Whereas Bolter and Grusin’s theory is primarily concerned with this interaction at the formal level—the interface design of a given text—I argue that we extend this logic to address more broadly the social and technological contexts within which such an interaction occurs: the cultural practices, discourses, and institutions supporting such media forms. Specifically, the
remediation of written and spoken forms of discourse in Ancient Greece helps facilitate the cultural acceptance of writing as an emergent technology of communication. As I argue throughout this dissertation, the process of remediation does not occur only at the formal level. Mechanisms of remediation are also at work in the wider technological context, specifically the theoretical and practical dimensions of rhetoric as it evolves as a discipline alongside the growing presence of alphabetic writing.

Generally speaking, classical rhetorical theory both contributed to and reflected the remediation of oral and literate cultures in Ancient Greece. These processes of remediation reassigned the technological attributes of writing back onto oratory, and thereby rendered writing familiar or “naturalized” because of its resemblance to the more culturally situated discursive medium of embodied speaking. This chapter offers an analysis of several innovations in classical rhetorical theory that interprets them as mechanisms of remediation that facilitate the cultural acceptance of writing. Specifically, this chapter considers such key moments in classical rhetorical theory as: 1) the invention of the Isocratic sentence as well as Isocrates’ concept of kairos, both of which can be viewed as writerly influences on speaking; 2) Plato’s exploration of the dynamic between rhetoric and dialectic in addition to his metaphysical theory informed by literate concepts of transcendence and displacement, as seen in a number of his dialogues; and 3) Aristotle’s Rhetoric, which analyzes in great detail a generalized, absent audience, suggesting a shift in emphasis from the performance to the composition of a speech, a move which,
although still focused upon oral speech, implicitly treats its writerly nature. These innovations in classical rhetoric contributed to a changing communications environment in Ancient Greece, one in which writing became an increasingly accepted technology. Such an achievement is reached in part through writing’s translation back into speakerly modes of rhetorical performance, where writing could shed the look-and-feel of its own interface and become invisible. The invisible influence of writing on speech effectually created a hidden theory of delivery that, once applied to spoken rhetorical performance, naturalized writing. As writing increasingly influenced or supplemented oratory, delivery began to matter less and less in the overall rhetorical process, and in some cases (as with Aristotle) was even viewed with outright disdain.

The shift from speakerly to writerly rhetoric around fourth-century Athens certainly did not happen overnight. In fact, it might be more accurate to describe the shift from oral to literate culture as a “transformation,” adopting Kenneth Burke’s sense of the term. For Burke, a transformation is a long-term, overarching change affecting the social, philosophical, and political dimensions of a culture, a steady process wherein “the position at the start can eventually be seen in terms of the new motivations encountered enroute” (422). In other words, instead of experiencing the culture shock of a new technology suddenly and violently overthrowing the old regime, the people of Ancient Greece lived through a period of steady change that appeared to be the natural progress of things; writing and speaking co-existed in a reciprocal dynamic. During this particular historical moment, writing was not an
entirely separate activity from speaking, and it even served as a technical extension of speech. Rather than displacing oratory as the primary means of rhetorical performance, writing first existed in a kind of symbiosis with speaking in the rhetorical process, which allowed it to germinate and eventually take the place of oration as the primary concern of rhetoric.

This chapter reads the transformations in classical Greece—from orality to literacy, speaking to writing, and mythos to logos—as constituent parts of a densely reciprocal network rather than as distinct historical breaks to demonstrate the interrelatedness of speakerly and writerly modes of rhetorical performance and how they remediate one another in both theory and practice. This reading builds upon the well-established conversation among classical literacy scholars such as Ignace Gelb, Eric Havelock, and Walter Ong, who claim that orality and literacy are discrete, separate states of consciousness, and revisionist rhetorical historiographers such as Susan Jarratt, C. Jan Swearingen, and Beth Daniell, who argue for an orality/literacy continuum. As chirography became a growing force in ancient Greece from the sixth to the fourth centuries, BCE, theories of oral rhetoric adapted to make room for writing as an alternate means of rhetorical performance. The transformation from speakerly to writerly rhetoric—precisely because it applies the formal, logical, and aesthetic imprimatur of the new writing technology back onto the already familiar mode of embodied, verbal speech—results in the growing cultural acceptance of writing as a “natural” mode of communication. Simultaneously, writing initially needed to latch onto the already-established cultural position of speech to grow into a
mature technology of communication. In other words, by applying writerly elements
to speech and vice versa, by conflating the two mediums to the point that their
distinctions blurred, the unique interface of writing becomes invisible, a transparent
window into “unadulterated” language. By illustrating how theories of delivery
became increasingly subservient to standards of written expression in ancient Athens,
this chapter uncovers a pattern of remediation that happens, not only at the level of
form or technics, but also within the institutional realm of rhetoric (as both theory and
practice), and across the history of the discipline. Examining the processes of
remediation pertaining to Greek rhetorical theory will best be served after first
discussing the communications environment in Ancient Greece within which those
theories emerged. Such contextualization is necessary to foster a clearer
understanding of how speech and writing interacted in Greek life, as well as how that
interaction is both passively reflected in and actively fostered by the more localized
site of rhetoric.

**Mapping Out the Communications Environment in Ancient Greece: General
Development in Chirographic Technology**

Examining the various processes of remediation only within the newly
developing discipline of classical rhetoric gives us an incomplete picture of how
verbal speech and chirography interacted with one another as the Greeks became an
increasingly literate culture. A more complete picture can be drawn by considering
the broader cultural context into which writing and speech were inserted, a composite
image comprised of specific material and technical circumstances, sociopolitical
structures, educational practices, and so forth. Therefore, before looking at how classical rhetorical theory remediated written and oral discourse so that the two forms began to increasingly resemble and depend upon one another, I will briefly discuss the historical developments of writing as a technological and cultural phenomenon in Ancient Athens, circa fifth century, BCE.

My rationale for choosing this specific period as central to the development of a technology and culture of writing is based upon the argument framed by Kathleen Welch in *A Short History of Writing Instruction* (1990). Writing in its various forms, from Sumerian cuneiform to Egyptian heiroglyphics, has existed for over five millennia, but as Welch remarks in “Writing Instruction in Ancient Athens After 450 B.C.,” fifth-century Athens is an important milieu in writing’s history because it marks the first known instance of systematic instruction, a legitimate birthplace of Western literacy. Welch claims, “Instruction in language formed a center of systems of education in Athens after 450 B.C., systems that in various guises provided some structures for Western education for about 2500 years” (1). Consequently, the technics, techniques, and technology associated with writing underwent such significant developments during this period that it is particularly deserving of scrutiny.

In *The Origin of Writing*, Roy Harris comments on the futility of trying to “objectively” historicize writing, claiming “our carefully cultivated European awareness of languages as unique chronological continuities, each carrying and embodying its own cultural inheritance, has fostered from Greco-Roman antiquity
onward a recurrent tendency to suppose that basic questions concerning language can be given merely historical answers” (159). Indeed, the question of the origin of writing is something of a canard, as it assumes a cohesiveness of cultural and technological factors and does not account for their complex interplay. Rather than embark down the potentially treacherous path of suggesting a linear historical development of chirographic technology, I shall instead briefly describe the technological and cultural dimensions of the scene in question, drawing upon a number of works that treat the subject of writing history and literacy development in greater detail.6

Historians and literacy scholars commonly designate the eighth century BCE as the point when the Greek alphabet was initially established.7 This period comes a great deal later than the establishment of written systems in Egyptian, Sumerian, and Phoenician cultures some three thousand years earlier (the Phoenicians are commonly believed to be the most direct influence on the Greek alphabet because of their trade relations), but the Greeks were the first chirographic culture to significantly extend the cultural reach of writing practices (Ong 90).8 Originally developed for pragmatic reasons related to mercantilism, such as keeping trade records, inventory, and the like, the Greeks began to repurpose their new technology for other uses over the next few centuries. Slowly, the literacy profile of fifth century Greek culture (Athens, of course, central to that culture) began to form, with writing serving civic, scholarly, and artistic functions in addition to its long-held economic role. In fifth-century Greece, writing was used for such varied tasks as archiving rhapsodes, creating stage
drama, transmitting legal codes, composing speeches for oral delivery (logography), and theorizing about matters of philosophical importance (Enos 23; Welch 9). Along with these different purposes for writing came different technological needs. These needs were addressed by a concurrent expansion of the technics and materials associated with writing in and around the fifth century, BCE.

The most public forms of writing, monuments, memorials, and other politically-oriented messages, were of course inscribed in marble steles, stone pillars, or hard clay tablets with the aid of simple metal chisels (Enos 54). While materials such as papyrus, which had been around since the Egyptians developed it several millennia before, were rather costly and hence used for more official writing tasks, lower class literates likely used fragments of pottery, called ostraca, for keeping records of family inventories, genealogies, and the like. The classical historian H.I. Marrou describes the hodgepodge of tools used for scribal instruction at all levels of Greek education that, in addition to the aforementioned ostraca, included the wooden frame filled with a thin layer of wax that was written on with a wooden stylus and could be smoothed out repeatedly. Wooden boards were also written on directly with ink pens that worked either as reservoirs or simple applicators. Pens were fashioned from specially carved wooden styli, bone, or hollow reeds and the ink was derived from powdered plants and minerals mixed with water, bad wine, and other appropriate liquids (Marrou 155).
The systematic approach to teaching writing in fifth-century Athens that Welch describes was a mechanical, cumulative process quite unlike the simple mimetic approaches used in previous writing cultures. As such, it served to abstract language from the physical body, creating the conditions necessary for establishing a truly literate society, scholars such as McLuhan, Havelock, or Ong would argue. This system of instruction, in very literal ways, put writing before speech (this would lead to Jacques Derrida’s provocative claim that writing precedes speech in a metaphysical sense as well). It also created an institutionalized space wherein writing and speech became conflated, creating ideal conditions for remediation that would allow writing to transform into a more natural, more fully integrated part of the communications environment of ancient Athens.

As Welch explains, young (usually) male pupils typically began their writing instruction by practicing the individual letters of the Greek alphabet, spending pages on a single letter and occasionally guided physically by the instructor. Having sufficiently learned the alphabet, pupils would then incrementally progress to syllables and simple words to sentences and short paragraphs (Welch 11). These smaller drills evolved as the pupil’s skill improved, until eventually he would graduate to a dictation class, writing down the master’s recitations of well-known passages of prose and epic poetry (12). Such exercises contributed to the formal remediation of both speech and writing. In one sense, the act of writing is validated by virtue of its ability to emulate the long-established products of both oral and written culture; in another, writing also supports or perpetuates the cultural prestige of
oral discourse itself. Citing Tony Lentz, Welch argues that the period in question is the first time writing becomes a central cultural force, a position achieved by intimately connecting it with oral traditions. She writes, “In *Orality and Literacy in Hellenic Greece*, Lentz argues that oral and written discourse competed with each other in ways that strengthened each” (12). Welch continues by providing a quotation from Lentz:

> The very teaching of grammar… demonstrates the tension between oral and written culture. Students do learn to write, but first they learn the systems of sounds the writings will represent. The system of sound they are taught, in turn, owes its existence to the awareness of abstractions fostered by writing. (12)

Welch contends that it was specifically “the intertwining of speaking and writing had helped to bring about the large educational changes of this period” (12). I would add that such an intertwining also strengthened the bond between speech and writing as *media*, where implicit, deeply embedded connections linking the two modes of discourse are reinforced through the repetition of systematic instruction.

Of course, writing practices only began in the classrooms of Ancient Athens. We gain a better understanding of the remediation of both speech and writing by considering the scope of these practices and how they brought chirography into traditionally oral spaces, spaces where delivery was often prized. It is important to note that writing did not initially displace speaking as the hegemonic form of communication, but instead was used in ways that augmented or extended the cultural power of speech. For instance, Richard Enos stresses the point that the development of Ancient Greek writing practices within a late-stage oral culture was a
transformation and not a distinct shift from a pre-literate to a literate state—in other words, a reciprocal dynamic of remediation. In *Greek Rhetoric Before Aristotle*, Enos charts a transformation of the function of writing from one of archiving (i.e., oral poetry set down after the fact) to one of composition (logography, or the practice of writing out a speech before delivery). Enos explains that the kind of writing associated with rhapsodic poetics, echoing the oral Homeric tradition itself, typically valued monolithic constructs such as virtue over vice, simple cultural ethics set to verse and transmitted through repetition. By contrast, Enos looks to the early logographer Herodotus (ca. fifth century, BCE), who created historiographic accounts of events such as the battle at Marathon with prose that was less a chronicling of events and more a directed, interpretive account which inherently posits an explanation and judgment of why such happenings occurred (39). Enos stresses that Herodotus’s accounts, which often included spoken testimony and quotations from epic poems, were meant to persuade readers by contextualizing events rather than transmit universally accepted proofs. For Enos, the practice of logography constitutes a middle ground between the speakerly world of the epic poets and the writerly world of early rhetoricians because it often incorporates the styles, purposes, and techniques of both traditions. He writes that the “same aesthetic qualities of epic poetry which so captured Greek listeners for centuries were evident also in historical writing because of its strong ties with rhetoric” (27).
We might read logography, then, as a space or practice of remediation, in that it creates a reciprocal dynamic between speakerly and writerly modes of discourse by combining the two so that they mutually reinforce each other. In other words, just as the already-established mode of oratorical practice influenced the very act of writing itself (writing as a reflective transcription of what was spoken, in part reinforcing speakerly forms), the newly emerging technology of writing remediated oratorical practice by transforming the formal, aesthetic, and logical dimensions of speaking. As Enos argues, these forms of discourse constitute nascent rhetorical activity in classical Greece that often gets overlooked when we consider rhetoric as the by-product of Kennedy’s *letteraturizzazione*. The forms of civic discourse that we commonly identify with the origin of rhetoric—Aristotle’s deliberative, forensic, and epideictic offices—are but systematic, disciplinized descendents of earlier forms which took shape because of the interplay of spoken and written discourse. Once rhetoric earned its own *bona fides* as a discipline, it would continue in its persuasive designs, treating logic, reason, and word-based arguments as more culturally valued rhetorical strategies than a passionately delivered oration. Basically, rhetoric begins to develop a pro-writing bias, privileging mental aptitude over bodily modes of persuasion, even when concerned with oratorical performance. As a consequence, delivery begins to lose its status as the premiere canon of the rhetorical process.

Lest the impression lingers that the transformation from an oral culture to a literate one is the result of technological determinism—that is, the direct cause of the technological innovation of alphabetic writing in Ancient Greece—it should be
stressed that technology is but part of a complex dynamic of forces, power relations, and ways of thinking. Just as technology has a discernible effect upon a given culture, it is also subject to the anticipations and reconfigurations brought about by larger epistemological transformations—in Ancient Greece, such factors include the development of new types of spoken arts, new philosophical theories about the metaphysical makeup of the cosmos, the influence resulting from trade relations with other cultures, as well as changes in political structure. A technology emerges into a cultural sphere not entirely of its own accord, not fully realized, but because new ways of thinking, knowing, and doing create the conditions for a new technology to emerge. As Steven Johnson contends, cultures anticipate new technologies long before they are capable of articulating them (34). The theories explaining the epistemological transformation of ancient Greece into a literate culture have sparked much heated debate over just this point. Is the move from orality to literacy a great divide, a dramatic shift along a continuum brought on entirely by the catalyst of alphabetic writing? Or is it instead the result of a rich interplay of discursive modes that reshape one another based upon how they circulate in Greek culture? I argue for the second option, and in so doing, I extend the recent historiographic work in rhetoric and literacy studies by recasting the issue within the framework of cultural remediation. Specifically, the revisionist work done by Susan Jarratt, Kathleen Welch, Shirley Brice Heath, Beth Daniell, and other historians/theorists in response to the classicist orality/literacy dichotomy establishes a perspective that unsettles the “Great Leap” theories, an important move because it recharacterizes the divide by
insisting that there is conceptual overlap between oral and literate states of consciousness. Building from that perspective, I maintain that we can better understand how rhetoric remediated alphabetic writing in ancient Greece, because rhetoric was arguably the main site that fostered the conceptual overlap. As theoretical discourse, physically embodied practice, and an institution of cultural power, Greek rhetoric blended together the attributes of writing and speaking in ways that transcended formal or technical processes of remediation.

The well-known works of classical literacy scholars such as Eric Havelock, Ignace Gelb, Walter Ong, and others established a paradigmatic narrative shaping how we discuss the advent of alphabetic writing in Ancient Greek culture that, deserved or not, oversimplified this dynamic by casting writing in the role of protagonist, the active agent in transforming Greek consciousness.\textsuperscript{12} The Australian technology theorist Darren Tofts offers a critique of this narrative in \textit{Memory Trade: A Prehistory of Cyberspace} (1998). In it, Tofts describes what critics generally refer to as the “great leap” theory of literacy, claiming that, “the invention of writing is usually acclaimed for its crucial and decisive role in the development of civilized, technologically advanced, and culturally rich polities” (40). Tofts cites Havelock’s characterization of writing as an “historical accident” in \textit{Origins of Western Literacy} to illustrate the drastic, transformative power of writing, which stands squarely apart from the more biologically natural speech. Havelock says that the “habit of using written symbols to represent such speech is just a useful trick which has existed over too short a span of time to have been built into our genes. […] In short, reading man,
as opposed to speaking man, is not biologically determined. He wears the appearance of a recent historical accident” (Havelock 12). Tofts concludes that although Havelock acknowledges the importance of writing, his argument is inflected by a fear of the technology’s ability to quickly alter culture, shown by Havelock’s emphasis on the stark differences between speech and writing:

The identification of *homo litteratus* as a “historical accident” suggests a drastic transformation. Furthermore, the idea of writing as something that is not “biologically determined” takes this transformation into the realm of mutation, of grafting, of implantation. The ontological opposition between organic and machine, human and technological, is implicit in Havelock’s “cautionary account of the origins of literacy.” (39)

Tofts also cites Walter Ong’s *Orality and Literacy* to show further how classical literacy scholars have underscored the differences between speaking and writing. Tofts claims that a central issue to analyzing the relationship of writing to epistemology has been “an assessment of the turbulent history of writing, and the tensions engendered by its infiltrations into cultures where the spoken word was the only form of communication” (39). Tofts quotes Ong in order to illustrate how his understanding of literacy is in distinct contradistinction to orality:

A deeper understanding of pristine or primary orality enables us better to understand the new world of writing, what it truly is, and what functionally human beings really are: beings whose thought processes do not grow out of simply natural powers but out of those powers as structured, directly or indirectly, by the technology of writing. Without writing, the literate mind would not and could not think as it does, not only when engaged in writing but normally even when it is
composing its thoughts in oral form. More than any other single invention, writing has transformed human consciousness. (qtd. in Tofts, 39)

In the highly influential *Orality and Literacy*, Ong makes similar totalizing claims that he lays at the feet of writing: “We know that formal logic is the invention of Greek culture after it had interiorized the technology of alphabetic writing, and so made a permanent part of its noetic resources the kind of thinking that alphabetic writing made possible” (Ong 52).

The great leap narrative suggests that alphabetic writing as a material practice so permeated the sensorium, implanting itself almost virally into the genetic sequence of speaking man, it inevitably changed the mental structure of the Greeks so that instead of being social in nature, they became noetic beings, concerned with the interiority of the mind. A provocative and hence tenacious narrative, it was popular for much of the twentieth century since the work of Ignace Gelb in the late 1950s. This paradigm basically went unchallenged until the late 1980s, when a new group of scholars emerged who would build upon and complicate the narrative in ways that unsettled the great leap theory, specifically by demonstrating an interplay among the epistemological and psychological conditions that accompany speech and writing. Central among this scholarship is Susan Jarratt’s *Rereading the Sophists* (1991), which argues for a resurrection of the classical Sophistic tradition within the history of rhetoric. Jarratt takes issue with the orality/literacy or mythos/logos divisions as they have predominantly been characterized, claiming, “These two historical models share the assumption that certain mental operations, specifically an elaborated
syllogistic logic and the introspection or critical distance presumed necessary for such logic, are not possible within an ‘oral’ or ‘mythic’ consciousness” (31). Jarratt goes on to explain why such a foundational assumption is flawed, and how a closer look at the sophistic rhetorical tradition productively blurs suspect dividing lines:

That the advent of writing initiates significant changes in the way humans think and act cannot be denied. But certain assumptions about the independent status and function of narrative and rational argument at separate moments in history can be fruitfully complicated by the introduction of rhetoric into the historical picture. [...] At one end of the historical continuum, we find argument and introspection in the epic; at the other, we examine the role of myth in sophistic contributions to the rational revolution. Relocating the sophists and rhetoric in the “progress” from orality to literacy will work against the historical view of rhetoric bursting out abruptly as a rough-and-ready practice in the fifth century, to be fully realized as a theory only by the next generation. [...] A sophistic reading of these classical materials may disrupt the smooth, unidirectional historical flow from mythos to logos, complicating discrete categories of rational and “literary” discourse. (31-2)

In The Contemporary Reception of Classical Rhetoric, Kathleen Welch likewise cautions against structuring the great leap narrative too simplistically because it risks becoming unquestioned doxa in the field. She prefers to underscore that the bifurcated theory, for her, functions as a kind of analytical shorthand which shouldn’t preclude one from considering the overlapping mentalities behind oral and literate culture. Welch explains the distinction of her position:
When one first studies the intermingling in the orality/literacy/secondary orality hypothesis, a natural resistance can occur because it may seem rather far-fetched, or too neat. […] Sweeping claims can frequently lead to the settling of unsettlable problems and the closure of inquiry and dialectic. The analogy in this context acts as a tentative beginning for the analysis of burgeoning literacy and burgeoning secondary orality. (151-52)

Even before Welch and Jarratt weighed in on the orality/literacy debate, the journal *PRE/Text* devoted an entire issue to discussing the matter in 1986, a salvo aimed at disrupting the tidy dichotomy. In the preface to this collection, guest editor Jan Swearingen cast the orality/literacy debate in militaristic overtones, initiated in part by the over-simplification of the dichotomy with respect to the Ebonics controversy and how best to teach “standard” written English to speakers of Black English. Swearingen maintains that “Once ‘oral’ came to be equated with ‘deficient’ in terms of the ‘literate’ standard taught in school the literacy/orality wars were underway” (117). She continues by saying that “As in any pitched, heated debate, the literacy/orality wars consist of accusation and invective, defense and refutation, doctrine and judgment” (118). In this influential *PRE/Text* issue, Beth Daniell’s “Against the Great Leap Theory of Literacy” offers perhaps the most biting critique of the theory (and even coins the moniker), claiming that it resorts to hyperbole when characterizing differences in oral and literate consciousnesses:

I prefer to call it the Great Leap theory because, according to this view, literacy brings about a “great leap” in the minds of human beings. The Great Leap perspective claims, in essence, that literacy actually causes fundamental changes in human cognition and that
these cognitive changes then bring about alterations not only in the consciousness of individuals but also in cultures. I do not intend to imply that proponents of the Great Leap theory believe that these changes come quickly. Rather, this term seems to me to capture the cognitive distance between literate persons and oral persons which this model presumes. (182)

Daniell offers what she sees as a more responsible theoretical schema that not only moves beyond the Great Leap theory, it even goes so far as to complicate the notion of a unified continuum. Aligning herself with Shirley Brice Heath, Daniell writes that “the notion of a single continuum omits such factors as the functions and uses of the discourse, the situation in which the discourse occurs, the cultural norms for the construction of the discourse, and the personal motives of speaker or writer” (185). A more useful model than the Great Leap theory, Daniell goes on to proclaim, “is to regard orality and literacy as two continua, two traditions that meet, intersect, and cross in specific human situations” (185).

Such revisionist moves are important to consider for this study, as they demonstrate the *reciprocal* dynamic between orality and literacy and how they work to refashion each other, not simply at the formal level, but at the level of cultural consciousness and epistemology. The mentalities and practices associated with writing and speaking were not discrete to each medium, but instead overlapped into both, and in so doing contributed to the refashioning of each. Expanding upon the work of scholars such as Jarratt, Welch, and Daniell, I argue that we can consider rhetorical theory *itself* as part of the cultural process of remediation, one that operates on a level distinct from the formal or technical. In other words, rhetoric is not only a
passive means by which writing enters culture, but it also actively helps writing become an increasingly invisible component of the media landscape by virtue of enfolding speakerly and writerly qualities together in prescribed oratorical performance. As emerging rhetorical theories in fifth- and fourth-century Greece began to challenge delivery’s status as the central canon of the rhetorical process, these same theories also articulated concepts that remediated oral discourse by applying burgeoning elements of alphabetic writing back upon the speaking body—creating, in effect, a hidden theory of delivery.

The Burkan transformation from orality to literacy was not simply the result of technical evolution. It was brought about in large part through rhetorical theory and practice, which put the technology to specific uses. In Understanding Media, McLuhan famously asserts, "The effects of technology do not occur at the level of opinions or concepts, but alter sense ratios or patterns of perception steadily and without resistance" (18). I would argue that technology does in fact take shape at the level of opinions and concepts as well, that societies often make deliberate and conscious decisions regarding how technology permeates their daily lives. The social and technological factors mentioned above—the invention of an entirely phonetic alphabet, systematic writing instruction, the development or refinement of a variety of writing instruments, the growth of writing practices that involved dictation or transcription, and even logography, which often combined elements of oral discourse with the analytic or interpretive elements of written discourse—contributed to the remediation of chirography in Ancient Greece by creating a communications
environment wherein writing increasingly played a central role, both as an isolated activity and as a supplement to speaking. Such conditions allowed a reciprocal dynamic to develop between speech and writing, where each employed the formal, aesthetic, and logical features of the other in order to conflate the line separating the two mediums. By expanding, augmenting, and even replacing the functions of oral discourse, writing became a gradually more naturalized technology, thanks in large part to a developing epistemology that abstracted language, removing it conceptually from the performing body.

The major rhetorical theories that developed in and around the fifth century also played an important role in facilitating the cultural acceptance of writing. Moreover, how these theories treat the canon of delivery is central to this process. Not only do we see delivery’s status begin to decline during this period, but we also see a hidden theory of delivery develop that incorporates formal, material elements of writing back into oratory and in effect naturalizes writing by conflating it with embodied performance, thus rendering its interface invisible. In the following section, I discuss these paradigmatic changes in classical rhetorical theory, particularly how those changes contribute to the remediation of speech and writing, in greater detail.

The Waxing Status of Rhetoric and the Waning Repute of Delivery

It is undoubtedly the best-known comedy bit in the entire history of rhetoric. Some time during the fourth century, BCE, the great Attic orator Demosthenes was
allegedly asked to list the three most important aspects of an oration. Adopting his best Henny Youngman impersonation, he responds, “Delivery, delivery, delivery.” Apocryphal? Perhaps, but it demonstrates the high esteem in which the fifth canon was held during the very early days of rhetoric.

By contrast, in Book Three of Aristotle’s *Rhetoric* (ca. 350 B.C.E), delivery suffers a more defamatory treatment; although Aristotle admits that it is a necessary component of oratory, he positions it as the “vulgar” canon of the art, adding that speakers skilled in delivery win the day owing to political defects in the audience (216-220). How are we to account for the discrepancy in how these Ancient Athenian rhetoricians viewed the canon of delivery? What causes delivery to be viewed as the king of the canonical hill in one instance and the lowly position of whipping boy in the other?

In short, the answer partially lies with the arrival of alphabetic literacy and the development of writing, an arrival that consequently brings about a shift in how the Greeks viewed language as a material product of their culture. With the advent and codification of writing practices, words themselves begin to take on a kind of power that begins to eclipse their embodied, vocalized form; ironically, written words develop *a priori* status. Marshall McLuhan commented on this birth of logocentrism and its accompanying shift in associated cultural values in *The Gutenberg Galaxy*, where he writes, “The interiorization of the technology of the phonetic alphabet translates man from the magical world of the ear to the neutral visual word” (18). With that perceived neutrality, McLuhan notes, comes a systemic distrust of how
words are put into action by the body. Delivery came to be viewed as a distraction from the “purity” of the message encoded in the words themselves.

As the scholars who argue for a more complex interpretation of the orality/literacy dichotomy demonstrate, chirography did not immediately and decisively displace speech as the central mode of communication in Western culture. Winifred Bryan Horner reminds us of this point, claiming, “Writing in fact did not become deeply interiorized until the nineteenth or twentieth century. For centuries after the advent of writing and the invention of print, Western culture was still basically oral, and as late as the seventeenth century most of the population was illiterate” (177). Rather, as Enos and others have pointed out, alphabetic writing initially served as a supplement to or an aid for speech in ancient Greek culture, and it developed for centuries within speakerly contexts to become an integral part of the oral composition process:

To think that when rhetoric reached the status of a discipline in the fifth century B.C. its nature was oral and that writing systems were subsequent (and derivative) is to ignore centuries of the interrelated evolution of oral and written composition that provided the heuristics that made rhetoric (therefore) disciplinary. Ancient Greeks saw applications of rhetoric for both oral and written expression not as accidental but rather as consequential; for all practical purposes, they viewed the relationship as univocal. (139)

Because of this conceptual overlap, the relatively new technology of writing was subject to the aesthetic, logical, and formal dimensions of an already established oral culture. This interplay would allow writing to be subsumed more easily into the
communication environment of ancient Greece because of its resemblance to the comparatively more natural discursive medium of speech. In fact, it was often the case that knowing the technology and being considered literate were two separate conditions, “since reading aloud was common and most writing was dictated to a scribe” (Horner 176). That this symbiotic relationship between speech and writing would over time transform so that speech also became affected by the aesthetic, logical, and formal elements of writing is a central assumption behind the theory of remediation posited by Bolter and Grusin. For just as embodied speech reconfigured writing in Ancient Greece—its purpose, its look and feel—so that it resembled oral discourse, writing exerted increasing influence over embodied speech, reconfiguring its very materiality in ways that go unacknowledged. This transformation constitutes a hidden theory of delivery, a theory contingent upon rendering the chirographic interface a transparent, natural part of the communications environment. When discussing the interplay of media at the formal level, Bolter and Grusin term this phenomenon “immediacy,” the logic of remediation where a media form attempts to emulate reality. As I argue throughout this dissertation, however, we can extend the analytical scope of remediation and apply the concept more broadly to the theoretical discourse surrounding how speech and writing get put into practice: in a word, rhetoric. Hence, a necessary part of this process of remediation, apart from the formal interplay and in the realm of rhetorical theorization, was to minimize delivery itself. In effect, this minimization further blurred distinctions between the two modes
of discourse by downplaying the importance of a rhetorical canon whose very existence designated embodied speaking as its own unique species of communication.

In William Tanner’s survey on delivery in rhetorical treatises, he writes that delivery, although important, “received no treatment in classical rhetoric until post-Aristotelian times” and that “the oldest surviving theory of delivery comes from the author of Ad Herrenium [circa 80 BCE]” (23). Tanner’s claims belie a decided bias towards writing, however, as he doesn’t consider the extent to which delivery was a vital part of the pre-theorized rhetorical tradition. Before rhetoric existed as such—that is, as an actual, codified discipline rather than as a cultural habitus or as an informally taught performative skill—delivery was considered to be a much stronger component, perhaps even the central component, of the rhetorical process. As Enos argues, long before the time of Aristotle’s “founding” treatise, rhetoric was already taking shape, developing centuries before in the rhapsodic, logographic, and epic poetic traditions (139). These were public discursive contexts in which the performing body figured prominently. Consequently, how that body performed—its intonations, its posture, its dress—was very much a matter of critical awareness. For example, in his dissertation “Beyond the Fifth Canon: Body Rhetoric in Ancient Greece,” James Fredal argues that the “word-based” rhetoricians of the fifth and fourth centuries were not the originators of this tradition, but that they instead attempted to theorize the canon in an emaciated fashion:

Ancient Greeks “found” rhetorical arts in performance, and they found it far earlier than and independent of the text-based “discoveries” (like
probabilities, enthymeme, psychology or literacy) that classical Greek culture is said to have been lit by. The key to this performative art of persuasion was, of course, action: not delivery as analyzed into units of gesture and voice and encoded as a canon of rhetoric early in the Hellenistic period. I’m talking about action as embodied, a cultural practice, a collective interaction, and an individual act: an extra-verbal medium of self-awareness and expression that antedates any written art and that suffuses every instance of public speaking, both ancient and modern. (3)

Delivery was therefore much more integral to the overall rhetorical process from the beginning, not a sort of “window dressing” to be applied to an otherwise completed speech after the fact. The measure of persuasive success was in the performance, not just in the supposed inherent logic encapsulated in the words of that performance.

The rather positive attitude towards delivery would be challenged in the fifth and fourth centuries, however, as theories of rhetoric became codified and Tanner’s observation that little critical attention was given to the canon comes to bear. For example, Plato’s well-known distrust of the sophistic brand of rhetoric, seen in dialogues such as *Phaedrus* or *Philebus*, was primarily fueled by his stance on delivery—the musical, impassioned performances of the sophists created potentially dangerous, hypnotic effects on audiences, oftentimes making the worse case appear the better. Aristotle, as we already know, begrudgingly admitted in Book Three that
delivery was important, but primarily in a cautionary sense, meaning that we should attempt to understand how delivery could corrupt an audience at logic's expense:

An Art concerned with [the delivery of oratory] has not yet been composed, since even consideration of lexis was late in developing, and delivery seems a vulgar matter when rightly understood. [...] But since the whole business of rhetoric is with opinion, one should pay attention to delivery, not because it is right but because it is necessary, since true justice seeks nothing more in a speech than neither to offend or to entertain; for to contend by means of the facts themselves is just, with the result that everything except demonstration is incidental; but, nevertheless, [delivery] has great power, as has been said, because of the corruption of the audience." (218-19)

Considering also the commonly held belief that Isocrates was uncomfortable as a public speaker, it is a likely assumption that his attitude towards delivery, too, was adversely affected, especially considering that he did not devote space to the canon in his writings. In fact, marveling at the artistry with which Isocrates approached rhetorical prose, Edward Forster claims that although he is counted among the Attic Orators, he “was not so much an orator as a literary artist” (23). Because of the pains taken by the likes of Isocrates, Plato, and Aristotle to make rhetoric a writerly art of persuasion, the domain of dialectic and enthymeme, a richly understood cultural practice became subjugated by logocentrism.

The declining status of delivery is itself a mechanism of remediation, in that it is an attempt on part of rhetorical theory to divert attention away from the embodied rhetorical performance and refocus that attention towards words, in and of themselves, as objective components of thought, whatever the medium. In other
words, for the familiarization of writing to occur, in order to make writing more common, the Greeks had to pay less attention to its uniqueness as a technology of communication. By paying less attention to delivery, classical rhetorical theory allowed alphabetic writing to embed itself more easily in the cultural practices predominantly occupied by the spoken word alone. Minimizing the importance of delivery helped to blur the material distinctions between speech and writing, naturalizing the written word by erasing its interface. One way of rendering the writing interface invisible was by applying its attributes back onto the speaking body—in effect, making speech more writerly and thereby taking advantage of speaking’s more “natural” disposition. Another was to place writing in a comparatively uncontaminated light, framing it as the intellectually “pure” counterpart to the dangerous, irrational nature of the performing body; as Fredal describes the hierarchical repositioning of speech and writing, “Speech appears not as natural but as naturalized, and composition-rhetoric as dependent upon this naturalization for its intellectual stature. Writing disciplines itself by refashioning speech, specifically its non-verbal, performed components, as ‘organic’, ‘irrepressible’, and ‘natural’” (5). Adhering to the language of Bolter and Grusin’s remediation theory, writing became more immediate—a transparent relay of mental activity—as the attributes of embodied speaking became hypermediated—amplified (and suspicious) attention was placed on the medium-specific elements of speech. I emphasize that this remediation happens not just at the formal level of interaction between speech and writing (Bolter’s and Grusin’s primary site of concern), but also
at the meta-discursive level of rhetorical theory—in other words, second-level theoretical conversations about how speech and writing should be crafted for persuasive ends. The culture of writing fostered by Plato, Aristotle, and even Isocrates signaled a change in disposition toward language broadly, valuing words-in-themselves (the “pure” state) over words-in-action (the dangerous, contaminated state). This shift in theoretical attitude towards delivery is but one mechanism of remediation, a mechanism reflected in other attempts to remediate alphabetic writing.

When different modes of communication interact in our cultural sphere, the likelihood that each influences the other is high, and such is the case with writing and speech in ancient Greece. Logography is an apt example of how this interaction serves in the process of remediation, both in terms of how speech gives writing a cultural purpose and how writing extends the cultural power of speech. As I have already suggested, the practice of logography developed over time to become much more than a means of carrying the unadulterated spoken word for an embodied performance to be delivered later and elsewhere. It was also a contaminating or remediating influence on speech. It began to reach back into the materiality of the spoken word, reshaping it so that speech began to assume the qualities we commonly associate with the written word: multiple tenses, embedded clauses, and generally a more complex sentence structure, for example.

More than a unilateral shift in consciousness brought on by the simple presence of writing, the process of speech becoming more writerly and of writing becoming more naturalized depended upon a reciprocal, interactive dynamic. The
technologies of speech and writing fed upon each other, writing borrowing from the cultural prestige of speech, speech adapting to compete with the newly arrived technology of chirography. At the forefront of this remediating transformation was Isocrates, whom Enos calls the “father of logography,” and who, as one of the Ten Attic Orators, contributed to the growth of the Greek language by bringing a stylistic complexity to oratorical performance. The development of this complexity owed much to the sort of plastic manipulation of language afforded by written discourse. For instance, Edward Forster describes in the introduction to Isocrates’ *Cyprian Orations* how the teacher-orator “could manage the period as few Greek writers succeeded in doing. In reading a long sentence of Isocrates we are struck by the fact that, however intricate it may seem, it runs smoothly, and its structure is perfectly clear” (22). Isocrates developed a style of composition that, in part, drew upon oral stylistics and extended them to degrees that likely could not have been developed in purely oral contexts. Foster observes that “the conscious artifices which Isocrates employs”—among them parallelism in sound, homophonic wordplay, and the avoidance of *hiatus* (a word ending in a vowel followed by another beginning with a vowel)—“though at times they may seem laboured, certainly often add to the clearness of his style” (23). Isocrates also brought uniquely writerly prose to the composing process as well, an ornateness derived from his use of amplification and highly embedded constructions (Conley 18). Conley further elaborates on the distinctiveness of the Isocratic prose style, explaining

> Balance and a rounded-off quality are achieved chiefly by Isocrates’ ample use of parallelism and antithesis at every level from that of
diction to that of larger units of composition. The techniques of amplification involve the prolongation of sentences by the use of synonyms and antonyms to amplify single words, by the expression of the same thought twice in different words, and by the opposition of two or more ideas where a single statement might have conveyed the basic idea more clearly. These devices give Isocrates’ prose a distinctive, indeed almost unmistakable, ring, and force the hearer to dwell upon each idea, to follow its development and augmentation, and to arrive with Isocrates at the completion of its expression. At times, the experience of Isocratic style is, as Isocrates meant it to be, almost hypnotic. (18-19)

We must also keep in mind that as a teacher of rhetoric, Isocrates relied upon mimesis or imitation as a central component of his pedagogical technique. His students, therefore, would initially encounter his compositions in the form of oral exercises before they were to practice composing original written material themselves (Jarratt 90). This oral imitation naturalized writing by emphasizing spoken discourse as the composition’s final destination and relegating writing to the background, an invisible aid to the task of learning to speak in the lofty style befitting a proper citizen. As students grew accustomed to encountering written discourse as speech from the outset of their rhetorical training, the differences between the two mediums became less distinct.

Arguably, Isocrates’ mastery of these innovative and highly complex sentence structures was one means by which writing remediated oral discourse; what initially appears to be a style-based critique of the Isocratic sentence can be reinterpreted as an issue of delivery. In other words, a sentence which employs techniques of multiple
periods, complex parallelism, and unique modes of amplification becomes possible because of writing, a medium in which language becomes static and subject to the kinds of contemplative scrutiny and revision that Walter Ong outlines in his work. This new “style” stands in marked contrast to the rhapsodic and epic poetic modes of sentence construction Enos describes which predate Isocrates and, because of its position apart from poetic or lyrical performance, directly contributes to the formalization of rhetoric as discipline (40). Moreover, it is the remediation of oral discourse by applying a material attribute of writing (in other words, more complex sentence structures result from the written medium, where a visualization of the words makes them easier to decipher and facilitates this complexity) back onto speaking. Writing of the type Isocrates and his contemporaries developed, brought back into speech, helped transform the cultural practice of embodied speaking at the formal level. Speech made writerly is a mechanism of formal remediation that benefits writing as well as speaking, because just as it broadens and enriches the palette of the spoken arts, it also hides the comparatively alien interface of the written word within the more natural mode of verbal discourse and renders the newer technology an invisible component of the communications environment. Describing it as a stylistic shift only misses the impact of the technology of writing upon speaking.

It is important that we remember the road to remediation is a two-way street, that there is reciprocity built into the dynamic. In other words, not only is the phenomenon accomplished through mechanisms where speech refashions writing, but
also through mechanisms where writing transforms speech. The duality of this process is necessary because it ensures that commingling media forms become integrated in such a way that, on one hand, the new media form (in this case, alphabetic writing) is granted an easier entry into culture owing to its resemblance to the old media form (in this case, embodied speech). On the other hand, it also demonstrates specific improvements over the older form which justify its existence. Therefore, the story of how writing became a growing technology in ancient Greece is only half told if we consider how practices such as logography facilitated the acceptance of writing by coupling it to a long-established mode of communication, eventually allowing writing to infiltrate the spoken word. There are also instances where spoken rhetorical forms were co-opted outright by the written word, where writing somewhat more aggressively sought to shape the spoken word in its own image to foster writing’s naturalization. Plato gives us the clearest examples of this mechanism, using the dialogue format as a literary conceit for dialectically “uncovering” his philosophical truths. From the after-dinner party arguments on the rightful course of justice and the definition of rhetoric in *Gorgias* to the rowdy drunken contemplations among the Athenian elite on matters of love in *Symposium* to the quiet sylvan contemplations between a wizened master and pie-eyed understudy on the true nature of love and the soul in *Phaedrus*, Plato’s dialogues were more than simply a literary conceit, a gratuitously entertaining vehicle used for conveying the philosopher’s unique sense of metaphysics (which, incidentally, we might characterize as carrying with them a literate or writerly influence, in that he places
things in the world in the shadow of idealized—or mentally interiorized—forms).

They can also be seen as a control mechanism for making writing seem more familiar while simultaneously encapsulating the unpredictable character of speech, rendering it static and scripted upon the scroll.

Plato’s dialogues, it should be emphasized, are not faithful transcriptions of oral events “but rather are artistically composed discourse written to elicit a certain effect” (Enos 92). They are, additionally, a conceptual remediation of an oral discursive practice that function by borrowing the generic conventions of a prior mode of communication, accomplishing the dual task of making writing appear more like speech, and speech writing. This formal shift is in keeping with the broader philosophical shift that ultimately gave birth to the formalized discipline of rhetoric, displacing the embodied, performative brand of oratory practiced by the sophists:

The reversal in value and importance afforded persuasion, from tricky and deceptive to necessary and beneficial, and its shifting association with spoken words, reaches its climax in the rhetorical theory of Plato and Aristotle, who accept rhetoric and persuasion only on condition that it relinquish action, performing bodies, and the pain and pleasure that they incite: only on the condition that it dispense with parole. Rhetoric must work through words alone; bodies, when they matter at all, must answer to the word. (Fredal 167)

Indeed, as Fredal suggests, bodies must answer to the word in the Platonic revision of rhetorical theory: even moments of unruliness are carefully crafted so that unenlightened interlocutors eventually fall to the irrefutable Truth uncovered by Socrates (think, for instance, of Kallikles’ initial unwillingness to engage Socrates in
proper dialectic in *Gorgias*, only to be persuaded to participate—and concede his position—later on). Plato’s dialogues are idealized demonstrations of how spoken discourse *should* appear, colored by the unique formal, material, and logical constraints of writing and hence a hidden theory of delivery. In spite of Plato’s well-observed, albeit suspicious, disdain for writing, it afforded him a mechanism that removed the dangerous contaminants of delivery emphasized by Demosthenes, Gorgias, and the other sophists and replaced it with an alternative model of speaking that prizes measured logic over impassioned, body-centric performance. In a famous passage in the *Phaedrus*, for instance, Plato (speaking as Socrates relating the myth of King Thamus to Phaedrus) criticizes the claim that writing will be an extension of both the wisdom and memory of civilization, arguing instead that “Those who acquire [writing] will cease to exercise their memory and become forgetful; they will rely on writing to bring things to their remembrance by external signs instead of by their own internal resources” (96). Much has been made, in the *Phaedrus*, *Seventh Letter*, and elsewhere, of the irony inherent in Plato’s denunciation of writing in writing as a poor imitation of reality, incapable of answering those who would question it. Enos, for instance, notes what he sees as the double irony of Plato’s *Gorgias*, prompting him to conclude that “Plato was entrapped by technology”: not only does Plato use rhetoric to denounce rhetoric (to dialectic’s credit), he also uses written dialogue to denounce writing. (91). Perhaps a better reading of this so-called irony is offered by Tofts, who sees Plato’s employment of orality as “a literal embodiment of the struggle between the culture of the spoken word and the introduction of the alphabet, especially in its
denunciation of the alphabet as being inhuman” (47). Viewed through the lens of remediation, the Platonic strategy is a means of enfolding not only the form, but also the cultural power of oral discourse into writing. Consciously or not, co-opting speech in this manner—brining its semblance, cadence, and generic conventions onto the parchment—conflates the lines separating the two media forms and assists writing in its undertaking to appear more natural to Greek culture.

Furthering the mission to naturalize the technology of alphabetic writing by discounting those elements most pertinent to the performed rhetorical event (and hence important to the canon of delivery), classical rhetorical theorists furthered the tendency to abstract not only the body of the rhetor, but also those watching, listening, (re)active bodies on the other side of the rhetorical transaction: namely, the audience. The “founding fathers” of rhetoric created an alternative theory that, rather than considering the rich feedback loop generated when a rhetor interacts with a live, in-the-world audience, instead posits a set of abstract, generalized rules speculating how an audience might react given its makeup and the circumstances surrounding the rhetorical event. In today’s parlance, we might think of this theoretical turn as a hybridized science made up of equal parts psychology, demographics, and opinion polling. We can look to the Isocratic notion of kairos as one example of this theoretical tendency to subject the living audience to writerly conceptualization. As Isocrates discusses in the Nicocles, Antidosis, and Funeral Oration, and also incorporated as a cornerstone of his teaching, kairos (roughly translated as “fitness of occasion”) is basically the rhetorical understanding of the social contingency involved
with persuasive discourse, the idea that the truth of any assertion is relative to the specific set of circumstances which surround it. A more formalized version of a sophistic concept that takes the immediate local context of a rhetorical performance into account, Isocrates’ particular brand of *kairos* is slightly different in that it relies upon a preconceived, interiorized notion of what constitutes fitness. As Jean Nienkamp asserts in her book *Internal Rhetorics*, a central tenet of Isocratic philosophy is that the truly wise citizens are those who most skillfully debate their problems in their own minds, that "there is a causal connection between internal rhetoric and ethical, wise behavior for Isocrates" (20). In other words, there is a direct connection between the capacity for inner deliberation and the ability to assess the *kairos* of a situation in order to take the best possible course of action (23). The important distinction to consider with Isocrates’ view of *kairos* is that it is significantly more abstracted from the immediacy of the embodied rhetorical act, creating a theoretical mental space that informs the rhetor’s compositional process more than the real-life world of the Agora. As such, the speaking event becomes less dependent upon the immediate, local factors of embodied performance and more dependent upon a textualized imitation of them.

Aristotle, too, developed an elaborate, systematic generalization of audience in Book II of his *Rhetoric* that also contributes to the remediation of speech by minimizing the importance of the *mise en scene* of delivery. Aristotle’s theory does not portray the audience as embodied and hence highly contingent, but rather in terms of an abstracted mentality that applies to all people in general. Therefore, he focuses
not on the external manifestations of an audience’s emotional state, but on what internal causes lead to different emotions. In the beginning of Book II, Aristotle offers a rationale for construction his audience analysis in this manner:

The emotions […] are those things, through which, by undergoing change, people come to differ in their judgments and which are accompanied by pain and pleasure, for example, pity, fear, and other such things and their opposites. 9. There is need to divide the discussion of each into three headings. I mean, for example, in speaking of anger, what is their state of mind when people are angry and against whom are they usually angry, and for what sort of reasons; for if we understood one or two of these but not all, it would be impossible to create anger [in someone]. And similarly, in speaking of the other emotions. (121, emphasis original)

The remainder of Book II includes Aristotle’s socio-psychological profiles of the state of mind associated with different emotions—anger, calm, fear, pride, envy, and so on—a collection of generic topoi that collectively maps out a common interior of the human mind and thus gives that interior an air of scientific legitimacy, based in large part upon the assumption of predictability.

The development of theories that preconceptualize the real-life audience—valuing a mindset of abstraction over reaction—constitutes a means of remediating oral discourse by bringing writing’s influence to bear upon it, especially if we accept Ong’s, Gelb’s, or Havelock’s premise that literacy brings with it a focus on the interiority of the mind over the exteriority of the life-world. Viewed in this light, Isocrates’ and Aristotle’s writerly abstractions of the rhetor/audience interaction can be regarded as examples of how a new communication technology influences the
formal, aesthetic, and logical dimensions of the entire communications landscape—in other words, functions that I maintain constitute a hidden theory of rhetorical delivery.

The classical rhetorical theories emanating from Athens in the fifth and fourth centuries, although not entirely explicitly, remediated alphabetic writing and oral discourse by diminishing the differences between the two mediums and downplaying the effect that extra-textual elements had on words-in-themselves. This remediation was accomplished through several mechanisms: by paying less attention to delivery as an integral part of the persuasive art, by incorporating verbal forms of discourse in writing, by incorporating the increasingly complex linguistic structures of writing in oral discourse, and by reconceptualizing the oratorical event so that the immediate, physical, embodied context of speech became filtered through generalized, abstract, disembodied theories. Blurring the material and conceptual distinctions between speech and writing led to the naturalization of the written word, which allowed the relatively new technology of communication to embed itself more easily in the cultural practices of Ancient Greece that were predominantly occupied by the spoken word alone.

As classical Greek culture acclimated to its new literate state, the attitude of rhetoricians, poets, and similar language practitioners towards writing softened, became more inclusive of the new medium, or in some cases even valorized it. In part, this transformation happened because writing did not initially displace oral discourse, but instead served as a supplement to it—a technological advancement that
allowed people to carry language around with them, to shift its presence along the axes of both time and space. At the same time, alphabetic writing was changing the look and feel of speech so that it began to resemble written discourse in terms of sentence complexity, hierarchical systems of order, figurative and rhetorical tropes, and so on. Changes such as these constitute a remediation of both writing and speech that occurs at the formal level, a manipulation of the material dimension of writing and speech.

A slightly different method of remediation took place in ancient Greece as well, only this method was not directed at the formal level of language, but at the meta-linguistic level of rhetorical theory. As oratorical practice became supplemented by logography, a conflation of writing resulted, allowing writing to enter the communications environment more easily. In short, writing became associated with the already-established cultural cachet of oratory. The period George Kennedy terms letteraturizzazione constituted a paradigm shift in rhetorical theory away from a focus on the embodied performance of a rhetorical event and towards a focus on persuasion based upon logocentrism. In other words, if a speech is written ahead of time and not composed extemporaneously within the heat of the oratorical moment in front of a live audience, then the rhetor necessarily needs a guide for predicting how the audience is likely to react to his rhetorical strategies. Fredal claims that in the early Hellenistic period, the emphasis initially placed on rhetoric as performance gave way to a more systematic code that began to see words themselves as the more important material of persuasive discourse. He writes, “Rhetoric became
an ‘intellectual’ art—an art of contingent knowledge, an imperfect dialect—only through the active efforts of philosophers, like Plato and Aristotle, who wanted to shift the paradigm, so to speak, through which persuasion operated” (3). The paradigm shifts in classical Greek rhetoric contributes to that culture’s growing acceptance of writing as a co-equal, and eventually superior, technology of communication. It is through mechanisms of remediation such as Isocrates’ conception of *kairos* and complex parallel sentence constructions, Plato’s hierarchical placement of dialectic over rhetoric as well as a decidedly logocentric metaphysical order, and Aristotle’s codification of a generalized (absent) audience that the technology of writing invades the rhetorical sphere and displaces bodily performance as the theoretical keystone of oratory. Speakerly rhetorics became increasingly writerly, both despite the fact that oratorical performance continued to be the preferred discursive medium and because the text could be wholly composed before its delivery. In the wake of this transformation, delivery became less the vital center of a rhetorical tradition based on performative practice and more a secondary canon subjugated to the emergent writing-based codes of rhetorical theory, a status delivery would maintain through much of the history of rhetoric.

As alphabetical writing flourished in late antiquity and the rules governing its formal, grammatical, and logical structure became codified, a culture of the manuscript developed which spread far beyond Athens and Rome and throughout Western Europe. Because writing was able to take language out of the speaking body and shift it through space and time, it led to a transformation where words-in-
themselves gained an advantage over words-in-action in the Western world. Accompanying the growth of manuscript culture is a reinforcement or amplification of the epistemological and philosophical transformations brought on by the introduction of writing technology to a previously oral culture. It should not be surprising, however, that these transformations went largely unnoticed by those who lived through them, precisely because of the cultural processes of remediation at work that had blurred distinctions between media forms to the point that their interfaces became hidden to the eyes and ears of the Greeks.\textsuperscript{16} The phenomenon of a culture dealing with a new technology via methods of remediation was certainly not isolated to the ancient Greeks and the introduction of alphabetic literacy into their culture. As we turn our attention to Chapter Three and the next key moment in the history of writing technologies—the Middle Ages, and the advent of the movable type printing press—we see once again how the discipline of rhetoric, particularly how it treats delivery, plays an important role as a remediating force in the early era of print technology.
ENDNOTES:

1 Of course, the etymological root of technology, *techne* is loosely defined as art, craft, or knack, or as Liddell and Scott’s *Greek-English Lexicon* defines it, “a set of rules, system or method of making or doing, whether of the useful arts, or of the fine arts” (1785). When scholars such as Jay Bolter, Cynthia Selfe, Christina Haas, and others extend the definition of “technology” beyond popular conceptions of the term (read: computers) to include such legacy practices as chirography or even oration, the argument of etymology typically figures into the discussion.

2 There are several terms used for the fifth canon throughout the rhetorical tradition: in addition to the Greek *hypokrisis* were the Latin terms *actio* and *pronunciatio* and the eighteenth/nineteenth century English term “elocution”). I will follow the precedent set in Fredal’s dissertation “Beyond the Fifth Canon” and use the term “delivery” universally to describe the canon as it is represented in handbooks and treatises to mean the physical gestures, posture, dress, and vocal characteristics of the orator, unless I have otherwise noted (54).

3 A term borrowed from Ronald Deibert’s book *Parchment, Printing, and Hypermedia: Communication in World Order Transformation* meant to foreground the social embeddedness of a given technology. Deibert argues that it is necessary that we understand technologies as part of a greater social ecology because we then see more clearly how a particular technology emerges from a particular social epistemology rather than simply springing into existence without context.

4 I borrow the window metaphor from Jay D. Bolter and Diane Gromala’s book *Windows and Mirrors: Interaction Design, Digital Art, and the Myth of Transparency* (2003 MIT Press). In this book, Bolter and Gromala argue that in the world of the digital arts, the computer interface vacillates between the “normalized” state of invisibility (the transparent window, the state where the interface does not intrude on the user’s experience of the content within the medium) and the self-conscious, unsettling state of reflexivity (the mirror, or the state where the interface is intentionally emphasized in order to call attention to its design rather than its functionality)(26-28). Bolter and Gromala go on to argue that the vacillation between states of invisibility and reflexivity are not unique to the digital age, and in fact mark the interaction of prior media forms such as painting, sculpture, and print (34-36).

5 Welch acknowledges in the article that the writing of history is primarily an interpretive act, and she mentions other periods that might similarly make productive sites of study (slightly later, when rhetorical theories become codified, or when Athenian and Spartan systems of writing instruction might be contrasted). As she explains it, the period is noteworthy because it marks a moment when literacy becomes more institutionalized, a “skill” to be taught in addition to the Ongian shift in consciousness towards abstraction (6). The overriding reason for her construction of 450 B.C. as a ground zero of writing instruction is that it “comprises the schools associated with the most powerful rhetoricians and philosophers who supplied higher education:” the Socratics, the Sophists, and Isocrates (2).

6 For a more complete treatment of the technological history of Athenian writing than what I offer in this chapter, several book-length studies are worth consulting. Among these works are Christine Guar’s *A History of Writing*, Roy Harris’s *The Origin of Writing*, Tony Lentz’s *Orality and Literacy in Hellenic Greece*, and, of course, Walter J. Ong’s *Orality and Literacy: The Technologizing of the Word*.

7 See, for example, Gelb, Diringer, Havelock, Welch (“Writing...”), which are listed in the bibliography.
Citing literacy theorists Eric Havelock and Derrick de Kerckhove, Ong argues that it is the inclusion of vowels in the Greek alphabet (which are not present in Semitic, Phoenician, and other alphabets) that allows for these new cultural uses. Because readers did not have to supply their own vowels when reading the Greek alphabet, it was wholly abstracted from the sense of sound to that of sight, what Ong terms “interiorization”—in other words, divorcing language from “the non-textual human lifeworld” and making abstract uses of it possible (90).

Cf. Derrida’s De La Grammatologie, Glyph, or “Signature Event Context,” for examples of the philosopher’s claim, which supports the “great leap” literacy theories that writing results in a fundamental shift in consciousness, thus making language an abstract, static material to be shaped by mental processes and not a performed, embodied practice.

See James Fredal’s unpublished dissertation “Beyond the Fifth Canon: Body Rhetoric in Ancient Greece” (1998). Like Enos, Fredal offers another perspective advocating the study of pre-literate, performance-centered rhetorical practices of ancient Greece. Such perspectives challenge the origin myth of rhetoric, which insinuates that rhetoric (read: formalized discipline) exists only as the inevitable development of literacy.

In Interface Culture, Steven Johnson discusses this theory of “media seepage,” which is the phenomenon where an already-established media form begins to exhibit characteristics that are not only self-referential (Bolter and Grusin alternately call this the logic of “hypermediacy”), but point to a cultural need for new media forms. For example, Johnson mentions a rash of television programming from the late 1980s/ early 1990s that uses the trope of “channel-surfing” as a main thematic element (Talk Soup, Mystery Science Theater 3000, Beavis and Butthead); for Johnson, such medium-conscious shows gave us a glimpse at the associative, hypertextual lingua franca of what would in a few short years become the World Wide Web. Another example would be the late manuscript era, where because of increased demand on technical resources and labor, texts begin to resemble more and more what would eventually emerge from printing presses in the fifteenth century: a fixed, regular script with little or no ornament.

It is not necessarily my intention to critique the important work of these scholars in question and entirely invalid, but instead to indicate how the scholarship subsequently coalesced into a kind of origin narrative that would later be called into question by late twentieth-century rhetorical scholars, among them Daniell, Jarratt, and Welch.

Accompanying this shift from social to noetic modes of being, the great divide theorists have argued that while a primarily oral culture was wedded to an epistemology governed by mythos (what is known of the world is transmitted through an epic poetic filter, the repetition of simple mythic narratives) and the logical structure known as parataxis (a non-heirarchical, associative method of ordering relationships), literate culture adopted an epistemology of logos (a more analytic philosophical system of knowledge embodied in dialectical treatises and other expository forms of writing) and hypotaxis (a logic based upon analyzing the heirarchical arrangements of elements). Because my point in citing this particular scholarly conversation is to emphasize its symbiotic character as a foundation for my own thoughts concerning rhetorical theory as a mechanism of remediation rather than to explore the complex intricacies of their theoretical positions, I refer the reader to the original sources. For a more detailed critique of this shift, cf. Jarrat (1991), Welch (1990 and 1999) or the special edition of PRE/Text that exclusively deals with the great divide debate, guest edited by C. Jan Swearingen (7, 1986).

William Fortenbaugh’s article “Aristotle’s Platonic Attitude Toward Delivery” posits that unlike the other two books of Rhetoric, which have a few positive things to say about delivery, Book Three shows a distinctive allegiance to the typical Platonic distrust of the canon, and may have been
assembled during his Academic period (246). Book Three’s criticisms of delivery echo sentiments found throughout Plato’s body of works, including *The Republic, Philebus,* and *Phaedrus.*

15 I take up this point in Chapter Four, where I argue that the increase in print production and technological developments in the nineteenth century creates a print culture that remediates oral and handwritten modes of discourse. Rhetorical theories of the nineteenth century assist this process in various ways. The New Rhetoric naturalized new print genres and forms, fostered bellettrism, and advocated an epistemological framework making words in whatever medium the transparent sign of the mind. Likewise, the elocutionary movement also supported bellettristic ends, making printed works of literature the standard for embodied rhetorical excellence. The emerging field of composition sought to make handwritten discourse emulate the look and feel of print by creating “organic” rationales for units of discourse such as the paragraph, which historically was less concerned with marking shifts in topics than it was with simply breaking up an increasingly text-heavy page.

16 McLuhan observed that even the progenitors of this transformation weren’t exactly cognizant of it. Interpreting *Phaedrus* in *The Gutenberg Galaxy,* McLuhan writes, “Plato shows no awareness here or elsewhere of how the phonetic alphabet had altered the sensibility of the Greeks; nor did anybody else in his time or later” (25).
CHAPTER 3

PRESSING MATTER: THE BIRTH OF PRINT,
THE FAÇADE OF DELIVERY

Figure 2. Left: manuscript fragment from the 14th century; right: detail of Gutenberg's 42-line Bible (ca 1455). Taken together, these images illustrate the process by which early print both emulated and enhanced the manuscript tradition (and vice versa), the process that Bolter and Grusin term "remediation." On a somewhat related note—and a very literal example of remediation—the fragment of manuscript shown on the left was actually used as binding material in the late 18th century (a customary practice) and was recovered during a restoration conducted by the Book Restoration and Conservation Company of Milwaukee (Yela, "The Infancy of Printing").

"Typography is not only a technology but is in itself a natural resource or staple, like cotton or timber or radio; and, like any staple, it shapes not only private sense ratios but also patterns of communal interdependence."

— Marshall McLuhan, The Gutenberg Galaxy
One of the initial major works produced by Johannes Gutenberg’s moveable-type press was the Mainz Bible, understandable given the cultural and political power surrounding the bible during virtually the whole of manuscript culture. In addition to copying the content of the manuscript era, early printed material mimicked its formal qualities as well. Figure 2 offers a side-by-side comparison of these two writing mediums. Note the similarities in format, layout, use of color, and overall style between the two samples. The formal emulation and material refashioning indicated by the two artifacts is an example of the theory of media interaction that Bolter and Grusin call remediation.

Similarly, the near-erasure of the rhetorical canon of delivery during the sixteenth century might also be read as a type of remediation, wherein the speaking body of oratorical performance is under-theorized to the benefit of printed or written discourse, thus allowing the writing mediums to acquire more cultural significance. In other words, the technical and formal changes brought about by the contact between manuscript and print cultures were helped along by concurrent changes in rhetoric. As an example, consider Ramus’ dramatic reassignment of the classical canons within the historical context of a nascent print culture. As one of the early architects of the humanist movement, Petrus Ramus’ contribution to the rhetorical tradition was highly influential in his own time and beyond—this, despite the fact that he effectively eviscerated a much more robust classical rhetorical theory that had survived throughout antiquity and the Middle Ages. In *Rhetoricae distinctiones in Quintilianum*, Ramus relegated the canons of invention and arrangement to the
logical branch of dialectic and banished the canon of memory from the enterprise entirely. This left rhetoric proper with but two canons, style and delivery. If Ramus’ surgery offered the swifter, more merciful cut to memory, then it gave delivery a deep, languishing wound from which it would take many centuries to recover. Even though Ramus acknowledges delivery’s proper place within the rhetorical arts, that place is ultimately a nominal one. The fifth canon gets short shrift in his text and is vastly overshadowed by matters related to style, the component of rhetoric dealing with words-in-themselves rather than words-in-action.

Ramus’ screed against Quintilian was first published in 1549, barely a century after Johannes Gutenberg developed his movable-type printing press in Mainz, Germany and—some would argue—revolutionized Western culture’s relationship with language, eventually developing into a fully realized print culture. As Walter Ong observes in “Print, Space, and Closure,” this transformation was brought about by mechanically separating words from the body—more so even than writing by hand did—while also fostering the interiorization of language into our individual (and silent) reading mentalities:

Print situates words in space more relentlessly than writing ever did. [...] By and large, printed texts are far easier to read than manuscript texts. The effects of the greater legibility of print are massive. The greater legibility makes for rapid, silent reading. Such reading in turn makes for a different relationship between the reader and the authorial voice in the text and calls for different styles of writing. [...] Manuscript culture is producer-oriented [and] print is consumer-oriented. (116)
While I am not arguing that the relationship between Ramus’ take on the
domain of rhetoric and the arrival of the printing press is a directly causal one, neither
am I inclined to dismiss the coincidence as mere chance. Rather, it is more accurate to
suggest that both events emerge from a similar world-view, one that supports a
philosophical understanding of language as a reflection of mental powers given shape
by divine hands. Rhetoric becomes little more than superfluous ornamentation within
this system, a chaff of tropes and figures that need to be separated from the wheat of
logical certainty. As such, a dichotomous view of language emerged, wherein the
form that language assumes was not perceived as carrying the same kind of power as
the transcendent content of the discourse. Such theoretical perspectives on language
use anticipate and reinforce the arrival of the printed page, which began to represent
the epitome of language regardless of the medium in the early modern era. In other
words, the technology of print played a major role in transforming both the matter
and the manner of language, in effect becoming McLuhan’s “natural resource or
staple” that, through habitual interaction, not only altered an individual’s sense ratio
with respect to language consumption but eventually spawned an actual culture
surrounding the new medium. Although at this early stage of print technology we
cannot accurately speak of a fully realized culture of print, it certainly was already in
potentia—in a process of becoming—steadily growing and arguably reaching its apex
in the nineteenth century. The nascent growth of early print culture was supported by
theories of rhetoric that were concurrently emerging during this period of transition—
some of them already in place—that fostered a bias for mind over body, created conceptual divisions separating style, form, and content, and lorded a materialist notion of words over their embodied practice.

This chapter argues that the treatment given to the rhetorical canon of delivery during the late medieval and early modern eras functions as a type of remediation that eventually allowed for the ascendancy of print technology. Rather than reiterate the conventionally understood history of medieval and early modern delivery as those rules of rhetorical comportment specifically related to the performing body,¹ I instead maintain that we can reread delivery during this period as a technological discourse. That is, the canon of delivery functioned as a mechanism of remediation, a means by which print (and, by extension, handwriting) achieved a familiar or natural status within the communications environment of the period. By building upon Bolter and Grusin’s theory of media interaction, I contend that print attains cultural relevance not only through an array of technical interactions, but also through cultural channels as well, rhetoric being central among them. Jay David Bolter and Richard Grusin identify strategies of remediation that contribute to print’s growing significance in Western European culture, strategies that they term “immediacy” (the tendency for the medium to render the medium transparent) and “hypermediacy” (the tendency to exaggerate the form of the medium) (11-14). For example, in some cases, printed texts and handwritten manuscripts tended to resemble one another by adopting hypermediated elements such as ornately decorated drop capitals, illumination, rubrication, and so on; in other cases, print and manuscripts tended to minimize their
existence as media forms by adopting a less ornate, stripped-down aesthetic. This interaction between manuscript and print media was not always synchronized, either. At times, print sought to emulate handwriting so as to co-opt the already established cultural significance of the prior media form, while at others, print sought to differentiate itself from handwriting and thus sell itself as the new and improved technology of communication. The result of this formal dance between print and writing was that their interfaces became invisible to us, receding from our view to the point that they became indistinguishable as separate media forms and became conceptually understood as neutral containers for transmitting “pure” language.

I contend that in addition to the formal or material mechanisms of remediation outlined by Bolter and Grusin, we can also identify other sites and strategies of remediation that operate at the level of cultural discourse, embodied practice, or institutional power—in a word, rhetoric is just such a site. At this level, the speaking body was eclipsed by rhetorical theories that looked more to the words themselves rather than how they were actually put into action. The ebbing interest in delivery that occurred in and around the fifteenth century is both a reflection of and a means by which writing and print become naturalized forms of communication. By focusing less on verbal, embodied components of language use (parole) and more on language in an abstracted sense (langue), Western European culture increasingly regarded both the written and printed word as natural components of the communications landscape.

In this chapter, I read the decline of delivery during the early modern era within the context of a paradigm shift in writing technologies, when the long-
established culture of the manuscript begins to give up ground to the printing press in
and around the mid-fifteenth century. The declining interest in delivery during
medieval and early modern times was both a reflection of and a means by which
writing became a naturalized form of communication. In this particular case, it was
delivery’s virtual *absence*, its downplayed status in rhetorical theories of the time,
that helped foster print technology’s eventual hegemonic rise as the dominant force
on the communication landscape. In other words, diminishing or ignoring the
embodied, performed rhetorical act and refocusing that attention on written
expression constitutes one means by which rhetoric functioned as a site of
remediation for both hand-produced and machine-produced technologies of writing.

Rhetorical treatises roughly contemporary to this technological shift also
advocated theories that translated the attributes of machine-printed writing back upon
handwritten and spoken discourse and further contributed to Western culture’s
growing acceptance of the written word. Examples of these theories that indicate
Western culture’s growing acceptance of the written word can be found in the long-
influential run of Christian rhetorics (Augustine, Basevorn, etc.), in particular the idea
of God’s word taking moral precedence over the ethical character of an embodied
speaker, as well as the development of the medieval rhetorical arts (not only
preaching, but also poetics and letter writing). Such rhetorical trends, which
effectively applied the formal, logical, and aesthetic attributes associated with print
onto all manner of discourse, functioned as an hidden theory of delivery. 2 In short,
rhetoric fostered the cultural relevance of print by helping other modes of discourse
become more “printerly” in their appearance and attitude. Before uncovering how rhetoric specifically refashioned the early modern communications landscape, however, it is necessary to draw a map of the social, technical, and epistemological contours of that landscape in order to indicate the context within which these processes of remediation occurred.

Mapping out the Communications Environment in Fifteenth-Century Europe: A Technological Overview of Late Manuscript and Early Print Eras

Our understanding of how print technology developed out of the well established Western European manuscript culture is, at best, incomplete if we consider only how concurrent rhetorical theories functioned within the complex system of remediating processes. For that reason, we should initially consider the transformation from manuscript to print within a broader social context or “communications environment.” I borrow this term from Ronald Deibert to underscore the social embeddedness of a particular technology, or the complex social system of various ways of doing and knowing that both anticipate and support an emergent technology (29). Within this particular communications environment, the lines separating spoken, handwritten, and machine-printed forms of discourse were subject to blurring and vanishing on both material and conceptual levels. As a consequence, the alphabetic word became increasingly naturalized, regardless of which medium contained it. Because much more extensive work has already been done on this historical period, and because my purpose is to sketch out a general
Alphabetic writing, in existence for over two millennia by the time we arrive in fifteenth century Western Europe, had ample time to develop a heavily codified set of formal and technical design standards. In its prime from roughly the twelfth through fourteenth centuries, the medieval manuscript was a richly encoded text that transmitted meaning through graphical as well as textual elements (Deibert 64-5). These elements were typically contained within a codex made up of several unrelated texts, usually written on parchment or vellum (and sometimes less durable papyrus or wood-based paper). The entire codex was bound in cowhide, deerhide, or the skin from some other domesticated animal. Important textual passages were often rubricated (written in red ink), and the beginnings of sections were usually set off by elaborately ornamented drop capitals (see Figure 2). Additionally, graphical elements that paralleled textual content adorned the outer margins of the text as well as the initial drop capitals of major sections. More highly prized manuscripts were gilded with decorative gold accents or “illuminated,” a term used to indicate medieval readers’ experience of the text as an object that actively transmitted truth in the form of light (i.e., the Word of God was quite literally perceived to be shining through the text). In *Writing Space*, Bolter draws formal connections between the manuscript and more recent electronic modes of writing, describing the manuscript as “examples of multimedia writing at its finest, in which all the elements functioned symbolically
as well as verbally to define a verbal-visual meaning. In this one sense, printing was not an improvement, for it destroyed the synthesis that medieval manuscripts had achieved” (78).

As the manuscript matured, so did the culture of production, dissemination, and consumption surrounding it. As Deibert reminds us, the seat of power within this communications environment was occupied by the “spiritual elite,” and within the vast confines of the Roman Empire, that seat was reserved for the Roman Catholic Church (50). As a result, the Church established what the manuscript looked like, what it consisted of, and who got to look at it. The laborious, costly process of manuscript production typically involved a small cadre of cloistered monks penning out texts in piecemeal fashion. While some scribes specialized in producing the calligraphy of the “main” text, others were responsible for rubricating, others in marginal glossing, and still others in marginal and capital illustrations (Baron 42-3, Bolter 78). Their tools consisted of pens made from feather quills (from geese or turkeys) or hollowed-out reeds, inks made from a variety of plant, animal, or mineral ingredients (depending on desired consistency and color), plant-based paper or vellum, brushes and gold leaf for gilding, and wood or leather for binding (“Medieval Manuscript Manual”). Although rarely cohesive, unified volumes, manuscripts were certainly united by theme. The various texts comprising most medieval manuscripts were religious in nature: homilies, hagiographies, or various books of the Bible (Deibert 61). Consequently, when language use and its reproduction was so tightly controlled by the church in the early and high Middle Ages, a metaphysical
understanding of language developed wherein words were viewed as concrete, divinely inspired objects—quite literally, the Word of God. Within this “Adamic” epistemology, it was believed that words were imbued with magical powers on account of their miraculous origins and so constituted a one-to-one correspondence with the things they signified (Deibert 50-51).  

As pervasive as both the technology of manuscript production and the religio-political system of order surrounding it was, this particular connection between communications medium and institutionalized power structure did not constitute a permanent status quo. As the fifteenth century approached, cultural symptoms appeared within the communications environment that anticipated Gutenberg’s eventual invention of the movable type printing press around the 1440s, an ingenious combination of technics already in existence such as the wine press, the metal punch, and oil-based inks.  

Gutenberg’s press was in a sense a response to the changing demands of late manuscript culture, and not necessarily the transformative agent that Eisenstein, Febvre and Martin, and other print historians suggest that it was. In fact, if we consider the shifts and seepages in the design features of the Western European medieval manuscript up until and beyond the advent of the printing press in the fifteenth century, we can chart a change in attitude towards textuality, a change from text as a physical, performative object to text as a “natural” interface through which to glimpse thought. Broadly speaking, late medieval manuscripts became more printerly in terms of their formal attributes: illuminated characters, the symbolic utilization of color, and the incorporation of visual elements eventually give way to a
primarily colorless, text-dominant product made of inferior materials. This change in the formal look-and-feel of the handwritten text was driven by a complex network of late medieval social forces including the rise of Protestantism, an increased appetite for secular works on part of the increasingly literate laypeople, a nascent manuscript market, and the sudden growth of the university system. These forces fueled the demand for a wider dissemination of texts than the contemporary technological forces were capable of delivering, in effect creating the conditions necessary for the invention of the printing press.

As I have pointed out before, the process of remediation is a dynamic of reciprocal forces that work in both directions; just as the old media form attempts to mimic the new one, so does the new imitate the old. Hence, a description of the “printerly” evolution of manuscript production tells only part of the story. The earliest era of printing (called “incunabula”) needed to borrow from the formal, aesthetic, and logical language of the manuscript in order to appear familiar to early modern culture. This suggests why many incunabula texts faithfully resemble manuscripts in design and content: As Febvre and Martin observe, Gutenberg’s forty-two line Bible was printed in a typeface designed to look like the handwriting of the Rhenish missals; moreover, most texts until 1500 were printed in Latin and dealt with religious matters (77). Even the practice of rubrication continued after the invention of the press, although it was a costly and time-consuming addition (Baron 169). The point that bears stressing here is that print did not have an immediately revolutionary effect on the late-fifteenth century communications environment, contrary to what
Elizabeth Eisenstein suggests, that “the temporary resemblance between handwork and presswork seems to support the thesis of a very gradual evolutionary change; yet the opposite thesis may also be supported by underlining the marked difference between the two different modes of production and noting the new features that began to appear before the fifteenth century had come to an end” (21). Eisenstein goes on to argue that the very arrival of the press was fundamentally responsible for the profound intellectual, political, social, and religious changes that occur during this tumultuous era:

One cannot treat printing as just one among many elements in a complex causal nexus, for the communications shift transformed the nature of the causal nexus itself. It is of special historical significance because it produced fundamental alterations in prevailing continuity and change. On this point one must take strong exception to the views expressed by humanists who carry their hostility to technology so far as to deprecate the very tool which is indispensable to the practice of their own crafts. (275)

I am certainly not alone in my skepticism of this claim, as other scholars have pointed out the limitations of Eisenstein’s argument, specifically the tendency to assign undue agency to the technology. While Eisenstein was partially right to insist that the printing press deserved more attention than it had been receiving during the time she wrote *The Printing Press as an Agent of Change*, it is also perhaps not sufficiently explanatory to characterize the technology and its impact on fifteenth-century culture as a simple cause and effect relationship where the press risks becoming a godterm. I would argue that the printing press was, to use Eisenstein’s phrase, a node within a
“causal nexus,” which is not to say that that characterization renders the printing press unimportant within it. Nonetheless, our understanding of the proper function of print technology in the cultural transformation from the medieval to the early modern era is incomplete if we were to ignore that the press existed within a context comprised of a series of multiple and reciprocal causalities. The substantial religious, political, and intellectual changes that led to and grew out of the renaissance—the rise of Protestantism, the birth of modern scientific method, the expansion of literacy rates, the increased development of the university system, Enlightenment models of individualism—are not, as Eisenstein claims, direct outcomes of the printing press, but are instead part of the same transformation in epistemology that takes place across early modern Europe. Without question, the printing press contributed to these changes in large measure, but it would not have had the impact that it did without a hospitable cultural milieu to foster (and even anticipate) it, and therefore that milieu demands closer examination.

Part of the reason why print achieved the status that it eventually did in Western culture is that it was first able to interact with the pre-established scribal culture before “revolutionizing” it, a point that bears emphasizing. This was accomplished not only by emulating the forms of manuscripts, infiltrating their institutional settings, and replicating their cultural uses, but also changing those variables in the process to be more accommodating of the unique attributes of the printed page. The ascendancy of print technology was a steady transformation that made use of the twin logic of immediacy and hypermediacy, a relatively slow dance
of remediation that owed at least as much to handwritten and spoken discourse for its existence as it did to its own technological novelty. This formal transformation ran concurrently with a change in how people conceived of words, from language as an active, in-the-world force to language as the material demonstration of intellect. As a consequence, the oral delivery of words recedes to considerations related to the composition of discourse—issues related to performance shrinks in the face of theories pertaining to the mental construction of the rhetorical text, in whatever form. As Ong describes this transformation in *Ramus, Method, and the Decay of Dialogue* (1958), Ramus’ contribution to scientific method, coupled with new ways of laying out text afforded by the printing press, resulted in the spatialization of thought, the creation of a mental landscape (225-6). Once this space was established, it then became further naturalized through the interiorization of the word, eventually leading to the Cartesian bifurcation of Mind and Body that would serve as the underlying paradigm for physiological and psychological schemas for several disciplines well into the twentieth century.

Language was naturalized via a process where a flag was initially planted in the *terra incognita* of the mind, and having claimed that uncharted cognitive territory, then came the task of filling in the map with a cognitive topography. The printed page followed a similar, albeit inverted, trajectory. It initially emulated an existing media form (the manuscript), then slowly began to redefine its own formal qualities once it was established, erasing its interface in the process so that the media form quietly took on the illusion of transparency.
The birth of print also helped solidify a change in attitude with respect to the human element behind the creation of a text, as well as how we conceptually understand the processes of producing and consuming writing. No longer the anonymous hand humbly reproducing or transcribing religious texts and philosophical treatises from antiquity, that peculiarly modern figure known as the author came into being during the transformation from manuscript to print culture. As Bolter sees it in *Writing Space*, the technological apparatus of printing helped create a new kind of textuality that in turn created a new relationship between the producers and consumers of these new texts. In other words, the mechanical repeatability of print, the steady erosion of a handicraft, multicolor, multitextual aesthetic, transformed the text from a performing object to a transparent window into the writer’s mental interior—the Ramist spatialization of thought that Ong identifies. Bolter describes the ironic result that print’s erasure of the rich aesthetic elements common to manuscript culture had on the perceived ethos of the creator behind the text:

Any fully literate reader could decide to cross over and become an author: one simply sat down and wrote a treatise or put one’s notes in a form for others to read. Once the treatise was written, there was no difference between it and the works of other “published” writers, except that more prestigious works existed in more copies. However, there was a great material and conceptual difference between a manuscript and a printed edition of that manuscript. For most kinds of writing, the printed copy had more authority because of its visual
simplicity, regularity, and reproducibility. As the author in print became more distant, and less accessible to the reader, the author’s words became harder to dismiss. (163-4)
I would complicate Bolter’s assertions here by arguing that it was not simply print itself that caused the birth of the modern author, but rather a system of conceptual and technological factors that were already developing before the press dotted the communications landscape, factors that anticipate the eventual arrival of the press. As I have just mentioned, the late age of manuscript culture was already showing signs of adopting formal elements that would later characterize printed texts, such as increased regularity of script, less color and graphical elements, and so on. In short, manuscripts adopted a more utilitarian aesthetic when faced with an increased demand and changing readership. Even as manuscript culture adapted to meet these external factors, it was ultimately not enough. The fifteenth century was a tipping point—a threshold—in the culture of reading and writing, and so a new technology needed to be developed to better address these changes.

The introduction of print to early modern European culture was not only fostered by these issues of increased demand, the development of literature, formal transformations, broad changes in political and religious order, and so on. Questions pertaining to how textuality is performed in public space (verbal or not), how the materiality of a textual object emerges in the world at the most local level should also be considered when determining how the transition from manuscript to print culture occurred. Therefore, it is necessary to also look at how rhetorical theories of the period dealt with this transformation, and delivery, either traditionally conceived as
the performance-based elements of oratory or reconceived as the subtle rules shaping the formal dimensions of written discourse scattered throughout the remaining canons, bears closer examination.

In *The Gutenberg Galaxy*, McLuhan contends, “Every technology contrived and *outed* by man [sic] has the power to numb human awareness during the period of its first interiorization” (153). McLuhan believed that the society that first witnessed the birth of Gutenberg’s moveable-type press did not experience print as a revolutionary new medium that quickly supplanted the handwritten word, but it was viewed in the same ambiguous state as the horseless carriage (153). Like McLuhan, I agree that the development of print culture is best described not as a drastic shift, but as a transformation. It is important to stress that when reading the history of this transition from chirography to typography, it should not be described in evolutionary terms. That is, we should not think of the social and technical factors that gave birth to the printing press as part of a progressive, linear process of evolution, for we then run the risk of perpetuating the myth of technological determinism. Instead, I maintain that we should not forget that the growth of print culture was initially slow to catch on, and that it had to build itself upon the preexisting infrastructure of manuscript culture because its so-called revolutionary character was not immediately persuasive enough to those who lived during this transition.

Where I diverge from McLuhan’s viewpoint is in his overemphasis on technology as an active force in reshaping the consciousness, or sense ratios, of a society, this notion that the transformation was always happening in an imperceptible
manner. Instead, I build upon the theories of media interaction put forth by Bolter and Grusin, Steven Johnson, Deibert, and others by emphasizing the *reciprocity* of the interaction between old and new media forms. A new medium inserts itself into a preexisting *culture* of textuality, with its own long-established practices, aesthetics, and genres. Not only does print establish its presence in the cultural sphere by imitating the look-and-feel of the manuscript, but handwritten texts in many cases mimic the new forms, aesthetics, and genres of print (and in some cases, they even anticipate them before they exist) both as a means of self-preservation and to help machine-printed texts appear more familiar or natural to early modern culture.

Neither handwriting nor oral discourse is fully exiled from the communications environment; they continue to exist alongside the new technology, becoming the comparatively more natural communication practices, and hence important allies for print to achieve a similar naturalized status. In short, print comes to be accepted necessarily because of this continual symbiotic relationship. This symbiosis was not a closed system, however; more factors than just material and technical influences helped print achieve its eventual cultural status.

Lest we risk bestowing unwarranted agency upon the machinery, the process was far from automatic. The remediation of the various mediums of communication was shaped by the active cultural forces that interacted with the machinery, such as individuals, institutions, and discursive practices. In other words, the technologies were in part shaped by the very agents that put technologies to particular *uses*. In the next section, I argue that rhetorical treatises developed during the late medieval and
early modern eras also contributed to the growing cultural acceptance of print. This contribution was made in part by conflating every medium of communication and diminishing distinctions among them. The role played by delivery—either cast as a minor player in the background of the rhetorical process or as an invisible theory that shaped the extra-textual elements of a discourse regardless of its medium—was central to the strategies of remediation that would allow the printed page to eventually become the hegemonic standards-bearer for language practices across the communications spectrum.

**From Mind To Page to Mouth: Rhetorics of the Written Word in the Early Age of Print**

As we have just seen, the printing press was not immediately a transformative presence in the communications environment of fifteenth-century Europe. Instead, it first had to borrow from an already well-established scribal culture, initially mimicking the look-and-feel of the comparatively “natural” handwritten manuscript. Print also slowly began to assert its own identity, affecting the shape of the landscape even before the printing press actually existed—late manuscript designs anticipate the mechanical reproducibility afforded by the printed page. This process didn’t just happen at the technical or mechanical level, however, as we have just observed. This interplay of technologies occurred within a complex social dynamic, where factors such as increased literacy rates, a budding marketplace for texts, and religious and humanist revolutions contributed to the refashioning of handwritten and machine-
printed writing so that they eventually became viewed as natural manifestations of language on par with (or even more so than) the spoken word. As part of this social dynamic, rhetoric was a key site for implementing or explaining various strategies of remediation, strategies that eventually led to the cultural acceptance of printed writing. Rhetoric was therefore both a reflection of and an active agent in the overall process of remediation. In particular, the canon of delivery—both in its traditional sense as well as in its hidden sense—played an important part in naturalizing the handwritten and machine-printed word by downplaying the role of the speaking body in some cases and playing up the writing-as-materialized-thought connection in others. As we shall see, some of these rhetorical strategies that helped secure print’s cultural cachet were already established well before the advent of Gutenberg’s invention.

I will first consider the history of delivery as it was traditionally conceived in rhetorical treatises during the late medieval and early modern eras. According to William Tanner’s article “delivery, Delivery, DELIVERY,” for much of the Middle Ages the definitive work on delivery was, in fact, the first recovered text from the classical era that dealt with the canon in a systematic fashion—the Rhetorica ad Herennium, a Roman treatise once attributed to Cicero and written some time around 80, BCE (23). The Ad Herrenium’s focus on voice—pronunciatio—as well as physical gesture—octis—would serve as the defining schema for centuries, and portions of it were even copied directly into minor treatises on some occasions (24). The influence of the Ad Herrenium is especially interesting given the anachronistic
character of much of its advice: the proper way to handle one’s tunic to convey different states of emotion, for instance. Tanner goes on to detail the late medieval interest in delivery, particularly as it concerns the fifth canon’s role in the art of preaching:

> During the Middle Ages, the pagan rhetoric of Cicero and Quintilian flourished in the Christian community. Cyprian, Augustine, who had been a teacher of rhetoric, and Gregory—as well as others—had utilized every known method of preparation for delivery. Nonetheless, Augustine in his *On Christian Doctrine* (IV. 1&2) feels the necessity to defend or justify a preacher’s attention to delivery. Likewise, St. Thomas Aquinas in his *Dominicana* (V) feels the same necessity towards the end of the Middle Ages. Both agree that attention to delivery is praiseworthy when the Christian orator (preacher) has no wish to bring attention to himself but desires only to benefit his audience. (24-5)

Additionally, Tanner offers several examples from a number of medieval treatises that treat delivery in a similar fashion—specifically, they advocate modeling one’s physical delivery after the message embedded in the text of the homile to create a sense of unity in the overall performance. Among these treatises are the late fifteenth-century text *Tractatus de Arte Praedicandi*, which calls for “a sharp voice in exposition, an austere voice in correction, a kindly voice in exhortation,” and William of Auverge’s thirteenth-century *Rhetorica Divina*, which “advises the preacher on the merits of blushing, weeping, groaning, and sighing while praying” (25). Marginal notations in sermonic manuscripts, such as one composed by the French priest Olivier Maillard in 1500, indicate that theory did in fact make its way into practice; the
notations included performance-based directions such as “sit down—stand up—mop yourself—ahem! ahem!—now shriek like a devil!” (25). Prompting preachers to be mindful of the impact of their embodied performance, St. Thomas Aquinas instructed them to draw upon a list of emotions meant to correspond to specific passages in the Bible, including “admiration, horror and excitement, irony and derision, elation, weariness and indignation, joy and hate” and also to behave—and even gesture—in a manner emulating how Christ likely might have acted in a given scene (25).

Furthermore, in *Of Eloquence*, Harry Caplan describes an undated homiletic text recovered from Berlin, which advises preachers to carefully regulate their physical gestures, pace, and vocal modulation, suppress the urge to cough, shout, or spit, and never to resort to vile or course language (Caplan 129). Utilizing a naturalistic metaphor to convey his theory of homiletic composition, Robert of Basevorn advocated that there be decisive unity among all parts of a sermon, from invention to composition to delivery, “in a similar way a stream moves gradually, from its source to its mouth” (Murphy 116).

There is a consistent ambivalence in these descriptions between artifice and at least the *appearance* of sincerity, between overly excessive histrionics and a truthful performance ultimately in keeping with biblical doctrine. This tension reflects a theoretical understanding of what it meant to translate written text into spoken discourse—maintaining a balance between enlivening the text and making it appear natural to the audience. For much of the Middle Ages and after, delivery and the office of the pulpit were intimately conjoined; these treatises advocated rules meant to
infuse the word of God with the life of physical, embodied performance. By their very nature, the rhetorics associated with preaching were mechanisms that contributed to the process of remediation by grounding spoken discourse in alphabetic text. In other words, they were formalized theories that specifically dealt with the question of how to naturalize written discourse by placing it upon the performing body.

This specific mechanism of remediation—formalized rules of delivery founded upon and subject to the textual sources of the Bible—did not only concern the spoken and handwritten word, however. Over time, print also became included in the process of superimposing alphabetic text onto oratorical performance. In fact, the Roman Catholic Church itself initially sanctioned the printing press, calling it “divinely inspired” in various edicts and elaborating on advantages such as providing impoverished priests with cheaper texts on sermonizing. Prevalent works such as Robert of Basevorn’s *Forma Praedicandi* (1322), “an extremely popular type of theorizing about oral discourse” found new life “well into the fifteenth century,” where printed copies of the treatise as well as a series of imitations flourished (Murphy 112). Additionally, the rise of Protestantism created an entirely new paradigm for preaching and thus a new market for rhetorical treatises on the subject (Eisenstein 157-9). It followed that there was an increase in the number and variety of these types of treatises. Basically, the printing press amplified the bodily practices of delivery that were established by the genre of preaching forms, a genre initially established within scribal culture. In doing so, print perpetuated the notion of the
alphabetic text taking precedence over, and even giving shape to, embodied discourse. Simultaneously, the practice of preaching created a pragmatic-based market that handwriting, and later print, could tap into. The rhetorical tradition of the *ars praedicandi* is a long and complex one whose end did not coincide with the end of the manuscript era. Rather, it extended well beyond the advent of the press and even took advantage of the new technology to expand the reach and scope of its theories, an influence that arguably still reaches us today in contemporary preaching practices.  

While there remained continued interest in delivery with particular respect to the preacherly arts, the canon did not fare nearly so well when it came to rhetorical theory as a whole during the transition from the late medieval to the early modern era. In fact, given the social and political character of the period, preaching was considered the primary form of oratorical performance in medieval Europe, and therefore interest in delivery was generally considered specialized to that particular practice (Conley 63). As I indicated at the outset of this chapter, it was not long after Gutenberg’s invention that a fundamental change in the attitude toward delivery occurred, a change that diverted attention away from theorizing how best to manipulate the performing body for best persuasive effect and onto issues dealing with the stylistic composition of the words themselves. In this respect, Petrus Ramus is perhaps the most obvious and influential force responsible for reshaping the domain of rhetoric in the sixteenth century, truncating the discipline so that it properly included only style and delivery. It is worth returning to the example
established at the opening of this chapter to see just how such a monumental theoretical salvo affected the acceptance and growth of machine-printed writing.

In his attack on the long-surviving influence of Quintilian rhetoric, Ramus agreed with the Roman that rhetoric is a far-reaching art, or that “rhetoric is the art of speaking well, not about this or that, but about all subjects” (573). However, Ramus did not see in rhetoric the capacity for discovering or generating new knowledge. While Ramus maintained the traditional distinction between the discovery of a topic and its demonstration—or in his terms, invention and disposition—his rhetorical schema valued disposition over invention. According to Ramus, the discoveries had already been made by the ancients; the task of rhetoric was only to present those discoveries in a proper manner. Therefore, Ramus disagrees with Quintilian on what the proper parts of that art actually are, and in so doing abbreviates the traditional five-part schema by moving most of it to a more logically rigorous discipline: “invention, arrangement, and memory belong to dialectic, and only style and delivery to rhetoric” (570). Even now that delivery had only one other canon in competition with it, style became far and above the centerpiece of this new rhetorical landscape, not only in Ramus’s treatise, but especially as subsequent works of Ramus and his followers begins to infiltrate the educational system. Ramism focused more attention onto the composition of the rhetorical text and less onto its performance, thus creating conditions for a hidden delivery where the look-and-feel of writing dictated all modes of communication. As the bias began to favor handwriting and print as culturally superior modes of communication, this would quietly exert influence back onto oral
discourse, where the tongue was made subject to the formal, logical, and aesthetic dimensions of written language. Just as was the case in ancient Greece, the minimization of delivery was a necessary component in the processes of remediation that helped naturalize print. This minimization effectively unsettled the distinctions between spoken and written (by hand or machine) modes of discourse by ignoring a canon whose very existence designated embodied speaking as its own unique species of communication.

Compartmentalizing the canon of delivery was not the only means by which Ramism limited the attention to the performing body. Broadly speaking, Ramus’ removal of dialectic (in the loose, heuristic sense meant by Aristotle) from the domain of rhetoric turned the discipline into an internalized, spatialized art of the mind, no longer the dialogical, embodied, temporal enterprise that it had been during classical times. Ramus’ criticism of Aristotle resulted in his proposal to replace the more nuanced, exploratory brand of Aristotelian logic with a new monological method of humanist dialectic. As Ong explains, Ramus did not believe that rhetoric was the proper place for conducting analysis, as the term was understood in the Aristotelian tradition. Ramus’ own understanding of analysis was quite different from Aristotle’s. Ramus maintains that within the discipline of logic, “analysis is the marshaling (examen) of the argument, enunciation, syllogism, method, in short of the whole art of logic, as is prescribed in the First Book of the Analytics” (qtd. in Ong 1958, 263). Ong goes on to explain that the Ramist notion of analysis supercedes all arts for which the method is deployed: “Analysis, for Ramus, is thus at root a way of
operating didactically upon a text. It belongs not to an art, but to *usus* or exercise” (264). Analysis was therefore an act closely related to genesis, not ‘synthesis’ in the sense of ‘demonstration’ — that act was reserved for rhetoric. Only after learning lessons by passing through the logical gauntlet of analysis could one then apply those lessons. Ramus writes that “Genesis is not the study of given examples as analysis is, but is rather the making of a new work” (264). In this way, the Aristotelian concepts of analysis and synthesis could be collapsed together to form Ramus’s one simple method of analysis — the method of presenting knowledge that has already been attained.

The Ramist concept of “analysis” was therefore not a problem-solving method *per se*, a heuristic for dialogically arriving at solutions for fuzzy, real-world situations. In other words, as a method of discovery, analysis only involved learning what was already known. Consequently, the Ramist concept of rhetoric became solely the display or presentation of this *a priori* knowledge. This theory conflicts with the civic-minded practice of arriving at probable or contingent knowledge that had characterized rhetorical theory during much of the classical era. On the whole, rhetoric became a method of ornamentation under the hand of Ramus, primarily a stylistic enterprise. For Ramus, this move constituted a means of systematizing knowledge, and its applications would transform the *praxis* of teaching and the sciences as they had been known for centuries. It would also further erase the body from the rhetorical act by foregrounding the mental construction of the text over its embodied delivery. In other words, Ramus’s revision of the domain of rhetoric
essentially altered the discipline’s identity so that it was no longer an in-the-world, *performance-based* art, where dialogical interaction with an audience was necessary for persuasion to occur—ornamentation occupied a position secondary to the self-evident text itself. For example, in his *Dialectique* (1555), Ramus writes:

> All the tropes and figures of style, all the graces of delivery, which constitute rhetoric as a whole, truly and distinct from dialectic, serve no other purpose but to lead the vexatious and mulish auditor. [...] These have always been studied on no other account than that of the failings and perversities of the audience, as Aristotle himself taught. (qtd. in Conley, 130)

The impact of such a significant remapping was huge. It would be difficult to overstate the reach of the Ramist influence—the treatises of Ramus and his followers gained acceptance not only in his native France, but they were also considered prominent in Germany, Switzerland, England, and they were deemed especially valuable by Protestant audiences, as Ramist philosophy aligned nicely with a Protestant understanding of scripture as axiomatic (Conley 131-33). Additionally, the highly regarded reputation and widespread influence of Ramus was in very concrete ways a product of the printing press. In *Ramus, Method, and the Decay of Dialogue*, Walter Ong demonstrates that Ramus’ work was widely disseminated during the Renaissance—some 750 unique editions between 1550 and 1650 (5). Just as Ramus created a print-friendly division in his rhetorical theory, the press rewarded him with extensive circulation. One of Ramus' disciples, Audomarus Talaeus (or Omer Talon) published his popular style-centric rhetoric, *Institutiones Oratoriae* in 1544. Many other Ramist rhetorics followed in the next half-century, and by the 1600s, their
approach became the accepted method of teaching rhetoric throughout Western Europe. Among such examples are Roger Ascham’s *The Scholemaster* (1570) and Richard Brinsley's *Ludus Literarius; or The Grammar Schoole* (1612), which exclusively emphasized writing and established the grammar school phenomenon that would spread throughout France, the rest of Europe, and England (Abbott 95-6).

Thus far, I have mentioned only one of the three medieval rhetorical arts, that of preaching. There were, however, two remaining rhetorical arts that contributed to print’s eventual acceptance: *ars dictaminis* (the art of letter writing) and *ars poetica* (the art of poetry). Together, these categories of rhetoric contributed to the creation of what might be considered a hidden or invisible theory of delivery, establishing formal and conceptual standards (not explicitly called delivery) that influenced the extra-textual dimension of handwritten production and eventually machine-printed texts. The long tradition of writerly rhetorical arts established a culture of writing that, over centuries, created conditions that were ultimately hospitable to print. One obvious connection, but one that bears pointing out nonetheless, is that such rhetorics advocated writing practices that created a sustainable, ready-made market for print to attach itself to (not to mention the market offered by printing the treatises themselves). Thomas Conley claims, “Some of the more important works [of the three medieval rhetorical arts] not only continue to circulate in manuscript form but appear among the earliest printed books in the West, the so-called *incunabula*” (99). Also, poetic handbooks such as those by Matthew of Vendome, Geoffrey of Vinsauf, John of Garland, and later writers arguably gave rise to Literature as it is understood.
in the Western European tradition; the press was conceived at just the right time to take advantage of this artistic transition and in so doing establish itself as a relevant technology of writing.

Rhetorical handbooks, and the later genre of grammars that were developed primarily for writing instead of oratory, both reflected and helped bolster a cultural attitude with respect to writing, that it was its own discrete communicative practice, perhaps even superior to speaking in certain respects. Additionally, grammars such as Erasmus’ *De Copia* (1511) and *De ratione studii* (1512), Richard Rainolde’s *a booke called the Foundacion of Rhetorike* (1563), Abraham Fraunce’s *Arcadian Rhetorike* (1588), and similar titles naturalized written discourse by creating grammatical rules that “fixed” the formal look of handwritten discourse. By advocating natural, self-evident reasons for how and why written language was to be produced, grammars created what was essentially an argument of remediation that affected every medium of communication. As Eisenstein, McLuhan, Bolter, and other media theorists have argued, the *lingua franca* of printed writing lies in its fixity, its highly uniform interface. Within the tradition of grammar instruction that grew directly out of the writing-centric medieval arts, rhetoric brought this material uniformity back onto the handwritten page (and also onto oral discourse) by wrapping language production of all types in a set of prescribed rules that was based not on formal issues, but on the proper, eloquent articulation of thought. As Don Paul Abbott describes the holistic pedagogical approach to grammar in early Renaissance English schools, the tradition was heavily influenced by Erasmus and was founded
upon the classical principle that “knowledge is ‘of two kinds: of things and of words’, that is, of ideas, truths, and of language. The knowledge of words comes first, but the knowledge of things is ultimately more important” (98). Therefore, attention to a regularized grammar was justified first and foremost for its ultimate ability to allow for the discovery of truths and, further, the persuasive conveyance of those truths. Sentence structure, verbal agreement, spelling, and the like were all subject to the regularizing force of grammar instruction, and this influence even reached into oration as well. Abbott describes early modern grammar instruction’s tendency to conflate the modes and genres of discourse, in effect erasing their material distinctions as unique forms of communication, claiming “This union of rhetoric and poetic and all other genres was possible, indeed even essential, because all discourse shared the same end: to speak well and to speak persuasively” (109).

Generally speaking, rhetorical treatises from the late medieval and early renaissance eras contributed to the remediation of machine-printed and scribal writing in addition to oral discourse by minimizing the differences among the three mediums and downplaying the effect that extra-textual elements had on words-in-themselves. In conjunction with the formal and mechanical factors making up the circa fifteenth-century communications environment, rhetoric eased print’s entry into the cultural sphere by utilizing several specific strategies. These strategies included compartmentalizing the canon of delivery, or minimizing its importance at the expense of focusing on stylistics. Also, the development of exclusively writing-based rhetorics such as the *ars poetica, dictaminis, and praedicandi* supported a
philosophical view of language that regarded words as a material manifestation of mental activity rather than an embodied, performative practice. Since antiquity and the philosophical contributions of Plato, words have been steadily taking on a new metaphysical role as objective products of an interior mental landscape. Consequently, print comes to embody the paragon of this premise. Seen through the lens of this emergent bias, the uncontaminated, mechanical repeatability of words is shed of the messiness associated with the bodily manipulations of tongue or hand and appear to readers as transparent windows into the writer’s mind. On the whole, concurrent rhetorical treatises supported this print-centric view of language and helped to embed it in other forms of discourse. As the material and conceptual distinctions between speech and writing grew increasingly tenuous, the technological apparatus that supported writing receded from view. Hiding the interface helped to naturalize the written word, allowing the relatively new printing press to establish itself more easily as an integral technology of communication in early modern Europe.

The canon of delivery was a central front in the effort to erase and eventually naturalize the printed page. As we understand delivery conventionally during this era, as performative elements of verbal discourse, its status within the overall rhetorical domain was downgraded to the benefit of written discourse, print by extension being the idealized form of writing. If we expand delivery to include those areas in rhetoric pertaining to the manipulation of non-verbal texts, print was also enfolded into the communications environment via rules that brought printerly
standards such as fixity, uniformity, or mechanical repeatability to language production in general. The transformation from the late manuscript era to the early age of print in Western European culture fostered important changes in how people understood both the production and reception of words. This transformation occurred because print did not initially supplant the manuscript, but rather functioned as an extension of it. In other words, printing emerged as a new technology that extended the reach of the written word, borrowing from the already established, naturalized aesthetic of handwritten textuality and thus enmeshing itself as a somewhat familiar component in the communications environment. Once situated as a stable communication technology, print began to change the look and feel of writing so that late-era manuscripts in turn resembled the affordances of print’s comparatively sparse, regularized design.¹⁴ This parallel process of resemblance further naturalizes both print and writing by blurring the distinctions between media forms, essentially rendering the interface invisible and making the content appear the same regardless of the extra-textual effects of the medium containing it. The relationship between manuscript and print was thus mutually reinforcing in many respects, not necessarily always contentious. The social, epistemological, and philosophical transformations begun during the advent of literacy in classical times became reinforced and amplified once the printing press extended the reach and scope of the written word. At the same time, the increasing demand for wider dissemination of writing led to increases in production before the age of Gutenberg. The greater volume and pace of
scribal production necessarily resulted in changes to the formal design of manuscripts (i.e., less use of graphical or colored elements), which anticipate the eventual arrival of the press.

In addition to the formal interactions between handwritten and printed texts, where their extra-textual designs influenced and refashioned one another, rhetorical treatises of the late medieval and early modern periods also contributed to print’s initial entry into the communications landscape of Western European culture. By minimizing the importance of delivery in the overall rhetorical process, developing new writing-specific offices of rhetorical practice, and supporting a philosophical viewpoint that renders language material rather than performative, these rhetorical treatises function as theoretical mechanisms of remediation that operate in conjunction with the aforementioned formal and technical mechanisms. Taken collectively, they work together to conflate print with the existing and established mediums of speech and handwriting in certain instances, while at others striving to differentiate the new form from the old at others. While delivery as such may not have gotten adequate attention during this era, I argue that we can read these rhetorical strategies of remediation as a hidden theory of delivery. The extra-textual attributes of the printed page, concealed within a shroud of naturalness, were enfolded into pre-existing mediums of communication, where they subtly refashioned the formal, logical, and aesthetic structures of handwritten and orally delivered texts.

As we have already seen in the case of the introduction of alphabetic literacy in Ancient Greece, the cultural adoption of print that began during the fifteenth and
sixteenth centuries occurred by local methods of remediation that were formal, material, and aesthetic, as well as by broader social methods that were political, discursive, and institutional. Again, rhetoric—as theory of language use, institutionalized discipline, and performative practice—was a central force in the overall process that helped make a new and foreign technology of writing appear more familiar to the people of early modern Europe. The interaction between writing technology and rhetorical theory extends well beyond these two historical moments, however. In Chapter Four, I focus on another important period in the history of writing technologies: specifically, the late-eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, when technical innovations in printing brought on by the Industrial Revolution, increases in literacy rates, and a rapid expansion of the number and type of print publications contributed to a culture of print the size of which was not previously realizable. The rhetorical theories developed during the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries likewise contributed to the growth of print culture by propagating “printerly” rules that, when applied back onto handwritten and oral discourse, helped make print the standard for all modes of communication. Specifically, the various theories pertaining to delivery in the New Rhetoric and the elocutionary movement are important in supporting a philosophical concept of language as the unfiltered product of an interiorized mental space. Against this backdrop, rhetorical theory was also able to establish processes of remediation that further naturalized the written, spoken, and
printed word. By these means, rhetoric helped elevate print to its hegemonic status as the written medium *par excellence*, a status the medium would enjoy well into the twentieth century.
ENDNOTES:

1 Perhaps the most comprehensive survey of rhetorical treatises and handbooks addressing delivery in the late medieval period is Ruth Crosby’s 1936 Speculum article “Oral Delivery in the Middle Ages,” included in the bibliography.

2 This particular interpretation of a hidden theory of delivery is an historical extension of the recent work in rhetorical theory that argues the extra-textual features of a given text constitute its delivery, not just the performative qualities associated with oral delivery, such as physical gesture and vocal inflection. For further reading on this argument, consult the works by Reynolds, Connors, Welch, and Dragga included in this dissertation’s bibliography.

3 For more thorough historical accounts of social and technological histories of the late manuscript and incunabula eras, I refer readers to the main texts drawn upon in constructing my more condensed history, which are listed in the bibliography of this dissertation. These include, but are not necessarily limited to: Eisenstein’s two-volume The Printing Press as an Agent of Change (1979) as well as the abridged Printing Revolution in Early Modern Europe (1983), Fevre and Martin’s The Coming of the Book (1974), Feather’s A History of Book Publishing (1988), Deibert’s Parchment, Printing, and Hypermedia (1997), and Baron’s Alphabet to Email (2000).

4 In The Gutenberg Galaxy, McLuhan emphasizes the different phenomenological experience of reading a medieval manuscript as opposed to a printed text, a difference he frames as “looking at” versus “looking through.” Musing upon the alien nature of reading from distinct historical eras, he writes, “Probably any medieval person would be puzzled at our idea of looking through something. He would assume that the reality looked through at us, and that by contemplation we bathed in the divine light, rather than looked at it” (106).

5 As an interesting illustration of this Adamic view of language—that it is a direct, deliberate channel to ontological truth—Deibert mentions several specific examples of how words were believed to carry with them a metaphysical or even magical power:

[I]t was not uncommon to find the mingling of words or texts in medicinal instructions, such as the herbal mixture called the holy salve in which the person preparing the mix is instructed to write in it with a spoon: “Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John.” An eleventh-century manuscript advises patients prone to fever to wear strips of parchment around their necks on which is to be written “In the name of Our Lord, who was crucified under Pilate, FLEE YE FEVERS.” The mysterious powers attributed to the text help to explain the crusaders’ odd practice of wearing a parchment scroll beneath their coats of mail, or having prayers or odd letter combinations inscribed on their weapons. (51-2)

6 Although Gutenberg is commonly attributed with the invention of the press, that attribution is not without some contestation. The Chinese had for centuries experimented with non-mechanical methods of printing with moveable type. Also, documentary evidence exists suggesting that both the Dutchman Laurens Janszoon Coster and the Frenchman Procopius Waldvogel had separately been experimenting with moveable type and “artificial writing” in the years surrounding that of Gutenberg’s invention (Deibert 62). That the printing press had been imagined by contemporaries of Gutenberg’s underscores my point: the press was not exactly an invention borne of one genius’s rare moment of inspiration. Instead, the concurrent development of several social changes allowed the technology to enter into the collective imagination, which eventually manifested in the near-simultaneous inventions of Gutenberg and his select group of contemporaries.
To read more about the critiques of Eisenstein’s central thesis that the printing press is fundamentally responsible for the birth of the renaissance, see David Olson’s *The World on Paper: The Conceptual and Cognitive Implications of Writing and Reading* (Cambridge UP: 1994), which offers a rather sizable literature review of post-Eisenstein scholarship. Olson himself argues that Eisenstein’s work focuses too much on matters of production and not enough on reception. He therefore looks at changing social patterns of reading in conjunction with the birth of print. Olson complicates Eisenstein’s argument by suggesting that the interiorization of writing was in part driven by the isolation and quiet afforded by new cultural reading habits and not necessarily because of the new technology itself.

I use the term “transformation” in a specific sense, which, as I discussed in Chapter Two, I take from Kenneth Burke. Burke defines a transformation as an all-encompassing change that affects the social, philosophical, and political dimensions of a culture, where “the position at the start can eventually be seen in terms of the new motivations encountered en route” (422). For Burke, those living through a particular transformation are often unaware of these underlying motivations, as they begin a transformative course assuming a different set of motivations. It is therefore necessary in Burke’s view to have adequate historical distance from the moment in question so that one can better understand those motivations.

Although the press is typically characterized as displacing the Catholic Church’s power, Eisenstein acknowledges that both Catholic and Protestant interests were initially served by the new writing technology, although over time she sees the press contributing to the Church’s undoing. She writes, “Some authorities have acknowledged that Gutenberg’s invention ‘cut both ways’ by helping Loyola as well as Luther and by spurring a Catholic revival even while spreading Lutheran tracts” (159). Nevertheless, Catholic and Lutheran presses alike continued for centuries to produce a relatively wide variety of breviaries, devotionals, hymnals, and preaching manuals throughout Eastern and Western Europe (160).

Ong is indisputably the definitive bibliographer of works by Ramus, his collaborator Omer Talon (Talaeus), and other Ramists. For more information on the various editions and titles of this catalog, cf. Ong’s *Ramus and Talon Inventory* (1958).

Thomas Conley attributes much of the demand for the Ramus catalog to Protestantism in general and Calvinist Puritanism in particular, which sought to distance itself even further from the Catholic Church by maintaining that certainty was the result only of a proper understanding of Scripture, which was viewed as unequivocal in its conveyance of Truth. Consequently, Ramus’ philosophical rearrangement of dialectic and rhetoric offered many in the new faith a means by which they could glean the dialectically “pure” meanings from Christ’s message (132-3).


As Abbott argues, this process of conflating genres and distilling first principles of effective and artful communication continued over the next several centuries, and in the eventual development of composition studies we find an even more heavily codified attempt to bring the formal look-and-feel of print back into chirography in the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. All modes and genres of discursive production were enveloped in a naturalizing argument that suggested adhering to such rules was meant to stimulate certain faculties in the minds of readers. For a more detailed discussion of this transformation, see Chapter Four of this dissertation.
“Affordance” is part of a terminology adopted from usability expert Donald Norman’s book *The Design of Everyday Things* (1988). For Norman, an affordance (Norman’s counter-term to “constraint”) is an actual or perceived property of an object’s design or interface embodied in its visible cues. In the case of the printed text, the interface indicates an affordance of mechanical reproducibility based upon the regularity of typeface, an efficient and legible condensing of text, and unity of design across pages and volumes.
CHAPTER 4

HARBINGERS OF THE PRINTED PAGE:
THEORIES OF DELIVERY IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

Figure 3. Title page of John Walker’s *The Melody of Speaking* (1787), one of the more popular textbooks on elocution in the nineteenth century. The text near the middle of the page reads “Exemplified by Select Passages from the best Authors, some of which have not appeared in any of the best Collections,” and illustrates one means by which works from the great age of print found their ways into the mouths of budding young orators, in effect naturalizing the medium of print.

In the beginning of *Elements of Rhetoric* (1828), the British rhetorician Richard Whately explains that because of printing—and more specifically, cheap
paper\textsuperscript{1}—what was once the province of the orator is increasingly becoming co-opted by writing. He even suggests that the rhetorical rules of one medium apply just as readily to the other:

\begin{quote}
The invention of printing, by extending the sphere of operation of the writer, has of course contributed to the extension of those terms which, in their primary signification, had reference to speaking alone. Many objects are now accomplished through the medium of the press, which formerly came under the exclusive province of the orator; and the qualifications requisite for success are so much the same in both cases, that we apply the term ‘eloquent’, as readily to a writer as to a speaker. \cite{14}
\end{quote}

Following in the footsteps of the model set forth by (mainly) Hugh Blair, Whately’s treatise greatly expands the domain of rhetoric to include the scope of written and spoken communication by directly stating that the bellettristic movement was the outcome of a vibrant, growing print culture. A position contrary to Whately’s medium-blurring definition of rhetoric lies across the Irish Sea, and some years earlier:

\begin{quote}
From what has been said, it will sufficiently appear, how grossly they are mistaken, who think that nothing is essentially necessary to language, but words: and that it is no matter, in what tones their sentiments are uttered, or whether there be any used, so that the words are but distinctly pronounced, and with such force as to be clearly heard. \cite{131}
\end{quote}

Here, Thomas Sheridan discusses the primacy of speech over writing, issuing the argument throughout his \textit{Course of Lectures on Elocution} (1762) that for England—and more specifically Ireland—writing is detrimental to language itself: it impedes
proper pronunciation, makes us mistake merely competent delivery for eloquent brilliance, and constitutes an inferior mortal copy of the Divine gift of speech.

The belletristic and elocutionary developments of what rhetoric historian Wilbur Samuel Howell terms the “New Rhetoric” of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries led to what initially appears to be a schism, a polarized view of what the domain, or at least the priority, of rhetoric ought to be when faced with the hegemonic status of print technology. Central to this debate was the role delivery played in the rhetorical process, reviving a question about the canon that resonated through antiquity: “does speech encompass the full range of embodied self-expression, or is it really a purely verbal and oral medium for externalizing thoughts written in the mind, exclusively male, uniquely linguistic, and naturally transparent and precise” (Fredal 282)? On the one hand, belletrism intended to treat the total sphere of human communication, encompassing oratory, writing, and criticism in its expanded scope, all forms bound together by a theory which advocated emulating both classical and contemporary works of aesthetic merit in order to cultivate the faculty of taste, as it is defined by Blair, Whately, and their disciples (Miller 51-2).

So revisioned, belletristic rhetoric developed a decided bias towards writing and print over oral delivery. Conversely, the elocutionary movement, exemplified in the writings of Sheridan and the more systematic John Walker and Gilbert Austin, came into parallel prominence by eschewing writing and focusing instead on delivery—the embodied skills associated with manipulating physical gesture and voice. One assumption behind the elocutionary movement was that print culture (or as it was

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viewed from the production end, a growing privilege for writing) was unconcerned or incapable of dealing with the canon of delivery, at least insofar as it was classically defined.

This chapter proposes that there is a different way of reading the belletristic and elocutionary traditions that permeate the New Rhetoric of the nineteenth century, one that suggests that the two movements are not necessarily antagonistically oriented, but instead work towards the same ends—namely, they both help to naturalize the print medium so that it becomes the *de facto* arbiter of discursive standards for all mediums of communication. Specifically, the two major strands of rhetorical theory and instruction in the nineteenth century address print culture by slightly different processes of what Jay Bolter and Richard Grusin call “remediation,” or the formal logic by which new media transform or refashion prior media forms.² Elocution accomplishes this remediation by re-inscribing works of print onto the body as exempla to be performed, erasing clear distinctions between oral and written discourse by assuming a set of principles common to all modes of communication, and occupying an outright ancillary space on the rhetorical map.³ By advocating that the domain of rhetoric is the total sphere of communication, belletrism often looks to printed discourse (and the ever-growing cultural force of Literature) as the paragon of rhetorical expression, and it subsumes prescriptive rules about the material form of written texts into a framework of natural, self-evident genres bolstered by an elaborate faculty psychology. Faculty psychology’s reconceptualization of language as a natural, organic outcome of the workings of the mind rather than a performative
act subject to the constraints of a given medium of communication allow for the machine-printed page to determine how the handwritten page and the speaking body are to behave, both rhetorically and materially—creating, in effect, a hidden theory of delivery. This chapter, then, examines how the elocutionary movement and the belletristic tradition of the nineteenth century’s New Rhetoric worked in tandem as parallel educational and cultural forces to naturalize the printed page. The collaboration of elocution, belletrism, and the New Rhetoric, along with the advent of composition studies, rendered the print interface invisible to an increasingly literate society via the remediation of handwriting and oral speech, thereby causing print to appear as an unmediated window into the mind of the author.

Mapping Out the Communications Environment: Nineteenth Century Developments in Print Technology and Culture

The mechanisms of remediation within the institution of rhetoric in the nineteenth century obviously feed into the much broader context of technological and cultural developments surrounding print culture, wherein similar mechanisms work together to bestow what Bolter and Grusin called “immediacy” upon the printed page. Collectively, such remediations of print result in a phenomenon where the print interface begins to influence the other modes of communication because it becomes increasingly familiar, or less unique, as a medium unto itself. As Walter Ong describes this transformation in *Ramus, Method, and the Decay of Dialogue* (1958), the design aesthetic of print, which he characterizes as depersonalized and
material rather than highly social and verbal, eventually leads Western culture to develop a spatialized understanding of thought and communication rather and not one based on dialogical performance (313-4).

Consider first the changes that occur at the formal level of the print interface. It is specifically during the nineteenth century that print achieves its hegemonic status, that the familiar look-and-feel of most works of print (white background, black uniform typeface, regular margins and paragraph indentations, the subjugation of images to verbal text) becomes more or less ubiquitous. This era stands in marked contrast to the era immediately following the advent of the printing press in the mid-fifteenth century, where the manuscript still held the most sway. As Ronald Deibert notes, early printed texts from Europe were indebted to the design standards long established by European manuscript culture. He writes, “The first printed books did not immediately change the appearance and form of medieval manuscripts; in fact, the early printers went to great lengths to produce precise imitations. So closely do some of the early printed works resemble manuscripts that they are virtually indistinguishable to the untrained eye” (65).

By the nineteenth century, however, the balance has shifted in favor of print, and the increased regularization of print results in a rather paradoxical example of remediation. The design standard of print, because of its ubiquitous uniformity, becomes a kind of non-design, in effect becoming an invisible template of formal standards that affects the structural, grammatical, and logical conventions of handwritten and oral communication. It is because of this effect of immediacy, as
some theorists have argued, that the printed text comes to be perceived as having an almost fetishistic power as a direct and unmediated reflection of the author’s thoughts. In *Windows and Mirrors: Interaction Design, Digital Art, and the Myth of Transparency*, Jay Bolter and Diane Gromala historicize print culture’s “desire for transparency,” which began in earnest during the nineteenth century (36). Although the typographer guilds may have had an aesthetic appreciation of the fine nuances of typefaces, the majority of readers do not, even today. As Bolter and Gromala describe the traditional print interface,

> The demand for clarity and simplicity is another version of the desire for transparency, and in this sense, transparency has also been the goal of typography. For hundreds of years, printed books have been designed so that we as readers look through the pages, not at them. As readers, we are supposed to focus on the meaning of the words in a book, and the typeface should convey the words to us without our noticing the style of type. (36 – 37)

For those persons immersed in the social reality of print culture in the 1800s, mind and verbal expression become fused together on the printed page.

In part, the highly regularized evolution of the print interface at the formal level involved a series of technical and technological advancements in print culture which occurred during the nineteenth century. Even though we cannot speak of a distinct shift in writing technologies during the nineteenth century *per se*—the printing press has been in existence for nearly four centuries, after all—the rapid changes in the mechanization of the printing process, along with notable growth in the bookseller and newspaper trades and ever-expanding literacy rates in Great
Britain and North America, make the nineteenth century an important site of investigation for technological and rhetorical interaction. As S. Michael Halloran sees it in “From Rhetoric to Composition: The Teaching of Writing in America to 1900,” the nineteenth century experienced profound changes in what we might call the infrastructure of print technology, and, by extension, handwriting. Halloran writes,

Discussions of the connection between technology and writing usually focus on one or more of three “revolutions”: the development of alphabetic literacy in Ancient Greece; the invention and diffusion of the printing press during the Renaissance; and the development of electronic media, the word-processing computer especially, in our own time. But another revolution in writing technology occurred during the nineteenth century, one less dramatic perhaps than these three, but nonetheless important in its consequences for writing and writing instruction. Pens, ink, and pencils improved significantly, making it possible for people to write with less fuss and mess, and fewer pauses for blotting the ink and sharpening pens. Paper decreased substantially in cost, making it economically feasible for people to write more, to use writing freely as a medium of expression, to discard drafts and revise more extensively. Book and periodical production increased dramatically, making printed material available to everyone. The postal system improved, making it easier to conduct both business and personal affairs in writing. (169)

Halloran’s remarks indicate the need for contextualizing the nineteenth-century rhetorical tradition within the concurrent technological history of the printing press, as he sees each of the two spheres necessarily dependent upon the other. Rather than offer an exhaustive history of nineteenth-century print culture in framing such a
context, however, I shall instead briefly gloss some of the more notable technological achievements of the period, as much more extensive work has already been accomplished on the subject.  

For several centuries following the inception of Gutenberg’s movable type printing press in the mid-fifteenth century, the technological apparatus did not change substantially. For over three hundred fifty years in western and eastern Europe, the printing press more or less retained its original design, a fusion of preexisting technics such as the screw press, which had been used for centuries in the production of wine and olive oil, and the punch-and-block method that Gutenberg used to create movable, reusable wooden type. These machines were then combined with well-established techniques for producing durable oil-based ink, as well as fairly time-consuming methods for making paper and parchment that involved drying and flattening pulp gathered from linen rags. To say the least, this technology, although a substantial improvement over the labor-intensive process of producing manuscripts, was still rather cumbersome. Production was still an expensive endeavor, and so the products of the press in large part continued to reflect the status quo of manuscript culture: incunabula (or early printed works) often used multiple typefaces that mimicked handwriting, texts were rubricated (glossed with red-inked passages), and content predominantly consisted of bibles, hagiographies, and other religious matter in addition to classical philosophical treatises (Baron 42). In the early stages of the print era, technological advances that we take for granted today had not yet been realized. The concept of mass production and uniformity of texts across print runs
were slow to catch on, as was the practice of binding a single text in a volume rather than the manuscript practice of assembling a series of unrelated works together to conserve space and resources (Baron 43).

The industrial revolution ushered in many technical changes that allowed for the increased production of printed material, lessening time, labor, and cost in the process. The handcraft processes of printing, binding, typesetting, type founding, and papermaking remained virtually unchanged until the industrial revolution gave birth to machines and mechanical processes that displaced such labor. Of the many print-related technological developments of the nineteenth century, perhaps the biggest of them was the mechanization of paper production. Thanks to Nicholas Louis Robert’s invention of a paper-making machine in 1798, paper production increased dramatically, from a previous output of sixty to one hundred pounds for a single mill to a new quota of one thousand pounds per machine; this increase in production led to concurrent drops in the cost of paper of nearly fifty percent (Steinberg 138). The need for more raw material to produce paper led manufacturers to eventually abandon recycled linen rags and adopt the much more abundant wood pulp (after some manufacturers experimented with various vegetable matter, straw, or wasp nests), which decreased paper prices and further increased production (140). Rather than printing onto pre-cut sheets of paper, print runs used continuous rolls of paper that were cut afterwards, again increasing productivity. Now that cloth was no longer the principal ingredient in paper-production, it soon became an attractive, cost-effective alternative to leather as a bookbinding material (140).
Additional technological developments include the metal press originally credited to Earl Stanhope and the Oxford University Press, which was far sturdier and less prone to breakdowns than was its wooden forebear (Feather 133). By the latter half of the century, these metal presses would no longer be run predominantly by hand, but by the power of the steam engine, an innovation that began in 1814 when John Walter built a steam-powered press for London’s Times and effectively eliminated the last trace of direct human labor in the printing process. Other late-century innovations primarily addressed the problem of developing a suitable and effective means of mechanical typesetting. Older, clumsier methods such as logography would eventually be outdone by American Ottmar Mergenthaler’s line-casting system developed for the British newspaper industry in the 1880s (called Linotype), as well as Tolbert Lanston’s book-printing technique developed in 1887 and dubbed Monotype (Feather 132-33). These typesetting innovations would remain popular well into the twentieth century, until the advent of computer-assisted typesetting.

My intention in stressing the importance of the technological developments of print culture beginning during the nineteenth century is not to minimize the impact of the printing press during its first four hundred years of existence, and it should be conceded that the attributes we commonly associate with print culture begin to emerge during the period roughly spanning 1450 to 1800. Indeed, much has been made, quite legitimately, of the early press’s contribution to a steadily increased readership, the creation of what Michel Foucault so famously termed the “author
function” (embodied in the personages of William Shakespeare, John Milton, and the like), or the codification of the English language in the form of popular dictionaries such as the one compiled by Samuel Johnson, to offer but a sampling. Elizabeth Eisenstein describes these intangible qualities of early print culture in terms of fixity (a stable text that resists revising; handwritten marks take on the status of marginalia or peripheral text), cumulative change, where errata in a text was corrected by way of the revised edition instead of local markings in the end-user’s book, and singularity (the paradigmatic notion of the text as a singular written work rather than an aggregation of disparate shorter works) (78-89). Eisenstein’s use of the word “revolution” when describing printing’s influence on our intellectual tradition is not hyperbole, for as she says, “typographical fixity is a basic prerequisite for the rapid advancement of learning” (78).

It was in the nineteenth century, beginning in the early 1800s but more so during the latter half, that we see the technology of the printing press adapt to increasing demands for printed material, creating a truly hegemonic status for the medium. The changes in the culture of print in the nineteenth century, however, go beyond merely those of degree—this isn’t simply a case of significantly more dissemination of printed materials. A change in kind takes place as well, one in which the nature of the printed works comes under closer scrutiny; in a society where people are more likely to be literate, suddenly what one reads becomes vastly more important than that one reads.
To frame the hegemonic rise of print culture as a simple causal relationship where new technology yields more production, however, oversimplifies the complexity of the supply-and-demand logic behind this shift. John Feather reminds us in *A History of British Publishing* that it was “not only in technical matters that the industrial revolution had a profound effect on the British publishing industry. Quite apart from the new business practices which were developed in the nineteenth century, which led to a greater regularity in the keeping of accounts and the recording of orders and sales for example, the trade’s market also underwent a dramatic transformation as did the means of reaching it” (134). Feather situates the beginnings of this shift with the newspapers, because increases in trade activity over greater geographical distances led to a growing demand to know about the goings-on in remote places; also, the rather new phenomenon of the urban space created a new cultural community—the city, a built-in customer base complete with a new sense of communal identity—that the newspaper trade capitalized upon (135).

Additionally, the growth of the new mercantile economy spread to outlying provinces, where rural inhabitants cultivated functional literacy skills so that they could better participate in it. Among such early provincial printed works were instructional manuals in accountancy, simple legal procedures, and assorted business-related documents (Feather 130). In *The Formation of College English*, Thomas Miller identifies this popular explosion of literacy with the creation of English studies curriculum in higher education, in effect challenging “the tendency of disciplinary histories to assume that change begins at the top among major theorists and is then
transmitted down to be taught in less influential institutions” (6). Growth in practical, work-based literacy quite naturally evolved into widespread interest in reading for aesthetic or recreational reasons. Consequently, the nineteenth century heralded an explosion of markets for printed material, from penny press newspapers to pamphlets to journals, to pulp fiction serials, to exquisitely bound, gilt-edged works of “high” literature. This demand, in part goaded on by technical innovations, led to a growing need for even more technological innovations. Ronald Deibert calls such a symbiotic relationship of cultural and technical dynamics a “communications environment” (emphasis added) to underscore the social embeddedness of a technology, and to undercut the technological determinist model of analysis that maintains the illusion that “technologies enter society and generate specific social forces and/or ideas de novo” (29). By shifting focus to see technologies as part of a social environment or ecology, Deibert argues, we come to understand more fully how a particular technology is a contextualized outgrowth of a particular social epistemology. In much the same way that Heidegger saw technology primarily as a set of social and not instrumental relations, Deibert argues that social need drives technological innovation, and not the other way around; for Deibert, this argument extends beyond the explosion of print culture to the industrial revolution at large.

The cultural, philosophical, and epistemological influences that pervade the nineteenth century in North America and Great Britain, ably discussed in other scholarly accounts, had a profound effect on shaping the communications environment of the era.9 The technology of print came of age in the Western world at
a time when the intellectual climate was fairly well established, and the scientific model of empiricism stood at the helm of the industrial revolution. As Ong explains, the advent of the press coincided with, and even helped propagate, the procedural scientific method of Ramism in the sixteenth century which later influenced Cartesianism; this constituted a paradigm shift that would unsettle the long-standing dialectical schema established in rhetorical theories of antiquity (225-6). Writing in the shadow of the philosophical zeitgeist cast by Descartes’ 1647 treatise *Principia philosophiae*, specifically his bifurcated model of subjectivity, were thinkers like Locke and Hume. In particular, John Locke’s *Essay Concerning Human Understanding* (1690) articulated a new kind of philosophical empiricism founded on the idea that human experience of the physical world is filtered through a series of impressions based on a history of sensory perceptions; these impressions are part of a complex web of associations ordered by various mental faculties termed understanding, judgment, and the will. Locke’s ideas were well received by the philosophical and scientific communities of Great Britain (and later The United States), and further contributions by Scottish natural language and Common Sense philosophers such as Lord Kames, Thomas Reid, and Alexander Bain lay a foundation for a long-standing faculty psychology that would survive as philosophical/scientific fact for over two hundred years, although some might argue that this philosophical shift was more concerned with supporting a nascent national identity through punctuation, grammar, and even thought than it was with outlining a genuine, disinterested epistemology. In other words, the faculty psychology
tradition developed a topographical treatment of the terrain originally established by Descartes, in effect rendering the philosophical physiological and thus serving to naturalize this particular model of subjectivity even further. With such a model in place, print stands as an effective medium for reinforcing it, both as a vehicle for disseminating language in its empirically proper form and as a manifestation of the linguistic workings of the inner mind, unadorned with the superfluous ornamentation of a performing body.

The epistemological rationale undergirding faculty psychology informed the increased attention paid in the nineteenth century to standards for all levels of language production, thanks in no small part to the influence of George Campbell’s *Philosophy of Rhetoric* (1776), the first major work to apply faculty psychology in a highly systematic fashion to rhetorical theory. Spelling, penmanship, pronunciation, grammar, and the like—in other words, elements relating to the *materiality* of the written artifact—were subject to increased scrutiny in order to solidify national identity, control educational policies, or demarcate social classes (Baron 95). The effect of subsuming these rather mechanical, prescriptive set of standards into a physiological schema, a “language of nature” as it were, is that the standards appear less like mechanical prescriptions and more like laws of nature—in short, the rationales for the rules become invisible or self-evident. But we should not lose sight of the fact that the interaction between a technology and its surrounding communications environment is a *reciprocal* one, and one that resonates beyond the interiors of the individual mind—this increased interest in establishing language
standards coincides with the proliferation of print culture. Marshall McLuhan well understood the extent to which the culture of print helped reshape the political, social, and intellectual climate of Western Europe and North America. In chapter eighteen of *Understanding Media*, “The Printed Word: Architect of Nationalism,” McLuhan asserts, “of the many unforeseen consequences of typography, the emergence of nationalism is, perhaps, the most familiar. Political unification of populations by means of vernacular and language groupings was unthinkable before printing turned each vernacular into a mass medium” (161). For McLuhan, nationalism occurs primarily through the homogenization of language that the typographic word exemplified, which trickled up into the culture at large. He writes, “The psychic and social consequences of print included an extension of its fissile and uniform character to the gradual homogenization of diverse regions with the resulting amplification of power, energy, and aggression that we associate with new nationalism” (159). In outlining such a thesis, McLuhan sees the ultimate goal of structured nationalism achieved by a variety of print-bound mechanisms, such as the stricter codification of language use. For McLuhan, a “significant aspect of the uniformity and repeatability of the printed page was the pressure it exerted toward ‘correct’ spelling, syntax, and punctuation. Even more notable were the effects of print in separating poetry from song, and prose from oratory, and popular from educated speech” (159). The effect of a relatively constant interface did not only affect language use within the print medium, however:

Uniformity reached also into areas of speech and writing, leading to a single tone and attitude to reader and subject spread throughout an
entire composition. The “man of letters” was born. Extended to the spoken word, this literate *equitone* enabled literate people to maintain a single “high tone” in discourse that was quite devastating, and enabled nineteenth century prose writers to assume moral qualities that few would now care to simulate. Permeation of the colloquial language with literate uniform qualities has flattened out educated speech till it is a very reasonable acoustic facsimile of the uniform and continuous visual effects of typography. From this technological effect follows the further fact that the humor, slang, and dramatic vigor of American-English speech are monopolies of the semi-literate. (162)

As intriguing as McLuhan’s assertions are, however, they only tell half the story. Critics of McLuhan’s have stated that his argument resembles a kind of technological determinism—explaining cultural shifts in such a way that technology becomes an almost autonomous agent. Although there are measurable effects of technology on culture at large, missing in this account is the notion that technology is put to use by persons and institutions with motivations and incentives to bring about shifts in culture. We can trace the effect of how cultural forces facilitate the absorption of a particular technology specifically in the prevailing rhetorical developments of the nineteenth century, to which we now turn.

**Strange Bedfellows: How Elocutionary and Belletristic Theories Extended the Reach of the Printed Page**

If the early print period, or incunabula, of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries was a close remediation of the illuminated manuscript, this new age of print during
the nineteenth century ushered in a heavily regularized, uniform, mechanical product, one with which we remain familiar today in its several forms: the newspaper, the novel, the academic journal, and so on. Black ink on white paper, a clear separation of graphical illustrations from text, a consistent and legible typeface, and regular margins and indentations became par for the course, the status quo of the written word.  

While most certainly a principle reason for the ubiquity of this regularized interface results from the “accident” of the technology itself—i.e., the mass produced machinery did not facilitate much customization in text design—print also became naturalized thanks to broader cultural forces such as changes in social epistemology and philosophy, national identity, and the interrelated structure of social institutions.  

Just as previous cultures had come to terms with other technologies of writing, nineteenth century culture explained these newly emerging forms and aesthetics associated with print by naturalizing them. Certainly the field of rhetoric was a major cultural site responsible for generating such explanations. In particular, rhetorical theory’s treatment of delivery plays into the process of print’s naturalization. Resurrecting the canon of delivery in the elocutionary movement places emphasis upon the embodied aspects of rhetorical performance (voice, gesture, posture, etc.) in order to provide a “natural” site for remediating printed matter—namely, the body. Concurrently, the writing end of the New Rhetorical spectrum which eventually gave rise to the discipline of composition supported what we might consider a hidden theory of delivery, prescriptive measures that applied “natural” rationales to compositional forms and techniques that increasingly resemble the medium of print.
As this chapter argues, the fusion of mental activity and alphabetic text is not solely the product of years of habitual exposure to print at the formal level. The New Rhetoric helps reinforce this fusion by minimizing distinctions between a particular medium of expression, privileging instead the manner of expression. For example, the compositionist David J. Hill expressed the prevalent sentiment of the day, that the theory of rhetoric was founded on principles that transcended medium, in effect conflating print, handwriting, and oral delivery by saying that each is subject to the same set of governing rules. Establishing elocution’s ancillary status within the rhetorical domain, he writes, “Elocution has long been regarded as a part of Rhetoric, but it is by itself too important and extensive a subject to be treated as a division of rhetorical science. It does, indeed contribute to render spoken discourse more effective, but so does elegant chirography or clear typography improve the effectiveness of written thought. Rhetoric treats of discourse in general, not written or spoken discourse in particular” (qtd. in Johnson 148). Hill’s opinion was paradigmatic among most of his contemporaries: the rules governing how language is used for rhetorical purpose are first and foremost based upon establishing mental harmony between audience and author. The paratextual elements of a given discourse (i.e., penmanship or physical gesture) are thought either to align naturally with that harmony, or are to be attended to only after the universal skills are mastered (148–49). For the empirically minded pedagogues of nineteenth century rhetoric, medium and message are two quite separate beasts, not intimately conjoined as Marshall McLuhan would later so famously declare.
An overview of how the elocutionary movement affects, and is affected by, the rise of nineteenth-century print culture reveals that the relationship was far less contentious than Thomas Sheridan’s impassioned advocacy for the spoken word indicated, if not in name, then in deed, and in a number of manners. The elocutionary movement that pervaded both academic and popular spheres of nineteenth-century rhetorical life actually began some decades before, in the latter half of the eighteenth century. Works such as Sheridan’s *Course of Lectures on Elocution* (1762), John Walker’s *Elements of Elocution* (1781), and Gilbert Austin’s *Chironomia, or a Treatise on Rhetorical Delivery* (1806) were not only influential as originators of the movement elaborated upon by elocutionists later during the nineteenth century, but stood on their own rights as popular elocution texts throughout the 1800s, each making their way into several editions.\(^{14}\) On the whole, the elocutionary movement drew upon classical theories of the canon of delivery as a means of tempering the psychological assumptions of the New Rhetoric, that is, that the focus of the discipline should be on language production conceived as verbalized thought rather than as an embodied, performative practice (Fredal 284). The elocutionists took issue with what might be called the more popular position in the field, voiced by Richard Whately in his *Elements of Rhetoric*, that teaching elocution was a “hopeless” enterprise, as the skill was thought of either “entirely as a gift of nature or an accidental requirement of practice” (254).\(^{15}\) Apologists for the movement were slightly kinder, as a number of nineteenth-century theorists acknowledged the importance of delivery (Hope, Hill, Channing, Day, and Bain among them), but then
suggested that proper study of the subject be taken up in other treatises (Johnson 148-9). Instead, champions of elocution sought to elevate delivery to its once canonical status, claiming as Sheridan did, “And if the language of nature [i.e., verbal language] be possessed of such power, in its present neglected and uncultivated state, how immense must be its force, were it carried to the same degree of perfection that it was amongst the ancient Greeks and Romans” (xii). Similarly, Gilbert Austin invoked the “ancients” in his defense of the canon of delivery when he called it “not the least important division of the art [of rhetoric]” (x).

However, the elocutionary movement was more than just a recapitulation of classical theory, more than just a reactionary answer to the neglect that characterized how most contemporary rhetorics treated voice, gesture, and the like. It is at least somewhat curious that a revived interest in delivery manifests in and around the same moment as the heyday of print culture. The nineteenth century was a period that saw an unprecedented expansion of printed material. A flood of penny press newspapers, serial sheets, periodicals, political pamphlets, and pulp fiction emerged concurrent with the increased popularity of parlor recitals, speech competitions, and similar oratorical practices—how might we explain this coincidence? Perhaps the antagonistic tone taken by those like Sheridan and Whately on both sides of the spoken/written divide doesn’t accurately or completely reflect the rhetorical landscape of the 1800s. Perhaps instead of both sides defending their own clearly defined disciplinary spaces, they were each addressing in their own way the cultural
tensions of an ascending writing technology, utilizing different processes of remediation that helped render the unique attributes of print invisible by enfolding them into the culturally naturalized practices of oratory and handwriting.

It is clear that the printing industry aided in fostering the popular and academic interest in oratory that lasted through much of the nineteenth century, and vice versa. Ironically, standards of oral pronunciation and bodily gesture central to the mission of the elocutionists were disseminated through works of print. Leading the charge to standardize English pronunciation were Thomas Sheridan and dictionarists such as John Walker and William Johnston, who used arguments based on patriotism and social mobility in order to entice students to strive towards “proper” speech patterns (Baron 128). Although figures like Sheridan were hugely popular on the lecture circuit, a broader reach could be (and was) obtained through printed collections of lectures and the advent of the pronouncing dictionary, both of which proved to be quite successful in the marketplace (129).

Both in Great Britain and North America, the first half of the century enjoyed an explosion of publications specifically directed at oratorical culture in the academy, while the later decades saw an increase intended for private oratorical performances (Clark, Halloran 1-6, 156). The market for elocution manuals, reciters, primers, and other forms of anthologized reading selections was rather large and accommodating. In addition to British elocutionists such as Austin, Sheridan, and Walker—each of whom saw his works republished in several editions on both sides of the Atlantic—the elocutionary movement was populated by numerous texts including William
Russell’s *Orthophony, or Vocal Culture* (1846), Ebeneezer Porter’s *Analysis of the Principles of Rhetorical Delivery as Applied to Reading and Speaking* (1827), George Raymond’s *The Orator’s Manual* (1879), Merritt Caldwell’s *Practical Manual of Elocution* (1845), J.W. Shoemaker’s *Practical Elocution* (1886), and a slew of others ranging from very theoretical treatises to simple anthologies for recitation. The potential for increased dissemination afforded by the enhanced printing technology of the 1800s fueled the popularity of oratorical culture by providing a desirable medium for packaging oratorical content. Likewise, the elocution’s popularity in the first place provided a burgeoning print market with an already established demographic upon which to capitalize. In this very material respect, the reciprocal nature of the relationship between print and the elocutionary tradition is quite clear—each reinforced the other. Furthermore, the associative bond between print and oration is reinforced by this upsurge of texts, positioning print as a necessary aid to, and hence an indispensable component for learning the theoretical principles behind, verbally delivered speech. This particular mechanism of remediation contributes to the naturalization of print by conflating the growing technology with the long-familiar, more natural (at least in perception) medium of verbal speech, in effect minimizing the differences between the two.

Elocution also helped naturalize print by more theoretical means as well, influenced primarily by the belles-lettres rationale put forth in Hugh Blair’s *Lectures on Rhetoric and Belles Lettres* (1783). As with its belles-lettres counterpart, the elocutionary movement as a whole relied upon a fount of literary passages meant not
only to demonstrate rhetorical principles to the student, but also to serve as models appropriate for oral performance (Johnson 43-45). These passages were typically a combination of classical and contemporary sources. Just to offer a few examples representative of the field, John Walker’s manual *Elements of Elocution* is replete with sources from the Bible, Virgil, Ovid, and contemporaries like Hume, Pope, and many selections from *The Spectator* in order to provide the student reader with ample literary examples to aid in the development of skills in oratorical punctuation (the verbal counterpart to grammatical punctuation). *Chironomia* also has several annotated passages, among them Gray’s “Elegy Written in a Country Church Yard”, Milton’s *Paradise Lost*, Shakespeare’s *Julius Caesar*, and several classical passages from the likes of Pliny, Homer, and Ovid. Russell’s *Orthophony, or Vocal Culture* includes several poetic passages meant to illustrate various moods such as sorrow, anger, or joy; literary figures such as Tennyson, Byron, Shakespeare, Browning, Coleridge, and others are employed throughout as a means of supplementing what Russell deems a highly scientific study of voice with examples showing “high standards of literary excellence” (Russell vi). Porter’s *Analysis*, although primarily concerned with pulpit oratory and hence full of contemporary sermons, also includes some classical adages as well as secular examples for recitation drawn from Shakespeare, Byron, Cowper, Walter Scott, and similarly popular contemporary authors as a means of teaching excellence of expression across genres and forms.
As scholars such as Nan Johnson, Thomas Miller, Naomi Baron, and Thomas Conley have explained, the enmeshing of classical and contemporary literary traditions served to elevate the status of British and North American literature in order to help establish a strong national/cultural identity—guilt by association with the revered ancient giants. But the elocutionists, like the rest of the New Rhetorical movement, were doing more than simply borrowing the status of the classical tradition as a foundation for their work. Rather, as they saw it they were extending it, improving it through the progressive addition of psychological and epistemological principles embodied in the works of contemporary literature (Johnson 14-15). I suggest that we might extend the insights of this historical scholarship by positing that at the level of media interaction, the function is similar: to elevate the cultural cachet of print by borrowing from the status of well-established media forms.

Comparing the works of popular authors that were received by audiences as printed texts with works from the classical manuscript era is one mechanism of remediation; making printed matter stand as the *de facto* exemplary standard for oral delivery is another. Together, these two mechanisms of remediation erase distinctions between the different logical, aesthetic, and formal framework of each communications environment. Moreover, by virtue of its placement at the top of the technological mountain, the culture of print becomes the “natural” disposition of language production, be it written or spoken. In other words, this conflation creates conditions by which print *as interface* becomes invisible while simultaneously influencing the shape of discourses in every medium. If this hegemonic ordering is only implicit
when discussing elocution, it is certainly more explicitly stated in the belletristic and composition areas of the rhetorical landscape, which will be discussed later in this chapter.

Yet another mechanism of remediation, the elocutionary movement advocated the mechanical standardization of delivery in a manner quite different from the audience-centered, contextual canon of classical times. An emphasis on mechanical regularity with respect to delivery borrows a central tenet of the logic of print culture and applies it to the speaking body, implying that there is a universally proper or natural way to deliver a speech of a particular species. Although Sheridan was a proponent of the natural style¹⁸, claiming that proper and effective elocutionary style is more the result of vocal tone coinciding with the ideas contained within a discourse than adhering to a set of arbitrary rules, many of the other elocution theorists developed highly encoded notational systems to precisely regulate vocal inflection, gestures of the arms, hands, and legs, and even facial countenance as a means of directly manipulating different faculties in the minds of listeners. Austin’s Chironomia is perhaps the best example of this prescriptivism, with a series of engravings depicting classical and contemporary orators performing various gestures and postures. In addition to these diagrams were annotated reading selections with diacritical marks indicating differences in tone, pitch, and cadence. John Walker’s Melody of Speaking (1787), a staple textbook well into the 1800s, employed a similar notational system, emphasizing accents and pauses meant to “express the passions” underlying the words in each selection. In the “Advertisement” section prefacing his
book, Walker defends the scientific precision of his print-bound system against those who might be put off by having sound delineated on paper when he writes, “Without much expectation, therefore, of credit with the Public, the Author addresses those few who philosophize on language, and who look with a favourable eye on whatever promises improvement” (ii). Similarly, Russell’s *Vocal Culture* even uses a version of musical notation in some examples; Russell explains that his treatise depends upon “systematic cultivation” because, “The art, like all others, is founded on certain principles, the knowledge of which constitutes science” (xiii). Additional works such as James Rush’s *Philosophy of the Human Voice* (1827) offered a detailed theory for studying vocal expression as a writable method of manipulating faculties of understanding and passion; this theoretical rationale, which extended or even supplanted the classical influences of Quintilian and Cicero by making the study of delivery a scientific, universalizing affair, subsequently influenced many of the important American elocutionists to follow (Johnson 155). While many nineteenth century manuals gave primary attention to the voice, Caldwell’s *Practical Manual*, John Broadus’s *Treatise on the Preparation and Delivery of Sermons* (1889), and similar manuals placed normative status not only on vocal performance, but on bodily aspects of delivery as well. Perhaps the pinnacle of elocution’s preoccupation with normalizing the body, Jonathan Barber, author of *A Practical Treatise of Gesture* (1829), taught elocution at Harvard with the aid of a hollow bamboo globe; students were made to stand inside the wooden hoops in order to learn the proper angles for various gestures. Collectively, sources like these maintained that natural elements of
bodily delivery—smooth movements of the limbs, unexaggerated movement of the face and eyes, a stately and solid stance with feet placed squarely apart, should be systematically cultivated so as to sympathize with appropriate moments in the oration. Again, the rationale for such systematic attention was based on the epistemological rationale—vocal and bodily gestures directly and universally affect the faculties of the listener, and they should function in concert with the meaning of the delivered text.

How are we to read this highly prescriptive movement to encode bodily delivery specifically as a means of remediating print? In one sense, elocution is part of a printing-centered communications environment, one that values the mechanical regularity of print and reinscribes the attributes back upon oral processes of oral delivery. In McLuhan’s view, the rise of the printing press ushered in a new paradigm of mechanization that reached into other technologies (consider assembly-line manufacturing technologies) and other communications media, eventually leading to electronic mechanizations such as radio and television. The mentality associated with these developments resonated in the cultural and ideological values of the time, creating McLuhan’s figure of the “literate equitone,” a figure whose speech is consonant with the regularity of print. For example, in “The Science of Body Rhetoric in Gilbert Austin’s Chironomia,” Philippa Spoel sees the elocution manual as a function of the modern episteme (read: Enlightenment era), arguing in a Foucaultian analysis that “the technologies of discipline that Austin inscribes have a normalizing effect in the sense that they define and code standards of polite bodily
action against which improper standards can be identified” (27). Elocution, then, naturalizes print in part by adopting the formal qualities associated with print culture—its uniformity, its iconic fixity—and explaining this adoption as a natural outcome of an epistemological rationale. This process of remediation helps print lose its status as a unique medium through which we experience language because the attributes we associate with print increasingly envelop all other mediums as well.

In “The Language of Nature and Elocutionary Theory,” G.P. Mohrmann defines the implicit philosophical underpinnings of the pedagogically oriented elocutionary movement, its inevitable growth from a post-Descartes Enlightenment as it was filtered through the eighteenth century Scottish “common sense” philosophers Thomas Reid, Lord Kames, Alison, and others.Mohrmann stresses the influence of incorporating natural language into elocutionary theory when he writes:

Certainly other forces were vital to the [elocutionary] movement, the role of science being one of special consequence. However, topics for scientific investigation were not selected willy-nilly, and it has been the primary purpose of this discussion to argue that the particularized analysis of the elements of delivery was not an accident of history. With natural language deemed important in so many areas of thought—in the arts, in morals, in all aspects of human conduct—nothing would have been more appropriate than that reason should have subjected tones, looks, and gestures to empirical observation. The rhetorical tradition having prior and most obvious rights to the domain, it is quite understandable that the elocutionary movement should have resulted. That result was not an adventitious distortion of
the tradition. Only when understood as a response to the accepted epistemology and psychology of the era will the elocutionary movement fall into proper perspective. (124)

Mohrmann’s observations stop short of acknowledging the technological resemblance between the elocutionary movement and the print paradigm as well. This is understandable, given that the ubiquity of the print interface is precisely what causes it to escape scrutiny as an interface. We’ve become culturally habituated to accept the interface as language in its purest form—the expression of interior thought. As a result of this quality of print, elocution was a mechanistic, highly standardized approach to delivery. Additionally, the type of discourse deemed worthy of delivering in the first instance was more often that of the highest literary order. The elocutionary movement achieved its prominence thanks in part to the increased reach of print, which fed a healthy market of orators looking for further instruction in vocal inflexion and more material to recite in the parlor. Thomas Sheridan’s protests of elocution’s superiority to the written/printed word to the contrary, elocution existed as a support to belles-lettres by legitimizing the rationale, by incorporating its logic into the realm of embodied performance. The two traditions were united in forwarding a nationalistic and cultural agenda served up by the printing press that masqueraded as empirically solid rules for language production. Part of that agenda involved naturalizing of the print interface, rendering it transparent, a truthful window into the mind of the writer.
While the elocutionary tradition throughout the 1800s served to remediate print through processes that reinscribed print-like attributes back onto the more culturally familiar form of oratorical delivery, then the belletristic tradition of the New Rhetoric, as well as the newly minted sub-discipline of composition heavily influenced by belletristic principles, advocated rhetorical principles that further remediated print via the handwritten word. Just as Richard Whately stated, the printing press greatly extends the “sphere of operation” of the nineteenth century writer; so too does a primary rhetorical focus on writing extend the domain of the press. Specifically, belletristic rhetoric and its counterparts helped remediate print by several processes: 1) it bestowed ancillary status upon elocution, establishing the literary word’s dominance over oratory; 2) it greatly expanded the domain of rhetorical theory to include newly emerging genres in the print world; 3) it conflated different mediums of communications by suggesting a certain universality of rhetorical principles based on the concept of language as the external product of internalized thought; and 4) it incorporated design elements associated with typographic writing back into handwriting by using a rationale founded on “natural” principles of discourse. These theoretical moves of naturalization allow for the development of prescriptive rules concerning the extratextual elements of discourses other than embodied speech that do not explicitly acknowledge the canon of delivery. They instead constitute a *hidden* theory of delivery, termed so because the rationale is subsumed by the other rhetorical canons of invention, style, and arrangement. The formal, aesthetic, and logical dimensions of the printed page dictated newly
developing standards that determined the shape of writing across the board. The influence of print brings not only a formal, fixed linearity but also reinscribes the values associated with print culture—in *Writing Space*, Bolter associates the values of print culture with the logical habits of homogenization, spatialization, and hierarchical systems of order—onto language production at all levels, disregarding distinctions of medium (10-13).

In spite of the popularity of elocution and oratorical culture throughout the nineteenth century, rhetorical theory on the whole, strongly influenced by the belletristic rationale and leaning more and more towards writing, considered traditional notions of delivery ancillary or peripheral to general rhetorical principles at best, and a potentially contaminating influence at worst. As previously mentioned, Whately’s highly influential *Elements of Rhetoric* called attempts to teach proper delivery “hopeless,” and like his predecessor Hugh Blair, gives far less treatment to delivery or oratorical eloquence than writing-related topics. The compositionist movement influenced by Blair and Whately treated oral delivery in similar fashion. For example, in the preface to *Principles of Rhetoric*, A.S. Hill makes a clear distinction between the principles associated with both writing and speaking and those associated with writing alone, and he arranges his book accordingly: Part I, which “discusses and illustrates the general principles which apply to written or spoken discourse of every kind” extends seventy-three pages, while Part II, dealing with principles exclusive to “the several kinds of prose writing which seems to require separate treatment,” lasts for three hundred and twenty-six pages (vi).
Alexander Bain’s *English Composition* refers to elocution as the naturally occurring mode of delivery brought forth by the proper understanding of the passions and human nature; he acknowledges that Eloquence—the “impassioned mode of address”—“usually supposes a certain energetic delivery, and elevation of manner which distinguishes it from common speech” (212). Likewise, Henry Day describes delivery in *Elements of the Art of Rhetoric* (1866) as the last element in rhetorical understanding, to be considered only “until the mental states to be communicated are actually conveyed to the mind addressed. It, therefore, may properly comprehend delivery” (6). The efforts of these rhetoricians effectively marginalized elocution within the domain of rhetoric by either stigmatizing the teaching of the practice as Whately did, making it the natural bodily outcome of an inherently affective speech, or conflating it with a generalized set of rhetorical principles applicable to all manner of discourse. Not only does this theoretical climate help support a hierarchy atop which sits the printed and written word, it also reifies a narrow definition of delivery concerned with bodily performance that obscures or detracts from a separate, hidden theory of delivery aimed at written discourse. Even though rhetoric pays attention to the extra-textual features of writing, these elements are not specifically theorized as performative aspects of textual production, but as a necessary (if peripheral) component to achieving perspicuity of expression.

As with the explosion of printed matter on oratory, so too did belletristic and composition-themed rhetorics reciprocally take advantage and extend the power of the press. Many notable rhetorical texts and treatises—among them, seminal works
by Blair, Whately, Genung, Newman, A.S. Hill—became mainstays of the
nineteenth-century university curriculum, and were consequently reprinted in
multiple editions. Arguably, Hugh Blair’s 1783 *Lectures on Rhetoric and Belles
Lettres* stood as the most influential work by the New Rhetoricians, both as a course
text in itself and as a theoretical influence for most composition handbooks and
treatises of the 1800s; in the U.S. alone, *Lectures* was reprinted in sixty-five editions
from 1784 to 1873 and was a cornerstone of British and American booksellers’
catalogues published after 1800 (Downey 19).

Perhaps Blair’s most influential contribution to rhetoric is his development of
a theory of taste, or an innate appreciation of the beautiful. The way this particular
intellectual power is cultivated is by having contact with the beautiful—in Blair’s
case, this meant the study of *belles lettres*. Belletrism operated on the principle, and
it eventually became the commonly accepted belief, that contact with the best works
of literature would help improve not only one’s mental faculties, but one’s moral
standing as well. Due in no small part to the help of Blair’s *Lectures*, a hierarchical
structuring of literacy developed that helped establish national identity as well as
social positioning; with more people knowing how to read, simple literacy is no
longer a demarcation of social class, and so distinctions were made between more and
less cultivated types of writing. This striation, at least partially, can be seen a result
of the growth of print. Further, Blair assigns universality to this power. In his second
lecture, “On Taste,” Blair writes, “In every composition, what interests the
imagination, and touches the heart, pleases all ages and all nations” (Corbett and
Golden 46). Blair looks to the masters of English literature—Milton, Pope, Shakespeare, and the like—for examples of the kind of writing designed to foster the faculty of taste. The effect of assigning this kind of importance to the cultivation of taste through belles-lettres is twofold. On one hand, this sets in motion a growing privilege of composition over oratory, which affects not only the reception goal of rhetorical training (reading the Great Books not so much as models of emulation, but in order to hone the sensibilities of the faculties and better one’s social station), but also the production goal (increasingly the end product of the rhetorical process becomes a written one, leading to the eventual establishment of a composition discipline in North America). On the other hand, the canon of style becomes especially important—Blair devotes fifteen of his forty-seven lectures to the canon, more than any other. Style for Blair is a writing-centric canon, as he devotes his stylistic analyses to the writings of Dean Smith and several of Addison’s *Spectator* essays. As a result, a particular kind of discourse gets explicitly privileged over others, a discourse whose structural, stylistic, and material components are influenced by the culture of print (as Eisenstein, McLuhan, Bolter, and others have argued, Literature as such doesn’t exist until the advent of printing). Moreover, with so much attention placed upon how the stylistic effects play in the minds of the audience, the notion that handwritten texts imitate printed ones on a material level—what we might call a nascent form of delivery—is not given overt treatment. Rather, these rules get hidden, conflated with principles of style and arrangement, and are theorized as “natural” elements of persuasive writing.
Literature was but one model of writing with which nineteenth-century rhetoric was concerned. The profusion of printed works beginning in the late 1700s and greatly increasing in the 1800s—novels, poetry, and drama, certainly, but also travel literature, scientific treatises, political pamphlets, journalism, and so on—gave rhetoric an entirely new field of writing forms upon which to capitalize. By expanding its domain to include (or even define) these new forms, rhetoric established itself as the general discipline to account for a much wider field of communication, securing its position in colleges and universities in Great Britain and North America and taking on what Thomas Miller would characterize as a “cosmopolitan” function by bridging the elite and popular cultures (Miller 11; cf. also Johnson 14-17). The rationale for discussing these various genres was predicated on the concept that writing genres—rather than social, performative types of discourse that take their shape from cultural habituation—correspond to the natural processes of the mind. With each purpose facing a writer, a matching prose genre existed that exhibited the best natural form, according to much of the rhetoric and composition theory emanating from the nineteenth century. In Nineteenth-Century Rhetoric in North America, Johnson describes the theoretical attitude that rhetoric applies to the growing world of print:

When discussing argument, description, narrative, and exposition as species of prose, nineteenth-century theorists had in mind compositions in which proof of a proposition, representation of an object, narration of a plot, or definition of an idea or object correspond to the formal subject of the discourse. These genres of prose were defined in terms of the dominant inventional process employed in the
development of subject matter and the overall epistemological aim of appealing to the understanding and the imagination. Nineteenth-century rhetoricians viewed argument as both an oral and written form, but they linked description, narrative, and exposition primarily with prose composition. Although theorists in this period reiterated the New Rhetorical principle that both literary and non-literary discourse rely on the same principles, they provided a more extensive account of the various forms of nonliterary prose than did their eighteenth-century predecessors. By applying the generic categories to a broader range of subjects and popular writing forms, nineteenth-century rhetoricians extended the formal range of prose genres. (199-200)

For compositionists like A.S. Hill, Samuel Newman, David Hill, John Genung, G.P. Quackenbos, and others, such a theory results in a taxonomy of the new forms of writing that either first emerge or gain cachet in the 1800s, a rendering of natural, self-evident categories (i.e., the familiar modes of narration, description, exposition) upon designed cultural products. For example, John Genung’s *Practical Systems of Rhetoric* (1886) draws a direct link between the mental process of invention and the modes of composition; he writes, “The discourse is to be not a mere agglomeration of statements, but an organism, fitted to move as one thought, and be incorporated into the reader’s mind” (218). Consequently, many different species of writing and oration become collected into the same genre; A.S. Hill concludes *Principles of Rhetoric* (1878) with a catalogue of the kinds of writing that he classifies as argumentative, ranging from the political orations of Daniel Webster and Richard Cobden to a chapter from John Stuart Mill’s *Principles of Political Economy* and Matthew Arnold’s literary criticism essay “Last Words” (399-400). While some
scholars rightly argue that rhetorical theory’s preoccupation with defining and codifying genres is a move designed to elevate the relevance of rhetoric in a highly literate period, my interpretation builds upon that argument by suggesting that another effect of this trend is the increased naturalization of newly emerging print forms. In other words, rhetoric not only names these new forms of writing, it also bestows a kind of *a priori* status upon them, recursively suggesting that their existence is dictated by the specific mental operations facilitated by each form. The reciprocity of the dynamic between the institutional discipline of rhetoric and the broader culture of print during the nineteenth century is such that each feeds upon and feeds into the status of the other.

We can also see the remediation of print at work in the processes involved in producing handwritten text. Just as a paradigm of mechanical prescriptivism took hold of the elocutionary movement in the nineteenth century, so too did it pervade instruction in handwriting. Baron mentions the growing popularity of penmanship manuals in Great Britain and North America such as H.C. Spencer’s eponymous *Spencerian Key to Practical Penmanship* (1869) and various works by the popular Austin N. Palmer (113). Such text emphasized the imitative, repetitive process of learning in order to write in a particular script—the imprinting of muscle memory—through highly structured exercises where the instructor would verbally tell students what motions to make with their pens, sometimes going so far as to use metronomes (112). Baron finds this highly systematized, scientific approach ironic, given that prevailing theories of the time (Johann K. Lavater’s *Essays on Physiognomy* (177?),
E.A.P. Hocquart’s *The Art of Judging the Mind and Character of Men and Women from their Handwriting* (1812), and similar analyses) saw a person’s handwriting as a reflection of his or her mental state, moral character, and sense of taste—in short, a mirror of the soul (111-12). While Baron’s reading of the standardization of handwriting equates the trend with the philosophical paradigms of the day, we might also read it as part of the hidden or invisible theory of delivery at work. In other words, rules directly concerned with the material, formal aspect of text production instead masquerade as rules pertaining to the intrinsic epistemological nature of discourse. Once again, we see the familiar phenomenon of remediation at work: a technological approach to writing (emulative of print) bolstered by a naturalizing rationale.

As we have seen, the rhetorical domain of the nineteenth century helped facilitate the rise of print culture (and tried elevating its own stature as an academic discipline) by a number of methods. In general, the New Rhetoric extended the notion of human nature by thoroughly schematizing an elaborate faculty psychology, making conditions ripe for a kind of logocentrism that sees the written word as a less contaminated means of transmitting ideas between human minds. The belletristic tradition begun in seventeenth-century France and brought to England and the Americas by Hugh Blair set standards of taste founded upon culturally sanctioned works of literature; coming in contact with sublime writing causes transformations in one’s faculties that subsequently affects the ability to communicate in any medium. On the whole, rhetorical theory greatly expanded its domain, staking its claim on the
newly expanding print landscape, bringing the multiple genres, literatures, and critical forms into its purview, arguing that general rhetorical principles are applicable to all forms and mediums of expression. The newly developing sub-discipline of composition studies adopted not only literary examples and for emulation, but also the look-and-feel of print in the design of handwritten texts. Finally, although delivery once again receives professional attention in the form of elocution, it continues to be seen as auxiliary to (written) rhetoric and is propped up with a multitude of literary exempla. And all of these communications media are subject to similar methods of mechanization that mimic the technical processes of printing, an irony given the emphasis rhetoric on the whole placed on nature in the rhetorical process.

**Reading the Paragraph as Intersection of Rhetorical Theory and Technology**

Nineteenth-century rhetoric subsumed the formal elements of print by applying a natural-language justification to them. This dynamic is illustrated dramatically by the codification of the paragraph in nineteenth-century rhetorical theory. By the time we arrive at the latter half of the nineteenth century, the paragraph stands as the structural measure of *written* discourse, taking a position it really had not enjoyed before. Even though the paragraph has been traced back to post-Homeric Greece, the act of physically separating units of written discourse with spacing or a system of diacritical markings was originally meant to serve the oral delivery of a written text, as Richard Enos and Elizabeth Odoroff argue in their article.
“The Orality of the ‘Paragraph’ in Greek Rhetoric.” They write that the paragraph “as are all features of early Greek scripts—is an aid to memory in the transmission of oral discourse. As such, the paragraph functions as an oral delimiter, a graphic instrument to facilitate verbal expression” (53). Furthermore, paragraphs were meant more as pausing-cues for orators and listeners alike—“determinants of spatial, temporal, and acoustic separation”—and were not necessarily codified to the point that they were meant to represent a single, discrete thought (57). As writing gained prominence throughout the western world, the paragraph remained more of a spatial separation of text and not a consistent logical separator; unlike chapter or section divisions, the paragraphing system much as we know it today was not always used to indicate a change in the topic (Baron 179). Further, the physical manner of paragraphing changed greatly from the manuscript to the print era. Baron details these changes:

Take the paragraph marker. Division of written text into argument-sized chunks dates back to the second century BC [also known as a capitulum]. In early Insular manuscripts, the beginning of a new capitulum was set off by the notation “.K.” By the twelfth century, the K had been replaced by a C. With the addition of a vertical line to indicate a littera notabilior, this C evolved into the paragraph symbol used in contemporary editing [¶]. Rubicators, who developed and began using the symbol by the end of the twelfth century, typically colored it red. Initially, many printers handled incunabula (early printed books) the same way as handwritten manuscripts; namely, passing nearly finished texts along to a hand rubricator. However, the
economics of the situation eventually dictated that a direct printing method needed to be found. The eventual solution was to use indenting to indicate a new paragraph. (179-80)

In fact, in and around the nineteenth century the printed page settled into its now-familiar look for reasons associated more with technological constraints than with aesthetic or logical ones. Because the page becomes more and more crowded as smaller typefaces were printed onto it, regular indentation served readers and typesetters alike, in the former case promoting legibility, in the latter functioning as placeholders to facilitate faster production (Rubinstein, “Printing”). As the formal characteristics of print become increasingly codified, they begin to seep into prior media forms, bolstered by a prescriptive set of rules that don’t acknowledge them as formal, but as constituent of proper style, organization, or logic—in other words, an invisible theory of delivery embedded in the other rhetorical canons. Because of the growing ubiquity of this change in the technical interface, what better way to create an argument for its “natural-ness” than by translating the technical elements of print back into speech and handwriting, where the same technological constraints don’t apply and new reasons for their use can be invented?

The initial reasoning behind paragraphing as a mnemonic device for orators becomes inverted during the nineteenth century to become a highly structured logical unit of writing that delineates a main idea, and no longer Enos and Odoroff’s “graphic instrument to facilitate verbal expression.” Heavily influenced by the New Rhetoric, the nineteenth century compositionist pedagogues predominantly advocated that communication be perspicuous, linear, and unified. The paragraph exemplified these
criteria, and the forefathers of composition went to great lengths to codify it in their
textbooks. Among the more popular composition texts used in colleges and
universities in North America was Alexander Bain’s *English Composition and
Rhetoric* (1866). In it, Bain describes the paragraph as “a collection of sentences with
unity and purpose” which should resist digression and from the very first sentence
announce its intended trajectory” (142). Bain continues by marking these qualities as
“essential” and applicable to “all kinds of compositions”; he concludes his discussion
on paragraphs by “[a]dopting an old homely maxim[:] Look to the Paragraph and the
Discourse will look to itself,” further emphasizing the natural, almost essential
character of the paragraph (151).

Some years later, John Genung’s 1886 *Practical Elements of Rhetoric*
similarly upholds the virtue of unity—cohesiveness—in the paragraph’s design, and
goes so far as to rewrite Bain: “And certain it is that care about the structure of the
paragraph is one of the best of influences to induce care and skill in building the
entire plan” (194). He goes on to outline three requisites for ideal paragraph
construction: “hence, a fundamental quality is unity[;] hence, another requisite is
continuity of thought[;] hence a third requisite is proportion between the parts” (194).
For Genung, these requisites are met by developing a point in your argument in a
linear, logical progression—a language-based rationale mapped onto a technical
element of print.
In Adam Sherman Hill’s *The Principles of Rhetoric* (1878), we find a more detailed treatment of the paragraph. Like his predecessors, Hill lauds the concept of Unity: “Unity, on the other hand, is essential to the excellence of every paragraph, whatever the subject-matter or purpose; without it, a collection of sentences may be a paragraph in form, but it cannot be one in substance” (238). That isn’t to suggest that form isn’t a concern for Hill, though, for the first insight he offers about the paragraph mentions its formal value: “The usefulness of division by PARAGRAPHS as a mere mechanical device is apparent to every one who has tried to read pages of print or of manuscript that are unbroken, or that are broken into many small fragments. The unbroken text tires the eye in one way; the text too frequently broken, in another” (230). He goes on to outline an architecture for the ideal paragraph, wherein he considers it—not unlike Bain and Genung—a natural extension of the sentence on one end, and a version in miniature of the entire composition on the other. In addition to unity and its mechanical value, Hill’s paragraph must also exhibit “Clerness” (an initial topic sentence wherein the subject matter is fully realized by paragraph’s end) and “Ease” (a “flowing style” on the level of each individual sentence as well as on the level of their interaction as a unified paragraph). The regularity of paragraph length, which has more pragmatic than aesthetic or logical origins, was a central concern to more than just A.S. Hill. Indeed, an almost fetishistic preoccupation with paragraph length drove much of the pedagogical advice on proper paragraphing techniques. Paraphrasing Taft, McDermott, and Jensen’s *Technique of Composition*, an early twentieth century text specifically indebted to
Bain’s text, Kay Halasek writes, “They go so far as to argue that an essay unbalanced by a significantly larger paragraph of two hundred words in a sea of sixty-word paragraphs indicates that ‘there is probably something wrong’ with the essay” (148).

The argument of organic cohesiveness—the ideal state that a paragraph ought naturally to strive toward—is common to most of these definitions, and it is in keeping with an epistemological viewpoint run through with Cartesianism via common sense philosophy and faculty psychology that was central to composition pedagogy. It presupposes a landscape of interiority, a physiological space from which language emanates. In Nineteenth-Century Rhetoric in North America, Johnson identifies this conflation between the character of a composed text and the model of mind it seeks to engage. Two principles of the New Rhetoric which greatly influenced composition theory and pedagogy were “(1) dynamic responses of the mental faculties predispose the effects that content, arrangement, and style will have on a reader; and (2) generic elements of prose form and style enable the writer to engage the type of intellectual, emotional, or aesthetic response appropriate to the aim of the discourse” (174). The axiom held by Genung, Newman, Hill, and others that “the order in which ideas are presented in a discourse must respect natural logic and the writer’s epistemological purpose” extended not only to global issues of arrangement or choice of genre, but all the way down to the constituent building blocks of the discourse as well—the sentence and the paragraph (181). As such, these
smaller units of discourse, shaped in part by formal components of print technology, are supported by a theoretical rationale that draws attention away from this formal resemblance and helps naturalize print.

This epistemological groundwork also allows for a hierarchical re-structuring of the media landscape, privileging writing (and by extension, its idealized print form) as a mode of communication that \textit{directly} gives voice to the workings of the inner mind (and in effect erasing any real consideration of \textit{actio} within the writing context), while subjugating delivery wholly to the elocutionary movement and restricting its conception to the auxiliary realm of embodied speaking. The space for considering how the manipulation of extratextual features of handwritten discourse contributes to overall rhetorical goals simply doesn’t exist. In \textit{A Pedagogy of Possibility}, Kay Halasek argues that the development of paragraphing instruction in current-traditionalist pedagogy results in a merging of the canons of invention and arrangement, blurring distinctions between the types of mental work going into each. She writes,

\begin{quote}
Generally speaking, current-traditional textbook authors also followed Bain by presenting induction and deduction as two patterns of unified paragraph development, leading [Sharon] Crowley to argue that what classical rhetoricians developed as methods of inquiry became for current-traditionalists organizational and developmental principles. “In a sense,” she writes, Bain’s “principles of the paragraph . . . shift[ ] the ultimate responsibility for the ordering of discourse away from the steps gone through during inquiry and onto the way that discourse is
\end{quote}
supposed to look on the page." Arrangement rather than invention, presentation rather than inquiry, became primary concerns for writing instruction. (146-147)

Here, again, is a reiteration of the point that an unarticulated theory of delivery as it applies to the written form is obscured by the argument that language is a natural, transparent phenomenon. Importing elements that resemble the look and feel of print via an epistemological rationale into handwritten discourse, a media form long regarded as transparent itself, is a means by which print becomes a naturalized fixture on the media landscape. In this new model of nineteenth-century composition, then, writing is not seen as a delivered performance (the domain of elocution), but rather as an externalization of internalized thought, a common view expressed in Samuel Newman’s *A Practical System of Rhetoric* when he writes that “the productions of the pen [should] exhibit the characteristics of the mind” (157).

In the nineteenth century, rhetoric undergoes significant shifts in the theory, practice, and teaching of both oral and written communication, shifts which ironically create a renewed interest in delivery in the face of an amplified print culture during this era. We can read such shifts as a dynamic combination of the effects of print culture’s growing influence on rhetoric, as well as active measures within the rhetorical tradition to instantiate print as the hegemonic medium of communication—in other words, the relationship might be better described as reciprocal rather than causal. Although we might generally say that the printing press (and the culture of writing in general) has historically served to relegate the canon of delivery to the background of rhetorical scrutiny, it is in part the influence of the printed page in the
nineteenth century that resurrects the lost canon of delivery in the incarnation of
elocution, a movement that remains popular throughout the nineteenth century. If
elocution exists to treat delivery as such, we see in the continued tradition of
belletrism what amounts to a hidden theory of delivery. By laying claim to virtually
the entire corpus of printed matter as objects of rhetorical criticism and then codifying
prose writing into distinct and self-evident genres, belletrism in effect superimposes
the material dimension of printed works—the look-and-feel of the printed page—
upon written discourse. In the nineteenth century, speech and writing alike were
subject to formalizations that leaned in the direction of print: a formal logic
comprised of mechanical repeatability, subsumed into a rationale of “natural”
language production, and illustrated by models of high literary merit suitable for
emulation. It is by such mechanisms of remediation that print enjoys its status as a
transparent medium of expression, a status that remains unchallenged well into the
twentieth century.

As a mouthpiece for the poststructuralist shift to come, the rhetoric professor
Friedrich Nietzsche understood the social importance of rendering our truths
transparent after constructing them, for he saw the power of truth-construction in our
willful forgetting of it. In “On Truth and Lies in a Nonmoral Sense,” he likens our
so-called pursuit of knowledge, actually our ordering of experience through the
creation of language, to finding objects behind a bush that we have only recently
hidden there ourselves. He writes,
If I make up a definition of a mammal, and then, after inspecting a camel, declare “look, a mammal,” I have indeed brought a truth to light in this way, but it is a truth of limited value. That is to say, it is a thoroughly anthropomorphic truth which contains not a single point which would be “true in itself” or really and universally valid apart from man. At bottom, what the investigator of such truths is seeking is only the metamorphosis of the world into man. […] His method is to treat man as the measure of all things, but in so doing he again proceeds from the error of believing that he has these things […] immediately before him as mere objects. He forgets that the original perceptual metaphors are metaphors and takes them to be the things themselves. (892-93)

For much of print culture’s reign, and particularly during the nineteenth century, we have done just what Nietzsche describes—we have forgotten that the interface, the design of the page, does in fact have a hand in conveying meaning, constructing truths, reinforcing ideology. With respect to the field of rhetoric, it really is not until well into the twentieth century that the myth of transparency that sits atop the printed page is called into question, that elements of textual design are outright suggested to have rhetorical effect. In the next chapter, we’ll look at how the renewed attention that rhetoricians pay to the materiality of the writing artifact becomes a central issue for redefining the canon of delivery.
ENDNOTES:

1 In a footnote to the quotation above regarding the impact of printing, Whately elaborates: “Or rather of paper; for the invention of printing is too obvious not to have speedily followed, in a literary nation, the introduction of a paper sufficiently cheap to make the art available” (14). Whately’s assertion of the importance of mass-produced paper is shared by a number of print scholars such as Eisenstein, Feather, and Deibert.

2 As discussed in the introduction of this dissertation, my reappropriation of Bolter and Grusin’s theory of remediation is an attempt to extend the theory beyond contemplations of formal elements of media interaction and instead look at how social discourses (i.e., rhetorical treatises) also contribute to the growing cultural acceptance of new media forms.

3 Cf. Ulman’s Things, Thoughts, Words, and Actions: The Problem of Language in Late Eighteenth-Century British Rhetorical Theory (1994), which reads the rhetorical theories of Sheridan, Campbell, and Blair within the broader philosophical context of the eighteenth century, specifically the paradigmatic linguistic understanding of the era that language functioned as signs reflecting thought.

4 According to Bolter and Grusin, the term “immediacy,” along with hypermediacy, is part of the process of remediation. Specifically, immediacy is the phenomenon by which media attempt to convey a sense of “reality” to its audience, in effect hiding its mediated elements from view, as in the photorealist movement of modern painting. With respect to print, immediacy is achieved by minimizing the book or codex’s reception as an aestheticized, designed object and foregrounding its appearance as a neutral, transparent container for the writer’s thoughts. As Bolter elaborates on the phenomenon in Writing Space, “Over centuries, however, the printed book was a significant refashioning that defined a space in which fixity and accuracy were more highly prized than perhaps ever before” (24).

5 Cf. Robyn Myers and Michael Harris, eds. A Millennium of the Book: Production, Design, & Illustration in Manuscript & Print 900-1900 (Oak Knoll: 1994), a generally comprehensive overview of the evolution of print design. Although many design elements of print technically predate the nineteenth century, mechanization as well as the rapid increase in productivity in the nineteenth century led to a de facto codification of many of these elements, in effect naturalizing the way print is “supposed” to look.

6 It should be noted that the phenomenon Deibert describes, of printed texts mimicking the form and appearance of the illuminated manuscript, did not necessarily constitute a one-way street. As Deibert also acknowledges, many handwritten texts from the late manuscript era began to exhibit what we might conventionally consider a “print-like” appearance (less ornate, tighter kerning, block-style lettering, less graphical elements). This spartan turn in manuscript design, which Deibert argues anticipates the cultural need for a technology such as the printing press, is in part a result of the demands of a growing secular literate populace coupled with limited scribal resources.

7 More on the technical history of typographic design can be found in Carter, Day, and Meggs’ Typographic Design: Form and Communication (New York: Van Nostrand Reinhold, 1993).

8 For a slightly more detailed technical exposition on the development of the printing press, see Geoffrey Rubinstein’s article “Printing: History and Development.” John Feather’s History of British Publishing looks primarily at the book trade of nineteenth century Britain, while S.H. Steinberg’s Five Hundred Years of Printing stands as a complete overview of the press and its evolution into the twentieth century. Of course, for a thorough history of the cultural reception and impact of the printing press, Elizabeth Eisenstein’s two-volume The Printing Press as an Agent of Change: Communications and Cultural Transformations in Early Modern Europe (1979), later republished in an abridged form
under the title *The Printing Revolution in Early Modern Europe* (1983), still stands as the definitive work on the subject.


10 The extent to which Cartesian subjectivity becomes the accepted model in Western European culture is in part demonstrated by the implication resting behind the faculty psychology movement, that there is a discrete mind with measurable functions that can be properly schematized. The Cartesian influence on faculty psychology can be drawn directly to the epistemology outlined by John Locke; Locke’s influence on New Rhetoric and subsequent movements are further detailed in Edward P. J. Corbett’s “John Locke’s Contributions to Rhetoric” (in *The Rhetorical Tradition in Modern Writing*. Ed. J.J. Murphy. New York: MLA, 1982).

11 Cf. G.P. Mohrmann’s “The Language of Nature and Eloctionary Theory,” which posits that the Eloctionary movement, far from being a mere pedagogical movement to produce good speakers founded on universal, empirical standards, was in fact an outgrowth of the Scottish natural language philosophers’ agenda to elevate Scotland’s national identity within Great Britain through the naturalization of idiomatic Scottish speech patterns.

12 Of course, exceptions to the rule did exist, notably the art book trend of the 1800s exemplified in William Blake’s *Songs of Innocence and of Experience*, a work which originally included ornate colored etchings but in subsequent critical editions was reduced to its verbal components—the poems themselves. In his book *The Textual Condition*, Jerome McGann calls the design attributes of machine-printed writing—images, binding material, paper stock, and so on—the “bibliographical code” (56). McGann’s overall argument, and he uses Blake’s critical reception as a primary site of analysis, is that the design regularities of print are so strong that the analysis of texts is overwhelmingly biased towards the linguistic code (the verbal component of a text) at the expense of the bibliographic code. In other words, McGann argues that critics, academics, and other professionals in the humanities have historically ignored the print interface, or bibliographic code, when reading texts. For McGann, this bias constitutes an oversight that does a disservice to historicizing works as artifacts within a particular cultural context.

13 A sentiment still very much with us today. Consider the not-at-all contentious statement in Jay Bolter’s *Writing Space* that belies this Enlightenment-based, progressivist bias towards print: “Gradually, over several generations, printing did change the visual character of the written page, making the writing space technically cleaner and clearer” (14).

14 For a detailed overview of oratorical history in the nineteenth century North America, the epistemological and belletristic theories underlying them, and the publication and reception of academic elocution manuals, see “The Art of Oratory,” Chapter Four in Nan Johnson’s *Nineteenth-Century Rhetoric in North America* (1991). Readers interested in more popular versions of such texts during the latter end of the century, such as parlor rhetorics that circumscribed oratorical performance along gender lines, will be interested in the chapter “Parlor Rhetoric and the Performance of Gender” in Johnson’s *Gender and Rhetorical Space in American Life, 1866-1910* (2002).

15 Similarly, Hugh Blair, in the comparatively shorter space he discusses delivery in his *Lectures*, calls it “The Natural Language” and suggests that attempts at teaching may end up spoiling a pupil’s natural aptitude. Most of Blair’s material on delivery hearkens back to Cicero and Quintilian and doesn’t extend it in the kind of systematic fashion that Austin, Walker, or similar elocutionists do.
For a more detailed history of popular and academic oratorical practices during the 1800s, see Clark and Halloran’s edited collection *Oratorical Culture in Nineteenth-Century America* (Southern Illinois UP, 1993).

A studied account of the extensive publication of elocution manuals, parlor rhetorics, reciters, and similar aids to oratorical practice is Nan Johnson’s “The Popularization of Nineteenth-Century Rhetoric: Elocution and the Private Learner” (in *Oratorical Culture in Nineteenth-Century America*, Eds. Clark and Halloran).

Sheridan, much like those who were subsequently influenced by him, maintained a tidy division in his schema that aligned words and their vocal expression with different faculties. He writes that “Words are, by compact, the marks or symbols of our ideas; and this is the utmost extent of their power” and also calls tones, looks, and gestures “true signs of the passions” (119-21). Sheridan’s framework upholds distinctions also made in many belletristic and compositional rhetorics—words are the expression of ideas, extratextual elements the amplification of those ideas.
CHAPTER 5

DELIVERY REDUX IN THE AGE

OF DIGITAL WRITING

The recent David Wallace article “Host,” which appeared in the April 2005 issue of The Atlantic, is a fascinating mise en scene of the political talk radio world, but that is arguably not the primary reason that it initially catches a reader’s attention.
The article is particularly noteworthy for its rather novel approach to marginal glossing: highlighted sections of text in the body correspond to marginal footnotes set in similarly colored boxes. This layout not only hearkens forward to hypertextual modes of writing—the visual cues of the colored boxes function in a way analogous to hyperlinks on a typical web site—it also hints backwards to the tradition of marginalia that characterized manuscript culture. Such a formal technique is an example of remeditation, a means by which the printed page assumes the qualities of a newer (and long-forgotten) media form in order to maintain its own cultural relevance and cultivate a sense of familiarity with newly emerging media forms.

While Wallace’s article illustrates how technologies and media forms interact and reshape each other at the formal level, it only shows part of how the dynamic of remediation works. New technologies enter the cultural sphere not only with the aid of pre-existing technologies but also because of cultural, discursive, and institutional forces—in short, how we use and talk about using our technologies. Many of the contemporary rhetorical theories dealing with the canon of delivery function in a comparable fashion in that they facilitate the cultural acceptance of electronic and digital media forms both by naturalizing them and by emphasizing their formal and technical benefits over earlier mediums.

The overarching premise of this dissertation, that the history of rhetorical theories and practices of delivery is an inherently technological one and contributes to the process of remediation, started with an observation of a recent and historically
unique moment. Specifically, a body of recent rhetorical scholarship emerged within approximately the last quarter-century that attempted to resurrect delivery by redefining the lost canon. No longer, these scholars argued, was delivery exclusively tied to matters pertaining to the performing body—rules prescribing proper vocal intonation and pacing, the timing of hand gestures and stances, appropriate attire, and the like. Kathleen Welch, Robert Connors, and John Reynolds began to see aspects of delivery in the surrogate bodies of texts never intended to be uttered by an orator. These scholars assert that we can see elements of delivery in such nonverbal locations as the choice of typeface used by a freshman writer in her final essay for composition class, the televisual commonplaces that comprise the typical evening network newscast, the layout of a magazine advertisement, or the decision to use a particular color scheme and graphics in the branding employed on a particular corporate public relations website.

Because this chapter ends at the beginning, that is, it returns to the moment established in medias res in chapter one, I am necessarily reminded of the questions that arose as I first read the works of Kathleen Welch, Robert Connors, Sam Dragga, Victor Vitanza, and similar-minded rhetorical theorists and historians. I wondered why this particular cadre of scholars—at this particular moment in time—is concerned with formulating new theories of delivery, reviving the lost canon by redefining it so that it is synonymous with medium or design. Broadly speaking, what are the cultural, epistemological, political, or historical aspects within our contemporary context that have created the conditions allowing such theories to
emerge? More specifically, how has our culture’s initial development of and subsequent interaction with various electronic communications technologies contributed to this shift in thinking about the once-forgotten fifth canon? My interest extends beyond explaining the conditions responsible for delivery’s redefinition, however. I’m also interested in exploring how such a theoretical transformation functions to help naturalize these new electronic and digital forms of writing. In other words, I argue that the variables within this rhetorical/technological equation are part of a complex reciprocal dynamic of remediation, a dense feedback loop wherein each player aids and abets the continued cultural relevance of the other using various mechanisms of mimicry and differencing.

The redefinition of delivery, therefore, can be viewed as both a diagnostic and therapeutic instrument in the development and cultural permeation of emergent electronic technologies of communication. That is, rather than posit an oversimplified causal relationship between rhetorical theory and technological instrumentality, I argue that these theories are both reflective and prescriptive, as they are part of a multifaceted nexus of multiple causalities. During the various historical periods discussed in this dissertation, delivery has been treated in different manners owing to the complex dynamic of a new technology entering our cultural landscape and contributing to changes in our literacy practices, economic markets, political and religious systems of order, metaphysical and epistemological schema, and so on. The Western rhetorical tradition has lionized delivery, dismissed it, excised it altogether, and made it the handmaid to literature at times concurrent with crucial
transformations of the communications environment. At times, such theories reflect an anticipated cultural desire for a new technology to emerge, and at others, they codify rules of use for a nascent technology so that our interaction with it becomes habitual, and eventually “natural.” As media theorist Regis Debray reminds us in *Transmitting Culture*, the ideas and technologies of a culture are intimately intertwined, comprised of what he refers to as “interdependencies.” Debray elaborates:

> It goes without saying that the field is complex. One speaks more appropriately of interactions and bipolarity than of entrenched antimony. Bruno Latour and others have shown there is no discrete technological object purely technological and totally inhuman or reducible to a purely instrumental neutrality. Technology is freighted with positive or negative values, fitted into institutions or social networks (like the speed bump or the alarm clock). We would never understand that things can speak to us about human beings if inanimate objects were not endowed with a kind of social soul. (49)

The aim of this chapter, and indeed this entire dissertation, is to describe the multiple ways that rhetorical theory—and particularly the redefinition of delivery—fits into Debray’s “social soul.”

This chapter, then, explains how the contemporary resurrection and redefinition of delivery fits into our current moment of technological transition, how it functions as a mechanism of remediation that allows new technologies of writing to enter the cultural sphere more easily. In framing this argument, I am extending Jay Bolter and Richard Grusin’s concept of remediation (or the means by which media forms refashion one another in order to promote their cultural acceptance) so that it
includes not just formal or technical strategies, but discursive and practice-based ones as well.¹ Rhetoric, because it is so intimately concerned with how communication functions in practical and theoretical dimensions, because it is a discipline that ponders methods of putting the instruments of communication to actual social use, therefore serves as an especially important site for analysis in determining how new communications technologies become culturally relevant. Just as we can understand nineteenth-century compositionists’ discussions of proper paragraph construction as a strategy naturalized the printed word by transforming a design feature of print into an “organic” unit of handwritten discourse or the Ramist dismissal of delivery as a response to the increasing dominance of an emerging writing culture further bolstered by the advent of printing,² so too can we interpret our current conversation about delivery as part of the overall process of remediation affecting our contemporary communications environment. By examining the decline of print’s hegemonic status alongside the advent of digital writing technologies, as well as the general rise of postructuralist rhetorical theories, I argue that the revived conversation about delivery is both a reflection of and a force acting within this dynamic flux. Put another way, that delivery is once again a central component of rhetorical theory at a time when new technologies of writing are emerging is hardly a coincidence attributable to chance. Upon closer examination, I argue that we can see delivery contributing to the growing cultural reception of electronic and digital technologies of writing by not
only explaining its cultural relevance on its own terms, but also eventually refashioning it to resemble prior media forms that have already attained a naturalized or familiar status.

As we have seen in previous chapters, the fifth canon has experienced a tumultuous reputation throughout the rhetorical tradition, a reputation that we can understand more fully by considering the technological contexts within which these changes in theoretical attitudes occur. The development of literacy in Ancient Greece coincided with a theoretical distrust of embodied delivery that was coupled with rhetorical theories advocating more “writerly” rules for oratorical performance. Similarly, the transition from the late manuscript to early print eras in the late fifteenth century witnessed a radical redrawing of the domain of rhetoric, and although delivery technically remained part of that territory, it was vastly overshadowed by the emphasis placed upon matters related to composing rather than performing (i.e., tropes and figures), as well as rules related to writing-exclusive genres (letter-writing, poetry, and grammar manuals). With the explosive growth and industrialization of print in and around the nineteenth century, delivery was revived in the form of the elocutionary movement, where it functioned as a site for naturalizing printed literary discourse by placing it upon the performing body. Either by means of erasure or by subsuming rules translating the material or formal look-and-feel of new technologies into the language of stylistics, logic, or aesthetics, the rhetorical tradition
has made delivery function as a technological discourse of remediation, a doorway through which a new technology, as well as its attendant media forms, enters the cultural sphere.

Such is the case for us today. We are living through a transitional era with respect to writing technologies, what some have boastfully (and perhaps even hyperbolically) proclaimed the “late age of print” (Cf. Moulthrop). The printed word has long held sway over our communications landscape, but as early as the late nineteenth century, the printed page began to remediate itself, anticipating the new media forms that were to come mere decades later. These new communications technologies—radio, television, film, and later digital technologies—initially mimic print’s well-established look-and-feel before developing their own formal and aesthetic identities (think, for instance, of the pre-graphical browser period of the World Wide Web, where content consisted solely of regularized alphabetic text). After the introduction of these new forms, print continues to participate in this process of remediation, borrowing from new media forms so as to protect its own threatened cultural position (for example, again see Fig. 4).

The entirety of this back-and-forth dynamic, which occurs at the formal or technical level, is sustained by the discursive, practical, and institutional forces that permeate a given culture, forces that give context to the media forms in question. My specific concern on this level lies with the corpus of rhetorical theories and treatises that coexist alongside this process. Rhetoric feeds into the dynamic of remediation by codifying the practical conventions for how a text is produced within a given
medium, thus contributing to its formal or generic quality by ascribing rules that, over time, develop into a cultural *habitus* that envelops what are essentially arbitrary factors within a theoretical framework of self-evidentiary logic. Just as Nietzsche described the formulation of language in general as an arbitrary set of signifiers that we hide from ourselves and later “discover” as if for the first time—seeing a camel and exclaiming, “look, a mammal!”—so too does rhetoric involve the prescription of rules that we take to be natural unearthings of the way we ought to communicate to best persuasive effect.

The contemporary redefinition of delivery is a slightly different mechanism of technological remediation than those detailed in previous chapters, the main distinction being the open acknowledgement that texts not spoken by an orator also carry with them performative elements, and that those elements are subject to comment and prescription by the discipline of rhetoric. Recently, handwritten, machine-printed, and electronic texts have been credited with possessing the power of delivery, a quality historically reserved for the speaking body. So revisioned, typefaces are suddenly perceived to convey authorial tone, background music intonates, hyperlinks gesticulate, a new perspective that prompts Kathleen Welch and others to proclaim that medium is delivery. I maintain that during previous periods involving the inclusion of new writing technologies, the theories of delivery that remediated old and new media forms were largely hidden—that is, they were subsumed within categories pertaining to style or logic when they were also implicitly shaping the formal or material dimension of discourse behind the scenes. Think, for
example, of the elocutionary movement’s reliance on literary and poetical source
texts as a means of cultivating a tasteful style during the eighteenth and nineteenth
centuries; this trend also functioned to naturalize printed discourse by setting print-
based standards for oratorical performance. Today, however, we are acknowledging
outright an explicit connection between the extra-textual or paratextual features of the
“performing” text and the canon of delivery. This historically noteworthy distinction
bears examining, because it is indicative of an important change in how our culture
has come to view texts as performative objects roughly equivalent to the speaking
body. It also signals a fundamental change in how we conceive of the human
subjectivity that drives the speaking body—no longer an essentialized component of
human being, but rather a socially manufactured, highly textualized construct. Before
inspecting how rhetorical theories in particular contributed to the shaping of our
contemporary communications landscape, however, it is first necessary to briefly
sketch a map of the social, technical, and epistemological contours of that landscape.
Mapping out these broader cultural forces will establish more fully the context within
which these rhetorical processes of remediation occurred and continue to occur.

Mapping Out the Contemporary Communications Environment: A

Technological Overview of Electronic and Digital Writing Developments

The electronic and digital writing technologies that were developed during the
twentieth century, which have supposedly allowed rhetorical theorists to redefine the
domain of delivery, did not emerge in our culture fully formed. Instead, they were
incubated within a complex dynamic of social, epistemological, political, and technical forces that were in play long before the digital age, when terms such as “computer” and “word processor” referred to the actual people who performed such labor, and not the machines and programs that eventually displaced them. It is therefore necessary that we consider this historical context so that we better understand the social motivations and changes in mindset that created the hospitable conditions for such technological transformations to occur, and how the recent conversation surrounding the status and domain of delivery figures into the entire dynamic.

We are situated in an age that Walter Ong has famously termed “secondary orality,” an era of post-literacy characterized by the proliferation of several different communications technologies that is “essentially a more deliberate and self-conscious orality, based permanently on the use of writing and print” (Orality, 136). Media forms that were historically distinct from one another are combined in the age of secondary orality, creating a mélange of hybridized, remediating forms that require new forms of consciousness for encoding and decoding texts combining oral and literate skills, pattern recognition, visual literacy, and so on. Obviously, the scope and diversity of this technological landscape is enormous, including not only the dominant electronic media of today, but also their earlier mechanical forebears: television, radio, film, the internet, telegraph, typewriter, telephony, photocopying, and similar minor media. It therefore proves productive to hone the focus of this discussion to a particular class of writing technologies that shares a common genetic
heritage with print and chirography, namely those forms of digital writing that we associate with the emergence of the personal computer, such as word processing or desktop publishing applications, hypertext and the plethora of genres populating the World Wide Web, email, instant messaging, multimedia texts, and various combinations of these applications.³

The fairly recent change in the theorization of rhetorical delivery roughly coincides with another scholarly conversation centered around emergent and established technologies of writing, our ability to manipulate their formal and material qualities, and their respective status within the communications environment of the late twentieth century. During the late 1980s and early 1990s, a rift as divisive as any in academia occurred between a group of theorists arguing for the revolutionary status of a relatively new form of digital writing known as hypertext and those who advocated that machine-printed writing remain the paradigmatic medium. Briefly characterized, the divide between these two theoretical positions serves as an example of how a discourse—not just the arena of technics or formal manipulation—can function as an instrument of remediation, or more specifically, hypermediacy. Bolter and Grusin define hypermediacy as one particular logic in their theory of remediation that involves exaggerating or drawing attention to the interface of a media form (an abstract expressionist painting such as Rothko’s Blue, Green, and Brown, for instance, is in part a self-aware commentary on the medium of painting).
Each side in this debate argued for the cultural superiority of their respective media form as both a tool of production and reception by explaining both the affordances of their medium of choice and the drawbacks of their opponents’.

On one side of the divide stood hypertext theorists and writers such as George P. Landow, Michael Joyce, Stuart Moulthrop, and Jay Bolter, who almost univocally claimed (and, as of this writing, wrongly) that this new screen-based writing technology would not only overturn the hegemony of print, but also promised to threaten the very existence of the conventional medium. For them, hypertext, especially experimental hypertextual fiction, represented everything that print did not. Hypertext is nonlinear, following a non-heirarchical, open-ended organizational structure; it follows an associative logic based primarily on tangential connections between points rather than one based on the print-bound logic of causality or subordination. Formally speaking, genre-defining hypertexts such as Joyce’s *Afternoon, a Story* (1987) or Moulthrop’s *Victory Garden* (1991) are comprised of small nodes of text with embedded links instead of the familiar, sequential parade of paragraphs nested within sections within chapters. The highly regularized printed page—black type, consistent face, regular margins and indentations, as well as subordinate graphical elements—gave way to a new formal language where the manipulation of color and font as well as the integration of alphabetical and graphical text were common. The power dynamic of reading and writing within this new form of textuality changes radically as well, as Joyce passionately argues throughout *Of Two Minds: Hypertext, Pedagogy, and Poetics* (1995). The tired modern binary of
reader/writer is overturned by hypertext, resulting in a literary experience that is more
dialogical than monological, where reading is no longer a passive act of
interpretation, but an active process of creating the text via the gesture of following a
unique sequence of hyperlinks. By these measures, the proponents of hypertext
deemed it a superior medium of communication compared to print.

The other side of this academic dispute was just as vociferous in its defense of
print. Print apologists such as Sven Birkerts, James O’Donnell, Neil Postman,
Clifford Stoll, and Mark Slouka, among others, saw the more established medium as
better able to reflect the disciplined methods of argumentation in fields like science,
history, or philosophy. They disputed the claims of hypertext’s so-called
interactivity, describing it as a subtler means of authorial control by prescribing
“appropriate” or sanctioned associative hyperlinks. Additionally, reading hypertext is
a comparatively public act next to the solitude of reading printed texts, therefore
making it unsuitable for the private contemplation necessary for fostering the
intellect. They also bemoaned the sterile, high-tech practice of navigating hypertexts,
preferring the relatively “natural” medium of print, even going so far as to
romanticize this notion by fixating on the image of reading books outdoors, in bed, or
in other locales where computers fear to tread (Stoll 58; Birkerts 77; Landow 6).
Defenders of the printed page took issue with the associative logical structure and
lack of fixity related to digital writing, feeling as Birkerts did that it threatened our
culture’s ability to reason with any moral or ethical certitude and thus hastened our
plummet into a pit of blank relativism:
My core fear is that we are, as a culture, as a species, becoming shallower; that we have turned from depth—from the Judeo-Christian premise of unfathomable mystery—and are adapting ourselves to the ersatz security of a vast lateral connectedness. That we are giving up on wisdom, the struggle for which has for millennia been central to the very idea of culture, and that we are pledging instead to a faith in the web. (228)

The point of this brief history is that the invention of hypertext was not necessarily an antagonistic break from print technology, but rather in some ways an extension of print, a transformation of it owing to reciprocal interaction. For all the initial saber-rattling, the discourse eventually reached something of a consensus, in some measure owing to the fact that hypertextual fiction has yet to garner a mainstream audience, while less radical genres of hypertexts across the World Wide Web do not overtly challenge the print paradigm. As we shall see, the conversation about the changing status and domain of rhetorical delivery also contributed to the initial exaggerated tone in the hypertext/print divide by suggesting that the malleability of digital writing forms invited us to re-imagine the canon. More reasoned discussion of hypertext allowed us to see it not as an antagonistic threat to print, but a remediation of it, a formal, aesthetic, and conceptual transformation of the printed page fomented by the advent of digital technology, at least in part. Well before the emergence of this new class of technology, we were actively changing our existing media forms in ways that anticipated hypertext and its formal affordances, among them creating the kinds of texts that Steven Johnson, echoing McLuhan,
would describe as being “too hot” for their medium, self-aware metaforms that are less than ideal forms within their current medium, but are actually “ghosts of technologies to come” that hint at future interface designs (33-4).

All the claims by these advocates of hypertext notwithstanding, the new technology of writing likely would not have come about were it not for developments within print culture over the span of the twentieth century. Although alphabetic text and image have co-existed before, it was not until the end of the nineteenth century that the print-bound hierarchy of text over image starts to develop cracks in its foundation. In *Montage and Modern Life, 1919-1942*, Chris Phillips recounts the developments that led to this transformation:

> The spread of montage imagery began in earnest after the 1880s and the advent of the half-tone process, which allowed photographically derived images to be reproduced in ink on the same presses as type. By the first decade of the twentieth century, photomontage imagery, albeit of a fairly primitive kind, could be found in popular illustrated magazines like *Colliers*. (26)

Halftone printing processes opened the door for all types of experimentation with the printed page, demonstrating to readers that the written word could perform the realm of semantic content. In addition to the photomontage trend that spread throughout Europe, the Soviet Union, and the United States during the early twentieth century, this period also sees a proliferation of related artistic gestures, from poster design and the genesis of graphic arts, experimental typography, avant garde artist books, print-based advertising, and so on. Even in literary circles, writers tried their hands at manipulating the extratextual dimension of their works. For example, in *The Textual
*Condition*, Jerome McGann remarks that Ezra Pound’s *Cantos* utilized Chinese ideographs in such a manner that in addition to functioning semantically, they functioned graphically as well, comprising a central “unwobbling pivot” around which Western-language text was set haphazardly (107-8). The famous cut-up journals that William S. Burroughs assembled from the 1930s through the 60s could be identified as a kind of pre hoc multimedia, dense collages combining images, handwritten text, typewritten and found text clippings in such a way as to elicit surprising associations between disparate elements. John Barth, Appollinaire, e. e. cummings, and other imagist poets would play with the color, layout, and typefaces of their poems, prompting rhetorician William Tanner to describe the practice as a type of delivery (28). Collectively, such experimentation with the print medium challenged the design paradigm of the book, the long-standing traditional bibliographic code, as well as the resultant hegemonic status of the textual over the visual, the linear over the chaotic, the author over the reader. The illusory interface of print as a transparent window into the mind of the author was beginning to give way to another design statement, one in which the printed page could be reimagined as a space, wherein its materiality could convey meaning and persuade readers in addition to the content it displayed.

Several decades before the advent of digital writing technologies—some years even before Ted Nelson coined the term “hypertext” in the 1960s—our culture was beginning to explore the technical possibilities of print, pushing at its boundaries and discovering its affordances and constraints, its benefits as well as its limitations.
Such experimentation was central to a transformation in our cultural attitudes that would create the demand for new developments in writing technologies. In fact, it was during this period of print remediation that engineer Vannevar Bush published his plans for the memex in the 1945 *Atlantic Monthly* article “As we May Think,” a hypothetical microfilm-based reading station that charted and stored the links that the operator would compile as he or she navigated through several related texts.

Additionally, this transformation of the material dimensions of print destabilized our modernist concepts of textual production and reception, showing us that it was not only content that communicates, but also the formal attributes of the medium, and in a significantly different fashion. This recognition opens the door to the possibility of reimagining the role of delivery as a central component in the overall rhetorical process.

The tendency to experiment with the printed form did not end with the advent of digital writing, however. One point I have stressed throughout this dissertation is that the remediation of media forms is reciprocal; that is, rather than operating along a progressive trajectory, the transformation of media forms is both a forward-looking and backward-looking enterprise, at times nostalgic and at others progressive. We can see this tendency in those examples where printed texts mimic digital textuality. For instance, anyone familiar with magazine graphic designer David Carson and his deconstructionist approach to layout and typography can see that his influences are in part drawn from the digital design aesthetic, prompting reviewer Ken Wilson to describe Carson’s influential graphic design monograph *The End of Print: The*
"Graphik Design of David Carson" (2000) as “a documentary record of a defining period for the profession as it moved abruptly and rather bewilderingly into the digital world” (Carson n. pag.). Similar examples can be found in books such as philosopher Mark Taylor’s *Hiding: Religion and Postmodernism* (1997), which thanks to the efforts of design firm 2X4, is a multi-layered text that graphically represents the linking convention of hypertext. Even more recently, N. Katherine Hayle’s *Writing Machines* (2002), a meditation on the literary history of texts that self-consciously manipulate their materiality (art-books, photomontage, and literary hypertexts), is itself a richly designed print book incorporating digitally influenced elements such as linking, highlighting, bulging text, alinear arrangement, verbal/visual integration, and similar graphical tricks that break up the grid-based regularity associated with traditional print design.

These examples, of course, are just a few illustrations of how print remediates itself in the era of digital writing, transforming its look-and-feel so as to maintain a sense of relevancy in a culture that has adopted a new writing technology into its communications environment. Such innovations in print design, many of which mimic, are influenced by, or are supplemented by digital technology, speaks to a need for the continued development of a new writing technology. They also facilitate the eventual cultural acceptance of digital culture by translating a challenging new form, aesthetic, and logic into the already naturalized medium of print. Moreover, by destabilizing the once natural status of print, by making us acutely aware of its formal
dimension as well as its ability to perform, this play allows us to become aware of the materiality of the text as a rhetorical space, a new frontier to be claimed by the canon of delivery.

It was not just print that seeks to adopt the new design elements of digital writing into its own medium, however. In the interest of maintaining symbiosis, or perhaps more a self-serving strategy of infiltration via camouflage, digital writing has not attempted a decisive break from print altogether. It also mimics the earlier medium in certain instances to borrow from its familiarized formal language. During the pre-Web era of the Internet and even the early years of the World Wide Web, content consisted almost exclusively of alphabetic text. By both technological constraints and by design, the nascent interface adopted the fixity, regularity, and mechanical repeatability characteristic of machine-printed writing. Also, desktop publishing software of the late 1980s and early 90s, such as Aldus Pagemaker or Quark Express, mimicked the actions, terminology, and even the tools (albeit virtual) of the printer’s trade. Word-processing applications (Microsoft Works and Word, Apple’s ClarisWorks, or Carel’s WordPerfect, for instance) eventually developed what-you-see-is-what-you-get (WYSIWHG) interfaces to immerse users in a more “natural,” and hence more intuitive, writing space where virtual sheets of paper scrolled up the screen as one typed as if they were advancing from a typewriter’s carriage. Even the Graphical User Interface (GUI), developed by Xerox in the 1970s and popularized by Apple and Microsoft over the next couple of decades, provides an
extended metaphorical space consisting of a hierarchical arrangement of files, folders, and a desktop wherein a user’s digital writing is subtly connected to the “real world” of print.  

The reciprocating strategies of mimicry that occur in both print and digital media are mutually beneficial, thus ensuring the continued cultural relevance of each medium. Rather than maintain its traditional look-and-feel, the printed page adapted, first in response to cultural desires to experiment with the formal language of the medium, and later to remain competitive with the newly emerging technologies of writing. Likewise, digital writing initially emulated traditional print in an effort to appear more familiar and, having attained some leverage because of that emulation, then defined its own formal, aesthetic, and conceptual makeup as a distinct medium in its own right. In each of these transformations, the cultural desire to manipulate the extra-textual elements of a given text creates a context for the redefinition of delivery.

While the remediation of machine-printed and digital writing certainly occur at the formal and technical level, it also occurs at the levels of ideas, discourse, and institutional or individual practices. The transformation that led to the introduction of digital writing did not only take place in the realm of the technological. In one respect, the academic rift between hypertext theorists and print advocates that I review here functions as a mechanism in the overall process of remediation, a means by which the differences between a new and a long-established media form are stressed in order to hype the fledgling technology and build broader cultural support
for it.⁹ According to Bolter and Grusin’s terminology, we might liken this to the formal logic of hypermediacy. The subsequent toning down of the bravado between hypertext enthusiasts and print nostalgics would then constitute a type of immediacy, a means by which the similarities shared by both mediums are emphasized to naturalize digital forms of writing.¹⁰

Of course, the mutual processes of remediation affecting machine-printed and digital writing throughout the twentieth century until today was not only brought about by the esoteric disagreements of a narrowly circumscribed discourse community of academics, literary and visual artists, and media theorists. Far-reaching cultural forces contribute to the process as well, among them broad habits of usage, changes in the market structure or economic interests associated with particular technologies, curricular changes in educational settings, changes in political or social order¹¹, epistemological transformation, and many more. Just as we have seen historically, the discipline of rhetoric also figures into this complex array of factors, at times actively shaping the communications environment by prescribing rules for producing rhetorical texts, at others shaped by it. The return of delivery is therefore a central example of this interplay of forces, and as such can be read as both symptomatic of our changing cultural attitudes regarding the complex association between textuality and embodiment and as an active strategy working to foment such a change.
In *The Gutenberg Galaxy*, McLuhan proclaimed, “Typography cracked the voices of silence,” meaning that with the instantiation of printing came a new paradigm of artistic creation where publicly visible, vocal, *performed* works of art so central to Western European culture gave way to the interiorized space of consciousness (250). He observes that, “As the Gutenberg typography filled the world the human voice closed down. People began to read silently and passively as consumers. Architecture and sculpture dried up too” (250). Today, we might revise McLuhan’s proclamation by saying that digital writing dismantles the myth of interiority built by typography. Furthermore, with that dismantling comes the obliteration of the artificial line separating form and content that print, because it developed an invisible interface owing to its regularity and mechanical repeatability, established for so many centuries. Our contemporary society is beginning to understand that writing, like sculpture or architecture, is an object, and therefore has the potential to perform in ways other than the semantic meaning of its alphabetic text. The recent paradigmatic changes in our conceptualization of rhetorical delivery is one indication of this shift in mindset. In the following section, I consider how rhetoric contributed to this understanding during the last century until today.

**Out-of-Body Rhetoric: The Poststructuralist Turn and the Return of Delivery**

The transformation of rhetorical theory in the twentieth and early twenty-first centuries, read in the context of emerging digital writing technologies, is not simply a passive response to a changing communication landscape. Instead, this
transformation plays an active role in remediating that landscape as an institutional, theoretical, and practice-bound force in our culture. Generally speaking, contemporary rhetoric utilizes two logics or strategies in its efforts to incorporate digital writing more easily into our environment. One strategy involves creating connections nascent and long-established forms of communication in order to foster a sense of familiarity and naturalness in the new class of technology— in short, a strategy of immediacy. The other, hypermediacy, works by emphasizing the benefits or affordances of the new technology over older ones, creating a sense of added value that makes a society more prone to accept it (e.g., digital writing extends our ability to communicate more effectively than earlier types of writing because of the inherent efficiency of cutting and pasting pre-existing text, or similar claims). These strategies are employed in a variety of manners, from extending the domain of delivery to the adoption of poststructuralist philosophy into rhetorical theory to the use of a neo-classical return to origins rationale. While I do not mean to suggest that these trends in rhetorical theory specifically and explicitly address the goal of familiarizing or naturalizing digital writing in every case, I maintain that they are part of an emerging pattern of thinking and theorizing about the overall rhetorical process that ultimately creates an hospitable environment wherein the fledgling technology can enter and subsequently develop.

The very act of reclaiming the canon of delivery and reassigning its role within the rhetorical process is itself a mechanism of remediation. Prima facie, redefining delivery works based upon the logic of immediacy. It takes advantage of
the canon’s traditional connection to the comparably more “natural” mode of spoken discourse and uses it to build a new association with the emergent technologies of digital writing. In short, the act of redefining delivery generates a direct equation between the performing rhetorical body and an entire class of texts that otherwise have no direct material connection to the body. By extension, to maintain that delivery is coequal with medium constitutes a leveling gesture that conceptually conflates all modes of discourse and makes the same canon applicable to all of them. To place a canon that for millennia has been exclusively concerned with the speaking human body on top of a new class of non-verbal texts validates them as performative objects, implying that on some shared conceptual level, these texts also gesture, intone, and inflect, albeit in a metaphorical sense. The spoken, handwritten, machine-printed, and now the digitally rendered word take on coequal status as objects of rhetorical delivery’s scrutiny, thereby erasing or diminishing the material distinctions between them.

The other logic of remediation, hypermediacy, can be seen at work in this strategy of remediation as well. Whereas in previous eras, the mechanism of conflating discursive modes was more covert (in classical times, incorporating the material benefits of chirography to revise oral discourse to become more grammatically and syntactically complex, and instead categorizing the revision as stylistic), the current mechanism of conflation is more overt. This strategy emphasizes the difference between the new and prior technologies, creating a sense of value in the new technology by pointing out its unique cultural benefits. Delivery and
medium become coequal terms not under the reign of print with its blank aesthetic, but with the arrival of electronic and digital writing technologies that are perceived to be more flexible, alterable, and performative than print. Perhaps as an unintended consequence of this strategy, the language many rhetorical scholars use when describing the redefinition of delivery (an active, purposeful revision of the canon) can sound somewhat passive, matter-of-fact, or self-evident. Conversely, some configurations assign subjective power to the technology itself. Such rhetorical constructions make it appear as though the technology naturally created or uncovered the revision, or that it “allowed” us to see such a connection. For example, Welch not only ascribes the theoretical shift to the emergence of the new technology, she even genuflects to its authority as a cultural catalyst when she writes, “to explore delivery here, I will center on how it has been reconstructed through electronic forms of discourse. Delivery, in its life as medium, has acquired enormous power in the twentieth century” (153). Commenting specifically on word-processing applications, Connors similarly remarks, “the growth of relatively inexpensive but sophisticated computer programs and printers means, though, that many of the decisions formerly made only by professional printers have recently devolved into the hands of the average writer. […] Contemporary actio is concerned with learning to use effectively the instruments that are being put in our hands” (Reynolds 66). In “Hypertext and the Rhetorical Canons,” Bolter even goes so far as to suggest that hypertext restructures the entire classical canonical structure. He writes, “Consider how hypertext as a new mode of delivery redefines the other canons. To begin with, hypertext brings together
the canons of delivery and arrangement, in the sense that arrangement of a hypertext, the order in which the topics appear on a reader’s screen, is determined in the act of delivery” (Reynolds 100). Examples such as these illustrate a tendency not only to hype the cultural value of a newly emerging writing technology (i.e., stating that these new writing tools reimagine the potential and possibilities of text production), it also goes one step further by subtly suggesting the technology has some degree of agency or subjectivity in this dynamic, creating yet another naturalizing link to the human body.

The effort to remediate digital writing predates the fairly recent conversation about delivery, however. The impulse to revive and subsequently redefine the jurisdiction of rhetorical delivery did not emerge without an initial change in the philosophical temperament of the discipline as a whole. The epistemological transformation that eventually redefines delivery has its roots in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century when the precursors to post-structuralism were beginning to form theories that eventually challenged the interiorized, immaterialist notion of human subjectivity that had become accepted wisdom since the era of Descartes and the Enlightenment. Building on the philosophical contributions of figures such as Nietzsche, Freud, Marx, Wittgenstein, and Heidegger, a loose collection of mid-century scholars, many of them from the French University system, took aim at the tenets of the modernist tradition, revising theories of language and meaning, gender and sexuality roles, the concept of the literary text, and even human subjectivity. By unsettling the Enlightenment notion that a written text is primarily a window into the
interior mind of a discrete human subject, this transformation of established metaphysical order dramatically reconfigures the relationship between reader, writer, and text. The text is recast as an active, in-the-world participant in the rhetorical process, capable of conveying its own meaning through its physicality.

Academics such as Michel Foucault and Roland Barthes challenged the modernist figure of the author, arguing instead that it was an historical fiction and that meaning emanated from the act of reading texts. Derrida famously claimed that there is nothing outside of the text, meaning that reality is not grounded in an essential and immutable metaphysics, but rather in the ever-shifting ground of discourse, ideology, and cultural codes. Rhetorical theory of the twentieth century was undoubtedly influenced by this mindset, which began shifting attention towards the written text and its capacity as a rhetorical force at the expense of the modernist notion that writing is the external manifestation of thought. We see the impact of post-structuralist thought in the theories of Kenneth Burke, who overturned the literature/rhetoric hierarchy by making works of literature (and by extension, any sort of human communication) objects of rhetorical analysis rather than stylistic exempla for emulation. Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca’s *Treatise on Argumentation* (1958) directly challenges the philosophical heritage of Ramus and Descartes when they posit a theory of argumentation that refuses to accept essentializing metaphysical concepts of language, truth, and subjectivity, claiming categorically in the conclusion of their text,

We combat uncompromising and irreducible philosophical oppositions presented by all kinds of absolutism: dualisms of reason and
imagination, of knowledge and opinion, of irrefutable self-evidence and deceptive will, of a universally accepted objectivity and an incommunicable subjectivity, of a reality binding on everybody and values that are purely individual. (Bizzell and Herzberg 1069)

We also see the influence, for example, in the adoption of post-structuralist critical theorists and philosophers such as Foucault, Derrida, or Judith Butler as honorary rhetorical theorists. Many of the central lines of inquiry for late-century rhetoricians—feminism, critical race theory, transnational politics, collaborative authorship, rhetorical historiography—are indebted to post-structuralist thought. Generally speaking, contemporary rhetorical theory has readily absorbed post-structuralist philosophy into its own domain, not surprising given that the philosophical perspective works from the first premise that reality is constructed through discursive or rhetorical actions. Recent scholars studying rhetorical delivery are likewise influenced by this epistemological rationale. The act of reassigning power to the materiality of the non-verbal text indicates skepticism regarding the idea of interiorized subjectivity, as if to say the writer’s mind is not the only active force, nor the most immediate one, in the rhetorical transaction between text and reader; the form of that text matters as well.

Incidentally, many of the same philosophical influences cited by Bolter, Landow, Moulthrop, and other hypertextual scholars as a rationale for hypertext are also central to the development of rhetorical theory in the mid- and late-twentieth century: Barthes, Foucault, Derrida, et al.¹² This is hardly a coincidence, as both conversations are situated within the same broad philosophical and epistemological
developments that destabilized selfhood and unsettled the concept of interiority that so intimately accompanied print culture. Along with that stabilization comes a class of writing technologies that attempts to de-emphasize authorial control and place emphasis instead on the interaction between text and reader, remediating the non-verbal text so that it would soon be seen in a new rhetorical light as an actively performing force in the act of communicating. The influence of poststructuralism has ultimately had a transformative effect on how the discipline of rhetoric views the issue of human subjectivity, and along with that, what constitutes the rhetorical act and how it is theorized. No longer essentialized or intimately associated with the integumental body, human subjectivity instead becomes socially contingent, a textualized construct. The externalization of subjectivity created the conditions necessary for later rhetorical theorists such as Welch, Connors, Reynolds, and others to see text, in whatever form, as a performative object and therefore subject to rhetorical study and prescription. With that theoretical change comes the realization that delivery need not be beholden to the speaking body, and its theoretical scope could be extended to the materiality of any text.

The resurrection of delivery also accompanies another prevalent trend in twentieth-century rhetoric, namely the neo-classical revival. The tenor of this conversation revolves around the idea that a return or reinstatement of the classical model of rhetoric affords scholars and students in rhetoric and composition a richer, more powerful rhetorical theory than the emaciated current-traditionalist model offers. Edward Corbett’s seminal textbook *Classical Rhetoric for the Modern*
Student, one of the early catalysts for this movement, argued that students were better served by studying rhetoric in its “original” form than the less robust modes of argumentation popular during much of the twentieth century: “[T]hose who study argumentation in classrooms today are not really exposed to the rich, highly systematized discipline that earlier students submitted to when they were learning the persuasive art” (16). In their 1984 article “On Distinctions Between Classical and Modern Rhetoric,” Andrea Lunsford and Lisa Ede look hopefully into a future where classical rhetoric regains its cultural relevance:

One way to begin this task [of reuniting classical rhetorical theory and modern practice] is by eschewing the false distinctions that have been persistently drawn between classical and modern rhetoric and by building instead on their powerful similarities. […] If rhetoric is to reach its full potential in the twentieth century as an informing framework for long-divorced disciplines and for instruction and conduct in reading, writing, and speaking, then we must define ourselves not in opposition to but in consonance with the classical model. (49)

Even classical revisionist projects such as Jarratt’s Rereading the Sophists, Glenn’s Rhetoric Retold, or Welch’s The Contemporary Reception of Classical Rhetoric were not simply concerned with advancing a purely historical perspective, but also with suggesting modern pedagogical applications because they were dissatisfied with the state of the current-traditional pedagogical model.

Many of the delivery revisionists invoke the notion of reviving the classical system when redefining the fifth canon. This strategy naturalizes digital forms of writing by attaching it to an “origin myth” of sorts, associating it with a “pure” or
complete version of rhetoric. Kathleen Welch argues in *Electric Rhetoric* that by recasting delivery to include the newest technologies of communication, we end up with a powerful theoretical apparatus: “New vistas lie open before us as the world speeds ahead with new technologies and their attendant literacies. If we refrain from theorizing this new era, then other forces will continue to dominate it. Historicized rhetorical theory and writing practices, including the writing of histories of communication technologies, offer us powerful theoretical bases” (210). In the introduction to *Rhetorical Memory and Delivery*, Winifred Horner proclaims that the collection “marks a turning point in the history of rhetoric. Through its revival of the classical canons of memory and delivery, it reaches into the past to explain the present and suggest possibilities for the future. It explores orality and literacy within a secondary orality that blends written and spoken and aural and visual language” (ix). Again, for Bolter in “Hypertext and the Rhetorical Canons,” hypertext not only facilitates the reunion of the classical system, it reconfigures it as well, allowing delivery, arrangement, and invention to collide in the very act of following a path of hyperlinks (Reynolds 100 – 104).

The association of new media forms with a “complete” classical system superimposes a patina on the new media, giving it an always-there quality. In much the same way as the nineteenth century rhetorical tradition gestured back to its classical heritage to simultaneously borrow from the authority of the ancients and make the case that the addition of a faculty psychology improved the old system, the current dynamic also vacillates between revering the old and touting the new. The
relationship between a redefined canon of delivery and a sutured classical system of rhetoric is mutually beneficial for those scholars redefining delivery as well as those reviving the classical tradition. Furthermore, the relationship incorporates the twin logics of remediation, immediacy and hypermediacy, in its collaboration. In addition to the strategy of inclusion (immediacy), which allows a newly revised theory of delivery to appear more culturally familiar by masquerading as part of an ancient and revered institution, there is also a strategy of innovation (hypermediacy) at work. Digital writing proves its cultural relevance precisely because of its ability to reinstate the classical system, an ability that print does not appear to possess. As Welch, Horner, Connors, and others frame the argument, new writing technologies have allowed for a return to the classical system in its entirety because they are more flexible and dynamic than their technological predecessors and can therefore serve as oratorical surrogates, mimicking the performative capacity of the speaking body. The complete classical model was lost for centuries because of the primitive state of earlier and inferior writing technologies, which did not offer writers an adequate substitute for oratory.

How a technology enters the cultural sphere, how it develops over time, and how it eventually achieves some degree of relevancy is hardly ever a matter of pure technical merit (for example, JVC’s VHS videocassette format became more widely adopted than Sony’s Betamax format as the technical standard, largely due to market pressures and legal maneuvering that overshadowed the fact that Sony’s product was generally recognized as technically superior). We make laws governing how
technology is used. We adopt certain technologies because they resemble pre-
existing technologies. We endorse the adoption of a technology in conversations with
family, friends, and other members of our discourse communities. Market forces and
advertising propel certain technologies forward. Also, in the case of rhetoric, we
prescribe rules suggesting how best to use technologies to communicate clearly and
persuasively with one another.

In the era of digital writing, rhetoric has dis-embodied the canon of delivery,
placing it atop non-verbal texts and, in effect, transforming those texts into surrogates
of the performing body. In so doing, the discipline conflates spoken and written
discourse (extended across the technological spectrum) and brings a degree of
familiarity to a class of writing still very much in its infancy, still attempting to
negotiate its formal and material boundaries. By superimposing the familiar language
of gesture, inflection, and tone on the digitally rendered word, rhetoric makes that
word at once familiar and strange. On one hand, redefining delivery makes digital
writing capable of emulating the performative capacity of the speaking body. On the
other hand, by expanding the theoretical scope of delivery to include texts not uttered
by the speaking body and extends the conceptual language of the canon beyond the
traditionally understood constraints of space and time, making it a far richer part of
the rhetorical process. This theoretical shift happens against the backdrop of
poststructuralist philosophy that reconceptualizes the modernist notion of human
subjectivity to become fractured and externalized, a textualized fiction superimposed
on top of the integumental body. For some scholars in the discipline, digital writing
fulfills the promise of a return to the long-fractured classical system of the art of persuasion by reinventing the Agora in an age when oratorical performance is somewhat anachronistic, and hence rare. Kathleen Welch posits the solution, writing “If delivery is regarded as medium, then the dynamics of the canon are reinvested with their original power. […] Classical rhetoric as a [word] system of discourse theory remains unique among the various critical theories available to us because it connects to history, politics, and the everyday uses of language” (Contemporary Reception, 99).

The rules pertaining to the manipulation of the material elements of non-verbal texts, for centuries hidden throughout the remaining canons and masquerading as issues of style, invention, arrangement, or otherwise, are repositioned under the auspices of delivery at a time when the composer’s ability to personally manipulate that text is easier than it is under the rigid fixity of print. By extension, handwriting, which over time developed a standardized look-and-feel influenced by print, has ended up suppressing chirography’s unique potential for malleability as a medium. Today, we are beginning to realize a more complete historical picture of how the materiality of texts contributes to the overall rhetorical process. Moreover, the act of rhetorical genesis is seated in sites other than the single human being traditionally credited with a text’s production (i.e., orator, author, designer). An entire communications environment comprised not only of machinery, but also accumulated media forms and genres, institutions that vet and disseminate the production of texts, and the people circulating in and around such institutions, contributes to the eventual
shape and ultimate persuasiveness of that text. We are beginning to understand that, to varying degrees, technologies of writing and communication have always had the capacity within them to communicate via their form. As I present it in this dissertation, when we also see that matters pertaining to delivery have often reached beyond the confines of the traditional canonical definition, we realize that, whether tacitly or explicitly, the discipline of rhetoric has historically acknowledged that capacity.
ENDNOTES:

1 Bolter and Grusin’s theory of remediation involves an interplay of two tendencies or logics, which they call “immediacy” (the tendency of a media form to emulate unmediated reality) and “hypermediacy” (when a media form calls attention to or exaggerates its formal qualities).

2 See, respectively, chapters four and three for discussions of these examples.

3 I had initially planned to adopt Jay Bolter’s usage of hypertext in *Writing Space*, which he defines as “a genre or series of genres, including interactive fiction, applications for education and entertainment, Web sites (which themselves many different genres, and so on)” that are “intimately associated with digital technology” to be recognized as such (41). Rather than use the generic term “hypertext,” I have instead opted to use the more inclusive term “digital writing” to incorporate types of computer-based texts that do not necessarily take advantage of hypertextual features such as linking. This term allows me to also look at digital applications that are more printerly in look-and-feel, such as word processing and desktop publishing.


5 Joyce’s argument that the reader’s role is more creative and interactive in hypertext than in print is characterized by a tone that depicts print as highly oppressive and violent and hypertext as liberatory. Cf. The in particular the chapter entitled “The Ends of Print Culture” (173-84).


7 For a definitive history of the web, read Tim Berners-Lee’s *Weaving the Web* (1999). Berners-Lee is credited with inventing the World Wide Web, developing many of the protocols and networking logistics that are still in use today.

8 Steven Johnson’s *Interface Culture* (45 – 53) provides a detailed historical account of the development of the graphical user interface during the 1980s. Johnson also makes much of the metaphorical nature of the GUI environment, arguing that the design of the desktop GUI works so well because it presents users not with the myth of verisimilitude, but with a cognitively flexible impression of a desktop, folders, windows, and the like (58-60).

9 Many of the voices championing the ascendancy of hypertext had, in fact, a vested interest in seeing the new writing medium succeed. Bolter and Landow, for instance, were principle developers of StorySpace (a hypertext authoring application) in 1989, and also launched Eastgate, a hypertext publisher.

10 For example, in response to criticism that *Writing Space* was too much given over to technological determinism and that it overemphasized the revolutionary potential of hypertext, Bolter extensively revised the text for the second edition to acknowledge more overtly the surrounding cultural context. In the preface, he writes,
In this respect [e.g., framing digital technology as an autonomous agent], I had fallen into a rhetoric, which McLuhan, Ong, and others had pioneered and which remains popular. I have tried to incorporate the insights of these critics […]. In chapter 2 and elsewhere, I acknowledge that writing technologies do not alter culture as if from the outside, because they are themselves a part of our cultural dynamic. They shape and are shaped by social and cultural forces.” (xiii)

11 Readers may wish to consult Part II of Deibert’s Parchment, Printing, and Hypermedia, which deals exclusively with the emergence of hypermedia within the context of the transformation from modern to postmodern geo-social and political structures.

CHAPTER 6

AFTERWARD:

WHOSE BODY? CRITICALLY QUESTIONING

THE INVISIBLE INTERFACES OF THE FUTURE

Figure 5. Split photograph of Ben McCorkle interacting with android. I am participating in a demonstration of the voice-recognition and face-tracking capabilities of Philip K. Dick, Android. The PKD Android was an exhibit at WIRED Magazine’s 2005 NextFest convention, a high-tech trade show featuring several examples of new technological applications that rely on bodily movement, speech, and other kinesthetic feedback as part of their interface design.

“[N]ever has there been culture without machinery or the invention of a machine without culture farther back in time.”

—Regis Debray, Transmitting Culture

In Understanding Media, McLuhan described media as “extensions of our physical and nervous systems, constitut[ing] a world of biochemical interactions that must ever seek new equilibrium as new extensions occur” (181). As provocative and
quotable a claim as this has historically been (in both academic and popular circles), it is an incomplete depiction of how humans interact with media forms. Just as technologies and their resultant media forms function as extensions of humankind, so too do we function as extensions of our media forms. Martin Heidegger asserted that we achieve a better understanding of technology if we contemplate it not solely in terms of technics and mechanics, but rather respecting how it gets inserted and absorbed into a complex, dynamic network of social forces fueled by the motives, habits, and desires therein. Similarly, Debray foregrounds the interdependencies of culture and new technology:

Need one truly choose between technicism and culturalism? What appears to make a revolution, such as that of printed texts in accounts such as Elizabeth Eisenstein’s, is an encounter between an emergent disposition to praxis (method of reading, writing, classifying) and an innovational system of tools and media. Without the quasi-chromosomal conjunction of cultural breeding ground with new technology, an innovation will not come forward and take over. (51)

Debray reminds us that technologies exist in a world, that they are embodied, and that they emerge (and later change shape) because we anticipate their arrival and revise our cultural landscape accordingly. The tendency to ascribe agency to our technologies or to insist on causal relationships is a powerful one—literacy changes human consciousness, the printing press sparked the Enlightenment, hypertext frees the reader from the tyranny of linearity imposed by the author—but one that must be resisted. If we fail to properly understand the social embeddedness of our technologies, the contours of the communications environment, then we lose sight of
our ability to imagine new uses for these technologies. By forfeiting our own agency within this feedback loop, we run the risk of being held hostage by the very machinery we created.

I have argued throughout this dissertation that in addition to understanding the manner in which our technologies change the character of our communication, we must also take a closer look at the discourses, institutions, and cultural practices that give shape, meaning, and purpose to our technologies of communication. The discipline of rhetoric is an especially important site of inquiry not only because it gives us the theoretical apparatus to understand the various ways that communication technologies function throughout our culture, but it also empowers us to redefine practices and strategies for their use in the future. More specifically, examining the changing role of delivery within the rhetorical tradition is a productive route because the human body (and the rules prescribing how that body behaves in performative space) has served as a conduit by which technologies of writing achieve a naturalized state, in our own era as well as in more historically distant ones. Additionally, as we look ahead to the future, paying particular attention to the contact zone between body and technology will become even more important for our discipline as the interfaces of the future promise to become even more seamless than today. Perhaps a short narrative will serve the purpose of illustrating the importance of not only why we should continue critically monitoring the changes our technologies undergo, but also how we might develop active and enabling theories concerning our use of those technologies and end up purposefully reshaping them in the process.
During the very early stages of writing this dissertation, I had a chance encounter with a fortune cookie that serendipitously charted my course through the first chapter. I would prefer to end by similarly gesturing toward the future, specifically where the state of writing technology is headed. We are already seeing evidence that our technological landscape is undergoing yet another paradigmatic transformation, one that promises to bring with it interesting changes in how the body and machine interface with one another. Research and development departments at major corporations, academic technologists, interface and usability designers, digital artists and other professionals are currently inventing a host of new hardwares and softwares that place the onus of performative communication back upon the human body. The metaphorical language of the graphical user interface so familiar to us today will eventually give way to a new interfacial logic based upon how the user moves, articulates, and interacts in an embodied, spatio-temporal world. Signs of this transformation can already be pointed out in such places as developments in speech and handwriting recognition software, gestural interfaces, virtual reality, wearable computing devices, Internet-enabled video conferencing (or telepresence), and similar technologies designed to take advantage of our more naturalized modes of communication.

The paradigm shift from an icon-based, metaphorical interface to a gestural, embodied interface will not come about abruptly, with loud fanfare accompanying it. Instead, it will occur as a relatively slow transformation that, unless we know to watch for the strategies of remediation that will eventually naturalize the new
interface, will otherwise occur imperceptibly. Already we can see the ghosts of
technologies to come, forms of digital communication that, metaphorically or
literally, incorporate the logic of the new interface: using gesture, voice, and physical
presence to interact with a particular technological application as well as other
people. To offer a short sampling of examples, consider the popular trend in
massively multiplayer online role-playing games (MMORPG), networked game
spaces such as EverQuest or Second Life where players design custom avatars and
use them to navigate the virtual environment and communicate with other players.¹
Similarly many newer iterations of online chat rooms, MOOs, and social networking
sites such as The Palace, Faketown, Habbo Hotel, or There.com have Java or Flash-
based graphical environments that also employ user-designed avatars to communicate
via text or simulated voice.² In the world of video-game consoles, the era of the
joystick is on the wane. Games such as Nintendo’s “Dance! Dance! Revolution!” or
Playstation’s “World Tour Soccer 2006” use, respectively, floorpad controllers and a
video camera with motion-tracking software that require players to use their entire
bodies to interact with the game, not just thumbs and forefingers. In the arena of
assistive and adaptive technologies, several products already exist that are designed to
mitigate to real-world difficulties associated with disabilities by allowing users to
communicate with others or navigate their environments with the aid of voice-
recognition applications that interact with desktop computers or motorized
wheelchairs.
Over time, our culture will further develop technologies similar to these, eventually supplanting the desktop personal computer standard and replacing it with a more flexible, variable, embodied look-and-feel. Concurrently, the rhetorical and discursive behaviors that are taking shape around pre-existing technologies will also solidify and become codified into self-evident rules prescribing better ways of communicating effectively using these technologies. The combination of rhetorical and technological factors will contribute to a dynamic where the more invisible technology becomes, the more intimately connected it becomes with our bodies, the less it feels like we are using technology in order to communicate with one another. It is precisely during this moment of slippage, this period when the technology threatens to hide from us, that we most need to be on guard.

In addition to the developments I allude to here, I was recently able to attend NextFest, a convention showcasing cutting-edge technological innovations sponsored by *WIRED* magazine. On that sweltering summer day in Chicago, I saw the future, or at least a collective vision of the future comprised of individual inventors, universities, and high-tech corporations. Amid the throngs of people bustling around Navy Pier, the ovoid nylon cubicle dividers, the ambient electronic music, and the laser displays bouncing around the ceilings and walls, I had the opportunity to play with several of the emergent technologies showcased there. I stood in the Montreal-based Society for Arts and Technology’s Panoscope 360, an interactive hemispherical display with a joystick in the center that you use to navigate through virtual space and adjust sound patterns. I manipulated virtual beach balls, abstract patterns, and hot air
balloons (with both physical gestures and with breath) at the various projection systems of companies such as Feedtank, Playmotion, and Dublin City University. I also had a rather short and stilted conversation with an eerily life-like android fashioned after science-fiction legend Philip K. Dick, the result of a collaborative project spearheaded by Federal Express and the University of Texas, Arlington (see Figure 5). The rest of the convention included examples of the latest work in the fields of robotics, alternative transportation, exploration, military technology, gaming, and health science.

Many of the technologies previewed at NextFest are not yet production-ready, and are therefore still experimental. Additionally, most of the products are aimed at play rather than practical applications at this point. It does not take much imagination, however, to predict how inventions such as these could eventually develop into our next generation of writing and communications technologies. For instance, an immersive display based on the Panoscope could function as a virtual auditorium where the user would be able to see the reactions of his or her remote audience while speaking and could adjust tone, stance, and style accordingly. Gestural projection systems could be used to manipulate alphabetic texts, images, and other media in real time, perhaps leading to a new form of extemporaneous interactive multimedia composing. Future iterations of robots and androids equipped with voice-recognition software could serve as intelligent agents in our lectures or board meetings, capable of communicating with us during a brainstorming session or project development. In each of these hypothetical digital communications
applications, rhetorical delivery would most certainly be an essential factor for learning how to use them. In one sense, there will be a need for users to learn how to manipulate their bodies and voices in a technical sense (i.e., developing a functional body rhetoric that will allow users to simply interface with a particular technology). Also, as these technological applications develop over time, we will become habituated to composing with them, performing with them, and communicating with other people through them. New genres and forms will emerge from our interaction with these applications. More and more attention will need to be paid to the aesthetic and persuasive impact of our gestures and verbalizations as we produce or perform texts within these forms and genres. Consequently, we will eventually formalize rules prescribing rhetorically effective ways of cultivating those physical elements. Therefore, it is likely that the canon will remain a central concern for the field of rhetoric in the coming years. It is important that we in the field of rhetoric remain cognizant of exactly how we will transform the canon of delivery to meet the changing demands created by these new communications environments. Otherwise, we may run the risk of repeating our past and allow the new technologies to become naturalized.

As I reflect upon all of the technological brocade I observed on that weekend in Chicago, I can’t help but think of the experience within the context of my own position in the academy as a teacher and scholar interested in the intersections of culture, technology, and literacy practices. My thinking on the subject leads to the political dimension of this new interface paradigm. When the technologies of
tomorrow recede from our critical gaze, when their interfaces become invisible and our own “natural,” embodied actions become enfolded into them, there will be a powerful lulling effect to forget the technology exists as technology. Technology exerts particular ideological influences upon us, and a concealed technology interpolates us even more completely. If it is in our interest to challenge that interpolation, where then can we identify sites for resistance? My concern is that the push towards an embodied interface will facilitate real-world practices of silencing and marginalization, in effect essentializing difference even after we have complicated those identity categories. We risk forgetting to ask whose body is assumed by this new paradigm, and I call for more critical scrutiny on that point as we enter this important shift.

Certainly, we should continue the politicized pursuit Cynthia and Richard Selfe call for when they suggest that we become “technology critics as well as technology users” (496). This applies to our scholarly work as well as the work we encourage of our students in the classroom. In addition to becoming critical readers of new interface designs and helping our students cultivate this skill, we should also think of ways of participating, for example, in the design process of software as end-user tech consultants making up part of a professional collective. Insofar as it is in our power as writers of grants, influencers of policy, and purchasers of technology, we should also strive to see that technology is distributed equitably and used with a degree of self-awareness. Basically, we should attempt to position ourselves
professionally at the reception and production ends of the technological assembly line as one means of ensuring that our push towards participatory democracy in the digital world can be realized—for everybody, and every body, involved.
ENDNOTES:


3 *WIRED*’s NextFest was held July 24 – 26, 2005 at Navy Pier in Chicago. A complete program of the event vendors, panel presentations, and corporate sponsors can be found archived at the conference website, http://www.nextfest.net.
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