BEYOND THE FIFTH CANON: BODY RHETORIC IN ANCIENT GREECE

DISSERTATION

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ABSTRACT

Modern rhetorical scholarship has frequently downplayed the importance of delivery to the origins of rhetoric in ancient Greece and to its subsequent role in the arts of persuasion ever since. While the Aristotelian canons of invention, arrangement, and style have maintained a relevance and utility up to the present, delivery is rarely discussed. When it is introduced as a canon of rhetoric, delivery typically is afforded only very brief treatment, often not in terms of physical presentation, but rather of mediated forms of communication. In this way, persuasive artistry is restricted to a narrow conception of speech, in which only written words and mental theory are considered relevant.

Behind this marginalization of delivery lies a profound ambivalence: it is considered to be powerful but highly unpredictable and therefore dangerous. Body rhetoric, when not subservient to the rationality of the mental word, is thought to inflame passions and turn rhetoric into demagoguery, mob appeal, or the outright use of force. Delivery, that is, must remain subordinate to rational speech for fear of turning rhetoric into its opposite.

An examination of ancient Greek practices of persuasion, though, suggest that early rhetoric relied much more heavily on delivery or *hupokrisis* than is typically
recognized by traditional historical scholarship. This practice required, I argue, an implicit rhetorical theory based on a culturally informed body \textit{habitus} which is rarely theorized or explicitly articulated. Delivery is also neglected because of the paradoxical necessity in ancient Greek practice to conceal performative artistry. To recover delivery in its full significance, one must first understand its connection to other patterns of cultural practice, fields for individual action and genres of performance. By looking at the semantic field established by terms like \textit{sophos, metis, strophe,} and \textit{mimesis}, the importance of delivery as a practice, a type of action, and the defining feature of performance stands out. Delivery not only stylized individual speeches, but constituted the avenue through which orators presented their public selves, gaining personal honor and political influence. In ancient Greece, selfhood and the characteristics of selfhood that we consider to be innate and biological, like gender and sex, were understood to be changeable and constantly at risk of being lost. Thus, they had to be constantly performed, and performed well, without appearing to have been "composed" or feigned through artistry. The case of Demosthenes and his opponents illustrate the degree to which rhetorical artistry and political influence depended upon carefully constructed patterns of deportment, gesture, dress, and voice, while at the same time demonstrating why and how the arts of self-presentation were disavowed and scorned as unmasculine and soft. Rhetorical delivery was central to the ancient Greek art of self-fashioning and to all persuasive artistry.
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CHAPTER 1

BODY RHETORIC:

WORD, HAND, FIST

Rhetoric as the Word “Written with Intelligence in the Mind of the Learner”

Socrates: Now tell me, is there not another kind of speech or word, which shows itself to be the legitimate brother of this bastard one, both in the manner of its begetting and in its better and more powerful nature?

Phaedrus: What is this word and how is it begotten, as you say?

Socrates: The word which is written with intelligence in the mind of the learner, which is able to defend itself and knows to whom it should speak and before whom it should be silent.

-- Plato, Phaedrus

Any new rhetoric that develops will certainly have to give increasing attention to the non-verbal means of communication.

-- E. P. J. Corbett (1971)

{Man’s} first and most natural technical object, and at the same time technical means, is [his] body.

-- Marcel Mauss (1950).

There is an old joke about a man bent over, searching the ground under a streetlamp. A police officer approaches him and asks whether he’d lost something.
"Yes," replies the man, "I've lost my keys in that alley over there." "Why on earth are you looking over here if you're keys are lost over there?" asks the incredulous officer.

"Because," the man answers. "the light is better here."

This is, perhaps, an apt allegory for the traditional history of rhetoric. The western rhetorical tradition since the Enlightenment has been looking for past arts of persuasion in invention, arrangement and style, in tropes and figures of discourse, in probability and stasis, in enthymemes and in the psychology of audiences and souls.

Rhetorical history has been written in this way because the light is better there. These are the forms and categories of persuasion that can be captured in words written, especially, as Plato suggests above, in the "intelligent mind of the learner". Words so written provide the light by which we search: they assist the intellectual activity of the searcher, and they circumscribe the mental activity where rhetoric is thought to have been "found"--both originally, in ancient Greece, and again whenever its history is rewritten. Persuasion is understood to be "naturally" located in the writable word of thought. Since words written (this time in texts) seem to be the brightest lamp historians of rhetoric have on the arts of the past, that is where we look for the art of rhetoric. And, of course, we find it.

But in the search, we miss all that lies elsewhere, in the dark.

We miss precisely those aspects of persuasion that are not reducible to the written word, all that comes to life only as the text is being delivered. It will be the task of this project to demonstrate just how important this moment is--the moment of entering into speech, from text to performance--to the arts of persuasion throughout history. The arts of persuasion were developed, refined, taught and expressed not in that dark alley called
writing (a rather eccentric and narrow alley in ancient Greece) but in the broad public space of embodied performance: in the agora, the assembly, the stage, the law-court.

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 rhetorical 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, ancient and modern.

If we want to uncover a more complete art of persuasion in ancient Greece and its perpetual reinvention since then, we have to look for it in the dark, silent habits of the Greek body, the performing body of the rhapsode, sophist, poet and rhetor, where it all started. Rhetoric became an “intellectual” art—an art of contingent knowledge, an imperfect dialectic—only through the active efforts of philosophers, like Plato and Aristotle, who wanted to shift the paradigm, so to speak, through which persuasion operated. Like the shift from the Ptolemaic to the Copernican cosmology, this shift was not in the direction of greater accuracy, control or power. Rather, the opposite. Text or “word” based theories of persuasion could never capture or duplicate the wild, infectious power of the speaking moment, even when that moment was canonized as “delivery”—hupokrisis, actio, or elocution—and text based rhetoric could never, much as it tried, come
to terms with the power of the performative that remained beyond its grasp. Words could never exhaust the expressive power of the speaking moment produced and felt not by mouths or minds, but by whole bodies.

As Mauss suggests, the acting body is the first technical object and technical means. *Techne*, the *techne* of rhetoric specifically, was first embodied, a means aptly termed by Corbett, “body rhetoric” (1969, 291). So, the first use of the term *rhetor*, applied to Achilles’ training as a “speaker of words and a doer of deeds” (*Iliad* 9.443), expressed an embodied skill for competitive, public self-exertion and honorable conduct parallel to the “deeds” that also win fame. Here, the antistrophe of rhetoric, understood as the action of the rhetor, is not dialectic but battle. In both, skillful action publicly displayed is the key. I’m speaking allegorically, of course. It is far too late now, at this moment in postmodern agnosticism to possess the “key” to any historical event or cultural phenomenon, no matter how well-trod. But I’ll stick by the allegory.

If we focus on the art of rhetoric as performed through the techniques of a body *habitus* (Mauss’ term later taken up by Bourdieu), with its own logic, its own media of transmission, its own generating principles and means of inscription, i.e. an art in every sense of the word, we find opening before us not simply a hitherto overlooked artefact, the Greek body, but a different horizon, another dimension, an unseen vista: familiar, yet entirely new. We find a terrain not of *psyche* (mind) and *heuresis* (invention), but of *phasis* (body) and *hupokrisis* (action), familiar because it stands as the original art, of which the written art we’ve so easily found, is but the copy, a map, a two-dimensional rendering of a three-dimensional space. By reinserting body and action into rhetoric, we
gain not only a better understanding of the tensions out of which rhetoric arose (and which continue to define it), but we gain as well a new perspective on relationship between speaking, textuality, and selfhood.

Speech appears not as natural but as naturalized, and composition-rhetoric as dependent upon this naturalizing of speech for its intellectual stature. Writing disciplines itself by refashioning speech, specifically its non-verbal, performed components, as “organic,” “irrepressible,” and “natural” (much as English legitimated itself apart from Classics by focussing on literary criticism rather than a utilitarian composition, see Miller 285-289). Other features appear as well. Rather than a “natural” (and naturally self-evident) faculty through which a text is more or less transparently “delivered” (the medium that communicates by disappearing), action appears as the foundational simulacra making possible our experience both of “natural” speaking and of durable selfhood.

Like looking through a lens past its focal point, this new perspective inverts action and enlarges it: not the supplemental gesture and tone mapped onto an already complete mental-text, but the very ground out of which the formation of self, mind and text arises. This inversion in turns forces a revised understanding of the peculiarly western philosophical traditions which rhetoric has borrowed from and enacted: that the self is indivisible and mental (not physical); that it is substantial, durable, and self-identical (not iterated through performance), that it is linguistically constituted and representable in writing. These insights are not new, of course, but they still merit attention and application to a discipline still silent about speech.
Before working out more fully the interpretation of this allegory of map and
terrain, of lamp, alley and "key," I want first to review, briefly, the well-lit tradition of
rhetorical history, particularly its origins in ancient Greece. I can think of few better
places to begin than with Thomas Cole's recent anti-revisionist work, *The Origins of
Rhetoric in Ancient Greece (1994)*. Cole defines rhetoric as "a speaker's or writer's self-
conscious manipulation of [his] medium with a view to ensuring [his] message as
favorable a reception as possible on the part of the particular audience being addressed"
(ix). Let's agree for the moment that only speaking and writing (and not, say, miming,
dressing or furnishing) involve the conscious manipulation of a medium with a view to
ensuring favorable reception. Still, speaking is a broad medium, and involves much more
than words.

Speaking is itself embodied (performed) and a speaker, however skilled or
unskilled, necessarily intonates, emphasizes and modulates. Every speaker presents facial
expressions, bodily postures and gestures, even when he or she remains virtually
motionless, so Cole's definition may be applauded, then, for its considerable
inclusiveness concerning the relevant media of persuasion. If intonation is part of
speaking, then speech is clearly more than its pure verbal content, and if this is true, then
every aspect of the human speaking act can be included: gesture, expression, stance,
countenance, and the like. For this reason, delivery has, since the *Rhetorica Ad
Herrenium*, been included as a separate canon of rhetoric. The question is whether or not
this non-verbal component counts as rhetoric, whether it can count as an art independent
of the verbal arts of rhetoric (invention, arrangement, and style) and independent of the
verbal means used to set it down as a canon of delivery.

Cole thinks not, and so the potential breadth of his definition disappears once it gets applied; what's left is narrow indeed. For Cole, a speech or text only deserves the name of rhetoric when its writer (for it requires writing) has first distilled the message into a "philosophical core," and an "aphilosophical residue" (13). The latter encloses the basic message of the former in a context (for Cole, a verbal context) that "says more or less or other than what the speaker means" (12). In one sense, this "core" is at the center of rhetoric, since discovering the core defines what will be its rhetorical context or "residue." For this reason, discovery or invention stands as the central activity of any rhetorical enterprise for Cole.

But on the other hand, this core is the least of all rhetorical tasks, since it simply presents the message and nothing, i.e. nothing that would make it likely to persuade, more. The "core" is characterized by "logical and chronological ordering of events and ideas," by "normal word order," by "plain, idiomatic speech moving at the level of strict, univocal literalness," never "turning" into figure. Rhetoric requires, after Barthes, a zero degree text from which the rhetorician then deviates in order to persuade.

Let's pretend for the moment that such a zero degree animal exists in dishabille: a text fixed by "normal," i.e. univocal and logical, order, a text without figure, without style, without "dress." For discourse to be rhetorical, says Cole, the rhetor must first find this stable, ideational core from which he or she will subsequently deviate in order to produce the desired effect. The rhetorician must isolate the matter at hand before the manner in which it will be delivered can exist as a specifically rhetorical deviation. And
without exception, extracting this matter from any manner of presentation is described as intellectual work: an idea. What is required is precisely the removal of every performed, embodied aspect of the speech. I’m going to invoke the division between matter and manner again later, but I want to emphasize now that delivery remains the only aspect of rhetoric absolutely irreducible to the written word or philosophical core.

As my discussion of rules will illustrate in Chapter Two, no textualized prescription (like delivery as a written canon) can contain within itself the context and manner in which it ought to be realized (the actual delivery of a speech). Unlike delivery, style is given in words, and even a “core” message will have its style, though it will be a “straight,” zero-degree style. The split between a textual “matter” prepared beforehand and the “manner” enacted at the moment of utterance is precisely the split between delivery and everything else.

For Cole then, rhetoric requires an “analytical metalanguage” with which to “formulate the theoretical principles governing the use of discourse” and “relate them to particular instances” (92). Cole concludes, and this is the thesis that he has been driving at, that no such metalanguage, no such knowledge existed prior to Plato. Rhetoric did not exist before Plato, precisely because only Plato provided the dialectical blade with which to cut the matter of a given discourse away from the manner in which it might be delivered: the substantial meat from the occasional dressing. A huge chasm exists, argues Cole, between the rhetoric of Plato and the eloquence of all who preceded him: just the chasm that exists between the definition of a circle (a radius, a center, a rotation) and a bunch of, more or less, circles.
If Cole means by this that Plato above all succeeded in showing how the body could be made invisible to the process of persuasion, then he is right, and in Chapter Three, “The Arts of Persuasion in Ancient Greece,” I’ll discuss Plato’s well-known adversity toward pleasurable, performing bodies and his solution(s) to this problem. If Cole means that the “manipulation of [a] medium with a view to ensuring [the] message as favorable a reception as possible on the part of the particular audience being addressed” did not occur until Plato, then I would revise Cole’s “origination” date back from the date of the *Phaedrus* to the rise of the earliest hominids and broader the geography from Plato’s Academy to the entire globe. (I left off the qualifier “self-conscious” from Cole’s definition as a characteristically restrictive mentalism, but I reserve the right to restore the term in Chapter Two, “The Body of Persuasion: Practice, Action, Performance, Delivery,” when I discuss the “logic” of practice and the body’s own unique forms of “self-conscious” perception.)

Cole’s thesis is bold, provocative, consistent, and well-argued. We are much better off for his having argued it. But his boldness, his departure from historiographical orthodoxy is one of degree, not kind. He preaches heterodoxy, not heresy. Cole simply pushes the invention of rhetoric forward a few decades, from, say, Tisias or Antiphon (which he labels “protorhetoric”), to Plato. But he doesn’t question the fundamental of our faith: that rhetoric is an intellectual endeavor, *written with intelligence*, as Plato says, in the *mind* of the learner. He doesn’t dispute the creed that art, to be art, must exist as consciously and explicitly articulable verbal principles located in the mind, not the body.

Who would depart from this doxology? Cole himself calls recent revisionist
histories of rhetoric, "neorhetorics" for their insufficient rigor, suggesting a faddish "falling away" which his reforms will correct. Against his own "revolutionary" model, he opposes those "evolutionists" for whom "explicit formulation of a body of useful precepts could be expected to follow, by a process of easy, gradual evolution, once there arose democratic political regimes" (23).

This is the position of Richard Enos, for example, in *Greek Rhetoric Before Aristotle* (1993). He sees the invention of rhetoric as "an evolving, developing consciousness about the relationship between thought and expression" (ix). But still, what evolves is *consciousness*. And this is the position of Kennedy in his recently revised *Art of Persuasion in Ancient Greece* (1994, now titled *A New History of Classical Rhetoric* and including his work on Hellenistic and early Christian rhetoric). Kennedy traces rhetoric back to "the natural instinct to survive and to control our environment and influence the action of others," (3) even as he locates true rhetoric (called "metarhetoric") in the fifth century B.C., "in the democracies of Syracuse and Athens." Here, an otherwise seamless evolutionary history (animal to primitive man to modernity) is punctuated, but not split, by a revolutionary tear at that moment in time when conscious thought colonized rhetorical practice, reducing it to principles of order that could be anticipated and controlled. It's just that for Kennedy, this moment occurred a blink earlier than it does for Cole, and within an evolutionary framework that validates "animal" rhetoric defined as bodily and behavioral.

In his earlier *The Arts of Persuasion in Ancient Greece*, Kennedy argued that rhetoric "rose logically from the conditions and qualities of the classical mind" (my
emphasis), noting that rhetoric indicates only the “theory or technique of speaking” (9), while the actual speaking he calls “oratory.” In *A New History*, Kennedy shifts his terms (rhetoric for oratory and metarhetoric for rhetoric), but the message remains the same: rhetoric is ubiquitous and evolved into something new, called metarhetoric, which was a continuation of and, at the same time, an innovation in, traditional practices of persuasion.

In describing the split between rhetoric and metarhetoric (or oratory and rhetoric), Kennedy invokes another split: that between a perennial persuasion “by direct action—force, threats, bribes for example” to persuasion proper, “by the use of ‘signs’” (3). This dichotomy is curious, since action can be semiotic (think of sign languages like ASL or, more simply, a raised hand), since speech includes action, and since both threats and bribes are conveyed through conventional signs in word and act. But the dichotomy is just a symptom, one that Corbett invokes as well in the “open hand and the closed fist” analogy, which I’ll discuss below. Erasing this binary would not change the historical scheme as it proceeds, because for Kennedy the issue is not “sign” vs. direct action (open hand vs. closed fist, or speaking vs. punching, a topic I’ll take up later in this chapter), but consciousness vs. everything else, and signs are simply what consciousness contains.

What counts is the ability to “describe the features of an effective speech,” including its delivery, based on the conscious, theoretical formulation of a set of stable principles.

For Kennedy, this rising rhetorical consciousness can be identified by four “signs” (24) of its arrival. The first three are the traditionally emphasized three canons of rhetoric: a consciousness of invention (forms of proof and argument), of arrangement
(logical ordering and division of a speech), and of style (the use of antithesis and stylistic devices in prose). The fourth sign of a rhetorical consciousness is the rise of philology and grammar, and the fifth is the rise of writing: "Although rhetoric was the art of oral discourse, the description of rhetorical techniques and the teaching of rhetoric required reliance on writing" (27). But what arose, I would argue, was not so much a consciousness, nor simply a technology (writing), but a certain type of writing which gradually came to be valued (as a valid index of knowledge and power) as distinct from a certain type of public display. Cole says this better than I could: A rhetorical style is "the written word's effort to do the work of the spoken word" (122)⁶. And even this shift from performance to text was more characteristic of Hellenistic cultural hierarchies than it was of classical Greek.

All of this can be summed up through the reading Kennedy gives to the logos of the common ancient handbook title, Techne Logon. Logos, Kennedy notes, refers to "a word, a sentence, part of a speech or ... a whole speech. It connotes the content rather than the style and often implies logical reasoning" (11). Does this mean that for the Greeks, the art of persuasion was an art of words and sentences (logoi), or does this mean that of the larger art of persuasion, rhetoric in its fullest sense, the Greeks recognized that writing could only render the logoi, a small portion of the whole of persuasion (peitho)? I would argue that we take this title, techne logon, not as indicating a logocentric perception of rhetoric among ancient Greeks, but as indication of a Greek understanding that writing could only convey a fraction (the logoi) of the whole art of persuasive speech, rhetoric. The rhetor's art, rhetorike, was not a composing of words, but a
performing of self through the skillful crafting of a rhetorical event. *Logos* was not "the genus of which civic rhetoric was the species" (Kennedy 11); rather, rhetoric (civic or otherwise) was an embodied and performed whole of which words (*logoi*) were but one easily handled part (the *only* part that writing *could* handle).

We can carry this logocentric perspective back, though, as far as we want. Charles Sears Baldwin, too, understands rhetoric to be a species of the verbal art (an art of writing, more specifically), of which poetic is its counterpart. And like Cole, Baldwin emphasizes the difference between manner and matter, or "extrinsic" and "intrinsic" means as a habit of the mind: "The division here into extrinsic means and intrinsic means as both necessary to persuasion is not merely the obvious one into matter and manner, substance and style; it is a division of the springs of composition, the sources of effectiveness, into those that lie outside and those that lie inside of utterance or presentation" (11). Like a philosophical core and a rhetorical dress, extrinsic and intrinsic rhetorical means indicate a habit of mind, a reliable ability to *extract* message from manner. Finally, iike Kennedy and Cole, Baldwin understands rhetoric to be coterminous with writing (he uses the term composition):

Rhetoric and poetic connoted two fields of composition, two habits of conceiving and ordering, two typical movements. The movement of the one the ancients saw as primarily intellectual, a progress from idea to idea determined logically; that of the other, as primarily imaginative, a progress from image to image determined emotionally. (3)

Here, too, rhetoric is nothing but the intellectual ability to order words that no-
body ever need speak. But Baldwin’s language curiously refers to (albeit metaphorically) the very bodily habits and movements that I want to highlight as rhetorical, much as Kennedy calls upon the behavior of animals to indicate what is a fundamental rhetoricality of all living beings. In doing so, Baldwin betrays the power of a delivery he overlooks. Expressive arts were for Baldwin restricted to patterns of conscious thought, intellectual or imaginative, so unquestioningly that he could use terms like “habit” or “movement” without the least hint of corporeality behind them. The logocentrism accomplished by modern assumptions about writing (assumptions that Cole, Kennedy and Baldwin alike implicitly accept) made terms originally appropriate for patterns involving physical action in space and time (“habit,” “movement”) now applicable only to attitudes of mind and styles of composition. Perhaps Cole’s reformation is a reform in name only (the name of Plato), much ado about nothing.

So if Cole objects to the “revisionism” of scholars like Kennedy or Enos (Baldwin could hardly be called a revisionist: he begins with Aristotle), then he doth, as they say, protest too much. He, like the “neorhetoricians” he denounces, defines rhetoric as a singularly mental and literate feat of the Athenian cultural revolution that saw rapid change, after all, in a wide range of cultural activities: in the visual and performing arts, forms of governance and jurisprudence, international relations and economies of exchange. He, like Kennedy and others embeds his revolutionary rhetorical consciousness within a larger (evolutionary) rhetorical practice that is by definition, but paradoxically, not rhetoric. The (r)evolutionary schema of Kennedy (1994) and Enos (1993) similarly restrict rhetoric’s scope to a type of “consciousness” about thought and
word rather than, say, a type of embodied self-awareness about the (more properly rhetorical) relationship between human act and received meaning. Cole’s concern for the ability to locate a philosophical core sounds suspiciously like Baldwin’s rhetorical habits and movements of mind. When Cole claims that rhetoric is impossible without dialectic, he is merely entrenching a position taken and held by virtually the entire tradition for at least a century. His is simply the starker and more emphatically punctuated version of a well-established doxology, which he sees the revisionists chipping away at.

He needn’t worry. The revisionists don’t depart too far from the faith (though even that departure is welcome and needed). Let’s consider a few other examples: Kathleen Welch’s revisionary history of the origins of rhetoric, The Contemporary Reception of Classical Rhetoric (1990), admirably criticizes the “heritage school rhetoric” that canonizes Aristotle (as did Baldwin) as the originator of a logocentric rhetoric while marginalizing the century and a half that produced him. But she doesn’t go beyond that crucial “century and a half” (where Kennedy and most other histories of rhetoric, too, begin) that produced all the early prophets, from Corax and Tisias to Plato. Nor does Welch depart from the notion that persuasion is exclusively verbal, mental, literate.

Although Welch gestures toward delivery late in the book, she doesn’t consider the possibility that delivery might apply importantly not just to “electronic texts” of our “secondary-orality,” but might rather have been an art of persuasion central to ancient Greek culture and central to the development of persuasive technique ever since. As soon as delivery is mentioned, it is redefined: “Similarly, the canon of delivery has important implications for rhetoric and composition. Rather than limiting delivery to the literal
gesture and expression that take place during speaking, we can relate it to the idea of medium” (99). Here, delivery becomes “medium” defined primarily in terms of electronic technologies.

Welch nowhere considers that delivery is not a recent innovation brought about by wired media, but was rather a (never mind the) primary technique of persuasion—a true art of the body—at rhetoric’s very inception. This oversight is all the more surprising given Welch’s vigorous challenge to all students of rhetorical history and theory to situate classical rhetoric more sensitively within its cultural context, particularly through reconsidering the importance of memory and delivery. If, as she argues,

a major reason for the similarly intense study of rhetorical theory in ancient Greece and in contemporary America derives from shifts in consciousness set in motion by radical change in the fifth canon, (99).

then perhaps we ought to rethink that fifth canon as it was experienced by classical Greek speakers and their audiences. It was a radical shift, not in consciousness but in cultural expectations and patterns of speaking performance that gave rise to a new rhetoric of ancient Greece. The importance of action to Greek arts of persuasion stands out most clearly when we shift our focus from the three canon emphasis of post-revolutionary rhetorical treatises (invention, arrangement, style) to earlier manifestations of oratory and other performance venues which highlight delivery and imply memory that writing could not represent.

I want to champion Welch’s much-needed wake-up call by highlighting what even her call leaves in the dark. The best way to overcome the dead, decontextualized,
formulaism of the “heritage school” as she describes it is by rethinking ancient Greek rhetorical culture in terms of performance and its related terms: *habitus* (Mauss), *practice* (Bourdieu), *action* (Goffman) and *speech*. It is this aspect of ancient Greek culture most easily overlooked by rhetorical theorists and historians when they focus exclusively on treatises and handbooks. The innovations of Isocrates, the development of Plato’s thinking on rhetoric and the final summation offered by Aristotle were alike profoundly influenced by, and written in reaction to, a pleasure-oriented performance culture to which oratory had adapted itself.

Susan Jarratt’s *Rereading the Sophists* (1991), too, challenges many of the ways in which we have read classical rhetoric texts. She argues for a reading of ancient rhetoric in which rhetorical sensitivity, even self-reflexivity, is present as early as Homer. She argues that “those two exclusions--of women and of sophists--may be related” (63). What’s more, she characterizes the sophists as “teachers and performers who were the first to formalize rhetoric as an art” (63). But placing “performance” and “art” in one sentence doesn’t prevent Jarratt from immediately conceiving of a feminist/sophistic alliance in terms of both a joint “intellectual marginalization” and a parallel revolution, not in how one can experience and enact subversive performances of identity and cultural value, but as revolution in a materialist epistemology (63-79). But it is just at the site of performance of self and/as/against cultivated, cultural norms and *nomoi* that ancient Greek rhetorical androcentrism, sophistic innovation, and contemporary feminist scholarship align most clearly.

I shall illustrate in Chapter Four, “Gender in Action: *Hupokrisis* in Ancient
Athens,” how ancient Greek performance culture centered on a set of highly specific,
gendered and sexed ideals of phallocentric masculinity, a masculinity which had to be
strenuously achieved and reiterated by the rhetor (and the citizen generally) through
performance and which could not be displayed by women or effeminate men (androgy noi
or kinaidoi) except through humor, parody, dissimulation, or disguise (as in
Aristophanes’ Assemblywomen). Understanding such culturally specific contexts for
rhetorical theory and practice as the “nature” of gender and sex in early Greek rhetoric,
the relationship between a masculinized public space (the Assembly, courts and
symposia) and a feminized private space (the oikos), or the role of (private) writing and
its relationship to manly public speaking, depends on a thorough accounting for rhetorical
performance as the definitively public, spoken, masculine avenue to political power and
social prestige. If rhetoric was performed as masculine, then a feminist approach to
rhetorical history should attend to this facet of the art.

I will attempt to “reread the sophists” as performers working to open a new
(prose) venue for public competitions (in masculine excellence and virtue) for the
exchange of cultural capital in the form of social prestige, honor and political power.
This new venue was not primarily a liberatory intellectual experiment so much as it was a
new (but similarly androcentric) performance genre, based on the model of warfare,
wrestling and rhapsodic competition.

Examining rhetorical performance, then, can be profitable not only for our
understanding of early (including sophistic) rhetoric, but for connections between rhetoric
and the related sex, gender (and other) hierarchies that rhetorical activities produced and
policing and that current feminisms seek to address. Through a study of rhetoric as body, for example, we discover a close relationship between the styles of movement, dress and gesture attributed to sophists and demagogues and those attributed to the alluring deceptions of women (like Pandora, aided by Peitho, the goddess of persuasion) and effeminate men. Treating early rhetoric as an intellectual experiment cannot help but overlook these connections, while attending to cultural codes of performance explains not only how women (among others) were so thoroughly excluded from rhetorical activity as it was understood, but also how a shift to writing could benefit the political aspirations of women even as it added another tool to the arsenal used to oppress them.

Considering the logocentrism of nineteenth century classical philology and the version of the classical world produced there and passed on to us, it's not surprising that delivery and performance has been so thoroughly ignored and marginalized within the tradition of rhetorical historiography, even among revisionists who try to expand and complicate the logocentric, philosophical rhetoric handed down by the classical tradition and the “heritage school.” Even though speech includes more than words, rhetorical theory has (unnecessarily) restricted itself to verbal means of persuasion ever since philosophical arguments against delivery and performativity took root (as espoused by Isocrates, Plato and Aristotle).

By now, the roots are quite deep. The durability of this argument rests not least on the nice parallel that Plato noticed between the word written in texts, and the words “written with intelligence in the mind of the learner.” The calm immobility of silent reading (which ancient elites were known to have practiced) accurately mimics the calm
immobility of that internal dialogue which we call deliberation or dialectic. Both are exclusively mental processes based on the silent review of words (the articulated grammata of ideas that Plato sought to model rhetoric and dialectic on), and both offered a stable feeling of control over self and (mental) surroundings which a rowdy audience and a water-clock distinctly did not. In fact, I will suggest that silent reading provided an important model and tool not only for the Socratic program of dialectical reasoning, but also for the subsequent philosophical model of rhetoric set up to challenge performance and its dangerous, troubling excesses.

The shift in Plato’s thought from Gorgias (which condemns the persuasive pleasure of Gorgianic display) to the Laws (which condemns immoral displays being made pleasurable before promoting the use of written legal preambles as an alternative) charts the rise of private (if not silent) and individual reading as an alternative medium for instructing and persuading a mass of citizens. Through this body of writing, Plato relocates wisdom from the public locality of a performance event to the private durability of a text.

Plato’s Laws exemplify both the problem Plato saw with performance (it linked sensual pleasure to moral instruction even when that instruction was not virtuous), and his solution: in the imaginary state Socrates describes, laws would have instructive preambles which would contextualize the laws, generate goodwill toward their observance, and thus persuade people to accept them. These preambles would be read, household by household, rather than publicly spoken, making persuasion safe by eliminating its bodily pleasures. I will discuss this move further in Chapter Three,
reading the “rhetoric as consciousness” tradition in terms of the plan (of Plato and Isocrates, among others) to replace the performing rhetor with the silent text, and the collective audience with the individual reader and thinker. Isocrates self-fashioning as writer and Plato’s politics of the Laws thus prepared for the exclusively private, literate and logocentric rhetoric of Aristotle. Persuasion could shift from a sensual and public art of pleasure mediated by display to an intellectual and private art of conscious thought mediated by the text. Private reading gave philosophy a way to theorize persuasion without a body, and so was rhetoric born.

When rhetoric received renewed interest as the sister discipline of composition, some two thousand years later, conscious attention to an individual, text-based, verbal technique was easily taken for the whole of the rhetorical arts, and became the exclusive focus of inquiry. Nineteenth century classical philology and textual study had prepared the way by defining ancient Greek culture as an intellectual achievement, and it was these classicists, in part, that early composition-rhetorics relied upon. Ancient texts and their commentaries are, after all, virtually all we have from that distant moment and writing is, after all, the focus of composition.

So its not surprising that composition established itself as a discipline by “naturalizing” the speaking moment (eventually using the orality/literacy divide as allegory, where teaching writing equals crossing the divide from nature to culture), such that only the written admits of artistry. I should say rather that composition studies accepted the naturalization accomplished by nineteenth century rhetoricians and classicists. Richard Whately proclaimed the “natural” delivery of the sincere, private
conversation between friends as the model for all public speaking, removing delivery
from the reach of art and limiting rhetoric to written composition. A century later, Janet
Emig borrowed the same trope to establish the learning/writing connection, arguing that
while “writing is learned behavior; talking is natural, even irrepressible behavior. . .
Writing is a technological device. . . talking is organic, natural” (91). Her treatment of
speaking as “natural” denies speech as problematic or worthy of study, and what
separates speech from writing is a “naturalized” and thus invisible speaking body.

But speaking, as I’ll discuss in Chapter Two, is neither natural, irrepressible,
invisible or “organic.” Neither is conversation “natural” or paradigmatic for public
speaking. Speech is, rather, learned, an embodied technological device, even
“mechanical,” and it can be a paralyzing struggle accompanied by great fear and, perhaps,
greater hope. A private conversation between friends in moment of leisure is no more
natural than is “private,” “leisure,” or “friendship,” (as a glance through William’s
Keywords will attest) no more natural than an older man leisurely courting a younger
friend for sexual favors under the guise of offering him a liberal education (the context of
Plato’s Phaedrus). Here as always, speaking is a physical tool and a technical means.

These arguments though, from Whately to Emig, simply borrow from a larger
belief that the bodily (whether as “oral” or as performed) is natural and given, while the
mind or soul is constructed (through writing). I will argue in Chapter Two that speaking
requires artistry of another sort, that it has never been either natural or inevitable, and
that it cannot stand as the “natural” origin and wellspring of literate culture and abstract
thought. Speaking is necessarily tied up in issues of performativity and bodily experience
as examined by anthropologists and cultural critics from Malinowski and Mauss to Butler
and Sedgewick; it has been constructed as “natural” for specific political, cultural and
disciplinary purposes.

Composition-oriented rhetoric, overlooking speech and thus performance as
“natural” had only to revive the letter-bias already championed by Aristotle, Plato and (to
a lesser degree) Isocrates and the Sophists before them. That bias has now become so
entrenched that even the most vigorous of revisionists do not challenge it, and the first
generation of composition theorists used it as the best model available at the time. There
simply was nothing else to fall back on.

Edward P. J. Corbett (1969, 1971) for example, very early in the revival of
rhetoric for composition defines rhetoric in such a way as to recognize its importance and
power while excluding it from any explicit treatment. His Classical Rhetoric for the
Modern Student (1971) defines rhetoric as “the use of discourse, either spoken or written
to inform or persuade or motivate an audience,” later restricting its arena of engagement
to the “formal, premeditated, sustained monologue” (3, my emphases). But nothing
either in this definition of rhetoric or in the restriction that he suggests (the sustained
monologue) warrants what the subsequent discussions of rhetoric tacitly assume: that the
artistry of speeches could proceed independent action. Corbett declares that he will not
deal with delivery.

Isn’t this simply a strategic decision on the part of the author, one certainly within
the author’s province (no one can treat everything) and reasonable considering the
audience to which he was addressing himself, composition students? Perhaps. But he
does name the book a Rhetoric, and he does include speaking in his perview, citing examples of rhetoric's use in face-to-face situations, on television, and on billboards (29-30). What's more, he does describe delivery's traditional importance to oratorical effect and, like most rhetorics, he notes its real power:

Most rhetoricians would acknowledge the importance of effective delivery in the persuasive process. When Demosthenes, the greatest of Greek orators, was asked what he considered to be the most important part of rhetoric, he replied 'Delivery, delivery, delivery.' Despite the neglect of delivery in rhetoric books, a great deal of attention was devoted to this aspect in the Greek and Roman schools of rhetoric. (39)

Clearly, Corbett understands delivery to have been important to oratory, and he accepts this assessment as valid. He continues, not reporting history now, but offering his own estimation, "There is no denying the importance of delivery in effecting the end that one sets for oneself. Many speeches and sermons, however well-prepared and elegantly written, have fallen on deaf ears because of inept delivery" (39).

What's more, Corbett uses readings that would seem to highlight the importance and power of rhetorical action. He chooses as sample texts to analyze Dworkin's essay "On Not Prosecuting Civil Disobedience" and the "Envoy to Achilles" episode in Homer's Iliad. The latter, I will argue in Chapter Three, was decidedly performative and highly dependent on qualities of rhetorical action. The former explicitly supports nonverbal acts of civil disobedience, like burning a draft card or refusing to salute the flag. These clearly rhetorical acts, like Homeric speech-making, depend heavily on the power
of non-verbal, embodied action to arouse emotions, inform and persuade. And Corbett himself uses gestural symbols to distinguish.

His now famous dictum of the “open hand and the closed fist,” like Kennedy’s appeal to animal behavior as rhetorical, illustrates a sharp divide by alluding to a subtle and deep affinity. Rhetoric does now and always has needed action just as, for Kennedy, animals (including human) do and always have enacted persuasion through their behavior. But that small movement of the fingers, from open (supplico, “I entreat”) to closed (minor, “I threaten”) changes everything, marking the shift from culture to nature, from mind to body, and from a reasonable, humane, and conciliatory verbal appeal to an aggressive and unreasonable mob action. The closed fist, Corbett explains in the preface to the second edition (1971), is a “new style” of rhetoric which “came into prominence in the second half of the 1960’s” (vii). Corbett characterizes this new style as “non-verbal, a kind of ‘body rhetoric’ that seeks to communicate with and influence an audience by muscular demonstrations of various kinds” (vii. his emphasis). It is “gregarious” rather than “solitary,” “coercive” rather than “persuasive,” and “non-conciliatory” rather than “ingratiating” (vii).

In a gesture, the closing of the fingers, Corbett disavows both gesture and the body, limiting rhetoric to what the mind can know and express in words, what he sees as “the strategy of appealing to the reasonableness, the rationality of [our fellows]” (viii). Delivery can only be salvaged by domesticating it, by tying it to and making it serve the writable word. The act of writing mimics the individual, intellectual process that makes rhetoric valuable, the very process that the mass appeal of body rhetoric is said to destroy.
precisely because it is too powerful to capture or control in words. On its own, “body rhetoric” can only move humans in the direction of aggression, fragmentation, “mob” action and social disintegration, as it was seen to do in the mid to late 1960’s. A focus on words written (in the mind and on the page) can prevent rhetoric from degenerating into its opposite: collective action. Without written words, rhetoric is said to lose its value, its ability to foster cultured mutual respect, self- ingrati ation, sympathy and regard for a the universal appeal of reason. Whatever its power, a non-verbal “body rhetoric,” like the “new style” of social protest, can never be allowed to thrive independent of the spoken word.

Choosing not to treat delivery, then, may have been simply a disciplinary and strategic move. But I believe that behind this move lies a profound disciplinary ambivalence toward any explicit attention to rhetorical action on its own. Body rhetoric is incendiary but immoral, powerful but inherently dangerous. This ambivalence stems from a centuries old and often rehearsed social drama involving class, race, gender and sex bifurcations and dominations, a drama in which the power of nature as body, as sex, as woman had to be anticipated and controlled by the “universal” order of reason and its administrative, graphic technocracy. Rhetoric simply happens to be one important site at which this drama plays itself out: the natural body, here rendered as delivery or action, must succumb to, follow, and model itself upon the mental word if it is to exist at all.

To exist within a discipline, that is, the acting body must be refashioned as naturally transparent and, literally, immaterial. Such a refashioning meant re-seeing speech as invisible or bodiless. Kennedy notes of the ancient world that “all literature
was written to be heard,” implying the importance of action even as he restricts the
delivered speech to an oral/aural event to be “heard,” but not seen. The designation of
even “oral” speeches as “literature” further reduces the oral to the verbal. Speeches are
not seen because the speech is simply the words spoken: simply the text that informs and
prepares for it. The rest is just the unproblematic execution of a finished plan.

As historians, neither Kennedy nor Corbett could very well dismiss speaking
altogether, as Emig does, since their ancient Greek subjects relied almost exclusively on
“oral” (i.e. performed) rhetoric. Written texts simply weren’t used in antiquity to
communicate in the same way as they are now. But, with Aristotle and Plato as their
guide, early composition-rhetorics proceed as though speaking were simply a less durable
version of writing. Like Ong and Havelock in the parallel field of oral literature, they
inherited and attempted to pass on a verbal discourse to which “body” rhetoric seemed
either pre-historic (natural eloquence vs. verbal artistry) or all-too-new (the body rhetoric
of social protest). By accepting the ideological biases of Plato and Aristotle and a
classics tradition that canonizes them, traditional rhetoric puts on the very blinders that
these philosophers worked so hard to fashion.

Many rhetorical theorists and historians before and after Corbett and Kennedy
note the importance of delivery to the effectiveness of a speech, but none include (let
alone privilege) delivery and performance as an aspect of the art of rhetoric worth
researching, historicizing or theorizing. None considers that the treatises of the Greek
philosophers did not describe an art of persuasion as it existed but prescribed through
strenuous argument what they thought should replace it.
Rhetoric as Performance of a Public Self

What after all is orality about, if not a performance of a person’s mouth addressing another person’s ear and hearing with his own personal ear the spontaneous verbal reply?

Eric Havelock--*The Muse Learns to Write*

The critical issue for understanding Greek culture in this period is not orality but performance. By focusing on orality as a global condition, scholars of Greek poetry have tended to define the relevant issues and problems as those of style, occasion and transmission. The physical actuality of performance then drops out of sight.

Eva Stehle--*Performance and Gender in Ancient Greece*

The Greek world really was theater in the sense that Greek culture was the culture of performance *par excellence*.

Maria Bonanno-- “All the (Greek) World’s a Stage”

By comparing Havelock’s view of “orality” as a cultural trait with the more recent views of Bonanno and Stehle, we can begin to understand how limiting our verbocentric blinders have been. It is as though the “oral” performer was a speaking mouth and nothing more: no face, no body, no movement. They are the same blinders donned (unwittingly, as I have argued above) by composition-rhetorics, and a testament to the
danger of starting rhetoric with Plato and Aristotle (or even Isocrates or the sophists). It's not as though no one knew the blinders were there; rather, it was simply assumed that this "periphery" was uninhabited and unimportant. Havelock will, characteristically, admit the deficiency in his sight and then pretend as though he didn't:

In primary orality, relationships between human beings are governed by acoustics (supplemented by visual perception of bodily behavior). The psychology of such relationships is also acoustic. The relationship between an individual and his society is acoustic, between himself and his tradition, his law, his government (66).

We needn't dwell upon the problem of the supplement introduced within Havelock's parentheses, though a Derridean reading of orality in terms of its visual (non-oral) supplement and residue might be interesting. I simply want to point out how, though Havelock cannot ignore the body of the speaker, he will not allow it to affect his program. Though Havelock elsewhere invokes rhythm and dance as essential to the culture of Greek orality, he maintains that this culture was located, enacted and transmitted through the mouth (really, through the spoken word) alone. But if we replace the nominal "acoustic" with the verb "performed," we can begin to appreciate the radical difference between the map of "orality" and that of "performance." The difficulty is not that of a literate culture imagining an oral one; the difficulty is rather that of a mind/word culture imagining a performance/audience/event one.

In an "oral" world, the persuasive body is (un)seen as naturally talented and inspired, or perhaps as responding to imitation and practice, but not to art: not to a finite set of
regular principles which can generate an infinite range of future actions in response to infinitely varied, specific exigencies. Action for traditional rhetorical history has been by definition beyond history and theory. Ever since Aristotle discovered his enthymematic “body” of rhetoric, Plato his private reader and learner, no other body seemed necessary.

What to do? Close the book, get a new map, and begin again. Look elsewhere. In this dissertation, I’ll be looking at the map of cultural practices drawn up by anthropologists, sociologists, folklorists and cultural theorists since Walter Canon, Irving Goffman, and Marcel Mauss (whose epigraph starts me off). This map will reveal amazing new wonders and marvels of nature. It will redraw the boundaries of the persuasive, and offer glimpses into hitherto unexplored and wild territory: dangerous, appealing, unknown.

The new map is more inclusive, more accurate, less distorted. It accounts for the bodies inhabiting that purely acoustic space and can thus teach us about how real embodied actors inhabit ideals of selfhood and self-identity and negotiate larger demands for political cohesion, individual expression, cultural continuity and the circulation of power. While in many ways familiar to traditional histories of rhetoric (we are, after all, back in “oral” ancient Greece where delivery was, after all, triple-crowned by Demosthenes and canonized), this new map will shift our perspective: some areas will appear larger at the expense of others, now smaller. Rather than focusing on “probability,” or the enthymeme, I’ll be examining the habitus, practice, and performativity of ancient Greek cultural poetics and rhetorics, the dispositions that inform such practices and the conceptions of the individual signified by those dispositions.
Rather than focusing on the mind and its internal-writing (the dialectic-like heuris(s that justifies all traditional rhetorical historiography), I want to focus on the acting body, the public performance of self through which the ancient Greek person presented and communicated an attractive and persuasive self to others.

This new map will also call for new methods of inquiry, new tools and new techniques of research. It will require that we examine more than just those well-thumbed rhetorical and philosophical tracts explicitly about persuasion as a form of knowledge. It will require that we read for other than just "ideas," forms of argument or verbal stylistics. It will require that we examine drama, oratory, and poetry as well as sculpture, pottery and architecture. And it will require that we examine these sources for evidence of larger issues. How did the ancient Greeks conduct themselves in public? what principles and value assumptions mediated this conduct? and how was their conduct, their bodily self-presentation, employed for its persuasive appeal? How did these patterns of conduct represent and reproduce cultural patters of value, of honor, virtue, shame and vice, which could then be used to create meaning and assign positions in the cultural hierarchy: male/female, citizen/foreigner, free/slave, aristocrat/ commoner? And how and why was this performative culture so thoroughly disavowed by written treatises on rhetoric? What form of antipathy or amnesia made the recovery of the speaking body so unlikely, its absence so "natural"?

Through these and related questions, we can gain greater understanding of and sensitivity to the historical conditions within which ancient Greek rhetoric arose. We gain what Bourdieu calls a "dialectical understanding" (as opposed to both
phomenological and objective knowledge) of the “logic of practice.” But this is not
enough. Nor is it enough, though important, to use our new map to rethink rhetorical
theory in other cultures, rhetorics often characterized by specific virtues of performance
rather than by peculiarly western understandings of, and valorizations of, logocentric
theory.

What we gain most is a broader perspective on the possibilities for human expression
and meaningful interaction, and so a broader understanding of how, at the beginning of
western thought, human self-fashioning and refashioning took place on rhetorical terms.
A look at action dismantles the naturalness and the inevitability of speech, orality and
“sincere” delivery, dismantling in the process all the negative implications of silence and
of non-verbal self-expression. By reimagining delivery, we can do for speech what
Neitzsche did for morals, what Michel Foucault did for sexuality and Judith Butler for
sex: disrupt speech as a singular, natural and given human faculty. A theory of
rhetorical action can open up a much-needed genealogical critique within rhetoric, a
critique that troubles traditional assumptions about speaking as natural and given, which
necessarily throws into question larger assumptions about language and the creation of
meaning.

It is, in other words, the manner of speaking, in rhetoric, the wordless delivery, that
troubles rhetorical attempts to anticipate and to control human interaction through the
composition of words. So it is delivery that confers upon speech its fetishistic power,
refusing the controlling stasis of text and the internal confines of thought, and inspiring in
speakers both fear and hope. Delivery marks out the very components of speech—gesture,
tone, stance, rhythm, timing, posture, expression, pitch—that resist being fixed by text and that remain outside the stabilizing, internalizing technologies of writing and reading and thus outside the realm of conscious control which marks off the boundaries of the self. Delivery, outside of words, remains speechless and unspeakable. The unpredictability of delivery, its recalcitrance to being written or theorized, makes for rhetoric what Judith Butler calls "trouble" (vii).

"Troubling" the standard view of delivery as the marginal excess or supplement of speech (which has been "naturalized" as orality or reduced to the writable internal word), a critique of speech would "[refuse] to search for the origins, choosing rather to investigate the political stakes in designating as an origin and cause those identity categories that are in fact the effect of institutions, practices, discourses with multiple and diffuse points of origin" (Butler viii-ix). Coming into speech from speechlessness, from action to words, is not a natural propensity for the human species, any more than is coming into good from evil (Nietzsche's binary), from homo- to heterosexuality (Foucault's) or from perverse sexual ambiguity to bifurcated sex/gender essences coded male and female (Butler). Logocentrism, with all its baggage, is achieved by denying action independent reality or moral worth, and this achievement may antedate and prepare for all the others.12

If we pursue Butler's critique (her "troubling") of sex as a substantial feature of identity, replacing "action/speech" for "sex/gender," we come very close to appreciating how delivery, rather than being the "residue" added to an already composed core-text, is in fact that through which not only text, but self is formed. Delivery is the performance
that produces gender and sex through reiteration, and not only gender and sex, but all
categories of the subject posited as essential, universal and stable, including and
especially speech. If it is the nature of the self-identical subject to speak\textsuperscript{13}, this is only
because of the ways in which speech and its constituencies (especially the relationship
between word and action) have been fashioned. In Chapter Five, I'll come back to the
"metaphysics of substance" and how the linguistic fiction of the stable self, and the
mind/body split which allowed this fiction, was able to (and needed to) disavow both (a
feminized and natural) corporeality and expressive performance, valorizing instead the
disembodied linguistic/rhetorical self as male, as text, as logos.

Before that, though, I'd like to finish this discussion with a brief example, an attempt
to reconstruct the power and artistry of delivery in ancient Greece. In Chapter Two, then,
I'll move to consider some terms related to delivery (action, practice and performance)
that can help contextualize it and help inform a full theory of rhetorical delivery. In
Chapter Three, I'll return to the history of persuasion in ancient Greece, beginning with
Homer and ending with Aristotle, to show its development from an embodied and sensual
art to a text-bound one. Then, in Chapter Four, I'll offer an a second example of ancient
Greek performance, a prostitution case which Aeschines prosecutes against Timarchos,
this time illustrating its powerful associations with classical gender/sex categories.
Finally, Chapter Five will come back to a critique of speech and delivery as played out
within the rhetorical tradition, following the model of Nietzsche, Foucault and Butler.

The Case of Meidias:
Delivering Insolence to the Judgement of the People

Let's look at a brief example illustrating how cultural patterns of performance (let's call it conduct) could construct and interpret not only rhetorical activity, but the very democratic institutions which made rhetoric in ancient Athens possible. Here, I want to diagnose delivery as symptomatic not only of a specifically rhetorical power, but of the ancient Greek culture of selfhood and of the political and social tensions that this culture struggled to contain. In this example, pitting the great Demosthenes against his arch-nemesis, Meidias, we see the importance of rhetorical action as a tool through which opposing political ideologies, embodied dispositions, and versions of the citizen could be played out, performed and interpreted.

In this corner, we have Meidias. According to Demosthenes, Meidias was bully. Notoriously wealthy and carrying himself in the best Homeric tradition of wealthy aristocrats and right-wing oligarchs: he spoke loudly and often, getting his way with bribery when shouting didn’t work and, when all else failed, with threats and intimidation. In the other corner, Demosthenes, fatherless, who was reputed to have been a frail boy, perhaps with a speech defect, not given to physical exercise in the gymnasium.

The antagonism was an old one, both theirs and the larger political tensions between democrats and oligarchs. When Demosthenes was young, his guardians defrauded him of his inheritance. He later sued to recover, enraging the guardians and Meidias, their co-conspirator, and prompting their revenge. When Meidias' brother, Thrasylokhos, was
charged by the city with paying for a warship, he and Meidias hit Demosthenes with an *antidosis*: a legal suit for the exchange of property between a taxed plaintiff and the defendant. The plaintiff, Thrasylokhos, charged that the defendant, Demosthenes, was better able to incur the tax: the fitting out of the warship or *trireme*. If successful, Thrasylokhos would exchange his estate for Demosthenes', inheriting the suit against his guardians as well, a suit that he would then drop. Demosthenes ended up keeping his estate, but having to repay the twenty *minas* charged to Thrasylokhos for fitting out the *trireme* ("Against Meidias" 57-59). Thrasylokhos now drops out of the picture, but the grudge between Demosthenes and Meidias deepens.

Things go from bad to worse. When Demosthenes volunteered to act as chorus-leader of his tribe for the Dionysian festival (the *Pandia*), Meidias took it upon himself to harass Demosthenes in every way possible. He broke into the goldsmith's shop to destroy the crowns and gilt-edged costumes Demosthenes was having made for his chorus, being prevented only by the awakened goldsmith himself. Meidias bribed Demosthenes' chorus-trainer, the judges and the magistrate (the *archon*). When the festival day arrived, he stood on the wings, preventing Demosthenes and his chorus from entering the stage. He "bawled and threatened, standing beside the umpires as they took their oath" (17), and crowned the whole thing by punching Demosthenes in the face as he stood on stage (15-19)

Demosthenes didn’t punch back, though it would have been permissible for him to. Instead, he immediately initiated a pre-trial hearing, of sorts (a *prohoulei*), at the Assembly meeting held in the theater and immediately following the Dionysia (7-9).
won the decision, and there matters stood for two years, until Meidias struck again. This time, he denounced Demosthenes publicly while Demosthenes was being considered for a position on the Council (as a Bouleuteis, or senator). Meidias attacked Demosthenes as unfit to serve as senator and nearly cost him the election (79-81). Finally, Demosthenes responded with a suit against Meidias, charging him with “injury at a festival,” aggrievated by impiety (asebeia) and “criminal insolence” (hubris). The text we have is Demosthenes’ speech against Meidias.

This case is useful for the information it provides about public festivals and choral performances in ancient Athens, but I want to look at it as evidence for the types of public performance, the patterns of conduct and public self-presentation, outlined and interpreted there. The evidence sheds light not only on the dispositions that separate Meidias (the oligarchic hero-character) from Demosthenes (and the democratic citizen-character), but on how these dispositions appear as visible public performances, which themselves crystallize as styles of delivery.

The delivery styles of Demosthenes and Meidias, I will argue, communicate competing ideologies and competing visions of appropriate Greek political action. How ought a Greek man to act? Demosthenes will deliver his answer by articulating and enacting the oppositions between himself and his opponent. The implication is that Demosthenes applied a learned and communicable rhetorical artistry, a technique of the body, to his delivery. This was a “body rhetoric” of hands, looks, tones and postures and one which could be reduced to principles, learned, practiced, taught and expressed, meeting the requirements of any verbal rhetorical theory, only doing so through another
media.

If this is true, then Demosthenes' body rhetoric could not have been the product of his unique rhetorical genius, or his act would not have communicated to an audience. He would only craft his delivery if he could count on an audience willing and able to interpret the action he displayed. Body rhetoric drew upon a common language of persuasion as much as did any verbal composition; an artful delivery implies a popular economy (a "physiognomy") of bodily self-presentation that could be written and read on the body by citizens generally. I will comment more fully upon this physiognomy of action in Chapter Four, but its tacit presence in Demosthenes' speech suggests that, even at the height of the Greek rhetorical consciousness, when verbal artistry was supposed to have reached its apex, non-verbal (or para-verbal) body rhetoric remains powerful, important and artful: a model for the verbal artistry which philosophical rhetoric will replace it with. Delivery, I argue, is the foundation upon which all verbal theorizing rests.

Demosthenes' argument in this speech is fairly simple. There are two types of men in Athens, he argues, based on nature (phusis) and disposition (tropos). There are those (like you jurors and me, and all good citizens, says Demosthenes) who are mild, humane, prudent, and discreet; and there are those like Meidias here: belligerent, shameless, and insolent (hubris). These two types may correspond to a person's natural disposition, an inborn personality type, as it were: a possibility Demosthenes recognizes and plays upon later in the speech. But each type may also be a disposition taken on, as it were, by choice: a "practice" or habit in the sense of a deliberate pattern of conduct generated by
enduring and self-generating principles of value and honor. Patterns of conduct reveal alternative dispositions: embodied orientations which a citizen might adopt, which generate their public actions, and which have serious implications for the viability of a polis, particularly for this democracy.

Demosthenes and Meidias thus represent two cultural models for public conduct particularly salient for that time and place. There are the loud, insolent and arrogant oligarchs and the humane, discreet, and politic citizens. The former behave with arrogance and contempt not only toward their inferiors, but toward the laws that protect all citizens alike. Meidias chooses hubris because of his fundamental contempt for democratic rule of law and the citizenry which pretend to judge him.

The fact that Meidias strikes Demosthenes is both sign and instance of the disposition he has cultivated for himself and which suffuses all his public interactions. It may not be rhetoric, but it participates in a public use of the body which is inherently rhetorical. In one sense, the punch is not rhetoric at all but its opposite, force. Rhetorical persuasion and violent coercion, like the open hand and the closed fist, have traditionally been viewed in oppositional terms. But the punch didn’t come from nowhere; Meidias knew how to throw his weight around and used his body as persuasive tool, not only by punching, but in everything he did. If we conceive of rhetoric only as words, we miss the complexity of negotiating rhetorical means, bodily and verbal (in tandem and apart) to get things done and the tension that such a negotiation produced for individual citizens and rhetors and for the entire Athenian experiment with democracy. The problem was not simply that Meidias used his body to get his way: every citizen and every speaker had to
stylize his self-presentation as a speaker and actor through the way that he used his body. Rather, the problem for Demosthenes was to refashion an appealing and appropriately masculine bodily action in ways compatible with a new democratic citizen ethos.

The punch and the disposition which produced it and which saturated all of Meidias' public interaction were not separable. Demosthenes will argue, in fact, that the insolent disposition of Meidias is most objectionable and most characteristically visible not in the singular instance of the punch (though the body of the Athenian citizen was considered inviolable; to strike it was punishable by death). Rather, it is the manner in which Meidias delivers the punch (that is, his delivery), indeed the way he acts in public in general, that deserves punishment:

To be struck is not the [most] serious thing for a free man, serious though it is, but to be struck in wanton insolence. Many things, Athenians, some of which the victim would find difficult to put into words, may be done by the striker—by gesture, by look, by tone; when he strikes in wantonness or out of enmity . . . These are the things that provoke men and make them beside themselves. . . . No description can bring the outrage as vividly before the hearers as it appears in truth and reality to the victim and the spectators (53).

Demosthenes goes on to enumerate some of these mannerisms of insolence: the tone of his voice (loud-mouthed, bellowing, and haranguing, 135-137), his gestures (snapping his fingers at justice, 135), the use he makes of his body (breaking the doors of Demosthenes' household, 59; standing by the judges to intimidate them, and blocking the aisles, 17) and his eyes (staring down the rowdy section of the Assembly to silence them,
The way he conducts himself in public, these gestures, looks and tones, like the way he delivers the punch and, as I will show, the way he will deliver his speech necessarily intersect, implicate, and signify one another, for all arise from the same disposition, the same pattern of action, what Bourdieu might call the same *habitus*. What is intolerable is not the punch, but the insolent habit behind it. If, as Baldwin has argued, rhetoric is a “habit” of composition, then for citizens and rhetors of ancient Athens, it included habits of composing the body and the entire self, not simply the words uttered. By calling attention to styles of self-presentation as symptomatic of political conviction, Demosthenes makes performance inherently rhetorical and artistic: Meidias has crafted an insolent manner, Demosthenes must then deliver a persuasive alternative.

Demosthenes admits that Meidias’ manner of acting can be hard to describe in words, but it is visible, recognizable, and easily readable. It can be interpreted by a popular physiognomy of dispositions and “natures” which write themselves on the eyes, voice, and hands, in the dress, the gaze and the gait. For this reason, says Demosthenes to Meidias, even those who “have no dealings with you are exasperated by your audacity, your tones and gestures” (19). Anyone, even if they’ve never spoken with Meidias, can understand the insolence that Demosthenes is speaking about, because this insolence is legible on his body and the manner in which he uses it. The *manner* of his actions, those that are most difficult to put into words, far from being invisible or unimportant are the most *visible* and the most *powerful* in effecting Meidias’ audience, victim and bystander alike. Scholars, though, have traditionally been less adept at reading or feeling the power
of body rhetoric.

Scholarship on this speech has, coincidentally, debated at length the question of whether or not Demosthenes actually delivered this speech. A comment by Aeschines (a long-time foe of Demosthenes who reappears in Chapter Four) makes a comment in Against Ktesiphon suggesting that Demosthenes "sold for thirty minae both the insolence to himself and the adverse vote which the people gave against Meidias in the precinct of Dionysos" (Aeschines 3. 51-52). This comment has traditionally been interpreted to mean that Demosthenes was paid thirty minae to drop the suit. Additional stylistic evidence sees the speech as out of order, redundant in places, and as failing to complete its explicit plan, further suggesting that the version we have is not the final version and that Demosthenes aborted the litigation mid-composition when the financial settlement (the bribe) was reached.

I don't want to continue that debate here but I do want to note how scholarly debate about the speech focuses exclusively on verbal stylistics and explicit evidence concerning its delivery (from Aeschines, 30 years later). None examine what I take to be the crucial point: that Demosthenes refers explicitly and repeatedly to styles of self-presentation and that he therefore must have given careful attention both to his own delivery and the likely delivery of Meidias whether or not the trial took place. Traditional scholarship examines the probability of Demosthenes' delivery based on the composition of a verbal style. I see Demosthenes examining the composition of Meidias' probable delivery based on his own practical mastery of styles of performance. The question posed by this speech is for me not whether a repeated theme does or does not constitute redundancy (proving either
incompletion or artful recapitulation). Rather, the speech presents in word and act opposing manners of speaking, implicitly asking the audience to pay less attention to what Meidias says than to how he says it.

Cole argues that a manner of speaking cannot count as rhetoric unless and until a philosophical core—the zero degree matter—has first been distilled out, from which the manner can function as a departure. On the contrary, I want to show, here and throughout this project, that the manner of action, an emotional/somatic orientation to the world, expressed through an embodied “logic” of public performance and artfully employed for specifically rhetorical purposes, creates artful rhetoric and produces out of itself principles for action and for the feelings and thoughts associated with action, including those ideas that later became designated as exclusively “rhetorical.” In fact, it is performance that creates not only rhetoric but the self, including all the stabilities, social categories and subsequent self-identities that came to be associated with selves and their ideas. Separating manner from matter, like punch from the puncher, transplants rhetoric from speaking performance to verbalized thought.

Let’s look again at the Meidias case. Demosthenes begins by linking the behavioral traits that Meidias is known for—hubris, bellowing, bullying and the like—to two important, liminal social categories which the audience would likely accept as threatening. People who characteristically act and speak in this way, Demosthenes suggests, are either wealthy or barbarians.

Demosthenes emphasizes most emphatically the class antagonisms that Meidias’ conduct might inflame.
Yet this habit (ethos) of his, Athenians, . . . should not be overlooked. Far from it. All citizens alike should be stirred to anger, when they reflect and observe that it is exactly the weakest and poorest of you that run the greatest risk of being thus wantonly wronged, while it is the rich blackguards that find it easiest to oppress others and escape punishment. (§123)

What men like Meidias are trying to do, argues Demosthenes, is to return Athens to its oligarchic, aristocratic past. They do so by bullying the poorer commoners, keeping them fearful and, most importantly, silent. This is, in fact, exactly what happened to a less fortunate object of Meidias’ ire. An elected arbitrator, Strato, found his citizenship revoked (meaning that he could not speak publicly before the Assembly or the courts) because of the machinations of Meidias when Strato rendered a decision against him. Demosthenes gestures to Strato’s fate as a threat faced by all: “There he stands silent, stripped not only of all our common privileges, but also of the right to speak or complain” (§95).

It is important to remember that Athenian democratic ideology prided itself on citizen equality, especially the equal right to speak (iseigoria), and that fears about the stability of these rights were never completely extinguished. The heroic age of Homer, after all, was a world of aristocratic domination, where speaking out of place could get one soundly thrashed or worse. In the Iliad, Odysseus beats the soldier Thersites (and any common soldier caught “shouting out”) across the back with his scepter when he dared to offer council to Agamemnon (2. 229-325). And, as Martin (1989) has shown, speaking length and audience tolerance was directly proportional to noble rank and military
authority: from Zeus to the lesser gods, from Achilles to the lesser chieftains and soldiers. Aristocrats could by definition talk longest and best.

Perhaps Meidias remembered the Homeric days of nobility fondly and was attempting to re-assert and protect, as Odysseus had before him, the privileges that wealth (and, perhaps, birth) could and once did provide. His attitude is reminiscent of the argument forwarded by Alcibiades in Thucydides that the aristocrat simply is “better” than the commoner and benefits a city by associating himself and his superiority with it. More importantly, perhaps Demosthenes’ audience of jurors recognized this attitude too, and feared it.

It was then Demosthenes’ task to demonstrate not that the privileges of wealth were incompatible with democracy but that the demos as represented by the jurors must and could guard against the abuse of any such privileges by punishing those who wore their wealth with insolence. The wealthy were dangerous insofar as they displayed insolence through their conduct, and it was this practice of insolence, as signified through a pattern of gestures, tones, gazes and movements that had to be guarded against, precisely because of its intimidating effect on others. The vitality of a democracy depended upon a reliable, public physiognomy of anti-democratic sentiment (a practice-generating ethos) and a vigorous reaction against it. Body rhetoric highlights the importance of this art, not only as performed by rhetors but as interpreted and responded to by audiences. Ancient arts of rhetoric reside here as much as they do in the artistic proofs, enthymemes and catalogs of souls hypostasized by Plato and Aristotle.

But insolence was not only associated with wealth. Demosthenes also connected
Meidias’ insolent conduct to his questionable origins, playing upon Athenian ethnocentrism and its palpable suspicion of foreign tyrannies. He alludes to the rumor that Meidias’ mother had sold him to an Athenian woman who purchased and adopted him as her own. observing:

And yet, though he has thus become the possessor of privileges to which he has no claim, and has found a fatherland which is reputed to be of all states the most firmly based upon its laws, he seems utterly unable to submit to those laws or abide by them. His true, native barbarism and hatred of religion drive him on by force and betray the fact that he treats his present rights as if they were not his own—as indeed they are not. (§ 150).

Barbarism, like inherited wealth, stands as a sort of opposing reality, impinging upon and threatening from outside the fragile democratic state constructed among the citizens of Athens. Foreigners from abroad, like models of past nobility, betray themselves through their insolence, their insufferable arrogance, in everything they do and say, and especially in the manner in which they do and say it. Like the wealthy, foreigners abuse their right to speak, using it to silence others, and they must be guarded against if Athenian law and citizen rights are to be protected.

What do we learn about the character of classical rhetoric from this example? Two things. First, I want to argue that the character which Demosthenes paints of Meidias was intimately connected to Meidias’ speaking style, and both necessarily carried over to any speech that Meidias might deliver before the jurors after Demosthenes’ water ran out. Speech and action alike flowed from the same disposition, like strophe and antistrophe.
The oral delivery of a speech was simply one highly visible and high stakes manifestation of a pattern of conduct thoroughly public, competitive and performative. A popular moral (and political) physiognomy made speeches readable as seen, turning them into tests of character and enduring ethos, of loyalty and patriotism, rather than tests of local incidents of crime, of guilt or innocence. Delivery was important as the ultimate manifestation of this character physiognomic.

Second, I want to suggest that in portraying Meidias as the very figure of an incipient and threatening oligarchy, Demosthenes does not denounce action in general, but emphasizes it. Having made this case against Meidias, Demosthenes now has to enact in his performance before the jurors an alternative manner, a deportment, a vocal tone, a gestural and facial repertoire consistent with the staunchly democratic ideal that he wants the jury to support.

The rhetorical enactment of this ideal is no easy matter, for the conduct attributed to Meidias was, as we have seen, reminiscent of a heroic ideal which the jury no doubt remembered and respected: the self-controlled man who answered to no one but himself, who suffered no inferior to gainsay his will. By the same token, the conduct attributed to the good democrat, mild and submissive (to the laws), could also suggest softness and weakness. The man who retreated to the protection of the laws might simply be seen as the “soft” coward (like the Homeric soldiers who hung back by the ships) who could not stand up for himself, could not simply punch back.

Demosthenes had a reputation for being “soft,” and his failure to repay Meidias in kind, even as it was consistent with a democratic rule of law, might have been seen in a
decidedly unfavorable light. Because he did not return the punch, Demosthenes has to act (i.e. deliver his speech) in a way that is pleasing and attractive but also honorable and “manly,” while remaining consistent with the ideology he has constructed.

Demosthenes thus has to give thought to his own delivery (which, as tradition attests, he was at pains to master and perfect). If the audience already suspects him of being “soft,” of using the democracy and the laws to hide his own weakness and dishonor (why didn’t he just hit Meidias back after all, instead of dragging the affair out for two years?), then he is advised to be vehement, impassioned, large and loud in his indignation at the wrongs suffered not only by himself, but by every poor citizen unable to protect himself from the overbearing arrogance of wealthy aristocrats or foreign tyrants.

But, on the other hand, if overdone or done poorly, Demosthenes risks being seen as the same sort of overbearing personality that he has attributed to Meidias. Demosthenes was, after all, in many ways like the man he condemns, more so at least than he was like the average juror: Demosthenes was wealthy, landed, an active, public person. Unlike most jurors, both Meidias and Demosthenes were highly visible and powerful public figures. If they were inclined to see Demosthenes as just another aristocrat, then he must guard against a manner of delivery that would reinforce this impression (shouting, gesticulating, staring), a manner similar to that which he criticized in Meidias. Such a delivery might make of the trial a shouting match between two indistinguishable politicos. How ought a democrat to act? If Meidias’ insolence is revealed in tones, gestures, looks and poses, then Demosthenes must reply with his own alternative, and he must be careful that his strategy does not backfire.
Of course, no one can construct from a text the manner in which a speech is to be delivered, nor is every action rhetorical. But classical Greek rhetors did act, and we can uncover clues about how they might (or at least must not) have acted; we can feel and imagine the ways in which Demosthenes might have composed and rehearsed his bodily performance, and we can understand how importance this performance might have been for specifically rhetorical, persuasive ends. Demosthenes makes his case by noting both what Meidias might do and what he or any incipient oligarch must not be permitted to do.

First, Demosthenes paints for the jurors Meidias’ typical speaking style: constantly “talking, railing, bellowing” (135): “In my opinion, if for nothing else, yet for those harangues that he delivers at every opportunity . . . he would deserve the severest penalty” (137). This tactic not only specifies insolence as an audible, tonal characteristic, but prepares the jury for, and thus prevents Meidias from employing this very characteristic: A railing or bellowing delivery would simply confirm Demosthenes’ portrayal. Every raised tone, every stare, every large gesticulation or dramatic pose will be evidence against the man who employs it. The same delivery that in Demosthenes might be impassioned vehemence or righteous indignation will be interpreted as insolence in Meidias, and only serve to convict him.

But, on the other hand, says Demosthenes, suppose he does nothing of the sort. Suppose instead of bellowing, threatening or denouncing, he meekly implores. Suppose he is humble and beseeching. Suppose in place of the closed fist (minor) he offers the open hand (supplico)? Why then this only demonstrates that the disposition is not a simple character flaw (which might be forgiven, since given by nature) but a cultivated
trait, with moral overtones. It shows that Meidias knows how to behave properly when he wants, but chooses not to. If a bully is humble and supplicating when threatened (as Demosthenes predicts Meidias will be before the jurors, weeping and begging for mercy with his children around him), it just adds to the punishment his characteristic arrogance and insolence deserves, for it proves that his hubris is not simply a native character flaw (his “nature”) but a cultivated trait which he can put on and off as he pleases. It is an “act”.

Meidias will stand to respond to the charges against him immediately after Demosthenes has finished. How will he deliver his speech? As a wealthy aristocrat, Meidias most likely had a text prepared for him by a speech-writer, but those words will not help him now. Acting in character (the larger-than-life aristocrat) will convict him of insolence, out of it (the supplicating defendant), of hypocrisy, of “acting” and deception. How will he carry himself? What pitch or volume? What gestures, what pose?

Demosthenes has made the question of Meidias’ guilt hinge upon his subsequent speaking performance: an instance of his disposition, itself the sign of his inner character. The performance, not just the text, becomes the measure of the man.

The matter at hand, while certainly involving verbal “invention” and “arrangement” of matter (perhaps even a zero-degree “philosophical core”), turns upon another sort of artistry located not in the mind but in the body’s memory and its genres of response: in the heart, the hands and the face. A manner of acting, and especially a manner of negotiating action as the process of delivering the speech is, as Demosthenes admits, just that which is almost impossible to put into words but which the jury must nevertheless
carefully read in the speech of Meidias. The wrongs against Demosthenes were well-
attested, publicly perpetrated, amply verified by witnesses. The catalogue of wrongs was,
it is true, carefully prepared in writing by Demosthenes beforehand. Meidias, too,
probably worked on his “message” by hiring a logographer, but this will not help him
now. If successful, Demosthenes’ speech will make the very idea of opposing democratic
ideals to oligarchic pretensions hinge upon the manner in which it could make itself seen
and heard. This was to be an action about action.

This text is for me exemplary of the ways in which rhetoricality gets reduced to the
verbal, making the acting body invisible. Rhetoricians typically do not examine speeches
in ancient Greece. Oratory, even when informed by rhetorical principles, counts as
eloquence, not rhetoric, or as rhetorical only to the degree that it shows evidence of
invention, arrangement and stylization according to traditional categories and terms.
Strike one. When speeches are examined, by classicists (who else?), they are typically
examined for the light they shed on ancient Athenian law, polity, and international
relations. Or, they are examined for evidence of Greek prosody or cultural customs and
norms (about festivals or rituals, for example). Even when the question of delivery is
explicitly raised, the evidence within the text about how the speech might have been
delivered or the principles according to which speeches could be performed and
interpreted is ignored. Strike Two. By reducing rhetoric to writing and to writing theory,
we not only miss rhetorical artistry as enacted, we also miss the tremendous cultural
capital afforded the construction and maintenance of selfhood through performance.
Then as now, who you were was not given, but achieved.
For Meidias and Demosthenes as much as for any Athenian citizen, speaking did not naturally and organically originate a durable and substantial subjectivity, agency or identity. Rather, speech was (and is) itself produced through regulatory practices which define its continuity and its coherence, defining in the process its boundaries and forbidden terrains. That is, speech is produced through performative regimes of intelligibility that exists as incipient bodily tendencies. Speech counts as speech (as self-productive) not simply by "gaining voice," but by approximating the domains of intelligibility according to which human expressive acts will be judged. To perform outside these domains is to remain speechless or to "babble," or chatter, stutter, stammer, stumble, gesture, mimic, ape, parrot. All of almost-speech-acts fall within and are condemned with and as the constructed "naturalness" or "bestiality" of delivery without a mental text to inform it. Speechless delivery, like the closed fist, is the negation of rhetorical persuasion and all that it claims to guarantee.

Identity is gained through the successful performance of a recognizable disposition (democrat/aristocrat; male/female; etc.) an internal textuality, a grammar of the self. What's more, this performance depends upon the faithful adherence to those practices that express "identity" as opposed to those various categories speechless action that signify identity-less speech: infancy, madness, hysteria, the whole gamut of psychic/neurological disorders, what Bourieu calls "the small change of madness" (  ). By reimagining the "natural" plenitude of speech as a fictitious epiphenomenon of reiterated performance (ala Butler), I want to trouble its ontology as the source of essential human properties like universal moral respect and egalitarian reciprocity
(Benhabib), subjectivity (Wittig), or equality and distinctness (Arendt). Speech stands rather as the effect of these desires, the term that we give to our own image of their successful reiteration.

Defining rhetoric as action can help us to see that speech is no more natural, given or inevitable than speechlessness, than morality, sex, or sexuality; that speech is no monolith but a shifting and plastic amalgam of sight, sound, and thought, text and context, scene, prop, script, act; and that the ends that speech is said to guarantee--humanity, sympathy, community, culture--is not a thing possessed, but an act enacted, the effect of an effect, a construct displayed from first to last and from moment to moment through performance. This insight, worth the price of admission, simultaneously reveals the evanescence of selfhood and the many media through which its appearance can be sustained and changed.
NOTES

1. Plato's term, *graphetai*, is the regular word for writing or marking (I should say, with Derrida, *tracing*) and is accurately glossed by Phaedrus: "You mean the living and breathing word of him who knows, of which the written word (*ho geogrammenos*) may justly be called its image" (276A). For Plato, the written word is an image (*eidolon*) of and result of an internal word to which Plato gives ontological priority (rather than itself being merely the image of and dependent on external written words). These internal words are themselves valued as a means to true knowledge through dialectic or dialectically informed rhetoric. More on Plato's ontological sleight of hand concerning writing, speaking and being can be found in Derrida's *Of Grammatology*.

2. Terms used to designate embodied media of expression beyond the verbal (but including non-verbal categories of the voice, like tone, rate and pitch) are numerous. In ancient Greece, the term for artful physical self-presentation was *hupokrisis*, the same term used for actors or acting and, later, connoting the same deceitfulness as implied in our "hypocrite." See Chapter Three for a fuller treatment of this and related terms. The Latin terms were *actio* and *pronunciatio*, becoming, in English, action and pronunciation, though the common term for the fifth canon of rhetoric was "elocution" and is now "delivery." I will use the term delivery specifically to describe the fifth canon of rhetoric as understood in handbooks and treatises, covering the gesture, stance and voice of the orator. When referring to larger cultural categories of non-verbal expression, I will use terms not traditional to rhetoric, like performance, practice or action in a sense other than that suggested by Roman *actio*. These terms are discussed in Chapter Two.

3. Ancient Greek rhetorical action cannot be pursued through texts by the Greeks explicitly about rhetoric. Paradoxical, yes; original, no. I'm following the conclusions of Detienne and Vernant concerning what I consider to be a closely related term, *metis*, or "cunning intelligence." They comment: "Failure would be inevitable if one tried to discover *metis* from an enquiry into what Greek intelligence had to say about itself when it composed theoretical treatises on its own nature. *Metis* must be tracked down elsewhere, in areas which the philosopher usually passes over in silence or mentions only with irony or which hostility so that, by contrast, he can display to fullest advantage the way of reasoning and understanding required of his own profession" (4). Sounds familiar.

4. Cole (1991) writes in part to counter the "revisionist" rhetorics (of "neorhetoricians") which attempt to push the date of rhetoric's inception back, prior to Plato, to the early sophists and logographers, whose lost handbooks, argues Cole, were merely collections of sample texts and not an enduring set of theoretical principles which could be applied to any rhetorical situation. He also opposes those neorhetoricians who see early rhetoric as initiating epistemological inquiries (modes argument and logical thought, discoveries of skepticism, relativism, or agnosticism) separate from the general intellectual shifts taking place in the philosophical thought of the time. See Cole's Chapter One: "Rhetoric, Neorhetoric, Prorhetoric," (1-32).

5. Kennedy's recent book, *Comparative Rhetoric*, examines the "rhetorical instinct" exhibited by animals. Though he doesn't call it delivery, the repertoire of animal rhetoric (tones, pitch, and volume, posture, movement and gesture) clearly derive from the fifth canon. Rhetorical delivery also figures prominently in his account of the early development of language, where language proper is said to arise out of gesture and symbolic action. Once born, though, language disowns gesture. Delivery decreases in importance as Kennedy moves to literate societies and, finally, to ancient Greece where "a fully developed account of delivery" was added to the system of rhetoric (210).
6. Cole's thesis in fact argues that rhetoric was dependent upon a revolution in literacy and literary style (prose style) that made it possible. I don't so much dispute Cole's argument, then, as invert it. What he sees as rhetoric's inception, I see as its inversion and interiorization. In a footnote to the quoted passage (122), Cole responds to Isocrates' rhetoric as "an effort to find some written counterpart to the performer's ability to vary his presentation according to the kairos of a given occasion" (173 n. 10). I couldn't have said it better myself.

7. Note on the tendency to read delivery as media, especially as electronic media: television, computing, the Internet and world wide web, etc. Delivery as orthography, font style, formatting and use of white space, page layout, document design, web-page design, use of graphics, etc. See for example Oschner (1997), and Welch and Connors in Reynolds (1993). Once again, the body drops out except as a representation.

8. See, for example, Richard Martin, The Language of Heroes (1989) and Detienne and Vernant, Cunning Intelligence in Greek Culture and Society (1978) for discussions of the performative quality of archaic Greek culture.

9. In "The Rhetoric of the Closed Hand and the Rhetoric of the Open Fist," (1969) and again in preface to the second edition of Classical Rhetoric for the Modern Student (1971). The open hand characterizes "persuasive discourse that seeks to carry its point by reasoned, sustained, conciliatory discussion of the issues. The closed fist might signify the kind of persuasive activity that seeks to carry its point by non-rational, non-sequential, often non-verbal, frequently provocative means" (288). The closed fist was for Corbett emblematic of the protests of the 1960's and 1970's.

10. Bulwer's exhaustive Chirologia and Chironomia (1747; 1644) begins his treatise with supplico, "I entreat: "the stretching out of the [open] hands" as the "natural expression" of entreaty, requesting, sieving [sic], and beseeching (21), while minor, "I threaten," "to show and shake the bended fist" is the sign of one who would threaten, menace, challenge, or defy (53). Thus supplico and minor might stand as emblems of the relation between a civil and solicitous reliance on words, and a menacing and demanding show of mute, brute force.


12. Ancient Judaism and ancient Greek practice united in their preference for assigning to words the power to make soul productive and lasting. Homeric heroes achieve fame through the stories that are told about them, and God speaks creation into being, making Adam a steward of all by giving him the power of naming. This isn't simply a statement about the natural power of verbal means, but a common myth which for the west has taken the place of the natural.

13. An almost universal assumption among speakers (but not among non-speakers like the deaf, aphasic, or glottotomized, for example). Monique Wittig's linguistic theory, quoted by Butler, is one example: "Speaking is, for Wittig, a potent act, an assertion of sovereignty that simultaneously implies a relationship of equality with other speaking subjects" (Butler 120). Not surprisingly, Wittig's model for "exercising language in the assertion of subjectivity" (117) is not really speaking, but writing, beginning with the "I" and ending in the novel as "perfect war machine" (117-128).
14. All citations are from the text of Demosthenes' speech "Against Meidias," in the Loeb Library of Demosthenes, Vol. II. This speech was also re-translated, with critical introduction and notes, by Douglas MacDowell (1990).

15. Classical sources on Demosthenes include Plutarch (Demosthenes), Dionysus of Halicarnassus (Demosthenes), and the pseudo-Plutarchan Lives of the Ten Attic Orators, as well as frequent mention in the works of Cicero and Quintilian. Comments on his physical frailty and speech defects are common, often told in conjunction with his strenuous self-disciplining. Among recent works, Schindel (1987) reviews historical accounts of Demosthenes' life.

16. MacDowell (1990) notes and summarizes the long scholarly debate on the meaning of hubris, an important term for Greek morality generally and for Demosthenes, and this speech, especially. Without pretending to classical expertise, I might suggest that hubris is neither simply "exuberant physical strength" or "behavior that causes dishonor" (19), but the display of confident exuberance and strength that comes to be read as a disposition of disrespect towards others. That is, hubris is a disposition that is read on the body, correctly or incorrectly, by others, especially those who read in a hubristic display their own shame. It is a manner of behaving, read as a disposition of not unequivocal but readable as an essential property of the individual.

17. Against the tradition that it was not delivered, MacDowell (23-28, 1990) proclaims the issue undecided, while Ober (93-94, 1996) dissents, arguing that the speech was delivered. Both offer summaries of the debate with references.

18. This is the reading given by Ober (1996) in “Power and Oratory in Democratic Athens: Demosthenes 21: Against Meidias,” in which Ober argues for the aristocratic-democratic tension within the speech and notes Demosthenes position as aristocrat vis à vis the audience, a position from which he has to disentangle himself (see especially 95-98). Ober does not, however, attend closely to performative clues which inform this tension and drive it forward.

19. Acting, hupokrisis, was a term of disparagement among Greek rhetors (see, for example, Aristophanes Knights). Being accused of having prepared one's presentation beforehand, like being accused of having written in beforehand, implied a lack of spontaneity and sincerity. It implied that one was "acting" words prepared beforehand or by another. For more on the acting/rhetoric relationship, see Chapter Three.
CHAPTER 2

THE DRAMA OF PERSUASION:
ACTION, PRACTICE, PERFORMANCE

In Chapter One, I challenged traditional histories and theories of rhetoric for their excessive or exclusive focus on words written in minds and in texts, and I proposed an alternative understanding of rhetoric in which verbal means of persuasion become repositioned as simply one among many available to persons with bodies (I'm excluding angels and demons from my analysis). I suggested that in his action against Meidias, Demosthenes understood rhetorical artistry to include his practiced self-presentation as exemplary citizen. This self-fashioning not only had to clearly depict a way of behaving that his audience could be expected to see as honorable and virtuous, but it had to do so within the range of expressivity available to Demosthenes as elite orator, at the same time steering clear of the excesses being attributed to Meidias. That is, this display could not be invented in toto; Demosthenes had to work with his own physical limitations and skills in adapting patterns of conduct, gesture, tone, and expression, including verbal expression, generally available and admired by his audience. A democratic political ideology and a model of personal virtùe had to be improvised out of existing cultural
behaviors and united in and as performance, on the spot, before an audience. Rhetorical artistry revolved around the practiced understanding and improvisation of a popular physiognomy at least as much as verbal composition.

This larger scene of the "available means of persuasion" refashions delivery as the presentation of self, culture, and ideal, while delivery, in turn, becomes the pivotal term around which the various means of persuasion revolve, refashioning rhetoric in significant ways. A revised understanding of delivery as the ground of artistic speech refigures all the other categories, canons and criteria with which we have become familiar. Rhetoric as embodied and enacted, though, cannot proceed without a new set of terms and a new understanding of feelings and dispositions (not just new ideas) to correspond to this shift in focus. Revising rhetoric to include bodies requires a new arena of intelligibility that I will call, after Burke, "dramatistic," requiring in the process a whole new array of cosmetics, costumes, props, and fronts.

In logocentric rhetorical traditions, writing becomes paradigmatic of a rhetorical consciousness which focuses on texts. In this chapter, I want to reimagine rhetoric and its paradigmatic moments by recontextualizing delivery, grounding it in three related terms that show how the shift from word to act can proceed. Rather than assuming a rhetorical text, arising out of a literate culture through an act of writing, I will discuss a rhetorical act as arising out of a culture of practice through a performance event. These three terms (act, practice, performance) interact in much the same way as do text, literacy and writing, but in a way that allows me to highlight the embodied nature of rhetoric as it was practiced and continually reinvented in archaic and classic Greece (and in every
manifestation of human persuasion through speech and action since). Together, these terms will help me to illustrate the centrality of delivery to rhetoric, to the maintenance of cultural value and the construction of the self, to the transmission of knowledge and virtue, and to the circulation of power in ancient Greece and in the west generally.

Practice as laid out by Pierre Bourdieu (1977) and Michel de Certeau (1984) refers to the everyday, common patterns of conduct through which cultural ideals are shared, expressed, interpreted, and put to use. Just as literacy can designate a shared (though far from uniform) cultural medium out of which various uses of text and script arise, so practice designates the common store of cultural uses of the body out of which specific, individual acts arise. Practices are themselves produced out of a cultural habitus, an embodied mnemonic of ways of acting, through patterned dispositions of bodies and their uses in space, in time, and in interaction with others. Though it is uniquely individual in application (improvised), practice is nevertheless communally shared through “structures of expectation, negotiation and improvisation” (de Certeau xvii). Defined in opposition both to objective knowledge and to pre-objective (phenomenological) experience, practice has its own embodied “logic” (Bourdieu), its own “way of doing”, of making and of using (de Certeau xv), its own means of transmission, and its own governing principles.

Action, as discussed by Goffman (1967) and Arendt (1958), similarly focuses on embodied skills as distinct from intellectual knowledge. Unlike practices, though, which typically remain anonymous, an unseen “everyday” tool of cultural transmission or tactical bricolage, action designates voluntary and uniquely individual (and therefore
revealing displays of character. Action highlights those unconditioned and exceptional physical abilities required of an individual who successfully carries off a practical activity in a new, fateful and dangerous setting. Action thus allows for individual distinction and self-assertion rather than conformity or invisible subversion. Action secures and displays honor, cultural capital and notoriety in an otherwise anonymous collectivity of practices. All warriors needed practical exercises; but accursed Achilles was a man of action.

If, as I argue in Chapter One, speech is produced and regulated (as "natural") through performative domains of intelligibility that define both its established frontiers and the wild terrains beyond, then action is an exploration of the wilderness, literally pushing the boundary of normal self-conduct that will either redefine excellence and establish a new mode of speaking activity, or fall, as madness, to the ravages of unintelligibility and excess. Through action, novels styles of speaking, of gesturing, moving, and modulating, are tested and either admired and added to the repertoire of speaking practices or rejected and forgotten.

Performance\(^4\) mediates these two poles, collective and collaborative practice and individual action, by highlighting the framed interaction between a performer (the person "of action") and an audience which judges and selects exemplary performers and thus establishes for itself models of virtuous, wise or otherwise excellent practice. Whereas practice follows the spatio-temporal schemes of a cultural habitus (whether to reinforce or to remake them), and action reveals individual mastery of movement and timing, performance reframes exemplary practice as action by placing it before an audience, separated and intensified, making achievement visible and vicariously efficacious as a
model for others to watch and follow. I would argue that whenever speaking performances are framed as rhetorical (rather than as aesthetic or didactic, for example), performers will adapt practices as action, developing in the process an implicit or tacit rhetorical theory which they remember, test, and extend or alter in and through their bodies. Rhetorical theory wasn’t invented in ancient Greece by Plato, the Sophists or Corax/Tisias. They simply represented as verbal tacit theories of persuasion which had existed and continue to exist wherever rhetoric is performed.

Through framing persuasive practice as action, performativity itself fashions (cannot help but fashion) rhetors, rhetoric and the very notions of selfhood necessary to qualify sound and sight as "speech." If successful, Demosthenes’ performance could alter the way his audience thought about citizen conduct, changing in the process how they thought about themselves. Demosthenes oratorical action changed how his audience could interpret public, political action, including those aspects of action we think of as conduct: democracy was rendered through delivery.

Not every instance of “action” will be performed before an audience, nor will every performance constitute a scene of “action.” Only a small fraction of the sum of cultural practices will ever take place before an audience or admit of the risky individual self-assertion characteristic of action. Of this small fraction both the repertoire of practices that can count as action and those that get performed will vary considerably. Not all speech-genres get performed, nor do all performances involve speaking. My claim is that in ancient Greece speaking performance counted as a significant venue for action and was used as a cultural tool to question and reformulate the traditional ideals
transmitted through the practices of a cultural habitus. And the most intense scene of public action was rhetorical: the action of rhetors before the Assembly and the courts.

Action-as-rhetorical performance became what we know as delivery, the central avenue to cultural capital and the primary tool for cultural change. As I shall demonstrate in Chapter Three, rhetoric in ancient Greece grew out of earlier genres of competitive, persuasive performance, and like earlier poetic genres, rhetoric became a site for competitive displays of and models for virtuous and honorable public conduct, that is, a place of action. Poetic competitions (lyric, iambic, elegiac, epic, dramatic) provided the cultural field or the “domain of intelligibility” within which rhetoric arose and was performed and judged, while rhetoric adapted speech and performance to fit the new demands of a democratic system of government. Rhetors adapted and performed the cultural practices used by citizens, and rhetors crafted their deliveries to refigure those very practices and the dispositions of which they were thought to be expressions.

Just as a powerful writer could alter not only reading and writing practices, but also the very language of a culture, so performers could refashion not only opinions and beliefs about events or policies, but also the very practices (and their public meanings) which established the appropriate, the proper, the wise, and the honorable. Rhetorical practice, including the “theory” with which it came to be identified, grew out of the larger context of ancient speaking performance as an instance of public action. What changed was not the invention of a theory as the mode and venue of a practice.

The cultural and political revolution in fifth century Athens made it a center for the performing arts throughout the Greek world. As this cultural revolution spilled over
into the political sphere, initiating a shift to democratic forms of governance, rhetorical performance--now understood specifically as delivery--took on increased importance as a necessary tool of political wisdom and leadership. When Plato and other fifth and fourth century critics denounce the democracy and its characteristic demagoguery and "flattering" of the demos, they were attacking, more than anything, the use of traditional performing arts within a new, specifically legislative (and, to an extent, judicial), arena. They were attacking the use of pleasure-oriented displays of *hupokrisis*, acting, in political and legal arenas. By returning to practice, action and performance, and by applying these terms to fifth and fourth century Athenian rhetorical culture, as I will do in Chapter Three, we can better understand how and why the problem of delivery became the fundamental problem for the entire western rhetorical and philosophical tradition.

Act 1, Scene One: Action as Public Speaking

I suggested in chapter one that, in Homer, persuasive speech was the *antistrophe* of action, word and deed: one hero's *muthos* pitted against another's. For Homer as for Demosthenes, speech was a competitive performance, like battle requiring the organs of agonistic competition: stomach, nerves, heart (now abstracted as courage, composure, and grace). You can duplicate this response in rough fashion simply by speaking before a crowd of two-thousand or so noisy (male) citizens who were paid to be there and in no way inclined to either agree with or listen silently to what you have to say.

To approximate the event more closely, assure that several of the spectators avail themselves of the opportunity to show off by heckling, mocking, or shouting you down.
Have others create disruptions because they disagree with you or because they were paid to. Finally, make sure that your speech concerns the most important matters of state: international relations, economic or military policy, or the framing of laws, and be certain that if your advice or opinions are ill-received (or if they are well-received but events turn out badly), your future will be rather bleak for the foreseeable future, leading possibly to criminal charges, exile, or even death. Now reconsider whether the organic irrepresibility, the naturalness of speaking doesn’t feel rather more like walking into a lion’s den.

Public speaking, like any fateful, dangerous and unpredictable situation, evokes what has come to be known as a “flight or fight” response: more animalistic than theoretical. Digestion shuts down, heart rate and respiration accelerate, palms grow moist while the throat goes dry\(^6\). The moment of entering into speech requires a type of awareness and self-mastery distinctly unlike the ability to frame grammatical sentences within coherent paragraphs or extract philosophical cores from the deviating residue. A bored gaze or smart quip from the audience requires an adroitness very different from, but no less artful than, all the rhetorical strategies that can be prepared beforehand, in leisure and in words. To understand the possibilities and the challenges to persuasive speaking in ancient Greece, we might begin with an orientation toward the publicly displayed contest rather than toward categories of proof.

In the philosophical tradition, though, things are not quite so dramatic. Hannah Arendt (1958) defines action in terms of freedom, not competitive performance. For Arendt, action refers to that set of human activities (one type of the *vita activa*) which is
not the slave of necessity. Unlike labor, which humans are compelled to undertake in order to reproduce life (labor as childbirth or as agriculture), and unlike work, necessary to produce the durable goods of the world (tool-making and craftsmanship), action functions to reveal the basic conditions of human plurality: equality and distinctness. Action reveals the unique distinctness of individual human beings from each other as well as our basic equality across this distinctness, functioning like a second birth into the world of the social: “With word and deed we insert ourselves into the human world, and this insertion is like a second birth” (155).

Action reveals who we are as distinct individuals because it is absolutely free and unconditioned, a new beginning: “To act in its most general sense, means to take an initiative, to begin, to set something in motion” (157). What’s more, “this revelatory quality of action comes to the fore where people are with others and neither for nor against them” (160). Thus action implies and thrives in the principle of community: we become distinct and individual social beings insofar as we freely act in concert with others. And because action reveals, the one who acts “must be willing to risk the disclosure,” even when this disclosure is unplanned and beyond control. Arendt’s existential philosophy of freedom and human interaction depends heavily, then, on the principle of free action as that which guarantees and prepares for the possibility of human interaction and true community. We can see in the risk of free disclosure a calmer version of public speaker than depicted above, but the unity of word and deed, and the principle of self-revelation (and self-construction) remain very much intact.

But this hint of the tension inherent in active public contest fades quickly. What
counts as action for Arendt rapidly gets distilled to just one paradigmatic type of action, and that is speech:

If action as beginning corresponds to the fact of birth, then speech corresponds to the fact of distinctness and is the actualization of the human condition of plurality. . . . Without the accompaniment of speech, action would lose its revelatory character, but, and by the same token, it would lose its subject, as it were; not acting [men] but performing robots would achieve what, humanly speaking, would remain incomprehensible. Speechless action would no longer be action because there would no longer be a actor, and the actor, the doer of deeds, is possible only if [he] is at the same time a speaker of words” (158).

Arendt follows the logocentrism of the predominant philosophical (and rhetorical) tradition in reducing action to speech. But she goes further still, reducing the fullness of speech to the idea of story. Arendt defines speech as the fleeting, intangible and irreducible “life-story” which can be brought to life in the telling but is not ever either the bodies that perform it or the documents that record it. Stories are impermanent and bodiless; “they may be told and retold and worked into all kinds of material . . . [but] they themselves, in their living reality, are of an altogether different nature than these reifications” (164). Not unlike Plato’s “words written with intelligence in the mind of the learner,” action ceases to function as a worldly reality and becomes, like the “philosophical core” of Cole’s (1991) rhetoric, an idea, any expression of which is already a departure and a transformation into something wholly other.

We are a long way from action as a physical, social process “in the presence of
others;” it has become a mental narrative: “Human essence can come into being only when life departs, leaving behind nothing but a story” (172). I don’t want to follow Arendt into this lifeless realm, but I do want to borrow the term and its original designation without losing its physical, dynamic connotations. Rather than sublimate action into a type of narrative after-life, I want to transpose it into the real world of human interaction and performative speaking because that is where it began, in the performance culture that was ancient Athens. Action as a specific arena of human conduct with distinct challenges and rewards can help us to clarify the unique quality of ancient rhetoric as performed, highlighting in the process all the experiential aspects of rhetorical artistry that traditional accounts leave out. Imagining ancient (and all) rhetoric as action (a flight that historical evidence not only warrants but expects), full of the tension of unpredictable self-revelation, we begin to see speech and the selfhood that speech constructs as embodied, fleeting and always out of our control. With this in sight, delivery comes to appear as simply one highly visible manifestation of a much larger cultural expressive field.

In many ways, Arendt’s understanding of action arose out of the free and unconditioned public speaking of the early rhapsodes, sophists, logographers and rhetors. Here, perhaps as nowhere else, citizens were freed from the necessity of labor (through the wealth deriving from Athens’ colonies, slave labor, and the productivity of women-run households): free, that is, to be “with” one another and to reveal their distinct individuality through action. Just so, public speaking was the primary venue for voluntary, uncoerced and therefore definitively social/cultural self-realization. Perhaps it
is with this model in mind that Arendt felt justified in reducing action (the action of the rhetor) to speech (the verbal ideas of the rhetor rendered as *historeō*, history, story).

Arendt suggests that the ancient Greek polis was invented for two reasons: first, to enable [men] to do permanently, albeit under certain restrictions, what otherwise had been possible only as an extraordinary and infrequent enterprise for which they had to leave their households. The polis was supposed to multiply the chances for everybody to distinguish [himself], to show in word and deed who he was in his unique distinctness. (175)

That is, the polis was designed as an arena for “action.”

Second, the polis was intended “to offer a remedy for the futility of action and speech” and “to assure that the most futile of human activities, action and speech, and the least tangible and most ephemeral of man-made products, the deeds and stories which are their outcome, would become imperishable” (176). Since speech is the paradigmatic form of action, the story-telling performances which recounted action—like the tales of heroic exploits epitomized by the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*—became actions in themselves, as well.

When the Homeric hero was replaced with the hoplite and the oarsman (as Athens became a naval power), *individual* exploit in battle became less likely, while the stability of the polis and the accompanying cultural changes made performance, spoken, sung or danced, more central. As democratic decision making placed greater emphasis on politician/rhetors who could advise and lead the people through public speaking, oratory became a parallel field of action. The two features of the polis mentioned by Arendt
became an important and enduring characteristics of ancient Greek culture, tying together such disparate activities as warfare, wrestling, epic poetry, sophistic wrangling and the heights of Demosthenic eloquence: they were all contests of action, polis-oriented and definitively Greek. The rhetoric named by Plato as a type of knowledge in service to dialectic was, before that, a field of action adapted to the needs of a democratic polis and the skills of its leaders. Rhetorical skill was practiced, valued and judged in ancient Greece not for its approximation to philosophical contemplation, but as a familiar venue for physical self-exertion and display which conferred honor and fame upon its most skillful practitioners.

Action, Scene Two: Action as Game

At about the same time as Arendt published *The Human Condition*, Erving Goffman was working on an essay destined to become a classic in sociology concerning the same term. Goffman’s “Where the Action Is” (1967) deserves to be a classic of rhetorical theory as well. Like Arendt, Goffman is interested in a certain type of human activity which is free, voluntary and therefore meaningful or “revelatory.” Like Arendt, he pursues voluntary, risk-taking exploits as that field of human behavior especially significant in the expression of selfhood and the creation of meaning. Both choose action as a term and a model for this peculiarly human, risky, revelatory activity. But Goffman does not so quickly reduce the term to speech and story-telling, as does Arendt. He takes as his model something decidedly unspeechlike: a coin toss.

For Goffman, action is best described in terms of brief, voluntary and temporally
and spatially bounded risk-taking. "Action" takes place most typically and most visibly in gambling and gaming, but the phenomenon is much more general, and for Goffman much more interesting, in other arenas. Action can be found in any "activities that are consequential, problematic, and undertaken for what is felt to be their own sake" (185), or "wherever the individual knowingly takes consequential [and problematic] chances perceived as avoidable" (194).

By consequential, Goffman means "the capacity of a payoff [result or outcome] to flow beyond the bounds of the occasion in which it is delivered and to influence objectively the later life of the bettor" (160). A coin toss is technically a game of chance, but if only the coin is at stake, it will not likely be a consequential game. Other activities like job-related tasks may be extremely consequential. But many well-managed, daily activities which require little attention, and for which there is little cause to deliberate because the probability of any outcome is either extremely high or extremely low may be consequential, will not likely be problematic even if highly consequential. Driving may be a highly consequential but not very problematic risk, whereas picking a movie to watch may be problematic, but is unlikely to prove consequential. Problematic risks typically require deliberation because the different possible options are close in value. Consequential ones, regardless of the deliberation required, will involve "life or death" outcomes.

Action involves both problem and consequence, and is, furthermore, voluntary: Goffman excludes from his analysis jobs that involve risk-taking so that he can focus on free and voluntary human activity for the light it sheds on human behavior in general.
Insofar as careers are chosen and therefore "voluntary," we might apply the term action to that choice, but perhaps not to every subsequent risk that the job requires of the individual. The experiential feeling of being "where the action is" may not be highly relevant to the choice or the subsequent activities. Choosing to be a fireman may be the result of many factors, but the rush of adrenaline and heightened vitality one feels when one is risking his or her life fighting a fire may not be one of them, whereas the gambler is more likely (according to Goffman) to gamble for just this type of heightened experience. Goffman's opening epigraph, from a high-wire performer after the death of a member of his troupe, puts this principle well: "To be on the wire is life; the rest is waiting" (149). It is this attitude--looking for action--that he is after.

It is my contention that in ancient Athens, rhetoric is where the action was. Performing as a rhetor, that is, was the most problematic and consequential of activities that a citizen could voluntarily undertake. No rhetor performed as part of his "career" and while certain citizens became known for their political (i.e. rhetorical) activity in frequently addressing the Assembly, the Council or a jury, none were "politicians" in the sense that politicians exist today: elected officials who derive their income from this office and whose tenure is secure for the duration of their term. Every citizen could speak, but none were required to. To do so was risky, highly problematic (formulating and explaining policy recommendations to a large, mixed audience), consequential (recommendations were tied closely to their advocates, with their fates being tied as well) and voluntary.

Rhetoric occurred when a citizen felt himself sufficiently skilled and prepared,
and the topic sufficiently weighty (to himself, his tribe, his deme, profession, or polis) to attend the Assembly (or initiate or respond to litigation), and rise to speak. The audience responded to such initiative. I would argue, not according to those rhetorical categories (invention, arrangement or style, ethos, pathos or logos) articulated by a philosophical tradition. Rather, they responded to this moment (and the speaker anticipated and prepared for it) as an implicit contest of character, a test of *metis*\(^9\) or “cunning intelligence” through the performance of instructive, pleasing and authoritative speech. In such a contest, the key ingredient is not the leisurely composition of words in private, but the inventiveness of the action as improvised at the moment. I would introduce “action” as an important facet of *metis* and the tradition of display-contests oriented around it.

Action, according to Goffman, typically occurs in a segregated arena, physically (spatially and temporally) cut off from everyday life: the craps table, the sports field, the boxing ring or the speaking platform. And according to Goffman, action has traditionally been associated with typically masculine virtues. The high-stakes, male-only Balinese cock-fight that Geertz describes in *The Interpretation of Culture* (1973) illustrates the separateness as well as the androcentric orientation of traditional arenas for action. It also illustrates the potential liminality of action. Cock-fighting, like the examples Goffman uses, occurs on the boundaries of the law (gambling, gang membership, dueling) and often beyond the boundary of acceptable everyday behavior, even though action confers status and honor upon the successful contestant. I will suggest in chapter four that early rhetorical activity similarly skirted the bounds of acceptable public behavior as an
intrinsic aspect of its functioning. The best showed their skill by plying the boundaries. This, and not some defect or degeneration, explains the criticisms lodged not only against rhetors and sophists, but public performers in general: they acted up.

Goffman also defines action in terms of personality type, especially as (a particularly masculine) character. In any population, he suggests, will be those willing to seek out action, risking one sort of capital in exchange for the opportunity to win another, and even make of it their trade or habit. Those who seek out (or at least do not decline) to take part in action, and particularly those who define themselves in terms of this practice possess and refine a specific set of primary skills in addition to character. In ancient Greece, citizens looked to rhetoric for the biggest payoff in political power, social prestige and cultural capital. Thus it is action, not writing, dialectic or any new epistemology that best characterizes ancient Greek rhetorical arts.

The art of rhetoric, like any performing art, requires a set of primary skills, the basic capacities required to "play the game": a knowledge of the rules, memory and a practical mastery of the occasion. Aim for hunting, stamina for mountain-climbing, speed and control for pitching. Primary skillss can be perfected through training: dry runs, mock events, stage rehearsals. We give the term "exercise" those physical exertions that prepare one for the real action. Within the history of rhetoric, Demosthenes has become the depository of most anecdotes about the struggle to master primary skills of rhetorical delivery: pebbles in the mouth, shouting over the roar of the Aegean to gain power and control over a feeble and stuttering voice\(^\text{10}\). A web of alleged infirmities form the backdrop to these anecdotes, making Demosthenes career a powerful story of
adversity: the naturally infirm and recalcitrant body and voice finally disciplined and mastered by the mind that they are then made to serve. For Goffman though, this scene requires something more: the man of action needs *character*.

Character is revealed not by *what* an individual is able to do in a contest, but by *how* it is done. Character refers to a certain style of conduct, a manner of doing things that “makes it look easy.” Issues of character can be decided only in fateful situations, in moments of action, never in exercises or rehearsals, and they are always determined in moral terms, typically in extreme terms, with reference to “failures in no way expected or successes out of the ordinary; mere conformance with usual standards is not the issue” (218). Character traits tend to be essentializing, so that one moment’s performance is taken as an adequate basis for judging the essential qualities of an individual (218).

For Goffman, character cannot be prepared for, taught or learned. I would suggest though (with Bourdieu, below), that a broad understanding of learning and teaching reveals character not only to be teachable, but, for certain cultures, of primary importance to a child’s upbringing. Rhetorical exercised like declamations or poetic recitations, when performed before an audience, reproduce the feeling of a rhetorical moment as action by reproducing the scrutiny and the immediacy of a public-speaking situation. As such, they provided a stable repertoire of embodied, kinesthetic and communicative responses available to be used in any number of actual speaking situations, functioning as a rhetorical theory even if they do not count for us as theory.

Goffman considers several features of “character”: courage, gameness, integrity and gallantry. But the most important, he says, is composure, defined primarily in terms
of bodily self-control, though not necessarily conscious control: “Composure has a behavioral side, a capacity to execute physical tasks (typically involving small muscle control) in a concerted, smooth, self-controlled fashion under fateful circumstances” (223). It has an affective side, an emotional self-control which similarly involves “physical control of the organs employed in discourse and gesture” (224). Composure requires a mental calmness as well, a presence of mind, which involves the ability to “mobilize memory and knowledge under pressure” as well as the ability to reply quickly and effectively to unforeseen interruptions or challenges. This is what we call “wits,” closely related to Greek metis. Composure requires “the capacity to sustain one’s bodily decorum in the face of costs, difficulties, and imperative urges” (225), which Goffman terms dignity. And finally it requires stage confidence, the “capacity to withstand the dangers and opportunities of appearing before large audiences without becoming abashed, embarrassed, self-conscious, or panicky” (226). This sort of composure means “acting natural” at those moments when one is most exac’tly scrutinized for artifice, appearing calm in those moments when one’s front is most seriously challenged.

All types of action involve character displays to some degree, even though the stakes are purely external (monetary or symbolic). But some types of action, interpersonal action, focus on character as that which is staked. These Goffman refers to as “character contests.” Thus roulette may require features of character, but since the outcome depends on the wheel rather than on the actions of the bettor, character issues are less salient. In dueling, on the other hand, qualities of character are highly relevant to the outcome and thus are strongly influenced by it: the dueler must maintain absolute
control over every move, avoiding the slightest lapse or misstep. Poker, though more
"passive" than dueling, nevertheless relies on facial and bodily posturing, serving as an
intermediate example.

In games of action, opportunities to display composure, dignity or wits and thus to
gain character come with the risk of clumsiness, speechlessness or discomposure.
Contestants establish evidence of strong character only by outdoing the competitors
display. Winning honor comes only at the expense of another. In "zero-sum" contests,
every act, gesture, or word is symbolically and synecdochally charged, revealing
something not only about a specific ability or skill, but about the general and essential
character of the individual as a whole in relation to the opponent. Every action is a
"treatment" of the other, as each contestant attempts to establish a public image
consonant with cultural ideals of virtue or honor in contrast to the image portrayed by the
opponent. "When a contest occurs over whose treatment of self and other is to prevail,
each individual is engaged in providing evidence to establish a definition for [himself] at
the expense of what can remain for the other" (241). These claims are almost without
exception morally toned: every act is either good (powerful, skillful, useful, virtuous) or
bad (weak, soft, clumsy, useless, evil). The "game" begins with a provocation, which
demands "satisfaction" (243).

A character contest depends, says Goffman, on a highly refined economy of
gesture, tone, stance and movement, particularly small muscle movement; and this
economy is learned first as a set of primary skills which one will have to display.
Contests of character push these skills to their limits, demanding increasing control over
increasingly subtle and fleeting movements: “Minor behaviors can be employed as a serious invitation to a show down. . . . Since communications or expressions, not substantive matters, are involved in these games, there is little to keep the symbol from becoming increasingly attenuated in duration and visibility until it has practically disappeared” (252). Aggression can be signaled with the slightest shift in the manner of speaking, standing, or looking: an aggressive pose here, a stare there, a closed fist subtly moved in the right direction. One’s mastery of cultural patterns of conduct can be demonstrated by most skillfully transgressing those standards or most subtly transposing them. Character is shown by the bullfighter whose hip grazes the deadly horns, the ballplayer who catches the ball with the slightest flick of the wrist, or the speaker who defeats his opponent with the opening or closing of the fingers.

If it is true that public speaking, especially as it was experienced and prepared for by rhetors in ancient Greece was a scene of action, (and I am arguing that it is) similar in important ways to other combative instances illustrated by Goffman, then rhetorical mastery centered upon the very skill in manner of execution suggested above for other instances of action. Point for point, Goffman’s analysis can be read as a description of Meidias’ action against Demosthenes (pugilistic, legal, and oratorical) and, by extension I would argue, to the ancient art of persuasive speaking generally. In contests of character involving public speaking, skillfully fulfilling all the expected norms or rules for verbal composition (the stuff of rhetorical theory) would not only not suffice, but would be seen as inappropriate and unworthy of true rhetorical artistry. Even masterful verbal skill would and could be rendered ineffective if not accompanied by the sort of
gracefully stylized manner that could respond to the sudden exigencies of the moment and that signaled complete mastery of one’s whole self in competitive situations, including especially all the sorts of minute muscle control suggested above by Goffman: control of vocal nuances in tone, pitch and inflection, of small gestures, of facial ticks and expressions, shifts in body weight and in the tiny movements of the eye. Just because you can talk the talk doesn’t mean you can walk the walk.

Even Demosthenes, who could use gesture and vocal tone (or could plan to use gesture and vocal tone) to defeat a wealthy and intimidating opponent (with powerful friends, a well-paid speech-writer, and his own masterfully insolent manner), was said to have failed as an orator earlier in his career because of his poor physical self-mastery, and this despite a “Periclean diction.” On one such occasion, according to Plutarch, he was laughed off the stage12. Afterwards, while he was walking along the walls to Piraeus, he was approached by Eunomus, an elder. Eunomus praised Demosthenes’ diction as being “worthy of Pericles,” but berated him for “throwing himself away out of weakness and lack of courage, neither facing the multitude with boldness, nor preparing his body for these forensic contests, but suffering it to wither away through slothful neglect” (Lives of the Orators 17).

This report is consistent with other reports that describe Demosthenes as weak, “soft,” frail and sickly, as well as agreeing with his reputed speech defects. Regardless of the exact nature of Demosthenes failings in this case, they support the view that ancient Athenian rhetoric relied heavily on bodily self-disciplining and those physical requirements of action discussed by Goffman under the heading of “composure”:
concerted self control, wits, dignity, presence of mind and stage confidence.

Demosthenes' failure was one of character, and he at least, if the tradition is correct, believed that this defect could be remedied, or could appear to have been remedied, through exercises in oratorical action. Read in the light of Goffman's analysis, Demosthenes action against Meidias, as well as his earlier failures, turned not on diction or verbal artistry, but on the exacting control over physical self-presentation known as composure and characteristic of any contest of action.

Action, Scene Three: The Politics of Winking

Geertz provides in his Interpretation of Cultures a now classic example (borrowed from Ryle, ) of the importance of well-composed fine motor control in negotiating interactions successfully: the wink. Geertz (after Ryle) presents the difference between an involuntary twitch of the eyelid and a wink (or between a wink and the parody of a poorly executed wink). Distinguishing between an autonomic reflex, a conspiratorial signal, and the parody of a clumsy conspirator requires consummate skill in decipherment for the "reader" and in execution for the performer. Geertz defines culture as the interpretation of meaning through descriptions "thick" enough to spell out the differences.

Geertz uses this example to illustrate his version of ethnography and the study of culture, opposing it both to the intricacies of a psychological phenomenology and the reductionism of objectivist anthropology. For Geertz, culture is not located in the "hearts and minds of [men]" (10), but rather consists of "socially established structures of meaning in terms of which people do . . . things" (12). Culture for Geertz is not in "action" or in any performance that winkers might undertake, but in the social meanings
(not unlike the Platonic forms, except that they are social rather than universal) that are "produced, perceived and interpreted" therein (7).

I seem to be departing rather seriously from matters rhetorical. Yet in another sense, we have returned to the very question troubling the rhetorical tradition with which I began, fundamentally a question of ontology: what really is rhetoric? Where does it exist? Is it a form of consciousness or habit of composing (words)? A structure of meaning? A type of knowledge? A psychological "process"? For Geertz, even something as subtle as a wink has nothing to do with bodies in action. Though he denies the "mentalism" and "psychologism" of some schools of anthropology, and though he wants to include the how of culture over the what (an emphasis he adopts from Ryle, along with the anecdote), he can conceive of no other way for such a thing as culture to exist except as a structure of meaning accessible only in the mind. To address the individualistic leanings of a mentalist anthropology, he makes the meanings social. But still, membership in the culture of winking has little to do with whether or not one can wink; rather it lies in discovering all the available means of winking, and in writing them down (known as ethnography).

Approaching rhetoric, particularly moments of rhetorical (re)invention, through the lens of action allows us to include within the realm of rhetorical knowledge all those skills and character traits through which rhetoric is enacted, not just those that can be written. As I suggested in the hypothetical scenario sketched out at the beginning of this chapter, classical Greek rhetoric was a profoundly difficult act to engage in, for precisely the same reasons that parodying a clumsy wink is difficult (only rhetoric takes place on a
larger scale of action). Rhetoric was a scene of action, not only in that the term for
delivery, *hupokrisis*, means “the actor’s art,” but also in that rhetoric was the premier
example of a fateful, consequential and problematic arena for the displaying of character
contests. Crowds were large and rowdy, and the stakes were as high as they could get,
both personally for individual *rhetores* and politically for the life of the *polis*. So
describing and theorizing rhetoric should be, not simply “thicker” description (though this
is a step in the right direction), but a reorientation toward those factors that generated
rhetorical motives and those categories of perception with which rhetorical performances
were judged.

What’s more, rhetorical performances were simply the tip of the iceberg, the
winks and counterwinks that relied on and exploited cultural patterns of gesture and
forms of social interaction far more widespread and widely applicable. In ancient
Greece, contests of speaking skill for the display of character occurred in numerous
venues and genres, at all levels of public life, from epic, dramatic, and lyric poetic
competitions (Martin, 1989; Gentilli, 1988; Herrington, 1985), to the wrangling of
sophists and philosophers (deRomilly, 1992; Martin, 1993) to the competitive displays of
festivals and symposia (Stehle, 1997), to the public displays of medical prowess through
incantation (Entraglio, 1970): public speaking contests for the risking of honor and shame
saturated the public life of Athenian citizens. As Arendt has said, the ancient *polis* was a
field for action. To persuade in this context, one had to be a man of action, and one had
to act. If rhetoric adapts itself to the culture in which it is being studied, practiced, taught
and judged, then action remains a central feature of this culture to which any rhetoric
would have to respond.

Individual rhetorical acts, rhapsodic displays, and dramatic productions alike were informed by a widely shared pattern of cultural practices and the well known system of meaning and value to which these practices were attached. To rethink delivery as informed by the cultural “practice” of embodied rhetorical techniques, I’d like to turn to another term, practice, as discussed by Bourdieu, who picks up the legacy of Marcel Mauss and his famous, if fragmentary, work on the techniques of the body. Bourdieu will help us to understand how both rhetorical delivery and public speaking performances generally arise out of common cultural patterns of conduct and deportment which are intrinsically meaningful, performing all the functions traditionally reserved for objective theory, and which can be used and refined by practitioners as they move in space and time. To understand delivery as central to all rhetorical artistry, both as theory and as practice, we need first to understand practice as the cultural patterning of bodily movements and meanings. Bourdieu can show us how delivery comes from practice.

Act 2: Practice: Scene One: Breaking the Rule

The distinction which Cole uses to define rhetoric, that between the matter and the manner of speaking, is just the distinction Bourdieu uses to analyze anthropology and its object of study. He begins, like Geertz, by noting the distinction within anthropology between phenomenological knowledge and objective knowledge. While the latter seeks to reproduce the “unquestioning apprehension” of the native, in the language of the native, the latter breaks from this “insider” perspective so as to reconstruct on a
theoretical level "the objective relations which structure practice and representations of practice" (3). This first break destroys what Bourdieu calls "doxic knowledge," the pre-critical acceptance of "the way things are" which precludes "the question of the conditions of its own possibility" (4). Objective knowledge introduces this break by reframing pre-critical knowledge within a larger realm of possibility, framing the question of the conditions making that experience possible. Only by turning to theory in this way, argues Bourdieu, can objectivist knowledge proceed to articulate "the structures of the social world and the objective truth of primary experience as experience denied explicit knowledge of those structures" (3). Anthropological knowledge becomes a verbal representation of the "matter" contained in the consciousness of the members of a culture.

Objectivist knowledge, within the realm of anthropology, generates the essential patterns used by anthropologists and rhetorical theorists to represent the totality of a cultural system, patterns which actual practice is said to reproduce only partially or imperfectly. Objective and writable structures of practice, like kinship diagrams, calendars of seasonal activities, categories of divisions of labor, and including audience typologies, lists of emotions or genres, levels of style, categories of proof or any other "available means of persuasion," take on the status of rules, either in the form of theoretical models, implicit laws, or transcendent social norms. Just what these rules are exactly, the nature of their existence, remains a problem for structuralism (and much that falls within poststructuralism), as it does for the nature of rhetoric (Bourdieu 22).

While the determination of rules applies tolerably well to occasional observances or reports of "typical" behavior, argues Bourdieu, they fall silent before "the practical
mastery of the symbolism of social interaction presupposed by the most everyday games of sociability” (10), like winking or speaking. Practical mastery and everyday observance alike are ill served by the rubric of “following rules.” It is just this everyday practice that interests de Certeau as well, who sees in them not the following of rules, but the tactical breaking of them. For de Certeau, the skillful practice of the everyday means knowing “how to get away with things” (xix), known as cunning. Practice as cunning, like the liminality of action for Goffman, suggests not a following of prescriptions but the creative bending or reinterpreting of them. Calling the practices of everyday life by the name of a rule, and “following the rules” the praise we give to those who carry these practices off with grace, style, or eloquence, illustrates the inadequacy of the term. Practice for De Certeau means knowing how to skirt the rules creatively for one’s own gain.

Even the carrying out of “everyday” tasks like cooking or speaking, particularly when practitioners deviate from cultural expectations to demonstrate their virtuosity, feels very little like the application of a rule, and distinctly unlike approximation to a norm. For De Certeau and Bourdieu, cooking mastery does not mean always having perfect utensils and every possible ingredient, and it doesn’t come from reading cookbooks. Rather, it means being able to make enjoyable, healthy meals from the materials at hand, or using second-rate ingredients to make something surprisingly good, and it comes from practice, from trying out new combinations and unknown techniques or from putting accepted ingredients and instruments to new uses. Similarly, rhetorical mastery cannot come from books, and it doesn’t reside in the head. It is a reliable bodily
orientation toward the unpredictability of an unfolding speaking moment, and an ability to capitalize on that moment, turning it to one's own advantage: of making the weaker argument seem the stronger. Any attempt to formulate this ability as rules to be followed destroys the very improvised tactics that make it worthwhile: anybody can follow a rule.

Still less does practical mastery rely on explicit rules to generate and govern its being carried out. The predictability which both anthropological knowledge and rhetorical theory seems to guarantee is precisely that which the exemplary or cunning practice, the clever variation on mundane activity, leaves behind. Even more so, practice as conceived by de Certeau excludes simply "following the rules;" rather, everyday practice is just that which utilizes its mundane invisibility tactically and subversively as purruque or "wiggling": the art of one "who cunningly takes pleasure in finding a way to create gratuitous products whose sole purpose is to signify [his] own capabilities through [his] work and to confirm [his] solidarity with other workers or [his] family through spending [his] time in that way" (26).

In the same way, rhetorical proficiency (in persuasive speaking) not only exceeds the prescriptions and principles of theory, but exists on an altogether different plane and frequently against the "rules" of proper discourse. Demosthenes might have had to break or bend the rules of "proper" speech delivery (the excessive gesticulation, the strained voice that all writers on delivery malign) in order to perform a convincingly repugnant version of Meidias' insolence and in order to counter it with his own performance of virtuous citizen conduct and deportment. Demosthenes ability to render (that is, to deliver) Meidias' conduct as insolent and exceptional (rather than as Homeric and
aristocratic) and to re-present proper, manly conduct in terms of a democratic ideology could never have been prepared for by a theory that simply enumerated those accepted forms of conduct that his audience already knew. Far from demonstrating his lack of rhetorical artistry, any systematic prescription of a proper delivery would rather illustrate the impotence of theory to address any real speaking moment. And if rhetorical theory cannot inform the improvised moment of persuasive action, what is it for?

Like rhetorical theory, Saussurian linguistics enforces the rules of “proper” speech by bracketing off practice (speech as parole) as in principle unknowable, and inarticulable. Like Geertz, Saussure excludes individual knowledge or mastery to focus exclusively on social/cultural meaning. Geertz privileges the “web of meanings;” Saussure privileges “the structure of signs, that is, the relations between them, at the expense of their practical functions, which are never reducible, as structuralism tacitly assumes, to functions of communication or knowledge” (Bourdieu 24, italics in original). Saussure helps to legitimate objectivist inquiry and launches linguistics as a legitimate science by demoting and then ignoring the practices which sustain language structures. By positing the logical and ontological priority of language (langue) over speech (parole) (a condition of “real knowledge,” as opposed to the ultimately unknowable conditions of development in pre-history), Saussure relegates the latter to the status of product, or by-product. This division produces for linguistics a well-defined object of knowledge--language--while the actual practice of speaking becomes nothing more than the execution of linguistic rules to produce a decipherable code, the mindless “work of individuals, not of the mass.”
For Cole, Arendt, Geertz and Saussure alike, what one individual body actually does, and specifically how they do it, is of no interest. What is of interest is the structure of ideas. This may be sufficient for philosophy, linguistics or anthropology, but rhetoric is, has been and must be oriented toward communication, not just ideas, and it has historically emphasized spoken communication, not only writing. Philosophy may begin and end in wonder, anthropology in a general catalogue of culture, but rhetoric begins and ends in address. Rhetorical theory, to explain its ancient Greek origins or their subsequent relevance to social life, must orient itself toward the real-time interaction between persons: speakers and their audiences. It therefore cannot align itself with or pattern itself after philosophy or any structuralism: anthropological, psychological, or linguistic. Rhetoric can never afford to lose sight of practice: the use of the human body in communicative interaction with others for accomplishing practical human goals.

For De Certeau and Bourdieu, therefore, language use is the paradigmatic example of tactical practice and the starting point for their explorations, where “enunciation furnishes a model of these characteristics,” even though “they can be discovered in the relation that other practices entertain with non-linguistic systems” (De Certeau 33). Not only that, but rhetoric serves as the model of a counter-hegemonic practice (defined as tactical in opposition to the hegemonic “strategy” of appropriation) that De Certeau attempts to theorize: “Whereas grammar watches over the propriety of terms, rhetorical alterations point to the use of language by speakers in particular situations of ritual or actual linguistic combat” (39). That is, rhetoric stands as the paradigmatic tactical practice, the primum wig, according to which other practices (as
tactics) can be analyzed and understood. Because it is inventive, individual, and 
improvised in the moment with available resources (mental, physical, and situational) 
rhetoric is best understood not as knowledge of a theory that can prescribe and predict 
practice, but as the composed management of a moment that theory can neither predict 
or prepare for. Rhetoric is not theory, but use: you can’t get here from there.

According to the perspective of practice, any attempt to instantiate a “proper” and 
prescriptive rhetoric within a cultural system, as Aristotle does, is to misperceive the very 
nature of the rhetorical as use, as devious, anti-hegemonic, and inventive, that is, as 
tactical. Doing rhetoric is an art of using the body in new situations to bring about 
change. But, following the platonic/aristotelian disavowal of tactical displays of skill 
(delivery) as dangerous and immoral, the rhetorical tradition has relied instead on 
objectivist views and literate methods, providing a model for the subsequent 
structuralisms of Saussure and, in anthropology, Levi-Strauss. Traditional rhetoric, like 
linguistics, privileges structures of objective knowledge over the practices which that 
knowledge attempts (and fails) to rationalize and represent. In the process, rhetoric has 
misrepresented the arts of persuasion as structures of representation.

As a theory, a pedagogy, a model that stabilizes and anticipates all future practice 
through the explicit articulation of “rules” (logical, psychological, linguistic, or aesthetic) 
according to which all effective practice ought to proceed, traditional rhetoric itself 
attempts to stabilize, anticipate, and provide a pattern for all future speaking moments, 
making theory the necessary, fundamental, and essential reality behind the 
epiphénomènon of practice. Thus traditional rhetoric begins the very idea that theory can
inform practice, making it regular, predictable and calculable. It institutes a three-canon theory as ontologically prior to delivery.

But speech is anything but regular, predictable, or calculable. Standing before a skeptical crown, overcoming fear and its paralyzing effects, responding to an insult or objection, reading signs of boredom or resistance and meeting them, sensing when you’ve said enough, and doing it all with the composure: what has this to do with the structures of theory? Rather than placing delivery at the end of a magisterial three canon process (the verbal colonization of the self), delivery belongs at the center of a new type of knowledge in which mind and body and environment meet in the moment of entering speech: an art of collective and mutual refashioning through public self-presentation.

What Bourdieu and De Certeau attempt to show, and what I hope to extend backwards to the very idea of an “art of persuasion,” is that pre- or extra-theoretical practice, far from being simply “inspired,” “natural” or “given” has its own extra-discursive technical principles, its own techniques of reproduction, its own media of expression, and that this practice responds to the exigencies of local situations, events and material conditions far more sensitively, efficiently and successfully than does the explicit, theory driven and exclusively verbal/logical rhetoric of Plato or Aristotle or more recent (de)incarnations. Rhetoric is a different type of knowledge that, because it remained outside of discourse, could not be represented within or by the discursive strictures of theory. But every principle allegedly introduced by Aristotle or Plato—the enthymeme, the psychology of audiences, the methods for discovering and articulating contingent truths for public audiences—can be shown to have been implicitly understood
by performers, politicians and poets before and outside the academic hothouse that
uprooted them and grafted them onto the otherwise fruitless endeavors of dialectic. Plato
didn’t invent rhetorical knowledge, he buried it and erected an inscription in its place.

Practice, Scene Two: Dialectical Knowledge

To fully understand practice, including rhetoric as speaking practice, its distinct
genre of embodied “logic,” and its particular means of reproducing itself, argues
Bourdieu, a second break is needed, a break from both objectivist knowledge and the
primary experience represented by phenomenology (or ethnomethodology). This second
break would recognize and establish the limits of objective knowledge by aligning itself
with practices (acts) “in the very moment of their accomplishment.” A rhetoric of action
constitutes just such a break with traditional theory-rhetoric. While objective knowledge
“grasps practices from the outside as a fait accompli,” the second break, which Bourdieu
calls dialectical knowledge, would make possible an understanding of the relationship
between objective structures of knowledge and “the structured dispositions within which
those structures are actualized and which tend to reproduce them” (3, my emphases). The
second break seeks to understand what objective knowledge brackets off: the “logic”
implicit in skillful practice as it unfolds. Dialectical knowledge remains in the doing, in
its responsiveness to the changing exigencies of a situation and its ability to exploit the
opportunities of a fleeting moment.

Objectivist inquiry poses the question of the conditions of possibility of primary
experience, thereby defining primary experience as that which by definition does not
question the conditions of its own possibility, failing thereby to qualify as real knowledge. Dialectical knowledge, in turn, explores the limits of objectivist inquiry by posing the question of the conditions of the possibility of objective knowledge, defined in opposition to the differently “theorized” functioning of practice. Objective knowledge defines itself as not posing the question of (because it denies the importance, the stability, the very existence) of the reproduction and functioning of practical mastery, so it ends just where dialectical knowledge begins: with the question of the conditions of possibility of experiencing practical mastery as distinct from objective knowledge. In other words, dialectical knowledge asks: “How does knowing how to speak in public (a practice) differ from knowing what to say (a theory)?”

Moving from the objective knowledge of theory to the dialectical knowledge of practical mastery is decidedly unlike the “invention” of an art that refined and disciplined a speaking “nature” (inspired, given, irrepressible, organic). Whereas objective theory reduced a plastic and productive art to its verbal and graphic representation (a tracing for an act, an inscription for a body, a map for the real terrain) the knowledge of practice (dialectical knowledge) attempts to understand (by feeling and imagining in the muscles and organs as well as in the mind) the limits of representation in rendering or appreciating the distinctiveness of practical mastery.

It is practical mastery which makes possible not only the explicit formulation of objective `rules of behavior’ (through the generation of intelligible patterns of practice), but the “objectively enchanted experience of that practice” as well (4). The language of this dialectical knowledge is not that of the rules that make up a structural system, but of
practical mastery embodied as "bodily hexis," experienced as durable dispositions and which together constitute a cultural "habitus." In other words, this dialectical knowledge must be felt in the body, in the very small muscle fibers, the "organs of discourse and gesture" that Goffman attributes to character. We have the theory, but what would a "habitus of rhetoric," or of public speaking, be? The answer cannot be simply more theory. It cannot restrict knowledge to that which is explicitly articulable, conscious, or exclusively mental. It must reimagine knowledge as extra-discursive, as experienced and expressed from body to body, through all the senses, in the moment of interaction. This doesn't mean ignoring verbal, discursive, conscious or mental aspects of knowledge as they inform practice. It does mean seeing them as one among many forms of knowledge rather than seeing them as the master code in which all other sensual bases of understanding must be encrypted.

Successfully activating the principles implicitly called for by a habitus, and the dispositions it tends to reproduce, occurs not as the execution of a rule or law, but as the actively improvised response to a constantly changing objective situation. Like any language use, practice is responsive, interactive and collaborative. Practical mastery must be improvised because it must be practiced in continuously novel and unpredictable situations before others, and it exists only in that interaction.

Theory, like rhetorical theory, knows nothing of these arts of improvisation and real interaction. But improvisation and strategy are inherent in practice, and qualitatively different from the execution of a rule, in large part due to their distinct use of time and space. The tempo and timing of an event is crucial to its successful completion, but is
just the factor removed by objective theory. Bourdieu comments:

To substitute strategy [De Certeau would use 'tactic'] for rule is to reintroduce time, with its rhythm, its orientation, its irreversibility. Science has a time which is not that of practice. For the analyst, time no longer counts: not only because [he] cannot be in any uncertainty as to what may happen, but also because [he] has the time to totalize, i.e. to overcome the effects of time” (9, his emphases).

Practice is defined by its tempo, understood as a qualitatively (not just quantitatively) changing resource and limit. This sort of sensitive temporal awareness involves everything from control of breath and heart and the pacing of words and gesture, to the movements of the parts of a speech, the "ripeness" of the situation, and the skillful use of the stages of life and of the popular moods of an age. De Certeau refers to this skillful manipulation of time "tactics," in opposition to "strategies" which can rely on property and the advantage of a place: "The 'proper' is a victory of space. On the contrary, because it does not have a place, a tactic depends on time--it is always on the watch for opportunities that must be seized 'on the wing.'" (xix). Armies and regimes use strategy, guerillas and insurgencies need tactics.

For both De Certeau and Bourdieu (though Bourdieu uses the term strategy for any practical means), ancient rhetoric was the first practice attempting to wrestle with the distinctness of time: the first articulation of tactical resources. For Bourdieu, the first formulation of rules to express the dispositions (bodily and cultural) generated by a cultural habitus, which themselves generate the possibility for practical mastery (as excellence), comes from the sophists in their adoption of temporally oriented words like
kairos.

Working with new styles of prose composition and new technologies of writing, logographers and sophists tried to anticipate, prepare for and control time, oriented around the speaking moment, in new ways for a new clientele. For de Certeau as well, early rhetoric marks an early western examination of everyday practices, offering a model "for differentiating among the types of tactics," according to the principle of "making the worse argument seem the better." And as rhetoric becomes a "proper" field of study and pedagogy, tactics get taken up (as they always do) by strategic systems: "As the author of a great 'strategic' system, Aristotle was already very interested in the procedures of this [sophistic] enemy which perverted, as he saw it, the order of truth" (38).

Dialectical knowledge as improvisation and strategy also implies a qualitatively distinct knowledge and use of space. De Certeau suggests that spatial resources avail themselves only to strategies of proper and propertied (proprietary) power bases. But the use of space and place is equally important to tactics. Skillful practice knows how to use the space around one's body; the layout of a stage, arena, building or courtyard; or the spatial options, avenues and dead ends of a city or region. Bourdieu refers to the spatial/semantic orientation of the eyes among the Kabyle (looking up and out is masculine and powerful, down is feminine and submissive), of the gait (a long measured stride is masculine and confident, short meandering steps feminine and weak), of the house (inside/outside; right/left) and of fields of labor (reaching in the trees as masculine/picking up fallen fruit off the ground as feminine) as an important aspect of any cultural practice.
De Certeau notes the tactical use of space, where the use of tactical memory "intervenes at the 'right moment' and produces modifications of space" (84). He offers as an example the difference between the objective and panoptic "map" which records proper names, and the idiosyncratic and selective "tour" which designates routes, shortcuts, and special places that remain unrecognized on maps, officially unknown, or "properly" forbidden.

I would describe skillful rhetorical practice as a felt, bodily "tour" of muscular paths, a feel for the routes through the body and mouth, and out into stage, theater, city and world. I see rhetorical theory as the construction of a proper "map" which tries to juxtapose and represent in writing all the "tours" known from practical experience. If one were to oppose later theory to sophistic practice (including the sophoi, the seven sages, as traditional pronouncers of wisdom), I would describe it as the difference between a guided tour, where students watch, hear, and feel the improvised performance of a master in novel situations, and a map, where all possible categories of performance and types of implementation are laid out, once and for all, in writing. In the latter, no actual speaking need ever take place, whereas in the former, performances of wisdom guide students into their own feel for subsequent performances, instilling a shared repertoire that is nevertheless uniquely appropriated according to skills, talents, and opportunities. What should be clear at this point is that this practice is not "natural," "organic," "innate," "irrepressible," or "inspired." It is informed by its own implicit theory, no less real for being non- or extra-discursive. And theory as "map" is not the beginning of real knowledge about the "rules" of persuasion, but its restriction (as a representation) and
subversion.

If, as Cole argues, pre-Socratic rhetoric differs from the advancements achieved by Plato and Aristotle in being “exercises” rather than “theory,” these exercises likely constituted simply one facet (the verbal building blocks) of the speech performance. The verbal exercise might then be understood to recognize its limits as verbal, and to respect the qualitatively different principles which functioned in practice: in lived time and space. Theory (from Plato to Cole) worked to eradicate this limit (which dialectical knowledge, as Bourdieu conceives of it, can restore) by reducing practice to “inspiration,” “nature” or “talent,” and declaring textual/verbal principles exhaustive of the art.

From the perspective of objective theory, the production, use, and exchange of cultural practices, objects and concepts (like kinship, gift-giving, child-rearing, hunting, agriculture, or verbal art) is governed by implicit laws waiting to be gathered, map-like, reduced to order and made explicit. Together, these laws form a “whole theory which calls for the existence of a structure, only fragments of which are delivered by experience—just its scattered members” (Levi-Strauss 46). For Levi-Strauss, the “primary, fundamental phenomenon” is the law (as, for Geertz, the meaning of the wink), not the observable, “discrete operations in social life”—the actual gift-giving and receiving (47). For Bourdieu and de Certeau (as for Mauss and others) the primary phenomenon to be studied is neither the primary experience sought by phenomenology or ethnomethodology, nor the objective structures given as rule or law. Rather, social practice must look to the “durable, transposable” dispositions, embodied, experienced and used by social actors, which generate the regularities and ingenuities of social practice.
(without any explicit rules) and which reproduce, through re-enactment, the principle of their own regeneration. These dispositions, which together form a *habitus* are, like theory, stable, knowable, testable and responsive to new situations. Like theory they comprise a finite set of principles which can inform and explain an infinite number of discrete instances. They can be learned and taught, popularized and revolutionized through creative re-application.

The rules or norms that describe a culture, like those that describe an art of persuasion, can never reach outside themselves to legislate when they are to be applied, when they can be abrogated or superseded, or how they can be bent to new situations, altering the very field of their application, any more than a text can dictate the context and manner of its being interpreted. Any such attempts become, simply, more text, leaving essentially unchanged the text-context divide and the unpredictability of the context-sensitive, improvised practice. Dialectical knowledge, for Bourdieu, poses the very question of the limits of the rule or the text that still must be interpreted and put to use, well or poorly. Rhetoric, insofar as it is concerned with actual, communicative interaction, with linguistic practice as opposed to linguistic form (like grammar) or structure (like linguistics) cannot exist within this limit, and to make it do so transforms it into something contradictory to its own end. Rhetorical theory as currently understood is an oxymoron. Either there never yet has been a rhetorical theory true to its promise, or there are an infinite number of rhetorical theories, equally based on traditional, even ancient, forms of knowledge, and equally open to change, reformation and return.
Practice, Scene Three: The Habitus

Bourdieu locates the engine of practice in the habitus—the “system of lasting, transposable dispositions which, integrating past experiences, functions at every moment as a matrix of perceptions, appreciations, and actions and makes possible the achievements of infinitely diversified tasks” (83, his emphasis). The habitus is the embodied sense of actions possible (a different sort of available means) for any given occasion: a somatic/kinesic/volitional repertoire. It is the bodies langue. Bourdieu might have seen in Demosthenes’ improvised “exchange” with Meidias just the sort of “reversal” that truly skilled practitioners can pull off. De Certeau might have seen in Meidias’ gestures, tones and looks an (unsuccessful) tactical opposition to the tenuous hegemony of popular rule. Dispositions, far from being “intentions,” or mental or ideological constructs (like rules) are, above all, bodily regularities, patterns of perceiving and interacting with the world which remain outside of discourse (recall Demosthenes’ comments about the difficulty of putting insolence into words).

These regularities include everything from the most “autonomic” (what Bourdieu call the “language of the organs,” 120) and the most fleeting (winks, gestures, ways of standing, moving, posturing, tones and inflections of voice; recall Goffman’s observation on the attenuation of units of gesture to signal an insult or provocation) to more durable patterns of dress and posture or the use of space (blocking aisles, bellowing and staring, all the machinations of Meidias to block Demosthenes’ deme from competing) to whole complexes of verbal and physical patterns of deportment (like the broad application of hubris to oligarchic/aristocratic conduct in general) that circulate through a culture, and
that we call manners, conduct or etiquette (polite, informal, uncouth, aloof, common, refined). A rhetoric of practice sees exemplary rhetorical skill not only in the verbal content of a speech, but also (equally or primarily) in the manner of conduct (of which the delivered speech is but the final instance) with which a rhetor negotiates a fateful, consequential and voluntary situation. Because of the desired continuity between performance and "real life" (and the perceived threats to that continuity always hovering over performance as "hypocrisy" or "acting") delivery becomes emblematic of not only the customary *habitus* of the speaker, but emblematic as well of the ideological position that he acts out and out of. It stands for a way of life and a principle of sociality that must be judged in moral terms as desirable or undesirable, virtuous or harmful, aristocratic or "common," democratic or insolent.

I don’t think it’s possible to overstate here the radical difference between the *habitus* as a type of embodied knowledge with which skilled individuals approach action and "carry it off," and the type of knowledge which outsiders—anthropologists, academics, philosophers or "rhetoricians"—apply to the observable regularities of skillful improvisation. The latter, symbolic mastery, conceives of the former, practical mastery, in purely cognitive terms as a set of symbolic exchanges of information fully representable through writing. But any attempt to create a lacuna-free and self-constituent system of conduct, a sort of master score of all the possible means of persuading will radically alter the ontological status of practice. The only way for practitioners to master the "productive apparatus" which enables them to improvise appropriate responses to new situations is by making it operate, by putting it into practice
“where the action is.” No mastery of langue can produce a witty parole.

This is precisely what [observers are] likely to forget, because [they] cannot recapture the logic [of practice] immanent in the recorded products of the apparatus except by constructing a model which is precisely the substitute required when one does not have immediate mastery of the apparatus (Bourdieu 123).

It is just this substitute, embodied in written prose, that Isocrates, Plato and Aristotle chose over the body techniques, the habitus that they would not practice or could not approve of. This does not mean that they chose pedagogy and critical acumen over tradition-bound stasis. The habitus includes as an essential aspect of its functioning an implicit pedagogy as well as an orientation to criticism (like the anti-hegemonic tactics of De Certeau, similarly embodied and dependent on use). A habitus accomplishes its own re-enculturation through what Bourdieu calls “structural (structured and structuring) exercises” (88), also known as body “hexis”:

Body hexis speaks directly to the motor function, in the form of a pattern of postures that is both individual and systematic, because linked to a whole system of techniques involving the body and tools, and charged with a host of social meanings and values: in all societies, children are particularly attentive to the gesture and posture which, in their eyes, express everything that goes to make an accomplished adult—a way of walking, a tilt of the head, facial expressions, ways of sitting and of using implements, always associated with a tone of voice, a style of speech, and (how could it be otherwise?) a certain subjective experience. (87)
Particularly salient or culturally charged practices can be offered up as ritualized or otherwise "framed" communicative displays (Bateson) which serve as "model" practices, garnering value or honor for the practitioners. Such models can, in turn, generate exercises (represented in the model speeches composed by logographers and recited by students or clients) which are practiced by novices, not with an eye to exact reduplication, but rather with an eye to somatic/kinesthetic/volitional internalization and incorporation for later adaptation and improvisation. As they are "memorized" by the whole body, model practices will reappear in new forms, new combinations for novel situations, either skillfully or unskillfully, through the novice.

Model speeches would be useless simply as texts without the visual and auditory nuances of their performance and the situational cues to which they responded. Pitch, gesture, and phrasing would heard, seen, and rehearsed together along with and as part of the larger argument in which they were embedded. This complex and its effects could thus be felt as wholes, the principle of which could be retained and reproduced, not in its specific details but in the overall effect achieved, whenever new speaking moments offered an analogous opportunity. Finding that analogous opportunity, an ability to read contexts for moments of possibility, would constitute just one aspect of rhetorical artistry that could never be reduced to rules or the texts that encoded them.

Structured exercises thus operate somewhere between simple and unconscious familiarization by "rote" imitation on the one hand (see and mimic) and explicit, literate instruction by precept and prescription (the model of formal education) on the other. What gets transmitted, most importantly, are the principles implicitly governing practice
(and the infinite ways in which new occasions might be improvised): a medium of transmission possible neither through the simple imitation of everyday routine (which has no space for judgement or adaptation), nor through the formal, explicit presentation of theoretical models, rules or prescriptions, abstracted from embodied reality. In this way, principles of practice become the models for language usage, which similarly supply a finite set of rules and a finite number of semantic units which can be recombined in an infinite number of ways to produce novel combinations with novel meanings.

Categories of gesture, tone, movement combined to express complex nuances of meaning function like the phonemes and morphemes which combine to make statements. If language use really is analogous to and derived from practice (some units of which are encoded in rhetoric as the canon of delivery), then rhetorical origins ought to be sought in practice, on its own "terms," rather than beginning with the stabilized langue, the structures of persuasion already divorced from linguistic use and twice removed from practice.

Language use, like any practice, must be inculcated and learned through stylized, "framed" moments of practice within ritualized occasions and interactions. Action, particularly character contests like ancient Greek oratory, provides a model (which gets reproduced as "structured exercises") for these temporally and spatially separated moments of highly visible and high stakes practice.

For Bourdieu, all cultures carry out the enculturation of its members and the maintenance of its principles of social action and organization through stylized or ritualized displays of body techniques. These displays act as a mnemonic, a technology
of memory before and outside of writing, which in turn act on the internal functioning of limbs and organs as much as on the orchestration of public festivals. Practical reason, through the durability of bodily dispositions,

extorts the essential while seeming to demand the insignificant: in obtaining the respect for form and forms of respect which constitute the most visible and at the same time the best-hidden (because most natural) manifestation of submission to the established order, the incorporation of the arbitrary abolishes... all the eccentricities and deviations which are the small change of madness (95).

This attention to the insignificant details of bodily bearing and carriage (under the name of tact, conduct, courtesy, decorum) remains, says Bourdieu, implicit but not unprincipled. Objective conditions speak directly to the motor function (those small muscles of discourse and gesture) through the transposable dispositions which inform and produce improvised responses. Rhetorical artistry, in the same way, was enculturated, was taught and learned, by extorting the essential while seeming to demand the insignificant. Not only from orators, but from actors, rhapsodes, symposiasts, physicians, sages and priests, features of performance (what we would call delivery) defined and established as appropriate, becoming and wise (or foolish, ungainly, and insolent) the patterns of conduct they enacted or portrayed, even as these features were derived and adapted from the very patterns of conduct they stylized and staged.

For Bourdieu, the immediacy of response to a situational demand makes practice resistant to conscious reformulation and adaptation, a resistance that renders practice homeostatic. Actions and responses can be calculated, anticipated and prepared for, but
these preparations, says Bourdieu, cannot take place through conscious logic, only through the principles circumscribed by the habitus, its system of values and corresponding patterns of self-expression. Bourdieu describes structural exercise as a "dialectical relationship between the body and space" which re-enacts stable mythico-ritual oppositions and hierarchies. Ritual activity reproduces a cultural habitus, displaying through physical actions the patterns of value and hierarchy that define the culture, and the goal of any habitus is, for Bourdieu, just this reproduction of itself by reproducing the same structured patterns of experience and action which can respond to recurring material conditions of existence (85).

Bourdieu is thus more interested in the direct somatic transmission of cultural principles from body to body or “practice to practice, without going through discourse or consciousness” (87) than de Certeau, who emphasizes the novel uses or forms which practice may take on. And Bourdieu has been criticized for this inattentiveness to cultural change. If we are to apply Bourdieu’s insights to ancient rhetoric, we will have to shift from the field of the habitus and its rituals as embodied tools for cultural continuity to the field of de Certeau’s "tactics" and performances as possible tools for cultural change. There may be connections between immediate, unreflective practice and everyday speech, or between static ritual and established forms of oratory, (like the ritualistic Dionysian festival that gave way to purely secular dramatic competitions in ancient Athens). And there were certainly continuities between early poetic performance competitions (from the aoidoi and Homeric rhapsodes to the dramatic contests employing “actors”) and the competitions of rhetors in the Assembly and the courts. Oratory was built upon a stable
tradition of performativity.

But it also clear that public speaking, the practice of the accomplished *rhetor*, was not, could not have been, simply a ritual act aimed at maintaining cultural stasis, even though it might be profitable to look at the moment of entering into speech (being a *rhetor*) in ritual terms, as what anthropologists might call a "liminal" moment (Turner). The rhetor’s art, though a performing art, was different in significant ways from the rhapsodes’ art or that of other poetic genres. What is needed, rather, is an understanding of the process through which rhetoric as a cultural habitus—-a system of self-regenerating habits and dispositions—-survived, participated in or brought about the Athenian cultural (r)evolution from poetic, predominantly aesthetic performance, to prosaic, predominantly political and rhetorical delivery, and from there to the text-centered rhetorical treatise that gained cultural validity in the Hellenistic period. How, that is, could orators think with and through their bodies to enact new ways of being, new patterns of conduct, new ideals of what it meant to be a citizen, a Greek, a man. I suggest that they did “think” and innovate in this way, and that they did it through delivery, challenging traditional practices even as they used them, by stylizing them in new contexts through studied control over their bodily movements and vocal qualities. Demosthenes called delivery the first, second and third most important of an orator’s skills because with it, through his bodily self-control, he could redefine what it meant to act as a democratic citizen, as an aristocrat, and as an insolent boor.

We can keep Bourdieu’s analysis of practice and bodily technique, and connect it to de Certeau's interest in the ways in which everyday practices as *tactics* can work within
the system, in its lacunae and interstices, to subvert and change it. That is, we can reexamine the practice of rhetorical delivery by imagining its stylized and pedagogic reenactment not simply as strategy or *habitus* (which emphasizes continuity), but as performance and tactic (which suggests an engine for change). Ancient Greek rhetors (and citizens generally insofar as they were publicly visible) as tactical performers used their bodied as a tool to persuade with, to display cunning, to maneuver, and to “think” with. In doing so, they helped to alter the very nature of Greek culture, including its political constitution and social stratification.

What frames and establishes practices as pedagogic, as exemplary, and as a powerful agent for change is not its status as a stable “ritual” form put into practice, but its status as a public “framed” display of improvised tactical wisdom. The presence of an audience and the separation of the practitioner, whom I can now refer to as a performer, from the mundane activities of everyday life makes a particular instantiation of practice a “structural (structured and structuring) exercise,” a model for imitation and an model of the world as it ought to be.

The framing of a practice before an audience transforms it into a performance. It is in the nature of performance, and particularly of competitive performance (when one is performing one’s self, a contest of character), to claim for itself and display as “structured exercise” just those implicit, conduct-generating principles worthy of being embodied, assimilated, and renewed in practice. Performance is not a term Bourdieu uses, but the description of performance popularized by Bauman in his *Verbal Art as Performance* (1977) matches perfectly the sort of exercise that Bourdieu describes to explain how
practical mastery is learned, how a habitus can reproduce itself in each new generation.

Act 3: Performance: Scene One: Framing the House of Rhetoric

I have attempted to argue that delivery was never simply the residue of a three-canon theory or the pre-rhetorical “dress” of a properly rhetorical structure, much less a stock-collection of gestures and tones to be tied onto words and phrases to make them more appealing or emphatic. Nor was delivery ever simply the “natural” expression of thoughts and feelings as they over-flowed the boundaries of the mind that spawned them (like Athena from the head of Zeus). Before Zeus bore Athena, he swallowed Metis, cunning intelligence, Athena’s real mother and source of her ingenuity (It was Athena who championed Odysseus and Achilles, the two consummate performers of Homeric epic). I have tried to portray delivery as a particular manifestation of Greek 

metis, an identifiable, stable, and communicable (though not simply verbal) quality which is expressed and refined in moments of action (risky, unpredictable opportunities calling for composure and cunning as indicative of character) and which is shaped by and answerable to larger patterns of practice that are shared by an entire culture as “conduct” or “manners,” like the Greek terms, familiar to rhetoric, ethos and nomos, meaning practice, habit, custom, usage. Through a description of practice (ethos, nomos) and action (metis), I have attempted to restore delivery (hupokrisis) not only to its larger sphere within Athenian cultural life, but to a more general principle of embodied knowledge as dialectical, tactical and performed. It is to performance, my final term, that I now turn.
What confers and guarantees the social meaning and value of any system of body
techniques, what in fact establishes any practice as action—potentially as both individual
(a contest of character valued for its ability to isolate a singular, unconditioned
excellence) and systematic (expressing a valued and valid system of cultural techniques, a
habitus worthy of being imitated and practiced)—is precisely its status as performed, a
framed “assumption of accountability to an audience for the way in which a
communication is carried out, above and beyond its referential content” (Bauman 11).
Performance confers honor on the successful performer for his or her ability to put into
practice implicit principles of conduct which constitute a cultural habitus (the ability to
embody and endlessly improvise the values and meanings of a culture in an array of new
occasions) even as it sets up and displays excellence worthy of being imitated (by
children, less-well-qualified adults, the general public). Performance summons the
excellence that it will display because the “assumption of accountability” made by the
audience intensifies the experience of the event, which becomes more meaningful, more
consequential, more fateful both for the performer and for the sphere of importance
afforded the event. The audience (as judge or jury or otherwise enfranchised,
deliberative body) confers status, power or capital on a successful performance not for it
referential content, but for something else, above and beyond that content. If rhetoric
describes the artful control or management of a speaking moment (rather than the artful
arrangement of written words, which is experienced very differently) to heighten its
persuasive effect, then we can expect to locate that artistry as performed (as spoken) in
the manner of its delivery, not in its referential content. If, on the other hand, the
referential content circumscribes the possible arena of artistry (the limits of a three-canons tradition), then we should perhaps admit that rhetoric has always been an art of writing as thinking, not communicating as speaking.

A rhetoric that is about communication rather than thought, though, cannot take that route, but must pursue performance as key. Bauman and the study of “verbal art” naturally privileges spoken performance as paradigmatic, but this privileging is not essential. Practice, not the “verbal” in verbal art, is what performance frames and calls attention to. What makes performance, performance is not its reliance on spoken words, but the expressive competence (Boyardieu would call it practical mastery) implicitly claimed by the performer, and the critical license implicitly claimed by the audience. Practice helps us to see and overcome the bias implicit in calling performance a “verbal art.” Performance helps us to see and overcome the stasis implicit in “practice” even as it helps us to counter the verbal-bias of most rhetorical theory.

As a perspective capable of mediating between the ubiquity of cultural practices as embodied skill on the one hand, and individual action as the competitive display of excellence, wisdom or virtue on the other, a performance perspective merits a privileged place in any understanding of the rhetor’s art in ancient Greece. Performance constitutes the art of persuasion known as classical rhetoric. Kennedy calls performance “oratory” to oppose it to rhetoric, or rhetoric to oppose it to the “metarhetoric” that philosophers wrote about. And Cole calls every thing before Plato “protorhetoric.” But this is having the cart pull the horse. Rhetorical knowledge does not arrive when set down in texts, much less when distilled as philosophical theory. It thrives, autochthonous, wherever
persuasive speech is performed, in the principles driving the performance.

In Bauman’s assessment concerning verbal art as aesthetic language use, his concern rests primarily on literary rather than rhetorical genres, but I believe his insight to apply as well to persuasive as to aesthetic ends:

It is no longer necessary to begin with artful texts, identified on independent formal grounds and then reinjected into situations of use, in order to conceptualize verbal art in communicative terms. Rather, in terms of the approach being developed here, performance becomes constitutive of the domain of verbal art as spoken communication. (11).

In other words, we needn't, and shouldn't, begin with written speeches as models of rhetorical practice, much less begin with classical rhetorical theory (as Kennedy (1998) has recently done, following the lead of much traditional historiography) or any logocentric theory (focussed exclusively on verbal means of persuasion), and then "inject" or apply this theory into texts, theoretical or oratorical, judging their rhetorical properties or value according to classical rules. Rhetoric is not in the text, even the text of a speech; it is in the culturally informed, individually acted, local, timely performance. And the performance is always already a theory.

So the edifice of rhetorical knowledge ought to rest on qualities of culturally situated performances, which become constitutive of whatever is artful within rhetoric. In this sense, rhetorical theory cannot demonstrate the value of oratory; on the contrary, successful performances generate their own principles, from which both rhetorical theory and critical judgement must proceed. From this perspective, rhetoric cannot exist in any
theory without being tied to and situated in specific cultural practices of performance, nor can "speeches" count as rhetoric apart from the actual event in which they were delivered. This may seem an entirely unremarkable insight, as it is, but the implications for the study of classical rhetoric are rather powerful, because so much of the evidence we have of the ancient world is textual. But the performance isn’t in the text.

The texts we have of the past are not performances, or even the graphic rendering of performances. They are texts of another genre, more like the idealized recollection of a performance, or the advertisement of a potential performativity. Classical speeches were commonly written after the fact, having been revised for publication to be read and/or recited aloud, possibly to advertise the author’s skill or to influence future proceedings. They were not "the performance" which they describe, nor can they be. The artistry of a speech exists only in the local interaction between rhetor, audience, place and time. Bauman notes the same problem in terms of verbal art: "How many of the texts in our collections represent recordings of informants' abstracts, resumes, or reports of performances and performance forms rather than true performances" (8)? Plato was satisfied with the textual re-presentation of Lysias’ speech through Phaedrus, taking those written words to be Lysias himself. He didn’t worry himself about qualities of delivery, audience response, or situational exigency17. We shouldn’t be so lax.

This doesn’t mean that we can know nothing about ancient rhetorical practice; it does mean that we have to look elsewhere, at texts and images that shed light on what it meant to perform rhetoric and to witness it. If Greek rhetores almost universally performed speeches or prepared speeches oriented toward their performance, then it
makes sense to look to features of performance, particularly the culturally specific features of ancient Greek delivery, *hupokrisis*, in order to understand ancient rhetoric. If even the consummate writer of speeches, Demosthenes, called *hupokrisis* the three most important of a *rhetor*’s tasks (mentioning verbal artistry not at all), then we should and can take this comment seriously by looking for this art at rhetoric’s very inception.

I’ve begun, tentatively, such a search in the latter part of Chapter One, and will offer a second example from Greek oratory (Demosthenes again) in Chapter Four. If rhetoric is interested only in written/verbal artistry, the artistry of written prose as practiced by Isocrates, Plato (or Demosthenes the *writer* as opposed to Demosthenes the *rhetor*), then we can drop the pretense of rhetorical art having any connection to speaking, any practical face-to-face orientation, and leave it a theory of writing along side which an hitherto unknown inquiry into the arts of speaking can now begin. In this new field of inquiry, writing will serve an altogether different purpose than it does in the art of composition-rhetoric, being only an ancillary work, preparing for and oriented around the speaking moment. Composition will serve a purpose akin to blueprints for a builder: important to know about, but far from exhausting the builder’s craft, a craft of loads and supports, of materials and their placement. (The builder knows when the architect’s plans won’t work, when a foundation will sink or a joist collapse under the proposed weight). Words will be subservient to the practical knowledge, the speaking tactics which inform it.

I do not argue for such a division here (architects really should talk to builders more), since the art of rhetoric, the “manipulation of [one’s] medium with a view to
ensuring [the] message as favorable a reception as possible on the part of the particular audience being addressed," (Cole) involves both verbal and non-verbal, writable and acted media. I suggest merely that rhetorical action be inverted and enlarged as the foundation of any rhetorical edifice rather than a superfluous false-front to the "real" building, a properly ignored, dangerous, and in any case deceitful after-thought, added on after the structure was completed as planned. (I should say that we realize the whole structure of rhetoric to be front and appearance for which verbal arts of invention, arrangement and style are but a few bracing beams, unseen and so not an end in themselves, as is delivery, but still important in their proper place.) These two media, word and act, can no longer be reduced, one to the other. The written and verbal can no longer claim to represent the acted, interacted, and embodied. Rhetoric as verbal representation must become rhetoric as self-presentation.

The latter is better served through the study of performance and performing, the actor's art, known in Greek as hupokrisis.

Performance, Scene Two: Handing Out the Keys

Bauman introduces and develops a feature of performance that Goffman had already taken for granted in Presentation of Self in Everyday Life (1959). Performance as separate and "framed" event will take place on a continuum, from the most marked, public, official or serious to the most spontaneous, private, subversive or parodic. Performances can be framed and "keyed" by many means, and at any moment, members of a culture can invoke, allude to, parody or even invert any or all of these means to
indicate the peculiar performative quality of an act or event as it unfolds. For Bateson (Steps to an Ecology of Mind, 1955), these means are metacommunicative: "Any message, which either explicitly or implicitly defines a frame, ipso facto gives the receiver instructions or aids in [his] attempts to understand the messages included within the frame" (188).

These metacommunicative means exist as the context or frame within which a message is delivered and therefore have more to do with the manner in which something is said than with the matter that is being conveyed. The metacommunicational devices used to frame performances are culturally specific, and must be widely shared and in that sense "traditional" or else they could not perform their function. At the same time, each performance must skillfully select among, call upon, manipulate or alter these devices, depending on the resources available, to customize it for the situation. If it does do so, it will not have merited the heightened attention that makes it a performance. The success of the performer depends upon the skill with which keying devices are employed and used (as tactical, we might say with de Certeau) within the constraints and the extrinsic and intrinsic goals of the situation: the purpose of the framed event, the resources available, the ends in sight, the mood of the audience, the favorableness of the environment, etc. For any given case, the question becomes, "Within any given culture, for any given performance event, what are the devices for 'keying' a practice as performed, what qualities are valued for each device, and how well does this performer utilize the resources available to him or her in manipulating these keying devices? For the arts of persuasive self-expression, the question can be stated, simply, "What is the
manner with rhetoric?" If I am right in calling invention, arrangement, and style the
canons of composed verbal matter, and delivery the canon of non- or extra-verbal
manner, and if I am right in describing ancient Greek public speaking a performance
genre, then the art of rhetoric can be said to begin with and proceed from delivery (albeit
a delivery much expanded and reconceptualized to include much more than bare lists
describing uncontextualized eye, hand and mouth movements18).

Performance as a display of communicative competence independent of its
referential content is judged for its "enhancement of experience, through the present
enjoyment of the intrinsic qualities of the act of expression itself" (Bauman 11). What
makes a performance a performance, a good or bad event, is not the message that is
presented, but rather the skill with which the available metacommunicational framing
devices are employed. Not every device will be relevant to, or available for, every
performance event, but any and every cultural event or act can invoke or invert whatever
metacommunicational devices are available.

Bauman lists some categories that framing devices can fall into: special codes (a
special register or lexicon); figurative language (skillfully wielding fixed formulas or
coining new aphoristic figures); parallelism (variously reiterated gestural, tonal, phonic,
grammatical, semantic or prosodic patterns); special paralinguistic features (pacing,
volume, intonation and inflection, stance and posturing, gesture and expression, etc);
special formulae ("Once upon a time . . ."); appeals to tradition; and disclaimers of
performance skill. Once these features (or whatever performative devices apply to the
event being studied) are recognized, they can be "read" as indices to the degree of
"performativity" of any event. A rhetoric of action will be alert not only to the somatic orchestration of an individual performer's body and voice, but to all levels of extra-textual (inter)action which emerge only at the moment of utterance. That is, delivery will be redefined as the performance of an event, not simply that of an individual. Delivery cannot be reduced to the catalog of gestures, tones, movements or expressions defined a priori as rhetorical. Nor is it enough to document "thickly," in the style of an ethnographic report, the exact movements and sounds produced by an orator, even as the first step toward a comprehensive encyclopedia of rhetorical action (not all winks are equal, as Geertz has shown). What would still remain missing are those traditions, customs, fashions and expectations within which those gestures were made and which directed their selection and adaptation. Missing as well would be the local and immediate context within which this particular performance occurred. To "read" and document Demosthenes delivery against Meidias (even were that possible) would be unhelpful without knowing a great deal more of the context of his speech: the fate of democracy in its struggle with oligarchy, the history of Athens political reversals, the status of aristocratic privilege and conduct, the peculiar mannerisms of Meidias and people like him, the reputation of Demosthenes and his physical capabilities, and the local and timely mood of the audience regarding Meidias' history of offenses against Demosthenes. And even this exhaustive series of contextualizations would be useless as ends in themselves unless they informed a better understanding of the particular qualities of (non-verbal) expressiveness (as action, cunning, conduct, habit) that were or became established as persuasive and how these qualities related both to the verbal content of a speech and the
larger situation that it addressed, including the future performance possibilities that it opened up or altered. That is, delivery must be placed within the context of cultural practices, arenas of action, and performative events wherever they occur, highlighting not just a gesture or individual performance, but the dialogical interaction between the somatic, the situational, and the cultural.

What’s more, these interactions cannot be reduced to events proclaimed “rhetorical” beforehand, as though persuasion only occurred within certain settings. The clear boundaries that exist in ancient Greece between the platform of the orator and the stage of the rhapsode or dramatist should not lead us to ignore the significant connections between them and with other aspects of cultural life. Persuasion, even persuasion explicitly addressing political events and matters of public interest, took place everywhere and cannot be circumscribed by fiat to one location or venue. Similarly, performances occurred in any number of settings, levels of formality, seriousness and popular or official sanctioning. That women were forbidden from the Pnyx (the place of assembly deliberations) does not mean that women did not imitate, parody or subvert assembly rhetoric elsewhere, nor that these imitations, parodies and subversions did not come to influence the original.

Goffman’s insights are worth attending to in this regard, and they agree with Bauman’s general thesis that every communicative act (every meaningful practice) is keyed in some way, and every act can employ features of performativity as one (if not the only) aspect of its functionality. Thus Bauman asserts against Austin (and with Goffman and Bateson) that “in spoken communication no such thing as naked literalness may
actually exist" (10) because every communication is framed in one way or another. The distillation of a philosophical core is not the literal base upon or against which other language use is a deviation (as Austin and Cole believe), it is rather simply one framing device among others, a device favored within certain academic registers but largely ignored elsewhere. Any piece of communication can participate in or borrow aspect of performativity.

Because members of a culture have at their disposal the "keys" of performance, performativity itself becomes a feature not simply of specifically framed or liminal events, but of the culture in general. Some cultures may attempt restrict performativity to a few highly restricted and strongly marked venues, while in others, performance may mark a wide range of practices available to a wide variety of members. But as de Certeau suggests of tactics, once those keys have been made public (and it is in their nature to appear before audiences), they can be used for purposes other than or alien to what was originally intended for them. What opens up before us then is a whole world of framed interaction which emphasizes not what is said but how it is performed. Delivery properly conceived would express interest in this performativity, particularly as a persuasive tool, wherever it occurred in a culture, whether or not that occurrence could be traditionally defined as rhetorical (deliberative, judicial, or epideictic).

What's more, as suggested concerning the liminality of action and the tactical subversions of practice, performance can be said to call for a pushing of the boundaries of official legitimacy. Rhetoric as act would therefore have to be willing to, and even oriented towards performance as a bending and breaking of the rules, rather than being
focused on the establishment and observance of rules governing public speech.

The point, again, is not simply to follow the rules, but to push them in interesting, pleasurable and appealing ways. Performances which simply and straightforwardly "fulfill" every performance device (this proof, that structure, this figure, that gesture) will quickly become perfunctory and routinized (no longer a performance but a liturgy). The life has gone out of it as performance, though it may (and probably will) serve some other purpose. But whatever the trajectory of any performative venue, no institutional authority or official power can prevent everyday performativity from challenging and ultimately altering the range of possible performance features. The everydayness of performativity makes it capable of transforming not only itself but the very culture which originally sanctioned it. Just as no rhetoric can be a theory without beginning and ending with delivery, just so no understanding of either rhetoric or delivery can begin without being thoroughly grounded in the everyday permutations of performativity through which a culture enacts and refashions itself.

A rhetoric of action must take into account all three of the terms I’ve discussed here: the physico/mental characteristics of a man of action (motor control, composure, style, grace, wit, etc) summed up in Greek *metis*; the culturally informed system of practices (of bodies, situations, and the divisions of time and space within which they move) described through terms like *ethos* and *nomos*; and the performative framing of interactions through which the man “of action” skillfully displays, parodies, or subverts the performance keys through which he will be judged and which can, in turn, alter the very cultural practices being enacted the selves which these cultural patterns make
intelligible: known in its most explicitly mimetic form as *hupokrisis*. As a culturally encoded medium, delivery becomes not just gesture and voice, but the creative play upon larger semiotic systems involving the embodied self as presented within its fullest context. In this way, delivery (as practice, action and performance) allows for transformations of self, conduct, and culture.
Notes

1. Burke’s dramatism (introduced in *A Grammar of Motives*, xvii-xxv) was nothing if not foundational, helping to initiate, among other things, the performance studies of anthropology and folklore which this project borrows from and adapts. Nevertheless, his use of the term is metaphorical, since “the book is concerned with the basic *forms of thought* which, in accordance with the nature of the world as all men necessarily experience it, are exemplified in the attributing of motives” (xvii, my emphasis). Rather than as forms of thought, a literal dramatistic rhetoric might understand all rhetorical theorizing as arising through the body and its uses in public space, before an audience. The goal is not a knowledge of motives, but of the process of self-creation with others as a paradigmatic rhetorical act.


3. Both Arendt (*The Human Condition*, 1958), an existential philosopher, and Goffman (*Interaction Ritual*, 1967), a sociologist, devote considerable time examining action as a term and a cultural phenomena as distinct from other types of human behavior like work or labor.

4. The tradition of performance theory and performance based perspectives on “verbal arts” has been outlined by Fine (1984), and Bauman and Briggs (1990). Bauman (1977) offers a good early statement of a performance approach to aesthetic verbal art forms, while Morris (1995) summarizes the more recent, separate but related field of research on performance theory and gender performativity.

5. In Homer, *hypokrínesthai* meant “interpret” or “follow upon in conversation.” This latter meaning developed from simply “answer” to “dramatic response,” referring to the actor who responded to the words of the chorus. From there, the meanings “to act” or play a role; “dissemble” or play the hypocrite; and “recite” or “declaim in a dramatic manner” followed (O’Connor 3). *Hupokritos* developed along similar lines, meaning “a reply or answer;” then “the actor’s art”; then “an orator’s delivery, declamation”; and finally, “the playing of a role, hypocrisy” (see Liddell and Scott). From the beginning then, the notion of acting, of public speaking and of dissembling were closely tied.

6. The now classic statement of the physiological response to stressful situations was given in Walter Cannon’s *Bodily Changes in Pain, Hunger, Fear and Rage* (1929).

7. Goffman’s essay appears in his *Interaction Ritual* (1968) as the final section of a larger study of everyday face-to-face interactions. With Goffman, I feel that “we need to see these events as a subject matter in their own right, analytically distinct from . . . communication systems and strategic interaction” (2).
8. Though rhetors, like all jurors or audience members in the Assembly, were eventually paid for their public service, they were not paid any more for speaking, nor is there any evidence that frequent speakers relied heavily or came to depend upon this income. On the contrary, most active speakers were likely to be elite men. They didn’t speak for the pay, but on the contrary, their wealth afforded them the training and ambition to speak, which had its own non-monetary rewards. See Ober, 1989.

9. For a full study of metis, see Detienne and Vernant, Cunning Intelligence in Ancient Greece (1977). Metis was a goddess, daughter of Kronos, and Zeus’ first wife. Zeus swallowed her when she became pregnant, for fear that her offspring would outstrip him and usurp the throne. He thus incorporated the skills of Metis within himself, and gave birth to Athena, daughter of Metis, but attributed solely to Zeus. History thus imitates myth, in erasing the legacy of the Goddess in western thought and especially in the history of rhetoric. Metis will be discussed further in Chapter Three.

10. See Chapter Four for additional traditions about Demosthenes’ practical exercises and training in delivery.

11. I realize the difficulty of making one unusual (because written and perhaps never delivered) instance stand for all of ancient Greek practice. I will add to this instance in Chapter Three, where I begin with Homer’s depiction of speaking competitions, especially contrasting the incompetent Thersites, the novice Diomedes, the aged Nestor and the ideal man of word and deed, Achilles. Then, in Chapter Four, I’ll return to another example from Demosthenes time, when Aeschines prosecutes Timarchos for speaking after having prostituted himself. In each case, I’ll argue that patterns of gesture, vocal quality, stance and deportment were significant features of a speaking performance best understood in terms of competitive action judged according to standards of composure, grace, style and “wats” and read through the small movements of the body.

12. Not unlikely, since in another speech, Demosthenes complains about Aeschines and Philoctetes sitting beside him during a meeting in order to heckle him; what worse, the audience found it amusing, encouraging their outbursts (Demosthenes 19.23).

13. It was Gilbert Ryle, in his “Thinking and Reflecting” and “The Thinking of Thoughts,” who first produced the anecdote of the wink and its various manifestations to illustrate the complexity of even the smallest communications of meaning. And was Ryle who first coined the terms “thin” and “thick” description to differentiate a muscular movement from a meaningful gesture, the observed action from the culturally established variety of meanings conveyed by the action. I might call traditional rhetorical theory of the Greek philosophical tradition “thin” description, because it tells us what speakers should think about in preparing a speech, but not how to persuade in the moment of public speaking.


15. The literature on the body is now vast, following Foucault’s attention to the uses and treatments of bodies in changing discursive regimes of clinical medicine, penal reform, and sexuality. See, for example, Lock (1993); Schepher-Hughes and Lock (1987); and Csordas (1990) for a range of approaches to body-work.

16. Thus, from the perspective of rhetorical theory, there can hardly ever be a perfect, consummate orator, while from the perspective of practice, perfection is defined simply by exemplary instances of mastery. In contrast to rhetorical theory (ala Plato, Aristotle, Cicero and Quintilian) drama critics (or drama theory) would never consider elucidating the “perfect” actor, even while claiming the ability to judge acting, since
each actor, each role, each performance is framed by its own expectations, its own challenges, its own exigencies to which it must respond. Any objective, all encompassing theoretical structure of acting would necessarily overlook these practical exigencies.

17. Actually, he did worry about these features (see, for example, Laws Book II for a lengthy discussion of non-verbal features of a performance), but he actively strove to suppress or manage them and their relevance to the persuasiveness of a speech. More about Plato’s evolving response to “the trouble with delivery” in Chapter Three.

18. This reconceptualized delivery, in fact, will remain resistant to being written or, if written, to being exhausted in the writing. Like Gorgian skepticism, it will be a distortion to say that it exists (rather than that it becomes), a distortion to say that it can be “known” in the way that theory is traditionally knowable, a distortion to say that it can be communicated in any form other than performance itself.
CHAPTER 3

CUNNING SPEECH/ACT:

THE CULTURE OF PERSUASION FROM HOMER TO ARISTOTLE

_strophios_: a twisting, slippery fellow
--Liddell and Scott

The twisted or sly one, the _strophis_, [is] a creature as mobile as the mime, Strophios, the father of Phlogios, also a mime, known as _polustrophos_; both of them could imitate the most diverse living creatures with movements of their agile fingers and hands. Strophaios was also the name given by the Greeks to the sophist who knows how to interweave and twist together (_strephein_) speeches and artifices.
--Detienne and Vernant

Performing Culture in Ancient Greece

Chapter Two ended with a discussion of performance as a type of communication set apart from everyday speech by virtue of various “keying” features, especially concerning presentational manner, which signaled its special status and which performers select and adapt with varying degrees of skill and success. Performance can be connected both to larger patterns of cultural practice which informed them, and to the individual stylization, called action, through which performers demonstrate their unique skill in navigating the uncertainties of any speaking moment, thereby winning honor,
status, or rank. Because rhetoric was in ancient Greece, and remains for us today, grounded in speech as paradigmatic, and because speaking is always a physical act involving all relevant qualities of physical self-presentation, rhetoric itself is best understood as a practice, an action, and a performance.

Performance can be restricted to individual assumption of special responsibility within an explicitly framed setting and a culturally sanctioned speech-genre, before a public audience which both judges and rewards the performance for the manner in which it is carried out: i.e. an officially sanctioned act in law-courts, on the stage, or in an assembly. But performance can also be employed by cultural critics more loosely or metaphorically to look at a wider range of cultural practices insofar as they are displayed before others and judged. In this sense, ancient Greece itself was a “performance culture” which placed significant cultural value on the skillful display of public speaking. What’s more, the various levels at which a performance takes place (and its various audiences) can be embedded and enmeshed within each other in various and complex ways. Any action that takes place before witnesses (even, as Burke argues in Rhetoric of Motives, the witness of the self) can become de facto a performance, even if no culturally sanctioned precedent exists for such a performance, and it can refer to, parody, subvert and transform cultural practices in the process.

In Chapter One, a judicial performance of Demosthenes was shown to turn upon his delivery (his stylized imitation) of himself and Meidias, which stylized and “framed” their public conduct in general, which in turn was made to reflect and stand as an instance of the wider cultural clash between opposed, ideologically informed practices: oligarchic
and democratic. He delivered a political argument. This tactical agility was seized upon and enacted by Demosthenes, but would have been either unthinkable or unpersuasive if rhetorical delivery were not already understood to be connected to broader patterns of public and political practice also, in a sense, performative. That is, before one could use rhetorical delivery to mimic, through movement and voice, not only an act, but a character and cultural type, political ideology had first to be imaginable as embodied: it had to be incorporated in an interpretable pattern of practice. Rhetoric (even as theory) is best understood as practice not only because speaking remains a practice, but because a speaking performance crystallizes culturally specific manifestations of being-in-the-world, stylized by the speaker, and expressed through pleasing and persuasive actions.

This performative orientation to skillful persuasion, to be carried out, has to draw upon an embodied repertoire of acts which the performer must adroitly control and enact, with all the subtle and twisting nuances of vocal, gestural and bodily movement that such control implies. It requires, in Bourdieu's terminology, *dialectical* understanding that constitutes a “theory” of practice: a reliable and finite set of principles which can inform gesture and tone, but which are not simply their singular or “routine” execution. Demosthenes, like any skillful performer, learned, studied and used his practice to inform specific actions in the same way that literate theory informs critical judgements. The pliable performance implied a stable, performative ideology of political dispositions and their characteristic deportment. In this chapter, I will argue that Demosthenes was far from alone in this practice: he was one late instance of a centuries old performance tradition through which wise action (*sophia*) was displayed in speaking contests.
Rather than emphasizing the revolution in rhetorical thought through which “inspired,” “natural” or “unconscious” practices of eloquence (called oratory) was reduced to the stable order of an articulable set of writable principles, I want to demonstrate that what made speech persuasive in ancient Greek rhetoric was precisely its continuity with a performative tradition in which non-verbal manner, that is, delivery, took precedence. The revolution didn’t invent an art of persuasion or make it knowable or teachable; it simply altered the medium from the body to the word.

Emphasizing continuity does mean that culturally valued forms of self-presentation went uncontested or that they never changed. Styles of performance, keying mechanisms and even genres can arise, develop and transform into something new\(^2\). The multiplication of roles in drama and the shift from poetic meter to prose rhythm are just two important developments that took place in ancient Greece. But within this development there remained a stable core of cultural values relating to speaking skill in performance that made itself felt from the Homeric hero to the assembly rhetor. I will argue that performance skills, especially realized in those aspects of the event relating to the performer’s manner of acting (gesture, expression, movement, tone, emphasis, rhythm, pacing, etc) remained significant aspects of public, political deliberation concerning wise action because these were the very qualities traditionally valued as pleasing and persuasive. These qualities, (referred to through terms like *metis, strophios, ethos, mimesis*, and *hupokrisis*) not stable bodies of knowledge (Homer as encyclopedia) or philosophical innovations (Plato as midwife to a true rhetorical art), inform the core of ancient Greek rhetorical and political practice. For this reason, rhetoric is best
understood as an outgrowth of earlier genres of performance competitions whose effectiveness depends on this continuity, on delivery, rather than as an ability made possible through epistemological, political, or literary invention.

Making these connections will require more than the lexicon of terms I have already introduced. I discussed that terminological tripod (practice, action, performance) to set up a frame from which delivery could be suspended, staging its importance to any theory of persuasive artistry. To flesh out this mannequin as specific to early Greek rhetoric, a new set of images will need to appear. Some of these, like *metis* (cunning intelligence), *nomos* (custom; tradition, law), *ethos* (dwelling place, habit), *strophia* (“twistiness,” mimetic agility) and *hupokrisis* (acting, delivery), have been mentioned already, and need only to be more fully defined as they connect to ancient rhetoric. Others, like *mimesis* (imitation), *muthos* (persuasive speech), *physis* (nature, appearance), and *phusiognomy* (the science of “reading” physical appearance), appear in this chapter and the next. Together, they establish a semantic space and create the possibility for a culturally specific theory (*theoria*, a [way of] seeing) of acts centered on performance, on a body-language (a *semimetics*) which could represent not only characters, heroes or gods, but also the emotions, dispositions, and moral attitudes that performers acted out and stood for, and, through these, to the customs, traditions, practical wisdom, and knowledge for which they were admired. This way of seeing rhetoric means revising the sources we go to, and the attitude we take toward them, away from philosophical speculation and system, and toward the examples of speaking practice and the comments made about it and its bodily enactment throughout the available sources.
This does not mean ignoring philosophy as irrelevant, but perhaps postponing its assessment until after other evidence is in. As Jarratt comments, "" ( ). After reviewing those elements connecting later Greek oratory to its poetic antecedents, I’ll return to sophistic and philosophical rhetoric to comment on the changes they introduced into this performance tradition, particularly in their understanding of speech, its makeup, and its value. Looking at the changes that take place from Gorgias, to Isocrates, to Plato and Aristotle will demonstrate how philosophy took up a performance tradition (where delivery was central) and attempted to replace it with one in which bodies did not matter.

Viewing ancient Greek poetry as performed and as persuasive is not new: this was, in part, the thesis of Havelock in Preface to Plato (1967; though he typically preferred “oral” and overlooked visual aspects of poetic performance) and has been the focus of a growing cottage industry within classical scholarship since then, partially as a result of insights borrowed from anthropological studies of the Mediterranean basin³. I want to argue, though, borrowing shamelessly from this classicist and anthropological industry, that every attribute said to have been invented by a specifically rhetorical consciousness since the early sophists was already inherent in the traditional performance culture which it grew out of, and that it was this performative continuity, not fifth and fourth century innovations, that made rhetorical speaking and acting effective and persuasive. Rhetoric became identified as a separate genre of activity (by philosophers, and since then by philosophically oriented rhetorical scholarship) primarily by disassociating itself with this performance tradition, focusing instead on the stable attributes of a mental process. That is, philosophers refashioned rhetoric by disavowing
delivery. I call this a philosophical strategy, not a rhetorical tactic because rhetors continued, well into the Hellenistic period and beyond, to use their bodies and voices to induce pleasure, work persuasion, win fame, and get condemned for it.

The converse is also true: just as persuasive speech was always inherently performative (and in that sense “poetic,” even when it abandoned verse), early poetic genres were inherently persuasive, intentionally innovative, and politically oriented. Performers used their poetry to “deliberate,” instruct, and persuade an audience about just and wise public action; political leaders performed poetry (or patronized poetic performances) to support, challenge or transform existing political regimes and institutions. Far from simply “inspired” or naturally talented, poets and rhapsodes were demiiurgoi (like sophists and rhetors, demiiurgoi of persuasion), craftspersons, whose fame depended on a skill (a techne) that was learned and applied to real political exigencies. The rhetorical device of appealing to a Muse (however sincere the invocation) should not lead us to mythologize the strenuous process by which poets, aiodoi and rhapsodes learned their craft. Ion may tell Plato he feels inspired, but the feeling is just one assiduously learned step in the process of manufacturing a convincing performance. Hesiod may present himself as a simple farmer, but this self-characterization as a rhetorical tactic does not mean he did not study. Even godlike Achilles had to be taught to speak well. These, performers all, were rhetoricians, and calling them proto-rhetoricians, or inspired orators who stumble upon persuasion through sheer talent or divine intervention simply mythologizes a deliberate and difficult process of education and refinement through which speakers were formed.
For this reason, Protagoras (at least, the Protagoras of Plato's dialogue by that name) refers to himself as a teacher of "good judgement about domestic matters... and political affairs, so that... [the student] may be most able both in action and in speech" (Plato Protagoras 318C), drawing a connection between the early poets and his activity as a sophist: "The sophistic profession (techne) is very old, but the men who practiced it in the old days were afraid of the odium attached to it and disguised their profession under various covers: some used poetry, as did Homer and Hesiod and Simonides, others used religious rites and prophecies, as did Orpheus and Musaeus" (316D). That is, they claimed "inspiration" and "simple truthfulness" as ways of avoiding the taint of artifice.

In the same way, their craft had to respond not simply to divine mandates but to real political exigencies. Gentili (1988), without referring to Protagoras, makes a parallel argument about ancient Greek poetic as rhetorical: "An essentially practical art, [poetry] was closely linked to the realities of social and political life, and to the actual behavior of individuals within a community... It existed to inform and instruct, most explicitly so when composed with the needs of specific groups and occasions in mind" (3).

Stehle (1997) agrees, using the term psychological efficacy to describe what she sees as the central function of ancient poetry: "The term psychological efficacy suggests that a performance aims to persuade an audience to do something or feel in a certain way that has practical consequences" (19). We might call this function by another name: rhetoric. Poetic genres were practical, informing and instructing audiences, because poets could use their speaking skill to address changing situations wisely and persuasively, a
cultural function that would have been impossible if poets were simply transmitters of a stable tradition or divinely inspired mouthpieces for a muse. Nothing separates the early success of a Homer or Hesiod from the latter abilities of Demosthenes.

Whereas Havelock (Preface to Plato 1963) has argued that ancient Greek poetry was bound by tradition and preoccupied with its own faithful transmission, more recent scholarship, like that of Stehle ( ) and Gentili ( ), has shown how ancient poetry responded to and advised its audience about the cultural and political context within which it was performed. Whereas Havelock emphasizes the unanimity of ancient poetry, especially epic poetry, more recent work emphasizes its agonistic quality: performances were generally given in competition with other performances. Whereas Havelock explains the unconscious acceptance of epic poetry and its “custom-laws and folk-ways,” I want to emphasize its partisan, tendential quality. Ancient poetry was not simply traditional or culturally ubiquitous: it was performed and attended to most carefully as embodied and enacted argument or advise, given by the poet in response to specific political and cultural exigencies, in competition with other politically and morally charged poetic performance, to advance the reputation of one’s city, one’s region, one’s family or one’s self. It was an art of persuasion.

Nor was this function missed by ancient political leaders. Hipparchus (tyrant and son of Peisistratos) invited the best poets of his age to come to Athens, and he paid them handsomely. According to the pseudo-Platonic Hipparchus, “he did these things because he wished to educate the citizens so that those subject to his rule might be as good as possible” (228C; See also Herrington, 92-93). That is, he sought to support his regime by
patronizing favorable poetic compositions. In the same way, wealthy Athenian citizens (after the democracy was restored) paid, and the citizens in general rewarded handsomely, the trained sophists and rhetors who could “move proposals and do what is best for the people” (Hansen 63). Calling the former “poetic” (or proto-rhetoric, or “traditional”) and the latter “rhetoric” on the basis of philosophical innovation or shifts in literacy overgeneralizes the reach and extent of innovation and misrepresents the important continuities that existed in this performance tradition.

The competitive presentation of a poet’s political wisdom, advice, or praise offered in opposition to the performed “arguments” of other poets and in response to specific, occasional, periodic, or festival events, all this makes ancient Greek poetry look very much like ancient Greek rhetoric. Both were concerned with persuading an audience to adopt the speaker/poet’s view concerning good or just conduct. And both depended heavily on the extra-verbal media through which performed actions could represent and refract cultural practices. Advising about nomoi and ethoi needed arts of delivery to portray what were essentially models of virtuous practice. Poetry, like rhetoric, was thus a demiourgos, a skillful practice or “craft,” taught and learned through “structural exercises”⁹⁹. Both poetry (in verse) and rhetoric (in metrical prose) were “dynamic and open to the innovations in vocabulary, formulaic technique, and narrative which each poet introduces to fit his songs to the particular needs of performance on different occasions and before audiences with different expectations” (Gentili 15).

Persuasive political speechcraft thus had a long tradition as poetic performance display, but before the time of Isocrates and Plato, this artistry had more to do with
action, defined as the cunning and timely representation (the imitative re-enactment) of a traditionally valued practice, than it did with the composition of speech-as-verbal-matter. Speech had long been but one manifestation of the craft of persuasion, and words (a fuzzy concept prior to the spacing conventions that separated individual verbal units) but one aspect of speaking performance, and neither were always valued in the way that “oral” cultures are said to value the human voice (Havelock). Only very late in the tradition, and only through the strenuous arguments of a relatively recent strain of philosophical thought, did speech become identified with its verbal content and get re-evaluated as the source of human goodness. Only with philosophy did political persuasion get fashioned as the logical crafting of writable words, and not until much later, in the hellenistic period, did this philosophical argument take hold. Before then and outside the reach of philosophically informed practice, persuasive speech was acted as a morally ambivalent metic craft that relied above all on the mimetic qualities which voice, movement and gesture could deliver.

Writers—specifically philosophers like Isocrates, Plato, and Aristotle—refashioned the body of persuasion from being highly physical to being almost exclusively verbal. Writing redefined speech in its own image. This specifically verbal and oral/aural speech that the Greeks are so famous for venerating, was not “naturally” appealing to them over and above its place in other cultures or outside of the larger importance of physical representation as performed mimesis⁴⁰. Rather, speech was actively championed, through writing, as a disembodied medium for persuasion, appropriate to a traditional patriarchy, useful to a fledgling democracy and necessary for the promise of philosophical
knowledge. This literate version of speech, I will argue, was made possible and preeminent by a rising culture of private reading among a literate elite and by the small circle of philosophical activity which private literacy practices made possible[1]. Though we have long understood “orality” and “literacy” to be mutually exclusive cultural states, opposed forms of consciousness, they are in fact closely connected throughout the classical period, mediated by the various methods of reading, writing, and performing used by the ancients. Performative means of producing cultural knowledge and methods and uses of reading, writing and speaking co-evolved and reinforced each other in the sphere of elite politics. Private and silent reading made it possible to transform speech, to sublimate it into the written inner word, but this was a transformation in technology, not epistemology. Rhetorical theory was already thriving in the body of the performer.

Before, and outside of, this circle of literate activity, political and moral persuasion had as much to do with action as with words, and speech always included the body and was performed. When Demosthenes called delivery (acting) the first, second and third most important of an orator’s tasks, he was articulating a principle seldom made explicit not because it wasn’t important, but because it was taken for granted as essential, essential enough to make mimesis (dramatic imitation) a central problem for both Plato’s Republic (Books III and X) and his Laws (Book II). Plato understood and deplored this fact: words were simply one facet of a communicative event, neither primary nor essential to its persuasive power; while speech was valued primarily for its mimetic quality, its ability to represent character, and not for its ability to contain thought. This means that Aristotle’s hierarchy is upside down: invention taking a privileged place and
delivery relegated to an apologetic footnote (as I discuss below). Without pretending to his depth of insight, I want to do to Aristotelian rhetoric what Marx did to Hegelian dialectic: put it back on its feet by putting stance, posture, movement and conduct at the center of rhetorical theory.

Crafting the *Sophoi* by Imitating the Crafty

A short example, set at about the midpoint between the earliest texts available (Homer) and the latest rhetorical treatises (Aristotle) will illustrate the intimate connections between early poetic performances and later rhetorical ones. If Homer is clearly poetic and performative, and Aristotle clearly rhetorical and literary, the tradition of the *sophoi* illustrates the point at which these ends meet. Liddell and Scott define *sophos* as "skilled in handicraft; cunning in craft," a definition that Gentili adds to in this way: "*sophos* designates the person expert in the practice of an art--in this case the art of politics and language use" (247 n. 62). This same meaning extends to the time of Gorgias and the *sophistes* (Gentili 55). This is a story, then, about politically performed cunning in ancient Greece: the very sort of practical wisdom which was said to signal the origin of rhetoric. Actually, it is a story not about any particular *sophist*, but about an older wisdom *tradition* and those cultural practices that centered on the dramatic rendering of *meis*, specifically as embodied in the traditional "seven sages" of antiquity. The persuasiveness of later sophists and rhetors up to and well past the age of Aristotle depended primarily on their ability to embody and display these same
qualities of *metis*, making it central to any art of persuasion in ancient Greece whether Aristotle mentions it or not.

The "seven sages" are named or referred to frequently in ancient texts, though with frequent discrepancies about who the sages were. Diogenes Laertius discusses them. Plato refers to them, and many sources quote or refer to the aphorisms they were said to have coined. What's more, the sorts of activities that the sages were said to have engaged in, those particularly that qualified them as wise, appears to contemporary understanding strangely disparate and chaotic: tyrants, democrats, philosophers, and jokesters seemed all to have made the list. For this reason, recent scholars (like Fehling 1985) have rejected the whole idea of the "seven sages," arguing that it was a "tradition" invented by Plato (in the *Protagoras* and again in the *Timaeus*) for the purpose of his argument.

Against this view, Richard Martin suggests, not that the tradition accurately remembered seven actual sages, or even that any actual sages existed. Rather, he argues that there existed in ancient Greek thought and practice a principle according to which all of the sages would be admired and "canonized." Far from being a disparate and eclectic group of individuals, they represent a principle faithful to ancient Greek culture generally: "Certain recurring themes, in the stories of the sages, allow us to extrapolate and to reconstruct a world in which the existence of the group of Seven Sages, long before Plato's era, makes good sense" (113). Of these themes or features, as he calls them, Martin selects three as most important: "First, the sages are poets; second, they are involved in politics; and, third, they are performers" (113).
Martin then offers a careful examination of the traditions adhering to each of the sages, concluding that each qualified as “sage” (*sophoi*) for his ability to perform political poetry. It wasn’t, he argues, simply a group of politicians who happened to be poets, or poets who dabbled in politics. Rather, political wisdom was conveyed, remembered and put to use (recall the mnemonic efficiency of verse, according to Havelock) in poetry.

“By performance,” adds Martin, “I mean a public enactment, about important matters, in word or gesture, employing conventions and open to scrutiny and criticism, especially criticism of style” (116). In this regard, Martin emphasizes the non-verbal and silent actions which the sages are said to have performed as well as the actions and gestures that accompanied their speech.

Thrasyboulos of Miletis, for example, was said to have accompanied a messenger from Periander through a field of wheat, and chopping off the heads of the tallest stalks as he went. Periander, hearing of this oddity from the messenger, understood the message and immediately executed all the leading citizens of his town. Another sage, Bias, was said to have fattened up two mules while his city was being besieged, and driven them into the enemy camp. Amazed at the good condition of even the beasts of burden, the opposing king abandoned the siege and sent a messenger to make an offer of peace. To the messenger, Bias showed bags of sand with a layer of corn on top, and with this evidence of prosperity, the king consented to a generous peace treaty (Diogenes Laertius 1.96) \(^\text{13}\). In each case, the sage was able to “stage” an action for the benefit of an audience to influence their subsequent actions. Both relied on some form of *mimetic*
representation (heads of wheat for human heads, mules for a populace) to portray and prefigure a reality that did not yet pertain.

In the same way, the sages were said to use poetic speech creatively to craft wise responses to delicate situations. I would argue that here, too, mimesis would remain an important aspect of their cunning metis. Their speech typically took the form of action-oriented aphorisms or sayings that could easily have served as scripts for performance acts (Martin 118). Several sages offered sayings about speaking styles or the use of gesture or were said themselves to have deliveries so unique as to occasion proverbs after them (118).

In these and similar anecdotes and aphorisms, always in response to some crisis or political event, wisdom occurs as the simple demonstration of right action that “like the stories from Japanese literature about Zen masters . . . provide a flash of illumination” (Martin 116). This sort of cunning insight illustrates another quality of metis: its ability, at just the right moment (its kairos), to reverse a dire situation to one’s own advantage. This is a quality amply illustrated and valued from Greek literature, beginning with Homer and especially demonstrated by Hermes, Prometheus, and Odysseus, the polumetis one whose many tricks and disguises finally allow him to return home and reclaim his household. This quality could be displayed in isolation, but was most characteristically performed. Odysseus could rely on his cunning to deceive the Cyclops even without an audience, but calling himself “No man” required the interrogation of the Cyclops to take effect, an effect that Odysseus boasted about once he was back on his ship (Odyssey 9. 367-516). Metis shows itself most clearly when it responds quickly and
effectively to the questions, interruptions or challenges of a dubious spectator. In itself, 
*metis* revealed a mental and physical ability to change outcomes by altering appearances, 
making the outcome other than what it would have been, making the better appear worse.

Thus, when we think of “making the weaker argument the stronger,” or of the 
importance of *kairos* to rhetoric, or when rhetoric is defined as the artificer (*demiourgos*) 
of persuasion, we ought to imagine not a new discovery in the art of speaking, but an 
explicit statement of what had been traditionally valued practice for centuries, whether in 
action, or in speech, or in representing speech and action through performance. And 
when Plato or Aristotle define rhetoric in terms of knowledge that one can possess and 
use beforehand to craft a persuasive speech, they are ignoring and thereby denouncing the 
very unpredictable face-to-face encounter in which *metis* shines, but which written texts 
cannot foresee or prepare for. They are trying to redefine what is (what ought to be) 
pieving, admirable and persuasive.

Because *metis* is naturally performative and display oriented, it thrived with little 
alteration when recreated in an explicitly performative, poetic or dramatic setting. That 
is, *metis* can be displayed not only when “real” cunning acts are carried out in actual 
political situations, but whenever a performer was able to show related qualities of 
cunning, mimetic agility, and quick-wittedness. *Metis* meant the ability to convincingly 
imitate many different moods or characters, persons or animals, while narrating their 
interaction before a live audience that might challenge, interrupt, or interrogate the 
performer. This polymorphic adaptability was just what Odysseus, Prometheus, and 
Hermes all relied on to achieve their goals: deceiving, adapting, responding quickly,
creating opportunities, making things appear other than what they really were. The sophoi showed similar abilities to adapt their words, moods, and actions to the exigencies of a hostile situation, before a suspicious audience.

Public speaking and performing, for this reason, felt much like real life, fateful challenges. The poets or sophoi, in a contest needing to be resolved, portrayed a contest and its resolution. Action as metis characterized both the heroes portrayed in the poetic narrative and the competition in which the poetry was performed. Before an audience and competitors, the poet/rhapsode/sophist/rhetor had to show the same composure, the same deft control over physical, expressive muscles, as did the characters being depicted in any heroic or wise exploit. The poet demonstrated his own metis, his own cunning ability to adapt to and control a shifting situation, by imitating (dramatically performing or delivering) the metis of his subject matter. Demosthenes, Solon, and Homer “performed” in the sense that they acted out a composition and imitated various character types, but this “acting” was at the same time very real, responding to serious political and legal challenges. When later rhetorical theorists (from Plato to Quintilian to Bulwer and beyond) condemn the “tricks of the stage,” that poor orators rely upon, we should conclude not that these tricks were rare, counter-productive, or hack-work, but rather that the best orators were much more skillful at employing these tricks without appearing to have consciously attempted or planned to use them: they displayed superior metis.

Thus the Homeric rhapsode had to show metis to persuasively recreate Odysseus’ metis. Just as Odysseus was a man of many tricks and disguises (now a king, now a beggar; now alone on the sea or “Nobody” in the Cyclops cave; now revealed,
resplendent in the rainment of Athena), in the same way the rhapsode had to be a man of many tricks and disguises, performing Agamemnon here, Athena there, Hector now and later Andromache or Paris. If Odysseus feigned madness to avoid the Trojan war and, later, to steal a statue from the Trojans, and Solon feigned madness to sing war against Salamis, then the rhapsode, and the performer generally, must be similarly skilled at feint, deception, mimicry. To persuade, one had to deftly imitate the most opposite of character types and patterns of conduct, from oligarchic and heroic to democratic and common, in order to demonstrate one's cunning intelligence and to set off a preferred style, a superior mode of conduct as persuasive because more appealing.

Demosthenes was directly in the line of Solon and of Odysseus and the rhapsodes who performed him. The essence of metis is the very shape-shifting cunning that makes rhetoric persuasive, performance pleasurable, and delivery important. But when rhetoric is conceived of as an intellectual process, or a stable and predictable set of options to be surveyed in anticipation of the speaking moment, rather than as the ability to act swiftly in the moment, metis disappears, for it has nothing to do with the stability of Platonic forms or Aristotelian categories. It is not a planning a strategy, but seizing a tactic.

Like the version of action articulated by Goffman, metis (and the sages who performed it) depended on the wise and controlled use of the body, in the moment, to change appearances. to represent through dramatized imitation or mimesis right action at the right moment, in this case performed before others in response to a political situation for with there were many culturally viable practices and alternative solutions. By selecting from among possible practices those best able to resolve a crisis (an action
involving fateful and consequential risk), and by altering appearances (including their own) to trick others and achieve their goals, and by doing so with composure before a skeptical or unruly crowd, the sophoi demonstrated their wisdom. *Mimesis* was just one aspect of their *metis*. Just as Antilochus in the *Iliad* could make the slower horses appear the faster, the *sophoi* make the weaker cause appear the stronger. Detienne and Vemann comment: "This octopus-like intelligence 'with many coils' is to be found in two types of men in particular—the sophist and the politician. . . . For it is in his shifting speeches, his *poikiloi logoi* that the sophist deploys his words of many coils . . . assuming as many faces as there are social categories and types of men in the city" (40).

What's more, the *sophoi* competed for a reputation as wise or "cunning." "Given that the context of speech in Homer is inherently agonistic, I now propose that the sages, so like the Homeric heroes in their self-presentation, concern for style, and functions in power management and advising, also operated agonistically" (Martin 120). The sages tried to outdo each other according to commonly understood genres of speech and models of wise action.

Martin concludes from this evidence that the "sage" was a recognizable title for the wise or "cunning" politician/poet and that, as a valid cultural role, "wisdom [was] held up for participation and reward as if it were a competitive sport" (120). He sites as an example the classical anecdote, often repeated, about the sages competing for a tripod (120-123).

Individuals who gained any reputation for political wisdom expressed through poetic performance (in symposia, festivals, and religious rituals) might compete for fame
as “sages” whose actions and sayings would be remembered and recited long into the future. Such a goal would be simply another avenue to the “undying fame” which Homeric heroes sought through “word and deed,” here the words and deeds related to military counsels and feats of arms. The *sophoi*, then, were experts in the practical craft of performing practical wisdom to address local cultural and political situations.

Solon is exemplary in this regard. He initiated the first democratic reforms in Athens and is thus remembered as a statesman and “politician,” but his ability to win the confidence of the people and to push his reforms forward depended on his ability to perform persuasive poetry\(^\text{15}\). In fact, Anhalt (1993) argues that Solonian political programs succeeded just because he was a poet and therefore persuasive in a way that mere tyrants or aristocrats were not. He did so, in part, by adapting traditional Homeric metaphors (the heroic bear surrounded by ravenous wolves, see *Iliad* 12. 41-42) to cast himself as lone reformer and scapegoat: Solon as the defensive wolf among a pack of dogs (Anhalt 125). Elsewhere, in another metaphor adapted from Homer, he compares a people and their leader to the sea and the winds that drive it (Gentili 44).

If, as Conford has suggested, the reciter of Homer was “expected to throw himself into the story and deliver the speeches with tones and gestures of an actor” (*Plato’s Republic* 78), then we might expect Solon’s Homeric metaphors to be similarly enacted, even to the point of imitating nature, especially if this mimetic skill constituted one aspect of practical wisdom. This makes further sense given Plato’s own objection to *mimesis* as including “the noises of thunder and wind... the barking of dogs, the baaing of sheep, and twittering of birds” in poetic performance (*Laws* 397B). If it seems
extreme that Solon would bark like dog or howl like the wind or like a wolf, we should remember that the norms of decorous conduct, gestures, movements and vocal traits are not “natural” or simply inspired but learned and culturally specific. According to Diogenes Laertius (1.49) Solon stripped naked and feigned madness (another form of mimesis in the line of Odysseus and Antilochus) in order to avoid being prosecuted for unconstitutionally proposing to resume the war on Salamis (speeches concerning the resumption of hostilities had been banned). He also delivered the proposal in song and verse rather than prose. Thus, we might include Solon (and, by implication, the sophoi generally) when Gentili notes that the “activities of a poet are thus conceived as mimesis—the imitation of nature and human life... as a re-creation, through voice, music, dance and gesture, of the actions and utterances of men and animals” (51). Just as Demosthenes could portray in voice, movement, and gesture the conduct of insolent aristocrats, so Solon could portray himself (an aristocrat) as mad, or as a wolf among dogs.

In borrowing Homeric metaphors and, perhaps, in performing them, Solon was adapting a traditional genre and a well-known medium—dramatic mimesis—for presenting his compositions and himself as wise. His audience, at least according to Plato, would not have been surprised to see various acts or agents in his poems dramatically rendered through intonation, gesture and movement. Nor, argues Richard Martin, would they have been surprised to see Homer allied with politically persuasive speech, with rhetoric. It is, in fact, with Homer that the term rhetor first appears, and it appears in the context of the “words and deeds” (Iliad 9.443) which any hero must perform and which must be taught and learned.
Performing Homeric *muthoi*

One might not expect to find in Homer an emphasis on persuasion, rhetorical artistry, its pedagogy and its display. While rhetoric is “naturally” attracted to democracies, Homer reveals the clearly drawn and strictly enforced lines of authority typical of a military campaign or a monarchy. Long before democracy was thought of or thinkable, positions of authority and relations of obedience would seem to inhere not in speech-making, but in titles (king or chieftain), in age, in military prowess, in ancestry, or in some combination of all of these: Agamemnon is king and leader of the expedition to Troy. He wields authority over the chieftains, Odysseus, Menelaus, Achilles and the rest, just as they in turn rule over their troops. If Nestor is obeyed, it is out of respect for his age and his wisdom; if Achilles is appeased, it is out of need for his military might. Some may have managed to locate in Homer a glimmer of rhetorical invention or a shadowy foreshadowing of the arrangement of recognizable parts of speech\(^6\). But, taken in large, the age depicted by Homeric epic would not be considered to reveal or even admit of significant rhetorical artistry. What need of persuasion when one had obedience? What need of artistry when one had inspiration from the Muses?

I want to use Martin’s recent work (*The Language of Heroes* 1989) on the *Iliad*, though, to suggest that Homer was, on the contrary, centrally interested in the crafting of persuasive speech, that persuasion was a primary avenue to honor and fame among Homeric heroes, including those on the battlefield, and that Homeric speech genres,
especially those most oriented around persuasion, were thoroughly performative, depending heavily for their effectiveness on mimetic qualities possible only in delivery. The term for persuasive speech and the artistry it required, as opposed to unmarked everyday speech, was *muthos*'.

When Phoenix, Achilles' trainer, is attempting to persuade him to return to battle, he recalls their early days together, and offers a clue to heroic values and heroic education:

That day [Peleus] sent you out of Phthia to Agamemnon

a youngster still untrained for the great leveler, war,

still green at debate where men can make their mark.

So he dispatched me, to teach you all these things,

to make you a man of words and a man of action too. (9.441-443)

The man of words was *a rhetor of muthoi*; the man of action *a praktera of ergon*, and they are of equal importance in forging the lasting reputation that all heroes sought.

Phoenix was charged, in the words of Bourdieu, in enculturating Achilles in a distinctively heroic (and aristocratic) *habitus*. As with the title "sage," argues Martin, the title "hero," and all the related terms and phrases that indicated the recipient's fame ("the best of the Achaians"), was bestowed and competed for not only through military exploit but through the creative performance of *muthoi*. As a term designating speech, and in opposition to its related *epea, muthos*, argues Martin, is a marked term in Homer designating, not just any speech, but authoritative, performed speech by acknowledged speakers with the goal of persuasion. And as is the case with performance genres in
general, *muthoi* are judged especially for the manner in which the hero delivers them, since the stylized delivery is what will set that performance apart from others, making it both persuasive and memorable. A hero had to speak like a hero by approximating, miming, known heroic speaking ideals.

Through careful stylistic analysis, Martin concludes, not only that the Homeric heroes show unique speech styles, but that these styles are presented in competition with each other: Agamemnon’s against Achilles against Odysseus.” Further, Martin argues that Homer upholds Achilles speech as best, most heroic and most admirable because most adaptable, wide ranging, authoritative and persuasive. When the focus shifts from the characters in the *Iliad* performing *muthoi* to the rhapsode or poet performing the larger *muthoi* that is the *Iliad*, art imitates life. Stylistic analysis again convinces Martin that Achilles’ speech style is matched most closely by Homer’s own, in the narrative sections of the poem. A rhapsode who acts out Homer acting out Achilles not only wins fame but shapes subsequent practice, just as surely as Luther shaped German. The effectiveness of the speech depends on this ability to enact an authoritative *muthos*. The shift in terminology to *logos* later should not deflect us from seeing what is essentially the same pattern: Demosthenes acting out Meidias acting out the privileged aristocrat. Demosthenes not only wins honor for himself but shapes public perceptions about democratic conduct *vis a vis* the law. So when Aristotle names *logos* as a fundamental principle for discovering rhetorical proofs, we can see him arguing against *muthoi*, against, that is, a version of authoritative speech that inherently implies performance and delivery. Aristotle constructs an understanding of *logos* in opposition to this tradition,
and rather than seeing this as a argument posited against accepted practice to replace it, we have accepted his view as the definitive statement about practice, not only about persuasive speech in ancient Greece, but about what makes speech persuasive generally. And on both counts, we have been in error.

By imitating the various ways that heroes speak and act, and by proposing one hero as exemplary through stylistic/dramatic approximation to the narratorial position, Homer and the rhapsodes who recited Homeric poetry not only describe, but show and imitate (dramatically perform) one manifestation of wise speech and action. Just as Phoenix showed Achilles, just as Achilles shows the other chieftains, Homer and the rhapsodes show their audience (and competing poets) how fame and honor ought to be gained through word and deed. For Martin, the Homeric poet (or whatever group was later called by that eponym) spoke and acted to represent a heroic ideal, to model and thereby recommend a type of heroism and a way of speaking and acting in competition with existing epic traditions, particularly those concerning Herakles and his exploits (227-230).

Havelock was right in suggesting that epic poetry was more than simply an aesthetic creation, that it could function as an encyclopedia (however unfortunate and anachronistic the metaphor) of nomoi and ethoi, custom-laws and folk-ways. But, according to Martin, he was wrong about Homer being merely traditional and universally accepted. Rather, Homer performs Achilles (and the other Achaeansto varying degrees) as an alternative poetic, an alternative way of being, to that inherent in the accepted Heraklean epic cycle: "If the language of Achilles is actually the undisguised voice and
the rhetoric of Homer himself... then the converse is also true: the rhetoric of Achilles--his heroic self-performance in an adversary relationship with the past and the present--is at the root of Homer's own composition-in-performance" (230). Stehle makes the same comment about Hesiod as a performing pan-Hellenist in competition with existing local (and other pan-Hellenic) poetic traditions.

My point here is twofold: that even as far back as Homeric poetry, the conventions that shaped rhetorical artistry were firmly in place: both can be described as agonistic, political, deliberative and authoritative speech-making which sought to advise or persuade an audience on proper action and win the speaker fame and honor. In this sense, Homer is "rhetorical" not because we can find in the poems evidence of Aristotelian categories, genres, parts of speech or proofs. This is arguing backwards. Rather, Homer is rhetorical because he participates in the same tradition: the tradition of having a set of rhetors compete with each other for advising an audience on wise political action, and motivating the speakers by rewarding such efforts with honor, prestige and influence. Why, after all, did the Athenian democratic process take place in a large arena with alternative speakers moving to a stage to address an audience, hoping to move their proposal and have their name and proposal inscribed on the decree? Why not make the decrees "of the people" and anonymous'? Because the fame they achieved was in direct line with the fame that all heroes of word and action sought for and through their speaking skill. Why were rhetors so routinely suspected of flattering self-interest, despite the obvious service they provided the polis? Because the traditional process of gaining
fame through poetic speech was still making itself felt, and increasingly suspect, as a vestigial characteristic of rhetorical speech-making in the assembly.

Why not change the venue to encourage more citizens the opportunity to participate in speaking roles? Why not have smaller groups, by deme or phratry or family, discuss issues (in symposia or local assemblies) and forward their recommendations to a small, central committee representing all demes (like those used to select council members) which could then discuss and decide on a motion? This democratization of speaking roles did not occur because the model for deliberation, political action, and rhetoric (artistic, persuasive speech-making) came from an agonistic performing tradition dating at least to Homer, in which individual performers (of _muthoi_ or _logoi_) ascend the platform in turn before the people to win fame by influencing the political process. In other words, rhetoric was _as_ it was not because of the democracy, or because of the innovations of sophistic or Platonic theory, but because of its adherence to a tradition of agonistic, (and androcentric and elitist) performances of _muthoi_ that far preceded both democracy and philosophical theory. Rhetoric was _as_ it was (pleasing, persuading, instructing) because of the hegemony of a performance tradition.

My second point is that the motivation for and interpretation of poetic competition was performative, meaning that both performers and audience payed special attention to the _manner_ in which words and deeds were expressed, including all those qualities of speech that display _metis_ through dramatic _mimesis_ of character types and that are categorizeable as delivery. Demosthenes, like Solon, like Homer, like Achilles or Odysseus (the other Homeric master of word and deed) before him, attempted to lead and
thereby to gain fame through artistically crafted persuasive speech which responded wisely (that is, appealingly) to current political and cultural contexts. But he had to act it out. He had to act and speak like the advice he was offering. They had to imitate wisdom by miming wise action; and so they attended to *mimesis*. For this reason, in poetry and rhetoric, delivery, the ability to dramatically represent the *ethos*, the *nomos*, the practice or conduct being upheld, was of paramount importance. Without writing, communication relied on performance; in order to be known as wise, one had to *act* wise by dramatically staging wisdom. This imperative and the corollary audience expectation grounded both the motive for and the appreciation of rhetorical performances as persuasive. A rhetor’s success depended on and arose out of his ability to exploit, in action, this performative tradition. Skill in persuasive speaking was grounded in delivery.

The Trouble with *Metis*: Ajax to Aristotle

Speech genres (*muthoi, nomoi, logoi*) were evaluated and valued from Homer to the *sophoi* (and forward to rhetors like Demosthenes) largely according to those non-verbal qualities of gesture, intonation, movement and expression through which performers could enact practical wisdom by adapting traditional roles and characters to their own political ends. In this regard, I suggested that Demosthenes’ speech against Meidias was typical not only of rhetorical activity, but of speech and song performances from Homer forward. But this does not imply that all performers drew on the same models or enacted wisdom or excellence in the same way. Achilles had to be dramatized as a different and preferable type of hero, worthy of emulation, if he and the Homeric
epic in which he appeared were to supplant Herakles and the tradition in which he was established.

Nor does this continuity mean that the semantic field marked out by terms like cunning *metis* or dramatic *mimesis* were universally valued and sought after. Other traditions in ancient Greece betray distrust and suspicion of just those deceptive tactics including speech itself that evaded straight-thinking and straight-dealing. Antisthenes, a student of Socrates and founder of Cynicism, has a pair of speeches between the *polumetis* Odysseus and his rival, Ajax, in their contest to possess the armor of a slain Achilles. Each attempts to his own worth in terms of the characteristic actions and dispositions which they display. Unlike Odysseus, the mighty Ajax scorns cunning action and deceptive speech, preferring strength and open-dealing: “War is decided by deeds, not words. . . . compared with a deed, a speech has no strength” (Gagarin and Woodruf 169). Ajax prefers strength to *metis*, just as he prefers open deeds to anything secret: “There is nothing [Odysseus] would do openly, whereas I would not venture to do anything in secret. I could not endure having a bad reputation, even if it meant suffering terribly, whereas he could endure being hanged if he could make a profit. Look how he allowed his slaves to beat him . . . and then, dressed in rags, he slipped into the enemy’s walls at night, robbed the temple and returned” (169). Ajax scorns Odysseus’ trickier as cowardly and craven just as Menelaos (whose horses were faster) had rebuked Antilochus for the tricks he used to win the chariot race.

Odysseus, for his part, argues, on the contrary, that being a master of tricks, deceptions and disguises was not only effective but honorable precisely because it
brought about the best results from the worst situations in the quickest and easiest way. Not all the heroes of Achaea together could mount Troy’s wall to recover the statue (whose recovery an oracle predicted would precede the Greek’s victory), but Odysseus did. What’s more he did so not by “hiding” behind strength and armor, as Ajax does (his strength and seven-layered shield were legendary), but by exposing himself to the lash of his slaves and risking harm from the Trojans in order to succeed in one night where all others had failed for nine years.

For Ajax, noble, open deeds were in direct contrast to secret tricks and disguises, and speech was similarly divided between that which is straightforward and that which was *strophiōs*, twisting and bending every which way. In either case, however, speech (that is, performance) remains for Ajax inferior to deeds: it “has no strength.” In the analysis that follows, I would like to pick up this thread from Hesiod forward to illustrate two familiar themes. First, both speech and persuasion could be given a range of moral and functional evaluations, from bewitching to salvific, depending on the degree to which it relied on cunning deception, visual/sensual pleasure, and *mimetic* disguise. Second, sophistic and philosophical writing attempted to jettison this cunning/sensual/mimetic aspect of speech in order to remedy its moral ambivalence. They did this not only by limiting speech to its verbal matter at the expense of its non- or extra-verbal manner. Speech comes to be evaluated more positively to the degree that this verbal matter predominates. The result is a version of speech (*logos*) no longer performative but limited to the verbal, not longer embodied but written. Transforming persuasive speech from a cunning display of *meris* to a rational demonstration of reality required the
jectisoning of its reality as a live, face-to-face interaction, unpredictable and constantly changing: from a race inside a labyrinth to a perusal of its blueprints. A rhetoric of the word is the vindication of Ajax.

Hesiod

Hesiod conveys views about appealing speech very similar to that if Antisthenes’ Ajax, and he does so be opposing another exemplar of metis: that cunning and tricky Prometheus. Hesiod’s treatment of both speech and persuasion could not differ more from the pattern set up by Homer, Odysseus, Solon and Demosthenes. In Hesiod, Prometheus is the very paradigm of the cunning deceiver, master of feints and deceptions, though Hesiod gives this sort of skill, this techne, a very different moral tone. In the Theogony, Prometheus wraps some ox bones “inside a concealing fold of white fat” and hides “the meaty parts and the inwards thick with fat” inside an ox’s stomach. One portion was to be for humans, and the other for Zeus. Zeus, given the first choice, was either deceived or, according to Hesiod, “saw it, the trick did not escape him,” but “imagined evils for mortal men in his mind.” In any case, he “took up the portion of the white fat” (filled with bones) and, enraged, forbade humans to receive fire (535-65). The fat, normally covering meat, here was simply a ruse for the inedible bones, while the stomach, similarly unappetizing, now hid the appealing fat and meat. But this story is not simply about deceptive cunning, it is about human origins in deception, and the role of persuasion in this origin. Persuasion as Peitho makes her appearance only in response to Prometheus’ theft of fire.
Prometheus, defying Zeus’ order, hides fire in a fennel stalk so that it will escape Zeus’ attention and offers it to humans (567). As punishment, Zeus fashioned Pandora, “a wonder to look at . . . sheer deception”. At this point in the myth, the *Works and Days* offers details that the *Theogony* skips over. Pandora was fashioned by Hephaistos with a human voice in the “bewitching features of a young girl” (*Works and Days* 62). Aphrodite “was to mist her head into golden endearment and the cruelty of desire and longings that wear out the body” and “hallowed Persuasion put necklaces of gold upon her body” (73), but “into her heart, Hermes, the guide, put lies, and wheedling words of falsehood, and a treacherous nature, made her as Zeus of the deep thunder wished, and he, the god’s herald, put a voice inside her and gave her the name of woman, Pandora” (76-81). This Pandora was given as a gift to Epimetheus, who forgot his brothers warning about Zeus’ revenge, and took her into his possession. This was the beginning, says Hesiod, of men’s misfortune.

Misfortune here is closely tied to deception and trickery, the cunning deception that Prometheus visited upon Zeus, the deception that Zeus visited upon men through the foolishness of Epimetheus, and the deception and “the cruelty of desire and longings that wear out the body” visited upon men through the beautiful but treacherous Pandora. Pandora’s treachery is all of a piece: her beautiful, god-given human voice is as alluring and as deceitful as the necklaces of gold given by the goddess Persuasion, who is frequently depicted in pre-Classical Greek art as attending Aphrodite. If in Homer, persuasion is a legitimate path to heroic fame through the performance of *muthoi* in word
and act, in Hesiod persuasion is about bewitching features and adornments just as speech is a beautiful gift, equally deceptive.

In one of the few places in classical literature that mentions persuasion as a divinity (Peitho), Hesiod here paints her as an accomplice to the crafty deception that makes men's lives a living hell. Persuasion decorates Pandora's body with necklaces. Note that her role is not in the forming of Pandora's beauty, which is attractive in itself, but in the external adornments that accentuate that beauty and help to hide the deceitful nature within. Speech, the "lies and wheedling words of falsehood," are not explicitly associated with the goddess Persuasion, which is characterized more by her visual/sensual appeal. But they are painted with the same brush: nothing to put one's faith in.

Even when just and sincere, says Hesiod, speech is at best ineffectual. The small role accorded to speech in the conduct of human affairs is corroborated later in the Works and Days, where Hesiod makes this comment about vocal pleading:

This is what the hawk said when he had caught a nightingale with spangled neck in his claws and carried her high among the clouds. She, spitted on the clawhooks, was wailing pitifully, but the hawk, in his masterful manner, gave her an answer: 'What is the matter with you? Why scream? Your master has you. You shall go wherever I take you, for all your singing' (203-208).

The spangled neck, necklace like, and the gendered power relationship--reminiscent of an abduction and rape--complements the Pandora myth. Whereas in that story, speech and persuasion were the craft and result of cunning deceit practiced against mortal men, in this, speech and persuasion are useless before the force of strength and
violence. For Hesiod, persuasive speech or song alone are useless in the face of basic predatory desires, by hunger and the lust for power. In the face of such brutality and injustice, what Hesiod longs for is not beautiful speech, but justice and straight decisions (215-225). What he recommends to his brother Perses is not eloquence but honest work (304-320). The similarities to the Pandora legend are interesting. In both, speech is significantly downplayed as the answer to men’s problems. Speech is either deceptive or impotent. Physical power and beauty, on the other hand, are central players in the struggle for good living. The whims of the powerful and wiles of the beautiful alike threaten to corrupt or destroy honest hard work in shepherds and farmers like Perses. Hesiod puts forward an anti-metis view of speaking similar to that of Ajax (and revived by Plato and Aristotle). But he does not, as Plato and Aristotle do, view persuasion as primarily speech centered or verbal. On the contrary, persuasion is primarily a visual appearance, pleasing, beautiful, and deceptive. It would be the task of the sophists to initiate a process by which persuasive speech could be made legitimate and honorable, and one way they did this was by reducing its reliance on visual artistry (feminine and effeminate wiles and tricks), expand the role of words, and alter the nature of truth. Protagoras begins by retelling a version of the Prometheus myth, this time changing the moral value of persuasion from punitive to redemptive.

Protagoras

If Hesiod does not share the reverence for speech that later Greeks will become known for, how did the change take place? By retelling traditional myths (muthoi) in a
new way. By the time of Protagoras (490-420 B.C.), With the first flush of Greece’s intellectual revolution of the fifth century, Protagoras will help speech to shed some of its reputation as either impotent or bewitching. In his retelling of the Prometheus myth, Protagoras recasts speech, not as one of the “gifts” of deception used to make Pandora, but as one of the technical arts made possible by the fire that Prometheus stole. His revision signals a remarkable reversal. Speech becomes not the punishment of Zeus, something beautiful but useless at best, but an invention of man, made possible by Prometheus’ gift of technical skill: from a curse to a useful and necessary, if insufficient, art for man’s survival. Without justice and reverence, says Protagoras, speech cannot achieve for man stable political arrangements. Even with speech, humans either “scattered” or, when they did form communities, they “would wrong one another, lacking as they did the political art, with the consequence that they would disperse again and be destroyed” (Protagoras 322a-c). Only after Zeus, fearing their destruction, distributed justice and reverence, could man live together in cities.

But still, speech has gone from being a deceptive trick played upon humans (men) by an angry Zeus to being a useful and necessary art invented by humans for their own use. But it still cannot itself overcome violence and injustice as physical force. As it did for Hesiod, physical force will always render speech useless. Only within a realm of justice and peace can speech flourish and deliver the promise of its origins. Principles of political relations, that is, were needed to police expressive acts and make them serve the interests of the community. This is one step in the process by which traditionally valued performative speaking was reworked and transformed, becoming in Aristotle something
entirely unlike what it was in Homer. Protagoras marks just one step in the attempt to make speech respectable, serviceable, to rescue speech from the bodies that performed it.

Gorgias

It will be for Gorgias, in his *Encomium to Helen*, to champion speech as the equal of physical force (bia), erotic desire and necessity. These forces, so powerful in Hesiod, are in Gorgias shown to have no more power over the soul and body of another than speech. Indeed, speech can be more powerful, for while physical force and necessity compel the body to act, speech with persuasion added to it can constrain the soul as well as the body. Gorgias is quite clear here about speech, “which by means of the finest and most invisible body effects the divinest works: it can stop fear and banish grief and create joy and nurture pity” (8). If Gorgias sees persuasive speech as able to work on souls just as a drug works on bodies, he was reinforcing what many Greeks already knew and practiced: speech as form of medicine, what Entraglio (1970) calls the “therapy of the word.”

I will not delve into the full history of Greeks use of verbal cures through song and incantation. But it is worth noting the connection between the rise of a culture of guilt from the eight to the fifth centuries B.C. and the rising importance of katharsis or the purification of a hereditary and quite physical moral impurity (Entraglio 35). “Not only does katharsis become more frequent in post-Homeric Greece; also, and this is even more significant, it is professionalized and passes into the hands of persons specializing in the paid performance of purifying rites” (35). Empedocles, himself the author of a
doctrine of purification—the Katharmoi—notes: “Men follow me by the thousands to find out whether the benefit of the path leads, some in need of oracles; others, because of the most varied diseases, wish to hear a curative word, long tormented by great pains” (Enfraglio 82). If Gorgias was, as tradition holds, Empedocles’ student, then his fascination with the powers of “curative speech” becomes merely a more secular and politically oriented adaptation of Empedocles own medical/magical cathartic logotherapy.

Up until Gorgias, speech remained a unified entity, or rather, a simple faculty much less interesting or useful than those faculties and abilities raised to the level of the divine, like Peitho and Metis. Speech, that is, to the degree that it attracts attention as powerful, remains inclusive of all aspects of performance. No distinction is drawn between speech and gesture, speech and bodily movement, speech and song, speech and prosody. Or if there is a distinction made, the latter term, not speech alone, is emphasized for its persuasive and curative power. Persuasion is more about necklaces, chants and dances than it is about spoken words or ideas, a point most clearly evoked in the vain pleadings of the spitted nightingale, who, because she cannot move, is reduced to purely oral and ineffectual appeals. Empedocles’ cures were more about symbolic action that they were about communicated thought. This will be important to remember when we review the treatment accorded to the pleasures of dramatic action at the hands of Plato and Aristotle. To suppress the embodied aspects of performance as excessively pleasurable, they need to cut speech into its constituent parts: verbal matter (invention, arrangement and style) and performative manner (delivery). This analysis enables them to reinvent speech as a matter of words and rhetoric as a matter of their arrangement.
Gorgias is the one to begin this separation of speech into its more or less persuasive, more or less appropriate parts. In the *Encomium of Helen*, speech becomes a thing to which persuasion must be added, just as he had earlier defined poetry as speech with meter. The powerlessness of speech by itself, without persuasion added, seems to echo Hesiod's dim view of the power of speech, but it also allows Gorgias to begin an analysis of speech as an isolated entity stripped of its various features. It becomes a natural "base" ingredient with which other elements may or may not be combined: persuasion to render it effective, meter to render it pleasing. For he goes on to discuss the powers of speech without song, without meter, without bodies: specifically the "words" of astronomers, the speeches "written with art but not spoken with truth" of sophists, and the "swiftness of thought" in philosophical disputes (Diels 53). Each of these descriptors--the words, the artful writing, the swift thoughts--are workers of persuasion, of the beguiling of the opinion of the crowd, without performing bodies.

Perhaps for the first time, speech can be thought of as composed of several constituent parts: words, thoughts, writing, and thought of as powerful apart from all the performative and physical attributes normally associated with persuasion. Speech as the silent inner word, the word of writing and thought, becomes the basic element of all persuasive power and poetic pleasure, but particularly as concerns the writing and thinking of philosophers and sophists. This is a truly remarkable development, a revolution whose revolutionary power is lost only after its effects have become naturalized by the fluent practice of silent reading. Fluent silent readers have no trouble understanding speech as silent, internal, divorced from bodily movement, close to verbal
thought. But those for whom speech is always performed, even when written, would have no such associations. A fluency in silent reading makes it easy to suppress the long cultural (and individual) process through which silently and passively "vocalized" internal speech is discovered, learned, and valued. But it is learned, and is culturally specific. Recent scholarship has increasingly accepted that ancient Greek literacy practices included silent reading, the very type of literacy that made disembodied speech imaginable and performance expendable. But this scholarship has not argued that this development was either universal or widespread. For that section of the population that retained a performative understanding of speech, those who were not silent readers, who were not fluent enough in reading to internalize written script or who had no reason to value its peculiar qualities, would not experience the analysis of speaking into word, thought and (now unnecessary) bodily movement as "natural." Nothing in their experience would lead them to view silent reading or verbal thinking as "natural."

Could it be that, prior to this development in literacy and outside its pervue, Greeks thought not through an "inner-voice" but through an imagined performance? Could it be that seeing, hearing, and recalling aspects of performance beyond the verbal were once as "natural" as disembodied words are to us today? Could it be that people thought with their bodies, in the small muscle fibers that are now restricted to the vocal folds? If we return to the comments of Bourdieu on the ability of a *habitus* to move from body to body, and from generation to generation, while remaining outside discourse, then we may be able to imagine a world in which deliberation and thought took place through a lexicon and a syntax of modes of conduct available to "think" with". We may be able
to imagine advocacy, deliberation, and decision-making as taking place between alternative dispositions realized in alternative patterns of movement, expression, tone and gesture that today seem not only natural, inevitable and given, but superfluous and expendable. An embodied thought process may seem to us hardly imaginable, yet I suggest that speech-as-performance, that is, as including all aspects of delivery, hupokrisis, was in fact taken for granted as “natural” and necessary for deliberation and persuasion, and that only a dramatic shift in the culture of textuality in ancient Greece could effect a change. The invention and spread of private and silent reading among literate elites produced just such a shift, and claimed it as a new technology superior to the old, in the same way that all new technologies are sold. And, as with all new technologies, it took an innovative group of technophiles to champion this new set of tools, skills and practices as useful and valuable.

Isocrates

For all the changes Gorgias attempted to work upon speech, it is in Isocrates that we witness speech reaching its most extensive power, its greatest value and its narrowest interpretation. Isocrates reinterprets the fable used by Hesiod, in which Epimetheus bestows gifts upon the various creatures, and like Hesiod, Isocrates holds that “we are in no respect superior to other living creatures; nay, we are inferior to many in swiftness and in strength and in other resources.” But unlike Hesiod, who saw persuasion and speech as deceits practiced upon men, through Pandora, in revenge for Prometheus’ gift to them, and unlike Protagoras, who saw speech as a human invention, necessary but insufficient
for the founding of stable cities, Isocrates paints persuasive speech as a uniquely powerful divine gift, given to humans for their own survival: “there has been implanted in us the power to persuade each other” (*Antidosis*). Further, this implanted power is not only divine, but unique—the *primum mobile*: “And, if there is need to speak in brief summary of this power, we shall find that none of the things which are done with intelligence take place without the help of speech, but that in all our actions as well as in all our thoughts speech is our guide.”

But there’s more. Isocrates’ version of speech is explicitly divorced from the embodied performance exemplified by Gorgias, Empedocles and Hesiod and Homer before them. For Isocrates, internal speech, or thought, is equal to and a substitute for the eloquence of those “who are able to speak before a crowd” since “we regard as sage those who most skillfully debate their problems in their own minds” (*Antidosis*). Those aspects of speaking typically associated with an oral performance—bodily movements, gestures, expressions, even tones of voice, volume, pitch and the like, everything referring to action—are here unnecessary: speech is simply the words that we produce “in our own minds.” This separation, begun by Gorgias, is championed by Isocrates. Gorgias made it possible to think of speech without meter, song or dance—without bodies—but Gorgias was himself a sophist, a speaker, a performer, and so he speaks of the power of speech as written or thought, but he never actually separated this verbal focus from his own performances and their infamously appealing paralinguistic features. Gorgias’ audience was probably more entranced by his alluring, alliterative rhythms than they were by his ratiocinations. Isocrates, on the other hand, was not a speaker; he was a teacher and a
writer. So for him, the praise of speech as thought is made real by his own professional activity. He was perhaps one of the few public citizens at the time who could make a living with words alone rather than persuasive performances.

What I am suggesting, then, is a progression in the understanding of persuasion and speech: persuasion gradually moved from the visible and erotically charged action of a goddess in the train of Aphrodite, to the spoken and politically/intellectually motivated action of a secular program, to the private and internal process of individual readers. As we shall see, the preambles to Plato’s laws, in the Laws, were made to persuade and to be read. Empedocles’ musical chanting, like Pythagorean “musical pharmacopoeia” (Entraglio 78) and the Orphic rites of healing and purification, were not separated from music, song and dance. Terms like thelsterion (charm or spell), kelema (a magic charm or enchantment), and keleterion (charming or appeasing), referring to bewitchment, enchantment and charms, worked through “magical actions performed by any of the procedures to which magicians resort, and not merely by means of [words]” (Entraglio 80). Gorgias and Isocrates did not simply empower speech or observe a power it had always had. Rather, they initiated a process, made possible by changes in literacy practices, through which the power of speech (in all its forms) could be analyzed and its various components evaluated for their relative effectiveness and moral worth. The result was a new way to understand persuasive speaking, rhetoric, as an exclusively internal and exclusively verbal process, defined not in terms of performance, but in opposition to performance as that which prepares for it but remains outside of it, as langue prepares for
but remains unencumbered by *parole*. Plato creates the possibility for a *langue* of rhetoric.

Plato

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. In the *Gorgias*, Socrates specifically holds oratory, persuasively performed speech which attempts to please an audience through *mimesis*, accountable for the way it encourages the gratification of pleasure over the search for justice and true knowledge.

Socrates compares such popular pursuit of pleasure with degenerative itch scratching. Of the man with an itch, Socrates suggests that his scratching will lead to ever more outrageous attempts at satisfaction:

> Is it only if he wants to scratch his head? Or what more am I to ask you? See Callicles, what your answer will be, if you are asked every thing in succession that links on to that statement; and the culmination of the case, as stated--the life of catamites (*kinaidoi*)--is that not awful, shameful, and wretched?” (494D).

For Plato, the pursuit of any pleasure, or the satisfaction of any desire is necessarily evil and degenerative unless explicitly connected with the pursuit of true
knowledge of justice and the good. But this shameful pursuit of pleasure, this itch scratching, among the many, “collectively, with no consideration of what is best,” is just what performers do: flute-playing, choral productions and dithyrambic compositions (501D-E). But, argues Socrates, if we “strip any kind of poetry of its melody, its rhythm and its meter, we get speeches as residue, do we not? . . . Hence poetry is a kind of public speaking” (502C). Speech as spoken texts, that is, as “speeches,” belong to the same genus, as it were, as poetry, because, like poetry, they are addressed to large groups of people: “The poets practice rhetoric in the theaters” (502D).

Because both are addressed before large crowds, argues Plato, and since crowds, by definition, do not have the knowledge of experts (459A), these types of performers must rely on flattery. Because they have neither the time (455A) nor the ability (465A) to do what is actually good for the audience (instructing them), they instead do what is pleasant: they scratch itches.

One of the ways, perhaps the most important, that the rhetor, or any performer, produces this sort of pleasure and flattery is through mimesis, including mimicry in gesture, intonation, posture, and expression. Anyone who would befriend or lead a tyrant, says Plato (510B-511C; here, for Plato, the tyrant is the Demos, punning on the name of Callicles beloved, Demos the son of Pyrilampes) must imitate him, acting as much like the tyrant as possible so as not to anger him. Just so, the rhetor, to be “friend” and “leader” of the demos can gain power only by imitating the people whom he flatters and persuades. He scratches his own itches by encouraging and helping the people to scratch theirs.
But this is just the problem that Socrates has with rhetoric, and he quickly returns to the idea of imitation to lay out his objection: “For you shouldn’t be an imitator, but like them in your own nature if you are to achieve anything genuine towards friendship with the Athenian people. . . . For each audience enjoys speeches delivered in its character, and dislikes those in an alien character” (513C). Imitation, including the bodily mimicry known as delivery or “acting” (hupokrisis) becomes for Plato an important aspect of a rhetor’s persuasive ability and an indispensable aspect of the pleasurable flattery that he produces. This imitation is closely related to the appearance that Plato consistently opposes to real knowledge of the truth. Rhetoric imitates (acts like) real political wisdom just as cosmetics imitate (look like) real health, putting color on the lips and cheeks. Physical imitation as mimicry produces imitation as pretense and deception.

Certainly, by imitation, Plato means a great deal more than rhetorical delivery. He would include all sorts of appearance as opposed to the real structure, the form lying “underneath,” all sorts of opinions or convictions as opposed to the real knowledge which it seems to be. But I would argue that imitation in its most literal sense, the imitation that we would call by the name of acting or mimicry, was central both to Plato’s condemnation of rhetoric and his construction of philosophical knowledge. By representing the negation of everything that Plato valued, mimicry appeared at the heart of Plato’s philosophical construction of the true and the good.

If we turn from the Gorgias to some of Plato’s other more important works (The Republic and Laws), we find imitation (and thus delivery) and its management of primary importance to Plato’s political and philosophical programs. Plato’s condemnation of the
poets in *The Republic* is perhaps one of the most well-known and infamous instances of censure. But we should recall the caveats of Herrington (*Poetry into Drama* 1985), who argues that “we must radically redefine our idea of *poetry.* We must learn to hear and see Greek poetry as a performing art, in some of its manifestations capable of extremely complicated musical, histrionic, and balletic effects” (x). Centuries of rendering poetry as an individual, silent activity of literate readers has made such a redefinition difficult. To restore poetry, argues Herrington, “in the mind’s ear and eye to *performance*—and to contemporaneous, even mutually competitive, performance at that—requires and exceptional effort of the historical imagination” (4).

With this new understanding of poetry, though, the particular meaning of imitation, *mimesis*, takes on new resonance. When Plato discusses poetry in *The Republic*, his primary concern is its mimetic qualities. Because of this concern, he is careful to separate poetry which is narrated (through indirect speech) and poetry which is acted out in character. In Book III (392C-398B), Plato’s objective is not simply to ban poetry, but to ban “representative” or mimetic poetry: that is, to ban poetry whose pleasure is derived from the imitation of the characters (or other sounds or images) being performed. He objects specifically to this type of “acting” as opposed to straight narration (indirect speech) for several reasons. When the rhapsode imitates the characters he is describes, taking on their tones, gestures, movements, and expressions, says Plato, he is forced to become many *different* types of person, animal, or natural process. Plato includes the rhapsode’s ability to mimic “horses neighing, bulls bellowing, and rivers splashing and the sea roaring, and thunder rolling, and so on.” (396B; recall Strophios the
mimic in the epigraph to this chapter). But what is best and most valuable does not change, according to Plato's theory of forms, and similarly, the best at any task are those who limit themselves to just that task. The gods are always the same, so that depictions of gods (like Proteus) changing shape (and manner) at will can be neither moral nor true. Similarly, "human nature . . . makes it impossible to play many roles well, whether in real life or in representations of it on the stage" (395B). Anyone in the Republic with a legitimate role ought not be permitted also to perform or imitate other roles, especially the Guardians. It can only diminish the effectiveness with which they carry out their appointed task.

What's more, imitation of this type usually involves imitating persons of varying quality: both the good and wise as well as the wicked and foolish. But imitation is infectious, for Plato, and appearances have the ability to impart themselves on the reality that they cover over. "Have you not noticed" argues Plato, "how dramatic and similar representations, if indulgence in them is prolonged into adult life, establish habits of physical poise, intonation and thought which become second nature?" (395D). Guardians especially ought not to "act," not only because a jack of all trades is master of none, but also because portraying mean, foolish, or wicked men, or cowardly or comical men, or women, children or slaves at all, will influence the way performers will behave in real life. Imitation, like the gratification of pleasure (they are really two manifestations of the same flaw), inscribes itself on the soul, and leads to immorality. The Guardians of the Republic will portray only decent men of good character engaging in noble, wise and
courageous activities, out of "fear of catching the infection in real life" (395D). Performance, for Plato, influences everyday practice.

In the same way, not only acting but watching dramatic portrayals can infect how one conducts oneself in life. In Book X, when he returns to his censure of poetry, Plato elaborates on the problem of dramatic representation. Through mimesis, "our better nature . . . relaxes its control over these feelings" (606B), represented through "the sounds and sights of tragic grief" (605D), since they are someone else's suffering and are pleasurable without any apparent harm. But, says Plato, few realize "that what we feel for other people must infect what we feel for ourselves, and that if we let our pity for the misfortunes of others grow too strong it will be difficult to restrain our feelings in our own" (606B). We will begin acting like those actors who imitate the very flaws that ought to be avoided.

Finally, and most important, is Plato's third objection: not just to the multiplication of roles, or to the threat of inferior roles "infecting" one's true nature, but to the very act of imitation itself. For Plato, the very qualities which make men worthy of imitation, their bravery, temperance, wisdom and goodness, are just the qualities in which bodily expressions, gesticulations and outcries are overcome. If for Goffman (and, I would argue, traditional Greek society as represented by Homer), action acquires moral value by stylizing and displaying gestural expression with composure in times of conflict, then for Plato, moral value is acquired only insofar as the gestural and vocal expression of conflict is suppressed altogether. Good men, by definition, are those "least liable to be
upset and changed by external influences” (381A), so that their actions will be most tempered and controlled.

Plato returns to this theme, too, at the end of the Republic, in Book Ten. Poetry, that is performance, that is mimesis or acting, appeals to and reinforces the less rational part of human nature, and therefore ought to be avoided. “Drama represents human beings in action” and especially concerning “conflict and internal struggle” (603C), so that two opposing forces can be seen to act upon the individual. While “reason and principle demand restraint” (604B) teaching us “not to hold our hurts and waste our time crying, like children” (604C), “the other part of us, which remembers our sufferings . . . we may call irrational and lazy and inclined to cowardice” (604D). But these two morally toned dispositions towards conflict and suffering have material implications for mimesis. They differ in the very stuff of which mimetic drama is made: “This recalcitrant element in us gives plenty of material for dramatic representation; but the reasonable element and its unvarying calm are difficult to represent, and difficult to understand if represented, particularly by the motley audience gathered in a theater, to whose experience it is quite foreign.” (604E).

Since most theater-goers or commoners are accustomed to giving visible and audible vent to their misfortunes, they will neither understand nor find pleasure in the more honorable and dignified portrayal of restraint, in which there is less to see and hear. Remember that “each audience enjoys speeches delivered in its character, and dislikes those in an alien character” (Gorgias 513C). Delivery in itself and for itself indicates and exacerbates a moral flaw inherent in any type of performance. If only there were a way to
convey useful knowledge without the dangers posed by performances, a way to connect persuasion with moral restraint and self-discipline, if only there were a way to reconceive persuasive speech without performing bodies, something that could take place in the mind alone, without the pleasing movement of limbs and flow of rhythms.

Poets "naturally" want to "represent a character that is unstable and refractory" (Republic 605A), which will "produce a bad state of affairs in the mind of the individual by encouraging the unreasoning [that is bodily] part of it" (605C). Because they have their minds on the eternally good and true, which does not change, the souls of the Guardians are better able to remain stable in the face of bodily afflictions. They will suffer silently, avoiding the cries, lamentations, and gesticulations which are characteristic of cowards, slaves, women, children, and low-down itch-scratchers (kinaidoi), and which are most amenable to dramatic representation. Acting, or acting out, is just what people do who have not mastered this sort of temperance and self-control. The self-control that defines the virtue of the Guardians makes mimesis, by definition, both difficult and immoral.

From this vantage point, the image of the itch-scraper in Gorgias illustrates Plato's principle, in the context of rhetoric, with paradoxical economy. We can almost see with what reluctant irony Plato makes this point. After all, since he never makes it explicit to Callicles (in the written text of the dialogue), what was he doing to indicate the direction he thought head-scratching would lead? How did he demonstrate this tendency if not with a mimetic gesture, the very sort of self-gratifying bodily response that the Republic's guardians would never permit themselves. A subtle movement of the finger,
but degenerative nevertheless: from the head to the neck, the chest, the waist... In a philosophical attack that precisely demonstrates Platos’ distrust of bodily action, Plato ties injustice and immorality with pleasure and truth with keeping one’s hands hidden and inactive. He gestures the obscenity of gesture, imitates the very obscene gesture which allows him to condemn the pleasures of mimesis. “See,” we can almost hear him say, “how even in admonishment, the hand must debase itself to indicate what the mind refrains from saying? The lower passions always need gestures to express themselves. How degenerate and dangerous must be a medium so suited to these unsavory demonstrations?” The finger scratches away the patina of decorum that philosophy is afforded by the nicer gloss of words, and it embodies, in the gesture of satisfaction, the very objections that Plato has to satisfying bodies and gestures in general.

Both poetry and rhetoric, performed before large audiences, rely on the deceitful appearance created by performing actors to produce the pleasures that is their goal. Both rely, that is, on acting, the same term used for delivery: hupokrisis. In this sense, delivery becomes the essential quality which makes both poetry and rhetoric imitative, immoral, and dangerous. Demosthenes will, in time, challenge this view of delivery. He champions its effectiveness and undertakes to demonstrate its moral potential. If Plato argues that restraint and self-control is difficult to portray and less pleasing to watch, then Demosthenes takes up this very task in attempting to portray a democratic ethos and habitus which is restrained, which submits itself to the law and which explicitly avoids the sort of vocal and gestural displays which Meidias indulges himself in. At the same time, he must make the display of insolence and self-indulgence, which Plato would find
easier to imitate, more pleasurable to watch and morally dangerous, just the opposite. It must appear, if Demosthenes is to win, morally reprehensible and distasteful and insulting to watch, and it will be, therefore, much more difficult to imitate and stylize persuasively. Demosthenes, that is, accepts the challenge put to dramatic performers in *The Republic*: to make restraint and obedience to the law appear more appealing, honorable, and pleasurable than indulgent self-assertion, violent revenge, or theatrical aristocratic insolence.

Plato, too, understands that the drastic measures imagined in *The Republic* could not be realized in his time. Either because he attenuated his condemnation or because he re-evaluated its usefulness, mimetic performances reappear in the *Laws*, albeit under close scrutiny. The move from *The Republic* to the *Laws* reflects that from the *Gorgias* to the *Phaedrus*: what is initially banned altogether is later readmitted on the condition that it submit itself to proper disciplining. Insofar as performers are allowed to persuade the masses, they ought to be regulated by the state (*Laws* 661-664); insofar as rhetoric is useful and beneficial, it will be subservient to philosophical knowledge (*Phaedrus* 266-274). In either case, whenever performers attempt to please or persuade, they must forego tying pleasurable *mimesis* to immoral or foolish conduct but must, instead, make wise and temperate conduct appear desirable and pleasing.

This formula remains fairly general in the *Republic*, but its central importance to Plato’s moral and pedagogical thought is confirmed by the more detailed treatment he affords action in the *Laws*. Plato returns to the subject of tone and gesture with gusto, but not in the context of rhetorical delivery. Here, in the *Laws*, rhetoric will no longer be
performed, and conversely, performance will no longer participate in the running of government. The concessions made to rhetoric in the *Phaedrus*, that it can be useful and beneficial when subservient to philosophical knowledge, is in the *Laws* forgotten. Plato recants the concessions because he has a new and better model for mass persuasion: private reading.

In the *Laws*, performance will have no place in the framing of laws or the administration of justice. It will simply serve to inculcate children, and citizens generally, in the general pattern of conduct, the *habitus*, approved by the state. Plato wants to maintain official control over a process, from performance to *habitus* and back, that is already understood to occur naturally and unsupervised. His innovation is not that performative gesture, tones, or postures could influence character and the overall moral status of a state, but that the state could and should oversee and control the process. Delivery is appropriated by the state, the propaganda of a closed system: a slightly more worthwhile version of Nero’s “bread and circuses,” but perhaps even more cynical. Just as the performer stages a dramatic scene, the state now with all its citizens will comprise one large political performance: “all our polity is framed as a representation (*mimesis*) of the fairest and best life, which is in reality, as we assert, the truest tragedy. Thus we are composers of the same things as [tragic poets], rivals as artists and actors of the fairest drama, which, as our hope is, true law, and it alone is by nature competent to complete” (817B).

The more explicitly political persuasion typical of the Athenian democracy, insofar as it is relied on for obedience to the state, is even less willing to trust the vagaries
of performance to carry out its goals. To “deliberate” for and gain acceptance and adherence to the laws and their administration, Plato does not have any place for performance. Rather, persuasion of the citizenry generally would be accomplished by the written dialogue, with the Laws themselves as a model: “Nowhere, I think, could I find a better pattern than this [dialogue] to put before the Law-warden who is educator; . . . and if he should light on poems of composers, or prose-writings, or merely verbal and unwritten discourses, akin to these of ours, he must in no wise let them go, but get them written down” (811D-E). and the preambles that would be written for every law. The very fault which led Plato in the Phaedrus to condemn writing, here recommends it for the purpose of explaining the laws and persuading the citizenry to obey it. Writing never changes what it says, so that even the dullest of persons can return to it repeatedly until understanding sets in: “Legal discourses when put in writing remain wholly unchanged, as though ready to submit to examination for all time, so that one need have no fear even if they are hard to listen to at first, seeing that even the veriest dullard can come back frequently to examine them” (891A). One needn’t make them pleasing or theatrical to persuade.

As both of these observations indicate, Plato (speaking through the anonymous Athenian) understands serious political persuasion and education, the traditional arenas of rhetorical performance, to be best undertaken through writing. Robb (1994) comments on this innovation: “These connected passages in the Laws in fact mark the earliest clear reference in Greek literature to the completed process of transferring the primary mechanisms of Greek paideia to the written word” (238). With this written word, Plato
could envision a new rhetoric, freed from its dependence on performance and all the moral pitfalls of that pleasing and degrading medium. He could, that is, imagine Greek persuasive speaking being rewritten as answerable to and restricted by the stable processes of thought represented by a written dialogue. Aristotle took it upon himself to carry out this task.

Aristotle

With Aristotle, the separation, between the pleasing performance of speech and the logico-verbal formation of its appeal, reaches its completest statement, making it possible for him to redefine rhetoric in a way amenable to systematic theory but alien to actual practice. Aristotle characterizes delivery most succinctly as, simply, an embarrassment, both for the proper business of rhetoric and for his own systemization of it. Delivery troubles both. He must admit that delivery “is of the greatest importance,” but cannot bring himself to approve of it: “Rightly considered (delivery) is thought vulgar” (1404a). Delivery is most important, because it is the most effective aspect of influencing the mind of the audience, which is after all the whole function and goal of the rhetorical art. But because it tends towards the pleasures of an entertainment, it ought properly to be avoided. This text in fact crystallizes Aristotle’s ambivalence about rhetoric generally as an imperfect form of dialectic, an ambivalence that erupts in his consideration of delivery:

We must pay attention to it, not as being right, but necessary; for, as a matter of right, one should aim at nothing more in a speech than how to avoid exciting pain
or pleasure. For justice should consist in fighting the case with the facts alone, so that everything else that is beside demonstration is superfluous; nevertheless, as we have just said, it is of greatest importance owing to the corruption of the hearer (III. I. 6. 1404a).

Without its context, it would be difficult to know whether this paragraph was about rhetoric as a whole or delivery specifically. The confusion arises simply because delivery is the center and fulcrum of rhetoric. Not the residue of an tripartite canon, but the balance upon which persuasion depends and its judged. Delivery thus stands in for and represents rhetoric as a whole: something which, rightly considered, ought to be unnecessary, but which, because of the corruption of the masses, is not only proper but absolutely essential. The trouble with delivery mimics in gesture and tone the trouble with rhetoric as a whole.

Rhetoric as instituted by Aristotle (and suggested by Plato) is principally a theory of knowing, and the elucidation of a set of principles for generating a certain type of knowledge. This rhetoric begins with the stability of these principles and the categories arrayed within them, and in the possibility of knowing and translating this stability onto the text to be spoken (the reliable attitudes or types of audiences or souls, the reasonable emotions that respond to calculable pains and pleasures, the universal methods of demonstration which survive their translation into the public sphere and the process of speaking), but even Aristotle’s rhetoric cannot deny its end in the unique performance of these principles in the speaking act, which is radically unstable, wild and unpredictable, if for no other reason than that it is interactive and dialogic. When such denials are
attempted, rhetoric turns into something else, philosophy, and becomes subject to the same criticism levelled against philosophy: it is alien to and useless for the real face-to-face interactions from which just political judgements are made. Philosophy proper can live with this charge, but rhetoric, a communicative and expressive art, cannot. The philosopher can ignore the body, but the rhetor must educate it, and use it. The philosopher might win the obedience of the mind, but the living speaker can never absolutely count on the obedience of his or her body, the hesitations, the stammers, the clumsy slips, wet palms, dry mouth, or intestinal torques that can ruin the smooth composure which a commanding performance requires. He or she can never ignore the embodied event or collapse the speaking onto the text that prepares for it, they belong to two different orders of reality.

But Aristotle does collapse them by ignoring one. He handles the split between matter (text) and manner (performance) by declaring the latter inartistic and therefore outside the scope of his work. But delivery remains a paradox for him, a power that he could not completely ignore. He wants to suppress how something should be said and acted in order to emphasize what should be said according to what could be known and arranged beforehand, but his attempt cannot be entirely successful. Delivery keeps erupting as the embarrassing necessity that ought not to be. But the strategy has become routine. Understanding delivery as simply the “natural” and therefore inartistic (or, if artistic, then deceitful) execution of the real work of textual invention (seeing) by now has roots that run as deep as they are broad. Geertz observes the same persistent error in the study of culture: “To draw ... the conclusion that knowing how to wink is winking
and knowing how to steal a sheep is sheep raiding is to betray a confusion as deep as . . .
to identify winking with eyelid contractions or sheep raiding with chasing wooly animals
out of pastures” (12). Aristotle has convinced us that knowing how to persuade is already
having persuaded. Nobody ever need speak, or wink, at all.

Just so for the difference between seeing all the means of persuasion and working
a difficult crowd. Rhetoricians, ethnographers and philosophers alike miss the object of
their gaze whenever they take the finger pointing to the moon for the moon itself, the text
of an event (or the universal system arranging all possible events) for the (possible) event
itself, or the meaning of a text for the power of the event. Ricoeur was simply mistaken
to assert that “What we write is . . . the meaning of the speech event.” What we write is
not the meaning of the speech event, it is nothing more than a translation in a different
medium of one aspect of the event, a translation that is also necessarily an interpretation
and a reduction of action to words. Defining rhetoric as that which is most amenable to
writing, as Aristotle does, is simply to mistate the nature of the beast. The text is not the
performance, or even the meaning of the performance, or the power of the event. Texts
can, to be sure, persuade, but in ancient Greece, rhetoric was not in the text.

However attractive is the desire to reduce the strategies of real, social action to the
strategies of writing or to the content of what is said, the para-verbal, mute remainder
somehow insists on being heard. Aristotle’s treatment of action counts as a gesture
towards the paradoxical irrepressability of this remainder and of the insistence of the
lived event to be accounted for by any theory of meaning. In book three of his Art of
Rhetoric, Aristotle introduces the distinction between what the speaker says (the proofs,
the source of *pisteis*), how it is said (*lexis* or style), and the order in which it is said (*taxis* or arrangement) (III. 1. 1-2.). Delivery in this scheme has been outsourced to drama, but it will have to make a cameo appearance, playing the role of Troubling Power. Having presented his theory of proofs, Aristotle is now prepared, in Book III, to consider the second item, style.

Beginning with section 3, though, he postpones his discussion of style to rearrange his terms: the triad has shifted, and now consists of the matter (the proofs), the manner (style), and the thing "that has the greatest force, but has not yet been taken in hand, the matter of delivery" (Kennedy III. 1. 3). This "how" of the speech is something new, though it is included in the category of *lexis*; both of these, style (*lexis*) and delivery (*Hupokrisis*), will now constitute the manner of speaking. This shift constitutes a sort of second beginning for Aristotle's Book III, a curious superfluity which only confuses the categories that he attempts to establish: action both will and will not be included in his category of manner or style, both is and is not another category to add to *heuresis* (invention) and *taxis* (arrangement).

This "something that has the greatest force" will be treated briefly, a homeopathic dose only, a trace, perhaps an inoculation against return, in five paragraphs of section 1. The remaining 18 sections of Book III will treat style (1-12) and arrangement (13-19). Based on the space Aristotle affords this skill, despite its superlative power (*dunamis*), delivery apparently deserves little attention. One wonders why he bothered to mention it at all. But paradoxes and reversals abound in this brief space. Delivery is, like acting (designated by the same term, *Hupokrisis*, in Greek), a "natural talent and largely not
reducible to artistic rule,” but since it involves how things are said (lexis), and since lexis has been determined to be a part of the rhetorical art, delivery “has an artistic element.” Delivery is “an art [which] has not yet been composed,” though some (Glauccon of Teos and Thrasy machus are mentioned) have written on it and “prizes go to those who are skilled at it.” It has “great power” but only because of the “corruption of the audience.” One must therefore pay attention to it, “not because it is right, but because it is necessary,” since the “whole business of rhetoric is with opinion.” It is vulgar insofar as it goes beyond demonstration to entertain the audience, but it does have “some small place in all teaching; for to speak in one way rather than another does make some difference in regard to clarity.” But these vocal considerations are only “forms of outward show and intended to affect the audience,” so that “nobody teaches geometry this way.” For every compulsory dismissal is a forced concession and readmittance. Rhetoric simply cannot be without delivery because (though Aristotle will not admit it) delivery is its essence.

Aristotle quickly drops his apologetic but apparently necessary digression and moves on to his promised discussion of style. But the digression points to the importance, and the difficulty, of the distinction with which Aristotle opened Book III, namely that between what needs to be said and the manner in which it is said, and the difficulty of ignoring the latter (performative manner) to secure the claims of the former (textual matter). The digression troubles Aristotle’s claim that bodies don’t (because they aren’t) matter. This distinction is the one with which I began this project, but I have been developing it in a way that Aristotle did not anticipate. That is, I want to distinguish
between those conceptual and lexical decisions, including stylistics, that can be fixed in writing outside the action of a speech, and those bodily and vocal acts that constituted the unfolding performance. I want to use the distinction with a consistency that Aristotle could not bring himself to admit into his system, so that delivery (along with those portions of the rest of the canons whose effect depends upon their performance) can upstage everything else. If rhetoric is performed, then delivery should steal the show.

The word that Aristotle uses to describe the virtue of delivery—the reason compelling its brief introduction—is *dunamis*, translated as power or force. This same word occupies a place of distinction in his definition of rhetoric: “Let rhetoric be [defined as] an ability (*dunamis*), in each [particular] case, to see the available means of persuasion” (Kennedy 1. 2. 1). It is this general power or ability to persuade public opinion that separates rhetoric from special arts like geometry. While geometry is “instructive and persuasive about its own subject,” and proceeds strictly by demonstration, rhetoric must be able (*dunamis*) to persuade about what is *commonly* known or believed. Here we have a bifurcation in what Kennedy calls the “genus” of *dunamis*. The persuasive power of rhetoric is legitimate whereas the persuasive power of delivery is not.

The former application defines the proper and useful arena within which rhetoric works, characterized by specific and local situations in a public arena and limited to contingent knowledge. The power of delivery, though, defines the boundary of illegitimacy beyond which rhetoric ought not really go, even though it applies to the same situations under the same conditions. Rhetorical artistry must therefore consider
delivery, briefly, but only because the audience is swayed by opinion, even though
rhetoric deals with opinion, and even though delivery does aid clarity, but only “a little.”
The twists and turns with which Aristotle admits and condemns rhetoric is worthy of
Strophios (strophiōs: the twisting, shifty one) himself; he calls on his own literate
cunning to condemn the cunning of delivery.

When describing rhetoric’s power, geometry provides a contrasting example to
illustrate its more specific, that is, technical, scope and knowledge. When describing the
power of delivery, Aristotle uses geometry to provide a contrast, to illustrate geometry’s
more appropriate method, that is, not intending to please the audience. When describing
the power of rhetoric, Aristotle uses geometry to illustrate its inappropriateness to
common, public matters, as not intending to please an audience. The very power in
public arenas that legitimates rhetoric condemns delivery. Rhetoric defines itself as
audience oriented in opposition to the technical demonstration of geometry, which is
bound strictly by its subject matter, but delivery is disavowed precisely because it
operates too unlike geometry. Aristotle wants it both ways, a rhetoric valuable because
not limited to geometrical precision, but unwilling to depart from the strict logic of
geometrical demonstrations.

This isn’t just an embarrassingly slip or unfortunate stutter. Aristotle defines rhetoric
on the very ground he later uses to disqualify delivery. Aristotle’s definition of rhetoric
presumes the very “mob” audience he later condemns delivery for appealing to. If
delivery is admitted to have the greatest power in producing persuasion, ought it not to
have primary importance in Aristotle’s scheme? Or if the power of delivery is
illegitimate because it affects the audience’s emotions, which are relevant only because of “the sad state of the government” (excessively democratic) (3. 1. 4), then is not all of rhetoric, whose raison d’etre is this very same system of governing and whose effectiveness relies on the very same emotions, similarly illegitimate?

One might respond by recalling the difference between persuading and “seeing” (theoreo, idein) characteristic of Aristotle’s definition. Because no rhetor can guarantee success, the most one can hope for is a sort of knowledge, a seeing parallel to that theory which characterizes dialectic. So rhetoric will be defined not as the ability to persuade, but merely to see the available means. The power to see, theoria or idein, that is the end of philosophy is like the shocked, speechless wonder, inaumazein, that begins all philosophy (Metaphysics 982b12; see also Plato Theaetetus 155). But this beginning and end is, for Aristotle, quite unlike the power to persuade, whose end is not in the mute, motionless contemplation of inner sight, but in speech and, finally, in human emotion and action, which is quite far from philosophy. Unlike earlier and later definitions of rhetoric (the artificer of persuasion), Aristotle’s definition requires no persuading, nor even any address, but simply the seeing of the possible means. This is the philosopher’s definition par excellence and the means by which rhetoric is legitimated for Aristotle.

Aristotle’s rhetoric argues for the simple but powerful strategy of removing rhetoric from the public realm, the agora, into the private workings of the rhetorician’s mind. The seeing is not the seeing that occurs between audience and speaker, but that between the philosopher (or rhetorician) and the possible means of persuasion which are inscribed upon and arrayed conceptually before the mind. And the persuasive body is not
the acting and speaking body of the *rhetor*; rather, the “body” of persuasion is the enthymeme, or the enthymematic structure of the argument. Henceforth, when Aristotle talks about speech (as in, “the speech”) he is referring principally to the “thought and contents” of the speech, not the actual process of speaking (Kennedy 38 n. 41), in which he has absolutely no interest.

The rhetorics of Plato and Aristotle, distinctly philosophical and theory driven rhetorics (*of theoria*, of internal sight), establish their boundaries with reference to those textual techniques made possible by the silent reading of phonetic writing. Plato grounds his theory of knowledge in the uniquely real and stable world of the forms. Philosophy begins and ends, for Plato, not in speaking but in wonder and in sight, just as political education begins and ends not in performance, but in reading. Philosophical wonder, the experience of leaving the cave and seeing real objects for the first time, is essentially *arrheton*—unspeakable. Certain types of speech, the philosophical dialogue and the dialectical pursuit of truth which it mimics and trains scholars for, may be useful as a philosophical maieusis, a laboring process that may bear truth (or, if faulty, still-births), but they remain means only, not ends in themselves.

Rhetorical speech, even at its best, that is, that conducted by a philosopher for a populace in need of direction, benefits not at all from the skills related to action and the wise use of the body: the sense of timing and grace, the excellence in acting through which emotions like envy, anger, pity and sympathy are displayed. Those characteristics that make a speech something other than an idea or an ideal form to be intuited are exactly the characteristics expressed through delivery, through the performance of a
speech in its appropriate time and place. The disavowal of these techniques of the body
made rhetoric salvageable for Plato. Philosophy-rhetorics begin by repressing delivery,
but it returns.

While Aristotle tries to eliminate delivery from a proper art of rhetoric, he does
not thereby eliminate every mention of the speaking body. He invokes delivery again
later (III. 12) to articulate the difference between oral and written style: "Written style is
the most exact; the agonistic is very much a matter of delivery" (III. 12. 2.). Written
style, defined in opposition to delivered speeches, is more exact because more appropriate
before a small audience, or even before a single judge, so that "what pertains to the
subject and what is irrelevant is more easily observed, and controversy is gone, so the
judgement is clear" (3. 12. 5.). Here we see delivery again (as in Plato) figured in terms
of its irrational appeal to (always dangerous) mobs. Speeches before a large audience are,
like shadow-paintings, loud, inexact and mostly for show. Here, as before, rhetoric at its
best (as written) adheres to the principles of strict demonstration and close reasoning (it
looks like dialectic) which ought to be naturally persuasive, and these attributes are best
attained through writing.

If rhetoric is aimed at large audiences, though, as it was in ancient Greece and as
it is praised for doing in liberal democracies generally, then these close demonstrations
will fail. Perhaps we should conclude that, for Aristotle, large-scale rhetoric typical of
democratic processes is a trivial application of rhetoric's true aim. Because this rhetoric
fails to be naturally persuasive in this case, it needs something that is "most powerful" in
effecting persuasion; it needs delivery. Proper rhetoric is very much like dialectic, so it
isn’t very persuasive, making delivery necessary to help it along. But isn’t persuasion the business of rhetoric in the first place, and democratic mass appeal its native habitat (its *ethos*)? If so, then we might conclude that Aristotle’s rhetoric has no *ethos*, no native place or real application. If a proper rhetoric needs some residue, an embarrassing supplement to effect what it in itself is charged with accomplishing, in what sense is it rhetoric at all? Ought not we reserve that term for the residue, the supplement itself?

Delivery, like acting, is effective for crowds; it persuades and therefore ought to be dispensed with. The mastery of Aristotelian systematizing is such that by Book III, this seems a trivial point. Delivery persuades, but what of that? It comes at the expense of techniques which “make the straightedge rule crooked before using it,” (1. 1. 5.) and should therefore properly be avoided. What he means, I think, is that *rhetoric* ought properly to be avoided because twisting bodies warp straight minds. Note the parallel oppositions established around rhetoric proper (the use of written, closely-reasoned enthymemmatic demonstrations) and rhetoric-as-practiced (which employs delivery and “warps the jury” by relying on emotional appeals). The former is most closely approximated by speeches written for a single judge, the latter is most characteristic of speeches performed before large audiences and relies on the tricks of delivery to incite emotions of anger, or pity or envy. In some cases it is necessary to “act [the speech] out and not to speak it as one talking in the same character and tone.” These are speeches meant for delivery, intended to be spoken before a large crowd and are, therefore, least amenable to close demonstrations. Insofar as they rely on strategies external to the enthymemmatic structure of rhetoric proper (like loud voices, paratactic development and
repetition), Aristotle suggests, these speeches fall short of rhetoric as an art. They are the result of “inspiration,” or, for us, “talent” or “giftedness.” For Aristotle, anything beyond the preparation of the text—composition—is inartistic (and if artful, one might presume, therefore deceitful). The more persuasion relies on delivery, the less its basis in art or techne. Aristotle could ignore delivery because it was, for him, inartistic.

Aristotle’s Rhetoric, that is, validates rhetoric by truncating its end—the public display in speech and act—making of it an internal process of discovery, a thought process. This internalization of a physical performance, a theatrical scene, into a mental performance, a cognitive “seeing,” results from Aristotle’s distrust of any bodily display or embodied emotional involvement (as opposed to the “rational” emotions, discussed by Aristotle in terms of mental states “reasonably” directed towards the object of pain or pleasure). Thus, the calculated pain and pleasure that emotional appeals rely on are legitimate and useful (II. 1. 8), while the pain and pleasure aroused by action is unjust and therefore incidental (perierga, a work outside the real work of demonstration, which is conceptual), even though “necessary” (III. 1. 5). In fact, for every characteristic which gives rhetoric its distinctiveness as an art, Aristotle sees, and condemns, a similar characteristic deployed in action: the power, the reliance on emotional appeal, the departure from the strict demonstration, the adaptation to audiences moved by opinion. Delivery reappears to Aristotle in Book III simply as the very essence and principle of rhetoric (as persuasive power) intensified through its re-placement, out of the mind of the rhetorician and back into the body and voice of the rhetor, where it had always been. The evils of rhetoric are purged, their excesses flowing into the body of delivery, so that it can
stand as a fetish for all those ways in which rhetoric fails to be philosophy. By
scapegoating delivery and driving it off, rhetoric can be cleansed of its bodily taint and
rhythmic pleasures and remade into a kind of knowledge, chaste like philosophy, the
internal seeing of enthymemetic bodies.

But delivery is also the reminder to Aristotle that his attempt to remove rhetoric
into the interior spaces of the mind can never be complete, and that the move in fact strips
rhetoric of its very essence. Delivery is, for Aristotle, like the return of the repressed, a
supplement that reveals the insufficiency of that which it supplements. It signals the deep
split within the Aristotelian framework between theoreo as the categories of
persuadability, and hupokrisis, as the act of persuading. Said another way, delivery is the
alleged bastard child that must be mentioned only to be apologized for, named only to be
shunned and hidden, precisely because it is, in fact, the only legitimate heir. Persuasion is
where the action is.
NOTES


2. Herrington (1985) discusses how archaic forms of poetic performance evolved into drama, showing how one performer, Timotheus in his *Persians*, revolutionized lyric performance possibilities. Herzfeld (1985) illustrates a more recent case of the pressures put on one traditional, shepherding performance genre (sheep-theft) by local authorities and townspeople.

3. See, for example, Herrington (1985); Connor (1987); Gentili (1988); Dougherty and Kurke (1993); Stehle (1997). Or contemporary anthropology in the Mediterranean, see Campbell (1964); Pitt-Rivers (1977); Herzfeld (1985); and Seremetakis (1991).

4. DeCerteau distinguishes between the strategies that take advantage of established places and the tactics that must capitalize on opportune moments to act: “The ‘proper’ strategy is a victory of space over time. On the contrary, because it does not have a place, a tactic depends on time—it is always on the watch for opportunities that must be ‘seized’ on the wing” (xix). He later explicitly associates tactics with the Greek *metis*: the “polymorphic simulations” that must employed at the proper moment: their *kairos*. Philosophy attempts to discredit any reliance on tactics or *metis* by establishing a stable mental/formal space within which ‘proper’ strategies can be planned and mapped out.

5. See, below in Chapter Four, the debate between Aeschines and Demosthenes on bodily display and the similar enmity, in later Roman times, between the orator Polemo and Favorinus, whose chanting style, effeminate deportment, and sexualized presentation was roundly condemned by the conservative Polemo. Excessive gesturing, vocal gymnastics and excessive, “effeminating” or otherwise sexualized bodily display was similarly condemned by rhetorical treatises from the *Rhetorica ad Herrenium* to Quintilian.

6. Pindar draws a similar connection between masters of speech (*logoi*) and singers of epic (*aioidoi*). See Nagy (1990) 221-224.

7. Not only traditional epic and dramatic contests, but symposia performances, dithyrambic, and lyric as well. Stehle argues that community choral poetry celebrating festivals or other occasions were competed for by elite groups within the community, and that such performances were used to advance the group’s version of local traditions, cultural ideals or political ideology to enhance the group’s social status and the prestige of the groups lineage and ancestry (18-21).
8. “Custom-law” and “folk-way” is the English equivalent of nomoi and ethos, a phrase in Hesiod for the forms of household management and communal life handed down by tradition, and ultimately by Zeus. Nomos will come to mean traditional ways of life and patterns of justice, and later, simply “law” (albeit a type of law with greater pedigree than simple decrees or psephismata handed down by the assembly. Ethos will shift its meaning from dwelling place, to habit or custom, to customary behavior. Both are, at base, terms referring to traditionally informed patterns of behavior, and it is this readily understood behavioral system that could be effectively mimed on stage.

9. Poetry is called a craftsman’s art or demyourgos in the Odyssey 17.382. Rhetoric is described in the same terms in Gorgias 454A. Rhetoric and poetry, the one in meter, the other in verse, were united as the two speech crafts which could be performed.

10. Mimesis has a long tradition as a critical term, but began, as Else (1958) argues, as “Miming: direct representation of the looks, actions, and/or utterances of animals or [humans] through speech, song, and/or dancing (dramatic or proto dramatic sense)” (79). Only later did it take on the meaning of “representation” in a more general sense. The imitation of a character, a hero or god or animal, later came to mean following the general pattern of a person’s ethical life-style, or in any way representing the characteristics of an “original.” But in its original meaning, each mimetic act was a direct physical copying, the impersonation, of a tradition, mythical or natural being as it inhabited or “inspired” the performer.

11. This is the argument of Robb (1994), 214-251; and Yunis (1996), 211-236.

12. Most of this argument comes from Martin’s “The Seven Sages as Performers of Wisdom” in Dougherty and Kurke (108-128, 1993).

13. I recall a similar anecdote about a Confederate general in Virginia who was apprised by scouts of a massive Union army encamped in Washington. The general swung out his smaller force in a narrow file and marched them within sight of Union scouts, arranging that, once out of sight, the front of the file would circle back to link up with the rear. Thus, in a large circle, the file of troops marched for an entire day and into the night, going nowhere. The union general, convinced of a huge Confederate force on the move, remained in Washington awaiting reinforcements. Thus, through metis worthy of Odysseus, was a large army pinned by a small one without a shot being fired.

14. Detienne and Vernant describe the chariot race in the Iliad in which Antilochus, at just the moment (kairos) when the track narrows, feigns loss of control, acting like his horses would crash into the team of Menelaus. In this way, the metis of Antilochus causes Menelaus to reign in his faster horses, allowing Antilochus to win the race (Detienne and Vernant 12-13).

15. This is the argument of Emily Katz Anhalt (1993) in Solon the Singer: Politics and Poetics.


17. Martin defines muthos in opposition to epeia. While the latter refers to “talk” in general, the former indicates “a speech act indicating authority, performed at length, usually in public, with a focus on full attention to every detail” (12).

18. Other terms, like dolos (a cunning contrivance; trickery; guile) or poikilos (manifold; changeful; subtle; wily) indicated similar qualities and suggest the same moral ambivalence with which an unexpected victory can be regarded.

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19. In a scene in the *Iliad* where Odysseus is deliberating whether to flee to the ships or rush to the line of fighting, I can imagine that Odysseus feels the deliberation, in his body, as alternative patterns of acting wisely, bravely, or honorably, just as we, in deliberation, feel in our minds and silently mouth in our throats the thoughts and words that guide or decisions. The rhapsode would then be obliged to imitate the different types of stance, gesture, movement and vocal tone that characterize these two alternatives. Studies of the use of sign-language among the deaf is relevant here. Deaf composers do not sound out words in their heads, as hearing writers do, but sign them out with fingers, hands and face. That is, the Deaf may be thinking with their bodies in a way analogous to that undertaken by ancient heroes, but for different reasons.

20. See the discussion in Chapter Four on conduct becoming like a “second” nature.

21. For Aristotle, delivery involves only vocal elements. Later writers, beginning with Theophrastus, will include bodily discipline as well: gesture, stance, movement, etc. But modern rhetoricians, following Aristotle, will discuss delivery (now called elocution or vocal culture) as having exclusively vocal or, frequently, exclusively verbal elements. When I use the term delivery, I will always mean it to suggest all aspects of wise or cunning action, practice, and performance as rendered in Greek by *metis*, *kairos*, *strophios*, *mimesis*, and related terms.

22. Delivery—*hupokrisis*—became identified as a distinct work (*erga*, *officium*, canon) of the orator—alongside invention, style and arrangement—with Aristotle’s pupil, Theophrastus, and had reached its fullest articulation by the time of Quintilian.

23. *Dunamis* can be rendered as a “potentiality” that is actualized by an efficient cause. For Aristotle, the actuality that rhetoric produces is not the speech or even the text of the speech, but the “seeing” of how persuasion could be effected (Kennedy 36 n. 34).

24. The Greek term, *demos*, like the English “people” can be used neutrally to refer to an entire population, but can also be used to mean “the many, the common, the mob,” taking on a clear, class-based hierarchy between the few who are “best” (aristocrats) and the many. Democracy, in the sense of rule by the many or the *demos*, can be interpreted in opposition to rule by those best suited to rule, the aristocrats.
CHAPTER 4

GENDER IN ACTION:

SELF-DELIVERY IN ANCIENT ATHENS

Failure would be inevitable if one tried to discover 
metis from an enquiry into what Greek intelligence had to say about itself when it composed theoretical treatises on its own nature. 

Metis must be tracked down elsewhere, in areas which the philosopher usually passes over in silence.

---Detienne and Vernant Cunning
Intelligence in Greek Culture and Society

Athens was a society in which philosophers were often ignored... If we focus our attention not on that eccentric coterie but on the citizen body, we get a quite different picture, one in which the debates of philosophers have no discernible impact.

---Winkler Constraints of Desire

Rhetoric is a calisthenics of manhood.

---Gleason Making Men

Hupokrisis in the Poetic Tradition

The last chapter introduced several new terms to the arts of persuasion in ancient Greece. Ancient Greek performers persuaded their audiences through the display of wisdom or sophia, and one important component of this display involved metis, a close synonym with sophia, and an important aspect of Greek culture, according to Detienne...
and Vernant. The cunning and practical artistry designated by metis involves both nimble intelligence and a somatic wisdom, a twisting (strophe) subtlety of mind and body, and it applies to a wide field of activity. Whatever its field of application, metis always implies practical effectiveness in a sphere of activity, and is thus a techne. It always refers to the tactical ability to master uncertain and ambiguous situations as they unfold, involving the timely seizing of opportunities known as kairos. Nevertheless, metis is not unified but polymorphic and diverse, an art of many facets, or many arts with a common center; it indicates practical mastery, in any sphere, of a world that is always shifting, ambiguous and unpredictable. Finally, metis involves a power of disguise and deceit: "In order to dupe its victim it assumes a form which masks, instead of revealing, its true being" (Detienne and Vernant 21). When Odysseus plays a beggar in Ithaca to catch the suitors, when Solon feigns madness to urge war against Salamis, and when Demosthenes acts like an insolent aristocrat to condemn Meidias and the oligarchic politics he represented, each relied on metis in its manifestation as mimetic: an art of likenesses or eikad. Practical cunning included the ability to appear what you were not, to change appearances in order to wrest success from unfavorable circumstances or to make the worse situation appear the better. In this regard, sophia begins to look like mimesis, itself reappearing in Greek performance genres as hupokrisis: the arts of acting and delivery.

This doesn’t mean that all wisdom, all performance, or all persuasion was simply a matter of gesture and intonation. But speakers were always grounded in the embodied moment of utterance and were always judged from that perspective. Philosophers could conceive of speech as a process of thought, or a leisurely dialogue, or a logical form, but
I can agree with Winkler that, in Athenian society, these new versions of speech had "no discernible impact" on the practice of persuasion. In the practice of any live, interactive moment, bodily awareness takes precedent, and in communicative events, it highlights not the precomposed words, thoughts, or logical forms, but the fleeting moments of embodied expression. In "oral" or performance centered cultures, such an orientation towards speech as embodied and interactive takes on added significance.

_Hupokrisis_ indicates this aspect of timely and embodied control over a live communicative event as it unfolds, whether at the rhetorical foci of cultural power and control (the assembly or courts), or in the routine reiteration of everyday practices. _Hupokrisis_ includes the "twisty" ability to mimic a wide range of recognizable character-types and dispositions through their embodied stylization, and thus participates in the whole of practical artistry known under the confluence of terms like practice, action, and performance, like _mimesis, metis, strophe_ and, more generally, _sophia_ and _rhetorica_.

In this sense, _hupokrisis_ appears as an aspect of all speaking, chanting and singing performances, indeed all practice in general, from the most personal of activities in the household to the most public: the cathartic chants of physicians, the displays of the symposia, the choral songs of festivals, rhapsodic competitions, and the dramatic contests of the Dionysia. Insofar as performance genres necessarily responded to and commented on the political and cultural context in which they took place, aiming at what Stehle calls "psychological efficacy" in moving people to action, _hupokrisis_ takes a central place in every aspect of ancient Greek public activity, thoroughly performative and thoroughly rhetorical. If a wide range of speaking genres (other than those three canonized by
Aristotle) required rhetorical artistry (without any stretching of the original designation of that term), and if all of these genres, from the most politically charged to the most routine and everyday were thoroughly performative, and if these performance genres offered avenues to both personal honor and political leadership and were judged as performances largely on the basis of the manner in which they were carried out, then what ought we to conclude? We might not be amiss in suggesting that our history of rhetoric, and theories that it has generated, have paid insufficient attention to the one canon where performance abides, to delivery.

One might, for example, want to attend to the history of persuasion itself (Peitho) as a sensual and erotically charged agency, a necklaced Goddess, who relied as much on the wiley crafting of appearances as on the logical arranging of ideas. One might want to pursue more carefully the wisdom performance tradition (out of which sophistry arose) or trace more sensitively a rhetoric of body techniques (a rhetorical habitus) as they evolve from Homer to the later poets and dramatists. One might want to pursue as rhetoric the displays of “healing” or therapeutic speech as it occurred in ritual curses, in medical practice, and in the cathartic effects of poetry. One might be willing to look beyond the myth of poetic inspiration (which can be a sincere claim and at the same time a rhetorical device) or “orality” (as the alleged “natural” and universal attribute of an entire culture whose members therefore attain no special speaking skills) to consider a poet’s practical training or learned artistry and to wonder what it was like to watch performances, practice different styles, rehearse, and gain renown as a poet/performer.
One might begin to look for descriptions in texts of what people are doing, and ask why they do it. Why does Plato’s Socrates prefer Phaedrus to read Lysias’ speech instead of having him perform it (or asking Lysias to do so)? Or why does Plato have Socrates put a bag on his head when he gives his first speech? What makes a speaker’s visual presence so disturbing? Why does Gorgias use the Helen myth with which to extol the virtues of speech, and then allow all rhetorical agency to rest in Paris’ speech and not (as we might have found in Hesiod) with Helen’s beauty (to say nothing of her speech)? Why is silence, however alluring, no longer persuasion? Why does Aristotle render ethos as something that exists in texts rather than in the characters and actions of individuals and in the “undying fame” that these actions win?

Answers to these questions, I argue, form a pattern which can be summed up as the attempt to reduce a wide ranging and important practical activity, the crafting of persuasion in performance, to the procedures of tightly categorized and narrowly defined educational enclave, one in which philosophically inform, writable words alone were worthy of rhetorical agency, while everything performed was condemned as something else: deception, trickery, inspiration, or madness. Odysseus preludes his muthoi by seeming dumb, standing stiff and still, “like a mindless man . . . or just plain fool” (Iliad 3. 220-21) before his words let loose “like a driving winter blizzard” (222). Plato, on the other end of the process, uses the written preamble to a law as a persuasive tool, equally static but without the cunning display; not a body tool, but a users manual that the reader can review and consider at length. Metis has given way to graphe as the sign and substance of sophia. Rhetoricians read Plato far more than they read Homer, but Homer
shows us a living rhetorical tradition, whereas Plato merely fashions utopian rhetorical dreams.

This isn’t, of course, a common view among rhetorical scholars, many of whom might continue to raise objections: “Performance traditions were not expressly political and therefore not consciously rhetorical in the same way that deliberative, judicial, or epideictic speeches were.” “Poetic genres did not show evidence of any attention to teaching, learning, or judging persuasion as sophistic and philosophical rhetoric did.” “Changes in literacy made delivery unimportant to classical rhetoric compared to the traditional three canons.” I cannot in the space of this chapter, or this dissertation, respond to the relevance or generality of “truths” whose validity has been accepted for generations. Nor is such a response possible. When the fragmentary nature of the evidence renders the cultural life of the ancient world only in two-dimensions, only in black and white, only in pieces, like a shifting optical illusion, it becomes impossible to tell figure from ground: whether we see cultural continuity initiating and surviving isolated literate and philosophical experimentation, or whether instead we see that change fundamentally altering the cultural practices upon which they drew. One position only becomes visible as figure for as long as the other appears as ground; neither can ever claim final status as either. They define each other, with history functioning simply to activate their oscillation: estranging the familiar, and habituating the strange.

So why suggest this revision of rhetorical history? Precisely because it has been the history of figures with no ground, a history of philosophical innovations without regard for traditional practices, the history of a revolutionary logos without any abiding
Reinserting delivery into history can reground rhetoric in its cultural context, even if theory retains its figures. Without it, we cannot gauge either the degree to which familiarity is familiar, or the breeding of contempt. Aristotle can never retain any relevance or vitality without a background to foreground that which he was reacting against. Without delivery, without the background of a culturally specific performance tradition, that is, rhetoric can have no history, only a parade of floating figures that never touch ground.

This is not to suggest that specific objections cannot be met and responded to, or pieces of the puzzle tried for their fit. In this chapter, I do want to try out one more piece, one which I hope can address the three objections raised above: that delivery (and a rhetoric of practice generally) was marginal to ancient Greek rhetorical culture 1) because performance features of rhetoric did not substantively influence political pleading; 2) because no widespread system existed through which such practice could be taught, learned, or judged; and 3) because the classical age became a literate culture in which traditional practice and the "undying fame" which performers won no longer mattered\(^2\).

To do this, I want to return to another example from Demosthenes, this time as he is represented by his commentators and his political rival, Aeschines, to stretch the claims of the previous chapters and specify their mode of application. For me, Aeschines represents another mid-way point (like the seven sages) between the early understanding of sophia as the personal display of metis and later attempts to rewrite wisdom in terms of a private, literate activity. This balancing act led Aeschines into some interesting paradoxes: an actor who condemns theatrics, a writer who denounces composition.
Equally paradoxical was Demosthenes: the politically astute, literate statesman who relied heavily on *hupokrisis* for his oratory dramatizes well the ways in which political statesmanship intersected with performance training in the artful self-presentation that we call rhetorical delivery.

This intersection is particularly noticeable in the case called a *dokimasia rhetoron*: literally a scrutinizing of the rhetor for his fitness to speak before the people. We have just such a case recorded in the works of Aeschines in his prosecution of Timarchos (and through Timarchos, his associate, Demosthenes), a case which has everything to do with the public display of manhood for the purpose of asserting political power and influence. This case can reveal much about delivery as central to political craft, personal ambition and self-fashioning in ancient Greece. If, in our accounts of classical rhetoric, we have missed the grounding of ancient Greek rhetoric in performance and its connections to everyday rhetorical practice, it is only because in attending to philosophical figures we have overlooked that ground whose obliteration made those figures noticeable. We have assumed that delivery was invisible not because it was obliterated, but because it was simply absent, immaterial, and unimportant. Cases of rhetorical practice can refigure that absence as denial, as significant: a clue, in fact, to the functioning of the art of delivery in ancient Greece.

Aeschines' speech *Against Timarchos*, then, will help me to make three final observations about the power and range of *hupokrisis* in ancient Greece. First, I want to suggest that in ancient Greece in general and in Athens in particular, the *polis* awarded political influence, determined citizenship status, and assessed not only shame and honor
but innocence and guilt through public performances of masculine virtue. More than through public institutions, appointments, titles or offices; more than through literary activity, or fame; power and privilege were won or lost, accumulated or spent, through gendered self-presentation. Not only was Athens a performance culture, but was, increasingly in its democratic periods, a society whose androcentric ideology of equality and lax public policing made it necessary to rely on other methods by which to judge the actions and intentions of its citizens. Reading an individual through his or her appearance and action was a traditional and valued avenue for assessing honor and shame as well as innocence and guilt; reading a text for evidence or documentation of the same was not. Thus, persuasive political activity turned on artful self-presentation in performance, that is, on rhetorical delivery.

Second, I will argue that rhetorical delivery itself, the performative accumulation of political and cultural capital, turned upon what Judith Butler (Gender Trouble 1990) calls the “performance of gender.” Although I referred especially to class and citizenship status (by extension suggesting the racial divide between Greeks and barbarians) in Chapter One, I will suggest here that the aperture of gender stylization offers the clearest focus on the image I am trying to expose³: an image of cultural capital being won and lost through gendered rhetorical delivery. The dokimasia rhetoron prosecuted by Aeschines turned upon his ability to prove that Timarchos, the defendant, had prostituted himself and had thereby surrendered his right to address the Assembly, or undertake legal or political initiatives, such as participating in a lawsuit (like the one in which Timarchos and Demosthenes accuse Aeschines of treason). Aeschines does this primarily not by
proving that Timarchos took money for sexual favors, but by referring to the well-known public conduct of Timarchos and associating it with the similarly well-known *habitus* of the prostitute, including those visible signs of indecent and effeminate "softness" written on the body.

Finally, I will argue that any effective or persuasive self-presentation in ancient Greece had to rely on a complementary but seldom mentioned performative hermeneutic called *phusiognomy* through which audiences could read and interpret physical displays. Public self-presentation was not simply "natural" nor was its interpretation left to nature, the Athenian *polis*, like any community, had to establish and maintain (and only then naturalize as given) a grammar of bodily deportment according to which varying styles of self-presentation could be (mis)understood, juxtaposed and opposed. Like the sort of understanding that Demosthenes alluded to (those insolent gestures, looks and tones of Meidias that couldn't be put into words) a physiognomy of appearance and action made every citizen "readable" as representing a type of character (masculine and "hard" or effeminate and "soft," for example) that could be known and judged, even if such judgements were not unanimous. What's more, this physiognomic action/interpretation cycle, like the reading/writing circle, formed a closed system in which opposing terms (like Plato's *pharmakon* in the hands of Derrida) were ever on the brink of collapsing into each other; there were no external referents to ground the meaning of a sign.

Just as contemporary theory finds no stable interpretation to be found in texts, either in the author's intent or the audience's response, so no stable self can be found lurking behind the characters being displayed in ancient rhetorical performance; it
“existed” simply in its public display. Each self had to be continually refashioned through consistent reiteration, and every iteration depended on a persuasive hupokrisis. Actor/performers portray morally charged visions of the good by mimicking the characteristics of known figures--male and female, well-born and slave, Greek and barbarian, god, human, or animal--themselves mimetic figurations of other analogous figures: rhapsodes do Homer doing Achilles; Demosthenes does Meidias doing “the privileged aristocrat” (perhaps doing “godlike” Achilles as well). They had to do so because no stable biological or ontological foundation existed upon which one’s identity could be hung; there was, to echo Nietzsche, no doer behind the deed. The self was, itself, an imitation and stylization of previously established, imitated and stylized manifestations of embodied virtues in action: temperance, superiority, wisdom, courage, self-control. If Gleason calls rhetoric a calisthenics of manhood, then I might call rhetorical action the staging of manhood: not just working out, but acting out.

The Case of Demosthenes: Orator Imperfectus

No one illustrates the rehearsal of manhood better than Demosthenes. Demosthenes’ rhetorical career was understood, from Hellenistic times forward, to have been the high point in Athenian political oratory and an example of the power of sincere, passion-filled speech to unite a people and move it to action. And although Greek rhetorical treatises mention hupokrisis virtually not at all, Demosthenes himself considered rhetoric to be above all about action, less a matter of discovery than a matter of exercise.
Demosthenes was from a well born family, but the early death of his father and the corruption of his guardians stripped him of most of the advantages he might have enjoyed as a free born citizen (Plutarch Lives). He could thus claim to be a citizen like any other against Meidias, even as he took pains to insure that his relative wealth did not lead the jury to identify him with Meidias. What’s more, he spoke and acted at a time of tremendous political and diplomatic upheaval in Athens.

Traditional foes like Sparta, along with new powers, like the rising Macedon, threatened Athens from all sides; shifting alliances and balances of power made international affairs in the region risky and volatile. Against these threats, particularly the looming power of Philip and Alexander, Demosthenes fought to unite Greek cities behind Athens’ leadership. The pro-democratic, pan-Hellenic and nationalist stance of Demosthenes’ speeches has made of him the very emblem of democracy and independence, of vigorous self-determination, of the many becoming one. Paradoxically, this emblem was itself a failure, as Athens fell, along with the rest of Greece, to Macedon. Demosthenes never could, as the Pericles of Thucydides did, mold the Greek peninsula into a solid, lasting union, nor did he wield unrivaled success in the Athenian political arena. He was exiled for a bribery charge and recalled on the death of Alexander, only to be sentenced to death after the Greek defeat in the battle of Crannon. Demosthenes escaped and finally killed himself as he was pursued by an agent of Antipater (Plutarch Lives; see also Dobson 228).

The figure of Demosthenes as an ideal representation of the classical Greek rhetorician and orator presents something of a paradox as well. Far from being the orator
perfectus, Demosthenes’ body and voice were as blemished as his career. The body and
voice of Demosthenes lacked as much in vigor, unity and strength as did his ill-fated,
Athenian led pan-Hellenism. Texts attesting to Demosthenes’ poor speech and sickly
constitution are manifold. Plutarch’s comments are typical:

Demosthenes was not given the education that his father’s fortune permitted,
“because of his bodily weakness and fragility, since his mother would not permit
him to work hard in the palaestra, and his tutors would not force him to do so.
For from the first he was lean and sickly” (9).

Demosthenes also, according to tradition, stuttered, lisped and suffered a weak
voice, a shortness of breath, and, if Aeschines is to be believed, a certain effeminacy that
revealed itself in spite of and through Demosthenes’ very labors to conceal it. All these
infirmities seem to summed up by the Greek nickname that he labored under: Batalos.

Plutarch offers several reasons for Demosthenes to have earned this nickname:

For from the first he was lean and sickly, and his opprobrious surname of Batalos
is said to have been given him by the boys in mockery of his physique. Now
Batalos, as some say, was an effeminate flute-player, and Antiphanes wrote a
farce in which he held him up to ridicule for this. But some speak of Batalos as a
poet who wrote voluptuous verses and drinking songs. And it appears that one of
the parts of the body which is not decent to be named was at that time called
Batalos by the Athenians (Lives IV. 5-7).

Plutarch cannot pinpoint the origin of this name, but it significantly does not
mention “stammering” as a primary referent. Liddell and Scott, on the other hand, define
“Batalos” primarily as “stammerer,” deriving from Battos or “stammer” after King Battos of Cyrene in Herodotus. Related to these are battarizo (stuttering; the twittering of swallows) and battologeo (speak stammeringly, repeat the same thing over and over again). Demosthenes apparently had claimed that his lisping or stammering earned him this nickname from his nurse (Aesch. Against Timarchus 126). The Liddell-Scott supplement also lists “Batalon” as the clapper for marking time, named, perhaps, in connection to the wooden shoes with which flute-players beat time. Significantly, the staunch lexicon of record doesn’t mention the not-to-be-named body part.

It isn’t difficult to hear the connection, though, between the repetitive chirping of a bird, stammering or mechanically repeating a sound over and over again, and beating a clapper or wooden shoe, much like our use of “wooden” to denote any overly mechanical presentation. The fact that it is connected with flute-playing also ties batalos to the effeminate flute-player that Antiphanes allegedly satirized. But in addition to the “stuttering” denotation, Plutarch’s musings also consistently refer to sexual behavior, particularly effeminate or promiscuous sexual behavior, as a significant connotation of the term. The nearest we come to this in Liddell-Scott is a variant that makes both Batalos and “Batos” equivalent to katapheres, meaning prone or inclined, including, with pun intended, “inclined” to sexual pleasures, and therefore lecherous, referring to that other repetitive, rhythmical activity.

One might imagine that Batalos referred to Demosthenes’ lisp or stutter, or to a physical defect or physical characteristic that effected his appearance or gait, giving it a “wooden” or noticeably swaying or “effeminate” appearance. The name given by his
nurse might then have been taken up or modified with a double entendre to mock either his “wooden” gait or stammering speech, or his weak or sickly constitution, to a linking these to a passive promiscuity. We can take this as our first suggestion of the connection that existed between vocal quality, deportment, and sexuality.

Whatever the final gloss on the term, Demosthenes-batalos succeeded, when and to the degree that he did, against enormous odds and numerous disadvantages in his physical constitution. The rigors of public address did not come easily to him. Even while rhetoric as a technical enterprise, the rhetoric of Plato and Aristotle especially, disdained hupokrisis as trivial, unseemly and dangerous, worthy of the stage or the sophist, but not of the demonstration, Demosthenes at least found it necessary to devote himself to it. He declaimed with pebbles in his mouth beside the pounding surf of the Aegean and while running steep inclines; he practiced in a subterranean study before mirrors and half-shaven (to prevent his going out in public, Plutarch Lives XI. 1); and he erected a platform below a suspended sword to prevent the excessive movement of his shoulders (Quintilian XI. III. 130).

At the same time, he was known primarily not, as we have seen, for his natural grace in speaking, but for his studied perfection. He was “accused” of preparing his speeches arduously beforehand so that they “smelled of the lamp” (Plutarch VIII. 3) and was reputed never to have spoken impromptu on a topic he had not already prepared. A master of delivery known for his literary skill, an exemplary Attic orator and politician whose principle political vision largely failed; an infirm stutterer venerated for his vehement eloquence; a clumsy champion of the one canon most despised by rhetoricians:
Demosthenes career is inscribed on his body, and represents the troubling art of delivery in ancient Greece. He, like his rival Aeschines, remains a study in paradox: an orator’s grounding in the arts of delivery were central to his stature as a literate political figure.

Demosthenes stood in relation to his political foil and nemesis Aeschines in much the same way as the wily, fast-talking Odysseus stood against the strong and straight-talking Ajax. For every performer skilled in metis was another who (through his own even more successful embodiment of metis) denounced trickery and artifice as deceptive and weak, literary skill as an effeminate artifice, preferring to rely on (or constructing himself in the alternative ideal of) the simple, honest and straight-talking man of action. While all men agreed that “Demades, in the exercise of his natural talents, was invincible” (Plutarch X. 1), Demosthenes was criticized for being too well-composed; his “action in speaking was astonishingly pleasing to most men, but men of refinement, like Demetrius the Phalerian, thought his manner low, ignoble and weak” (Plutarch XI. 3).

Aeschines has similar or identical terms to describe Demosthenes, too studied and literary, too soft and weak: an assertion difficult to take at face value since Aeschines was himself a fairly accomplished actor who only later took up rhetoric. But it fits well within the larger paradox: the tremendous importance of acting and action to the elite social world of Athens and to oratory more specifically, coupled with the equally pressing need to conceal it. Like the subterranean but untheorized importance of metis, kuponkrisis remained central to the degree that it was denied. To be a man, one had to act, but to (appear to) act was by definition not to be.
Demosthenes persuaded, when and to the degree he did, through his relentless and self-erasing self-refashioning. In this devotion he may have been exceptional, but he was far from unique. He represents Greek politics in general, and he stands as a model for Greek public culture not because of an innate genius that made him a “natural” statesman and orator (like Demades), but because he had to work so hard at forming his own (second) nature, and at hiding what he worked so hard at. In this, he reveals both the rare opportunity and the tremendous challenge of performing excellence and of rehearsing it daily before a jealous and rowdy Athenian public. That is, Demosthenes can begin to illustrate the degree to which ancient Greek (and, within the context of sophistic declamation, Roman) male public identity was contested and had to be physically performed. Public speaking was a “calisthenics of manhood” that had to be displayed, but impeccably displayed, lest it be (mis)read as an unmanly self-pampering for the pleasure of others³. As Plato reminds us in the Gorgias, the sophist and rhetor pleased and was admired for his pleasing, but could also always be accused of trying to please, and could be condemned for this form of effeminacy: making oneself up to please others⁹.

In which Demosthenes Disciplines his Infirmities

Two anecdotes relating to Demosthenes’ early career, from Plutarch’s Lives, will serve to show this calisthenics and theatrics of manhood in and as rhetorical action. These incidents in Demosthenes early career suggest the close relationship that existed between oratory, action and public acclaim in classical Athens. We are told that
Demosthenes early attempts at addressing the Assembly were far from successful, largely due to a “weakness of voice and indistinctness of speech and shortness of breath which disturbed the sense of what he said by disjoining his sentences” (VI. 3). On one such occasion, he is interrupted and laughed off the stage. Afterwards, while Demosthenes was walking along the walls to Piraeus, he is approached by Eunomus, an elder.

Eunomus praises Demosthenes’ diction as being worthy of Pericles, but he berates Demosthenes for “throwing himself away out of weakness (malakias also means softness or effeminacy, used earlier by Plutarch in the Demades comparison) and lack of courage (atolmias characterizes, in an aristocratic scheme, the agennes or low-born, another term from earlier in Plutarch), neither facing the multitude with boldness, nor preparing his body for these forensic contests, but suffering it to wither away through slothful neglect” (VI. 4). Here the condemnation is not that Demosthenes is too-well molded, but not well enough. In this case, preparing one’s body suggests the sort of physical self-training that Goffman says is important for any risky and competitive field of “action,” but it also implies a conscious attempt to become pleasing in a gender-specific way: to become “hard,” bold, and strong.

This scene repeats itself on a later occasion, when Demosthenes is again “rebuffed” by the rowdy Athenian Assembly and denied a hearing. This time he is discovered by his friend, the comic actor Satyrus, to whom Demosthenes laments that, “although he was the most laborious of all the orators and had almost used up the vigor of his body in this calling” (perhaps following Eunomus’ admonishment), “he had no favor with the people, but debauchees, sailors and illiterates held the bema, while he himself
was ignored” (VII. 1-2). Was Demosthenes straining every muscle in order to avoid appearing soft? If so, then perhaps his strategy was off. Metis indicates the tactical ability to be so soft that both hardness and softness are easy to imitate: the most difficult gods to battle are the ones that change shape most easily, the most pliable of actors can best imitate the most masculine of heroes.

Satyrus, the actor (hupokrites) and imitator responded with some advice:

‘You are right, Demosthenes, but I will quickly remedy the cause of all this, if you will consent to recite off-hand for me some narrative speech from Euripides or Sophocles.’ Demosthenes did so, whereupon Satyrus, taking up the same speech after him, gave it such a form and recited it with such appropriate sentiment and disposition that it appeared to Demosthenes to be quite another. Persuaded, now, how much of ornament and grace action lends to oratory, he considered it of little or no use for a man to practice declaiming, if he neglected the delivery and disposition of his words. (VII. 2-3)

Sources differ on the details, but several report that Demosthenes studied under an actor in order to improve his action. Quintilian claims he was trained by Andronicus of Rhodes (Institutes XI. iii. 7) while the Pseudo-Plutarchan Lives of the Ten Orators says it was Neoptolemus.

The advice Demosthenes receives about cultivating a manly delivery (including voice and action) fits his reputation for physical infirmity and vocal “defects,” and is echoed centuries later by Quintilian, who frequently bases his recommendations for delivery on standard gender stereotypes: “physical robustness is essential to save the
voice from dwindling to the feeble shrillness that characterizes the voices of eunuchs, women and invalids” (Xl. iii. 19). But Quintilian also echoes the suspicions harbored against any practiced and therefore artificial display of physical robustness. Hence the frequent warnings against orators taking up “the actor’s art” or their tricks of mimicry: “For what can be less becoming to an orator than modulations that recall the stage?” (Quintilian Institutes XI. III. 57). In order to succeed as a credible speaker, Demosthenes had to cultivate his body and voice to overcome natural infirmities that would otherwise make of him a laughingstock: he had to act hard. But in order to succeed, he had to appear not to be acting at all.

That is, Demosthenes had to work at the public presentation of a “natural” masculinity in his speeches. This work included not only vocal exercises (phonaskesis), but bodily training as well, perhaps in a manner much like the “structural exercises” described by Bourdieu in the reproduction of practice. Eunomus’ admonishments suggest, either as common perception or reality or both, what Quintilian later makes clear: that Demosthenes failed in the Assembly because he could not display the results of the strict regimen of vigorous physical self-mastery (enkratia) to which all (male) Athenian citizens were expected to discipline themselves. Winkler comments: “At all levels of morality and advice-giving we find the undisciplined person described as someone mastered or conquered by something over which he should exert control, usually conceived or conceivable as part of himself” (50 and cf. Faecalith 63-77).

Plutarch reports the tradition that after Demosthenes took up running to discipline his body and his lungs for oratory, he went on to compete in the city games, and took the
prize in the long-distance run. While this is admirable, more important to Demosthenes' career was his ability to display this physical prowess as unaffected, in the strength of his speech, the length of his periods, the duration of his stamina. He had to rehearse and embody an appealing stylization of masculinity that overcame any "natural" softness or weakness in a way that, at the same time, appeared simply natural. The name given to practical training in self-control and self-stylization for public presentation was *hupokrisis*, and the name given to the scrutiny which interpreted public performances for signs of hidden artifice or self-pampering was *phusitagnomy* and, in the political arena, the *dokimasia*, or "scrutiny."

Scrutinizing the Rhetor(s): Aeschines against Timarchos

In 346 B.C., Athens dispatched an embassy to Philip of Macedon to negotiate peace, including as ambassadors both Aeschines and Demosthenes. Upon their return, Aeschines declared himself "fully in Philip's confidence," and assured the Athenians that peace with Macedon would lead Philip to march against Thebes, leaving Athens as the leading power on the mainland (Adams 159). Demosthenes, on the other hand, warned the Athenians that Philip's interests were all contrary to Athenian independence and that Macedon intended to set itself up as sole power in central Greece. When Philip, with the cooperation of both Thebes and Thessaly, swept into Attica and reinforced his hegemony in the region, the peace treaty soured and the public sentiment turned away from cooperation with Philip.
Demosthenes, in alliance with Timarchos, took advantage of the unrest by accusing Aeschines of being in Philip’s pay and therefore treasonous. Aeschines’ responded by initiating a *dokimasia rhetoron* against Timarchos, which he won, thereby ridding himself of one of his prosecutors and delaying his own prosecution for treason. Timarchos, argued Aeschines, had forfeited his right to initiate any legal action by acting like a prostitute.

*Dokimasia* was a public action that *dramatized* the self-policing of Athens’ citizen body rather than strictly enforcing it. The point was not to uncover hidden sexual practices or moments of cowardice, nor was it to assess the moral character of each citizen. Rather, the point was to open up a space for the public display of Athenian democratic ideology and the masculine citizen ideal upon which it rested. The “examination” rehearsed a civic androcentrism through a public debate that increased in intensity and seriousness as one climbed the social and political ladder (Winkler 5, 54-64). A *dokimasia* first occurred as one was nominated for membership to the rank of citizen. At this proceeding, any citizen could challenge the nomination of the candidate by answering the opening question, “Does anyone wish to accuse this man?” (Aristotle *Constitution of the Athenians* 55.4). Usually perfunctory, like the question at a wedding, “Does anyone object to this union?” the procedure could nevertheless catalyze the satisfaction of personal or familial grudges against the candidate, his sponsor or either’s family (Winkler).

A more intense level of scrutiny could take place after a citizen had been elected to public office: a magistracy or a seat on the Council (the *Boule*). This is just what
happened when Meidias contested Demosthenes’ admission to the Council. He may, for example, have accused him of abandoning his military assignment in Eretria (he returned to lead his tribe at the Dionysia where he got punched) where a rebellion was being quelled (MacDowell). But a *dokimasia rhetoron* could also be invoked whenever someone had addressed the people (in the Assembly or the courts) who by his incontinence had relinquished his right to speak or act as a citizen. This type of scrutiny was not a universal formality, as were the scrutinies exacted upon new citizens or new office-holders. It was rather an occasional event, and relied upon a law according to which no one could address the Assembly who had either 1) abused or neglected his parents, 2) refused military service or abandoned his post, 3) squandered or “eaten up” his inheritance or 4) prostituted himself (*Aeschines, Against Timarchus*).

Any citizen who had addressed the Assembly or the courts and was suspected of having already committed any of these citizenship restrictions could be charged with a *dokimasia rhetoron*. This legal action, literally a scrutinizing of the rhetor or speaker involved a prosecution speech (here by *Aeschines*), followed by a defense (by Timarchos, with Demosthenes probably speaking as well on Timarchos’ behalf).

While the various failings indicated in this law seem unrelated, they are all based on the ideal of protecting the integrity of one’s body as the personal manifestation of a free civic body, of keeping oneself, one’s family and one’s *polis* both intact and free (not beholden to the will or pleasure of any other) against external pressures and pleasures. That is, all these failing represent a failure of *enkratia*, or self-control in the face of enticements which might compromise the (physical or corporate). Here the familial body
(as blood line and inheritance), the civic body (as autochthonous Greek ethnicity), and the
corporeal body (the inviolate, free and equal citizen body) all interact and mutually
reinforce or compromise each other. To abuse or neglect parents or to “eat up” their
estate, or to break ranks or refuse military service (as a hoplite or an oarsman), or to
prostitute oneself is to become the slave of something over which one ought to be master,
including especially one’s own desires and passions in the various ways that they can be
“spent.” As Winkler notes, “the person who has sold himself will be ready to sell out the
common good of the city” (57). To put it viscerally, the charge of dokimasia rhetoron
implied that one had permitted an opening, an incontinence, which compromised bodily
integrity, submitting it to external pressures which could limit one’s self-mastery and thus
one’s action as a free citizen13. Since masculinity was founded upon a pattern of practices
rather than upon biology or anatomy, and since it was therefore slippery and always open
to question, one’s status as a free man, and therefore as a citizen, depended upon how one
had practiced or “used” one’s pleasure (to paraphrase Foucault’s The Use of Pleasure),
and how one could perform it when called upon to do so. As we have seen with
Demosthenes early attempts to speak, softness, weakness, or “suffering the body to wither
away through slothful neglect” would guarantee an unfavorable reception. To survive a
dokimasia rhetoron, one’s masculinity had to have been practiced (an ethos), and (so that
it could be) performed (in hupokrisis).

Again, the dokimasia rhetoron seems to have been invoked as an exception rather
than as a rule. It was more useful as a symbolic tool—rarely used but always at hand—for
enforcing a general regime of public conduct. Winkler suggests that it had “very little to
do with sex, and everything to do with political ambitions and alliances in the high-stakes game of city leadership according to the rules of honor/shame competition” (60).

Aeschines uses the allegation that Timarchos had prostituted himself to parry Demosthenes’ treason charge as well as to attack Demosthenes himself. Timarchus’ alleged prostitution becomes the vehicle with which Aeschines will call attention to Demosthenes’ voice, physical deportment, form, and general conduct (especially as literate rhetor) as signs of his “softness” and effeminacy.

In this way, performance and the appearance of artifice in performance drove the charges and countercharges that Demosthenes exchanged with Aeschines. Through this legal case, the importance of sex/gender hierarchies in the artistry of persuasion can be seen and heard, as it were, in action. But action as hupokrisis was simply the tip of an iceberg: gendered and sexed public self-presentation was a massive but largely submerged, visible as concealed, always dangerous but unavoidable route to social status and political power, and the primary route went straight through rhetoric. One crack in a well constructed persona could be titanic, resulting in profound cultural and political consequences precisely because, as we shall see, decisions of innocence of guilt, like exchanges of honor or shame, depended heavily on appearances: on patterns of public conduct, on the performances that displayed them, and on the “likely” practices and motivations which could be associated with them. In this sense then, hupokrisis was central not only to persuasion, but to the whole process of self-refashioning through which not only cultural status and honor but political innocence (and the very right to speak that went with it) were decided.

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Demosthenes called attention to Meidias’ insolent conduct, calling attention at the same time to his own conduct as it imitated and then departed from the Meidan model. Aeschines will similarly call attention not only to the conduct of Timarchos, but Demosthenes as well, as an oratorical version of the same type; each acts like someone who submits himself to the interests of others for pay: the kinaidia (sexually submissive) and the sykophantes (sycophant). In the same way, too, Aeschines calls attention to his own conduct as citizen-rhetor speaking before the jury. He must “deliver” the offensive practices (and performances) of Timarchos and Demosthenes and juxtapose them with his own alternative ideals of masculine conduct. And just as Demosthenes had to guard against misinterpretation, Aeschines has both to overcome the sensual beauty for which Timarchos and his type are known and admired, and present an equally “attractive” alternative, without allowing the audience to paint him with his own brush: stylizing his self-presentation in an appealing way to please and persuade.

Rhetorical action as a form of self-discipline and training in the dramatic rendering of ideologically charged conduct was the product par excellence of a larger social paradox of display and disavowal. Central to persuasion, the orator as actor yet could not be explicitly acknowledged. Central to rhetoric, it is never explained in any Greek rhetoric treatise. Like the subterranean world of metis that Detienne and Vernant attempt to excavate, like that world which Winkler opposes to the eccentric realm of philosophical writing, hupokrisis acts as the hinge (the strophinx) upon which rhetoric turns, the door to cultural capital and political power.
Clothes make the Man, or Undressing for Success

Very early in his speech, Aeschines reviews Athenian laws regarding orderly public conduct, including laws limiting the contact between teachers and students and gymnasts and their trainers, as well as the aforementioned laws against dereliction of military duty and prostitution. He referring repeatedly not only to the laws, but to the sober and honorable conduct of the men of old: Pericles, Themistocles, Aristeides and, especially, Solon (alleged author of the law against rhetors prostituting themselves, which Aeschines was invoking in his prosecution). "So decorous were those public men of old," urges Aeschines, "that to speak with the arm outside the cloak, as we all do nowadays as a matter of course, was regarded then as an ill-mannered thing, and they carefully refrained from doing it" (25). Aeschines then invokes a model to illustrate: the statue of Solon standing in the market-place of Salamis, arm respectfully inside the cloak. This is the very Solon who was said to have appeared naked before the people, singing rather than speaking his call to arms against the Salamians, hoping that an apparent fit of divinely inspired madness would save him from prosecution. More interesting than this fictional reconstruction of the Solon-image, though, is the actual deportment of Aeschines on the stage as he moves from this sober image to its contrast and anti-type: Timarchos.

Aeschines continues, "This is a reminiscence, fellow citizens, and an imitation of the posture of Solon, showing his customary bearing as he used to address the people of Athens" (25). But to what does the indefinite pronoun refer? Is "this" the imagined statue at Salamis, or Aeschines' own posture as he invoked that august pose? Having invoked the importance of a rhetor's bearing before the people as an indication of his
general moral conduct, Aeschines was surely conscious and careful to craft a bearing that would ring the contrast with Timarchos as effectively as possible. But does he want to contrast the proper modesty of the “public men of old” with his own age as well? Should he have his arm inside his cloak, as Solon had done, to demonstrate his own propriety? Or should he leave it out, as was the custom in his day, perhaps relying on other less obvious gestures of sincerity and modesty (a modesty he had already claimed for himself as reluctant champion of Athenian morality: 1, 3). Or should he remove it only momentarily, to illustrate the effect, and then remove it again?

His next move is equally interesting. How unlike those men of old, says Aeschines is this Timarchos:

Those men were too modest to speak with the arm outside of the cloak, but this man not long ago . . . in an assembly of the people threw off his cloak and leaped about like a gymnast, half-naked, his body so reduced and befouled through drunkenness and lewdness that right-minded men, at least, covered their eyes, being ashamed for the city (26).

Aeschines may overstate the case a bit, but regardless of the hyperbole, he could not have made this accusation if something close to what he describes had not happened at all. He clearly understands the audience as willing to grant that Timarchus in front of the Assembly had behaved shamelessly, reflecting his general shamelessness, and he calls upon the modesty of the audience to imagine what they properly ought not to have seen. to “observe” that they had covered their eyes rather than witness Timarchus’ half-uncovered, “reduced and befouled” body.
He is so shameless a speaker, Aeschines implies, that only legal action will keep him quiet (keep him from addressing the Assembly as rhetor) or keep his clothes on. His conduct at the assembly imitates his conduct in life: shameless, improper, and worthy of punishment. But unless Timarchos were simply as depraved as Aeschines said, he might have uncovered himself with just the sort of deliberate rhetorical skillfulness that Aeschines needs here. Perhaps he supported a suspicious peace with Philip by imitating the same disrobing strategy used by Solon himself to endorse an unpopular war with Salamis.

Even the august and conservative Quintilian, centuries later, equivocates on the meaning of exposure. For on the one hand, Quintilian takes pains to describe how the toga ought to be worn (IX. III. 138-144), and admonishes orators not to “draw back the left hand while extending the right” (131), to “throw the toga over the shoulder” or “draw up the fold to the waist” (130). But later he admits that as the speech gains momentum and approaches its climax, “practically everything is becoming, we may stream with sweat, show signs of fatigue, and let our dress fall in careless disorder and the toga slip loose from us on every side,” as long as we don’t allow such carelessness too soon (147). If we admit that a certain calculated dishabille adds to the image of the orator’s passionate disregard for anything but the true and good, then the question of orderly dress becomes one of use, timing, and interpretation rather than one of simple acceptance or prohibition. It depends on what this exposure reveals. Was Timarchos really just drunk and disorderly, or was his a calculated attempt to demonstrate a passionate devotion to
Athens’ safety through an dramatic display of her own exposure to Philip’s military might?

And what should Aeschines do here and henceforth? If he simply “modestly” reports the shameless act of Timarchos, he will forfeit some of the dramatic energy of the moment, juxtaposed as it is with Solon’s stolid statue. But ought he risk “acting out” such debauchery outright, having said that right-minded men ought not to see it? Is the dramatic rendering of shamelessness an effective extension of “mentioning what no one ought mention,” a tactic Aeschines uses repeatedly in this speech (37-38), and sanctioned by Solon’s own impassioned and inspired disrobing and, later, by Quintilian himself? Or is that going to far, destroying not only the comparison, but his own credibility as speaker?

If Aeschines condemns any version of self-exposure, he must be sure not to allow his audience to catch him reproducing the same pose later in his speech, at the height of his righteous indignation, lest he look like the very one he condemns by virtue of his posture. But conversely, if he simply follows the pattern of Solon’s statue, he risks alienating an audience for whom this level of reservedness had already become an affectation. Should he speak with the arm outside the cloak or not? Should he follow the practice of his own day or the composed statue of a dead Solon? Imitate the scandalous original or the noble imitation that departs from its own original? In any case, this is a moment for careful attention and skillful understanding of the limits of mimetic action that Aeschines should reach for in this setting, on this case, in front of this audience, at this moment.
This matter of pose and dress is not the only issue, however; it is only the first step in a casuistic chain connecting assembly behavior and public conduct as a prostitute. As I shall discuss in more detail below, Athens had no means, nor did it consider proper, to police or inquire into its citizens’ private behavior, including promiscuous sexual behavior. Even prostitution itself was not illegal per se, even if it was frowned upon. As long as one did not attempt to exercise the rights of a citizen by addressing the assembly or sitting on a jury or on the council, one would not be open to prosecution (Dover 29; Halperin 94-95). As long as he took no pay, or induced another citizen to accept pay, or slept with the wife of a citizen, Timarchos’ sexual practices were largely his own business. Although Athens had means to keep non-citizens out of official proceedings through the use of tokens (Hanson 88-89), it did not employ any coercive means to extract testimony from the accused or any witnesses (Sinclair 144). Thus Aeschines had no way to actually prove that Timarchos took money for sex, though it was just this practice that he was accusing Timarchos for.

And he is aware of the difficulty, for he warns the jury of what Demosthenes will say (119-131). Demosthenes, warns Aeschines, will argue in defense 1) that the tax on prostitution ought to show record of Timarchos payment, since the tax-collectors in their zeal always discover and extract payment from every prostitute in their jurisdiction, but no such record is forthcoming from Aeschines (119); and 2) that common report and rumor has labelled Timarchos a prostitute because of his beauty, but that he ought not be convicted on the basis of rumor and envy: on “appearances” (126). In both cases, Aeschines response is to call upon the importance and reliance of a citizen’s public
conduct and popular reputation: if he cannot rely upon that, then he has no defense at all (124-131). Neither "quibbling" about tax documents, nor an attempt to discredit a reputation as mere "rumor" are proper defenses for men whose conduct is truly above reproach.

Notice that Aeschines does not provide actual evidence in response to these charges, but calls upon common knowledge of public conduct (a conduct known only in terms of comings and goings, of being seen with someone in public, not of private transactions) as so many physical signs of guilt in order to secure his case. Common report, urges Aeschines, really is important and valuable, and Timarchos' popular reputation, like his conduct on the stage, represent and therefore prove his moral failings. Or, rather, not that common report is usually accurate about a man's conduct, but it is more important, the only thing, really, of value in a man's life. Rumor, like the undying fame which Homeric heroes sought through poetic compositions, or like the Goddess "Common Report" allegedly praised by Hesiod (128), made an honorable life worth living, a credit to the man and to his community. The seeming is the reality.

Not only, then, does a rhetorical habitus enculturate a pattern of practice (both the performative reiteration of a masculine self and the rehearsal for later opportunities to deliver it in public speaking), but it enculturates as well an ability to interpret public practices for the moral quality within. What does an exposed arm or flank, soft flesh or cloak, mean? In Aeschines' view of Athenian life, practice becomes the code for, and therefore equivalent to, morality: "It did not seem possible [to the framers of the nomoi] that the same man could be a rascal in private life, and in public a good and useful
citizen’’ (30). Following traditional ethos and nomoi, folk-ways and custom-laws, demands that one guard and protect what is said precisely because it was the substance of one’s moral worth as representative and member of the community.

These subtle associations between public undress and assembly address, between common report, public conduct, rhetorical delivery, and private transaction doesn’t end here. Aeschines’ quickly turns from Timarchus’ behavior to that of Demosthenes, referring to that common report that named Demosthenes “Batalos.” Aeschines mentions “Batalos” on several occasions. In the first instance, he suggests that the nickname was not given by his mother but by common report for his “malesness” (anandrias) and lewdness (kinaidas). In another speech, he gives the name a similar gloss: “the boys used to call him “Batalos,” he was so vulgar and obscene (kinaidian)” (On the Embassy 99). The nickname, Aeschines continues, was then switched to “blackmailer” or sykophantes, because Demosthenes was so anxious to say whatever anyone would pay him for. But in Against Timarchos, Aeschines presses the sexual innuendo further. Immediately following the Batalos passage, he continues:

For, Demosthenes, if anyone should strip off those exquisite, pretty mantles of yours, and the soft, pretty shirts that you wear while you are writing your speeches against your friends, and should pass them around among the jurors, I think, unless they were informed beforehand, they would be quite at a loss to say whether they had in their hands the clothing of a man or of a woman!” (107)

Aeschines never accuses Demosthenes of the lack of decorum which Timarchus has shown. Rather, through a cleverly ambiguous image, Aeschines himself disrobes
Demosthenes, asking the jurors to imagine Demosthenes doing just what they ought not to have seen Timarchus do. There he invokes what happened but ought not to have been seen, here he invokes what hasn’t happened but ought to be seen: a hermeneutic disrobing.

As Timarchus revealed his own debauchery by stripping his cloak off before the Assembly, Aeschines’ suggests, Demosthenes would reveal his effeminacy by stripping himself to show, not (only) his (soft and indecent) body, but his already visible soft shirts and pretty mantle. For the moment then, Demosthenes himself is figuratively being put on trial, scrutinized, as another, craftier, rhetorical version Timarchus. Timarchus reveals his own debauched body and kinaidian character in his undress (a sign of his shameful practices) and in the soft and disgusting body he there displays. Demosthenes’ lewdness is revealed rather in his dress, whose ambiguity hides even as it displays an ambiguous gender, whose softness is associated with being an evening speechwriter for hire, along with other nighttime activities that some men have to pay for. The dress is the form; the delivery is the matter.

In both cases, as with Demosthenes’ treatment of Meidias, rhetorical delivery is used synecdochally to represent the whole of a man’s public practice and, through that practice, to suggest the moral disposition and character behind it. At the same time, delivery figured as synecdoche draws attention to one’s own alternative display of manliness as neither too carefully composed (like Demosthenes) nor too carelessly exposed (like Timarchos). Speakers using this strategy thereby introduce a paradox. Calling attention to one’s own body (Timarchos through shameful undressing, and
Demosthenes through effeminate dressing) is morally questionable and the sign of a
kinaidian character, but the speaker who uses this argument risks calling attention to his
own performance as more masculine, and therefore more pleasing, and therefore open to
the very charges being levelled against an opponent. Rather like the Wizard of Oz
lecturing on the evils of hiding behind curtains. It’s no wonder that delivery is seldom
mentioned as an art or even as an important aspect of rhetoric, and when mentioned, that
it gets carefully hedged in by proscriptions about how one must not act, especially how
one must avoid “acting.”

The difficulty of the task is compounded by proscriptions that both ends of the
performative spectrum, allowing only a narrow band of acceptable demeanor pass
through. While Timarchus paid too little heed to maintaining decorum, Demosthenes
pays perhaps too much, thus demonstrating from the opposite end of the spectrum, the
same lewdness. Quintilian might have been talking about Timarchos and Demosthenes,
then, when he observed that “excessive care with regard to the toga . . . is just as
reprehensible as excessive carelessness (XI. III. 138). This double failing, through
insufficiency or excess, demonstrates the narrow wire upon which one had to balance. To
pay too little attention to one’s dress, particularly as a speaker, was shameless, since robes
were likely to fall into disarray and expose body parts that ought not be exposed. Only
those who sell their bodies have an interest in that. To pay too much attention to one’s
clothing suggested, paradoxically but with perfect sense, the same thing. Only prostitutes
(and women generally), says the argument, are so careful about their looks, since they
have to attract clients on that basis.
The clothes, soft and pretty, become reliable signs of the ambiguous gender of Demosthenes—the body clearly male, the softness clearly effeminate—and their true correspondence is proven in the very act of removal-for-inspection. The act of scrutinizing Demosthenes clothes’ (which the jury could do) is made to signify and actually produce the truth of Demosthenes’ *kinaidias/ syllophantes* inner character, covered and uncovered by those same clothes, the very well-known character-type for which Timarchus is undergoing legal scrutiny.

Elsewhere, Aeschines presses the identification of Demosthenes with Timarchus (and both with *kinaidoi*) through the names by which they are commonly known. This identification further connects both physical appearance and vocal quality with gender type and disposition, making delivery the primary simulacra of moral agency and gendered selfhood. Aeschines contrasts Timarchus’ possible defense—that common report slandered him because of his remarkable beauty—to Demosthenes’ claim that Batalos was a nickname from his mother or nurse (in response to his stutter or his deformity), and not common opinion (in response to his effeminacy). Here, Aeschines claims that Demosthenes and Timarchus are alike in that both are wrong: In Timarchus’ case, common report is true (he really is a pretty *kinaios*) and in Demosthenes case, it was a valid “common report” that gave him his name (*Batalos = kinaidos*), and not his nurse (126).

And, as I suggested earlier, the same valid “common report” that called him “Batalos,” later in life gives Demosthenes the name of blackmailer (*sukophantes*). This theme recurs often in *Against Timarchus* as well as in *On the Embassies*. Aeschines
argues that Demosthenes is nothing more than a hired pen, one who would write any speech for the highest bidder. In Against Ctesiphon, he makes the charge clearly: “But you, I think, are silent when you have gotten, and bawl aloud after you have spent; and you speak, not when your judgment approves, but whenever your paymasters so order” (218). The parallels with Timarchus and the solicitation of others for pay is clear, and clearly alluded to when Aeschines notes that the soft shirts of Demosthenes are those he wears when he is writing speeches against his friends, which he would do only as the result of a bribe: speech-writing is simply a subtler form of prostitution, and both can be seen in the distinctly unmanly dress (or undress) of the professional prostitute or logographer. “Demosthenes” says Aeschines, “after he had spent his patrimony, went up and down the city, hunting rich young fellows whose fathers are dead, and whose mothers were administering their property” (170).

Unlike Timarchus’ physical advances, Demosthenes makes literary advances as a hired logographer. But the implications are identical: of shameless profligacy, of passivity and promiscuity (chasing after young men with money and doing as they bid) produced by an inability to curb expensive tastes. Both reveal the failure of self-mastery characteristic of the kinaidoi. Most importantly, though, Aeschines calls attention to the similarity by referring to the action--the rhetorical delivery--of Timarchus and Demosthenes as speakers on the platform, either before a jury or before the Assembly. In this way, Aeschines identifies not only Demosthenes and Timarchus, but prostitution and logography as equally kinaidiat and dishonorable (atimia). The audience has clearly
seen, or can now see, the truth of Aeschines’ charges through what these men do in their speeches and in their (real or imagined) (un)dress.

Through his voice--stammering, lisping, breathy and enervated--as through his physical appearance, Demosthenes is revealed to be less-than-male. This might just be Aeschines’ looking for dirt in unlikely places, or stretching to malign an otherwise reputable character, but I suggest that the general assumptions behind Aeschines’ remarks imply much more: Greeks experienced human nature on the one hand as a function of behavior and disposition and, on the other, as a characteristic that makes itself known through a rhetoric of signs of the body and voice. Selfhood crystallizes in delivery. Aeschines could make his accusations stick because of the generally accepted and understood system of interpretation, known through reputation as rumor or “common report,” which read public actions and displays as proper or shameful; controlled or loose; hard or soft; masculine or effeminate. Physiognomy was the art of reading these bodily signs: a literacy of the flesh. The process of public self-presentation, of enacting approximations to a masculine ideal, crystallized in the performance of the rhetor, that is, in hupokrasis. Physiognomy was the complementary art, the art of the audience who, as critical “readers” of these performances, needed a public hermeneutic of bodily deportment on which to base their interpretations.

Athenian Androcentrism: The Truth and the Fib

For ancient Greek culture, one’s physical, markedly sexual and highly gendered deportment was intimately connected to one’s cultural capital, one’s political

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persuasiveness, even to one’s very right to speak. It is this fundamental cultural system of bodily self-presentation and interpretation which must inform the specific qualities of ancient Greek rhetoric and its historical development. This system is the key to be found even though historical practices go unwritten and therefore remain largely in the dark. This is the ground upon which historical figures must be established. The power of physical and vocal deportment was particularly salient in the case of gender because the status of one’s sex was never finally established, but had to be achieved and maintained in the face of intense competition, particularly for elite males. One important way for masculinity to be shored up or challenged was through its opposite as a foil.

One Greek term for the man who failed to live up to the ideal of Greek masculinity was, as we have seen, *kinaidos*; a term that meant, neither homosexual nor simply female, but one habituated to giving (rather than taking, with the image of domination and penetration always implied) pleasure, especially sexual pleasure. Winkler characterizes the *kinaidos* in terms of “promiscuity, payment and passivity to another man’s penetration” (46). The term was a reliable foil to the idealized *hoplites* or citizen-soldier, the wealthy citizen who owned armor, held his place in the ranks of the Athenian military, who knew how to rule himself and others, and who thus demonstrated rational moderation, mastery, and continence in all things.

Together these terms marked out the range of gender expression possible for men, but as ideals they were never finally achievable by any historical person, male or female. *Kinaidoi* were anatomically male, but according to their “second” nature, that is, through their practice of sexual promiscuity, passivity and prostitution, they were
“effeminate.” We have seen in the previous chapter examples of how indulging an inner disposition, allowing oneself to scratch a shameful itch, could alter one’s very nature. The Gorgias argued that the itch-scratcher would himself turn into a kinaidos just as, in the Republic, “excessive emphasis on athletics produces an uncivilized type, while a purely literary training [of the sort Demosthenes is being accused] leaves men indecently soft” (III. 410D; cf. X. 606-607); and in the Laws, “the man thus delighted becomes assimilated to those habits, good or bad, in which he delights,” (II. 656B) even as the tones and gestures by which character is imitated not only delight their audience but become the habit of those delighted by them, (II. 659D-660A). Aristotle uses the image of ruts worn into the turf through repeated use to suggest an even more material interaction between the soul and the body: actions imprint themselves onto the habitus, the ethos, the very physis of the actor (Phys. 805A).

Unless they were vigorously resisted, unmanly self-conduct—including gestures, looks, vocal qualities, deportment—could infect and overwhelm one’s very nature. One was never finished imitating the sort of man one could never simply and finally be. In this way, then, gender status was understood to remain slippery and reversible, even for elite hoplites. Indeed, elites were at greater risk than others that their public demeanor would be found wanting because they were under more intense scrutiny. Masculinity was thus always subject to challenge and always needed reassertion, and such reassertion was not an uncomplicated matter. Gender was not a matter of physiology but of behavior, of activity or passivity, and of the proper “use” (chreis) of pleasure (see Foucault 53-62; Winkler. One’s gender—we might say one’s character along the axes of
dominance/submission; giving/getting pleasure; or acting/being acted upon--was therefore never obvious. Rather, it had to be persuasively communicated through an interlocking system of action and interpretation, of display and scrutiny. Masculinity had to be acted out, performed, continually because gender was a rhetorical condition.

Nevertheless, or as a result, excellence in public competitions--displays of physical vigor and stamina--was highly prized. The Greeks, says Gouldner, valued bodily virtues--beauty, youth, health--but they especially valued fame that outlasted the body. And, "the fame which is best is that which is earned through one's own active efforts" (43). That is, Greek virtue, which was defined almost exclusively in male terms, was achieved through active contest, through what Goffman calls the character contest.

Gouldner continues, "Above all, a man is made legendary by his readiness to risk what is precious in continuing strife or competition against others" (43). Greek public (i.e. free male) life was saturated by the honor/shame binary, even for those who declined to participate in the contests. Further, the attempt to gain honor and avoid shame through the reassertion of gender frequently had to come at someone else's expense: "people do not find it pleasant to give honor to someone else, for they suppose that they themselves are being deprived of something" (Anon. lamb.). Gouldner (Enter Plato 1967) refers to this contest system as a zero-sum game, wherein fame is won from competitors, who gain in shame in proportion to the honor bestowed on the winner (49-51).

The pliability of one's nature, combined with the competition of display, made each public self-presentation like a performance contest. Demosthenes can successfully "misinterpret" Meidas' aristocratic superiority as a "natural" insolence and his humility
as an even worse manifestation of artifice. Aeschines can successfully misinterpret both Timarchos’ “naturally” careless public disrobing and Demosthenes stylish and too-studied attire as equally effeminate and scandalous: either insufficiently or too carefully composed. In each case, the winner reinterprets a pattern of practice as dishonorable, deciphering with one device both a shameful inner nature and an equally shameful artifice attempting to cover it up. This sort of contest, I argue, took place through *hupokrisis* every time a speaker stood up.

In Athens, where a democratic constitution and a pervasive ethnocentrism made civil violence shameful and unlikely, public speaking became an important arena of elite competition for honor and power: a site of action. After the democratic reforms, the Athenian political arena was such that political power accrued primarily to those who could excel in addressing the Assembly and the Council. Finley argues that,

> A man was a leader solely as a function of his personal, and in the literal sense, unofficial status within the Assembly itself. The test of whether or not he held that status was simply whether the Assembly did or did not vote as he wished, and therefore the test was repeated with each proposal. (15)

Because political power did not reside largely in offices or elected or appointed positions, politicians were defined simply by their continual and successful presence before decision making bodies: the Council that set the agenda for consideration of laws and actions, the Assembly where legislation was deliberated and voted upon, the courts where litigation established reputations, and broke them. Ober notes that, “the relative insignificance of most offices in the Athenian state made the Assembly and people’s courts unparalleled
institutions. He who would be a politician at Athens must address the Assembly and become active in the courts” (116).

Public speaking became a necessary skill for individuals seeking fame or power in Athens, and it was essential to the process of governance. Here too, as we shall see, the performance of masculine virtues was taken seriously, and honor or shame bestowed accordingly, with real political consequences. The communication of one’s own masculinity in opposition to the claims of others must have been, for the elite males for whom public speaking was a possibility and an expectation, relentless and exhausting. This was not a matter of leisurely dialogues or intellectual exploration, but of public performances by the elite of Athens before an audience of thousands involving the most serious of Athens’ legal and political affairs. Careers could be made and broken by audiences who bestowed honor upon some (including themselves) by denying it to others.

In this context, the saying attributed to Demosthenes by Athanasius (via Theophrastus) and rehearsed by Cicero (Orator 56; Brutus 142), Pseudo-Plutarch (845b), and Quintilian (XI, iii, 6) that delivery was the first, second and third most important part of rhetoric, takes on a new layer of meaning. But I want to push Demosthenes one step further. Rhetorical delivery functioned as the improvised performance of a pattern of practice through the cultivation and presentation of an idealized masculine self in a character contest performed against other rhetors. As such, delivery was central not only to the success of an orator but to virtually every aspect of public (i.e. free male) life in Athens. Public oratory was itself but one central, highly visible, and high stakes venue
within which individuals (always in terms of masculine ideals) competed for status and
prestige; it was not the only such venue for publicly performed action.

Not only in political oratory, but throughout Athenian public life, speaking skill
was an important tool for achieving and maintaining status. In dramatic competitions, in
the competing demonstrations of physicians and physiognomists, in the agonistic casting
of erotic spells and counterspells, in the singing of cathartic epodes, in the family contests
to participate in choral festival dances, in the tense banter of symposia, in the disputes of
the pre-Socratics and the wranglings of the sophists, winning or losing depended largely
on the persuasive public performance of embodied cultural ideals. These competitions
turned on an aesthetics of self-presentation through the skillful display—in action and in
voice—of physical self-control, gendered deportment, and sexual charisma. Stehle says
briefly: “Performance was part of the ‘theatrical’ public life of a culture governed by
honor and shame” (7). This theatrical public life rose to most consequential and
significant pitch in the form of rhetorical delivery, where the very life and constitution of
the polis was determined. But when we read rhetoric as depicted by philosophy, a calm
intellectual process of finding available means of persuasion, of logic and enthymemetic
structures and categorized audience types, this entire theatrical realm drops away,
breathlessly and without a whisper.

And as a theater of honor and shame, public speech was far more than just words.
Orators were expected to embody and physically display cultural markers of status and
esteem. And oratorical success and social prestige generally, relied, in turn, upon one’s
robust, disciplined, and unaffected—i.e. masculine—bodily and vocal action (*askesis*, including *phonaskesis*). What mattered, as much as what was said, was how it was said.

There are several additional factors which might lead us to view Athenian culture as one for which gendered public performance was particularly important to one’s persuasive speaking. In an underpoliced state like Athens, the *kinaidos* image and the formal necessity of a public scrutiny against the “soft” citizen merged one’s personal business with one’s public image, making both a serious matter. For one thing, Athens differed from other city states in policing practices: slave/free status was not visibly marked by dress codes as it was in other cities (pseudo-Xenophon 1.10). Further, Athenians prided themselves on not policing people’s activities behind closed doors. Demosthenes (24.192-193) for example, approves of the laxity of laws concerning the private lives of ordinary citizens (*idiotai*) in contrast to the harsh laws that applied to those *rhetors* who routinely elected to enter the political arena and thus subject themselves to increased legal scrutiny. Similarly, Dionysos of Halicarnassus contrasts the Greeks, who tolerated private behavior with Romans, who “drew back the curtain on every household even to the bedchamber” (*Antiquities* 20.13).

One could even prostitute oneself if one chose, as we have seen: Aeschines talks about those who deliberately forego participation in the political arena, equating them with those who are habituated to sinning against their own bodies, but admitting that no action should be taken against them as long as they stay out of public affairs (*Against Timarchus* 158-161). But precisely because privacy was permitted, and to the degree that private vices had bearing upon public conduct and leadership qualifications, some
method was necessary for assessing a person’s virtues, virtues that might be compromised by unsavory private predilections: “The life of a virtuous man ought to be so clean that it will not admit even of a suspicious wrongdoing” (Aeschines 48).

What’s more, by the time of its democratic reforms, Athens had ceased to be the sort of face-to-face society in which members knew each other by sight and could judge character on the basis of previous interactions and first-hand knowledge. Thucydides (8.66.3) connects the size of the city with the fact that its members were not known to each other. Ober, commenting on this fact, notes Aristotle’s contrast between the small size of his ideal city and the situation at Athens: “Unlike the ideal city of the Politics, which was to be ‘easy to take in at a glance (eisunoptos: 1326 B 24), Athens remained an ‘imagined community’ in that no one had ever seen the entire demos assembled” (Ober 33). It was therefore difficult or impossible, even given the importance of rumor and “common report,” to know the private predilections--the phusis--of every citizen. But citizens’ claims for leadership status and public influence made it important to know just what sort of men they were.

And even if the relatively small group of elite rhetors were known to each other, they were not so known by the audience, which might be composed of poor or disabled citizens, commoners, and rural farmers who could subsidize their infrequent trips to the city by attending the Assembly or one of the people’s courts (Hanson 7-12). This meant that speakers had to rely, as Aristotle notes in the Rhetoric, on the construction of their character (ethos as way of life) in the course of their pleadings (though not, I am arguing, simply through the words in a text, but also through the “language” of the body). This
character had to be created in the course of the speech itself, just as character for Goffman as asserted through action. But since speeches were often written by someone other than the speaker, and since speakers rarely defended their own character in any case (a strategy that was frowned upon as arrogant unless the speaker's character was under attack), the bodily self-presentation of the speaker in the speech itself was of primary importance for judging character.

Political changes in Athens intensified this demand that character be created through self-presentation. The popular appeal of the tyrants (Pisistratus and Cleisthenes) to Athenian "nationalism" had eroded the status of the aristocracy and the deference that noble birth could afford local nobles. With the fall of the tyrants and the rise of democracy (through military and navel encounters in which "common" citizens took part), a consciousness of citizenship and equality took hold. In this atmosphere, the automatic deference that elites and nobles once expected was, if not gone, markedly reduced. In the vacuum created by the fall of the tyrants, a speaker's charismatic appeal replaced the traditional lines of authority that had maintained social stability. Citizen-consciousness meant that every potential leader—and all who aspired to elevate or maintain their high social status—had to win respect and honor by virtue of their public actions, including military, financial, and rhetorical actions alike (Ober 118-155).

There were thus several factors combining to generate a cultural system of public scrutiny and public performance: the liberal attitude towards private life in Athens; the relative anonymity of speakers, particularly concerning their private dealings; the speaker's need to (re)establish his masculine self-mastery, integrity and dominance; the
scarcity of resources of honor and status, such that the favoring of one came at the expense of another; and, finally, the audience's reluctance to bestow honor on or follow an elite speaker little known to them or known only through rumor, an interest deriving in part from the possibility that the speaker's success might come at the expense of members of the audience (Ober 125-128). All of these factors combined to make a speaker's action both problematic and consequential. There was no written text to analyze, no newspaper transcription to return to. Everything had to be acted out before the audience.

These factors, a sort of ad-hoc bricolage of action and scrutiny, worked together to form a slippery and sometimes self-contradictory method of assessing status, rank and approximation to the hoplite ideal (or, gaps in the public image through which one could attack in a dokimasia suit). All public action became symbolic action: the conscious and crafted performance of individual integrity, bravery and restraint in public before unruly and distrustful observers and ambitious competitors. Political and legal address was simply one focussed instantiation of this general habit of being. This action could be more important than the words spoken, since words could be fashioned (and paid for) beforehand, by others. Words were precisely those items composed at night and answerable to wealth and therefore suspicious. Precisely because Athens did not regulate private behavior strictly or police it invasively, its citizens needed a public system of interpretation, a visible hermeneutic which could allow them to judge individuals and their characters on the basis of inspection. The solution to this problem of judging character was answered through a practical, rhetorical physiognomy.
Reading Body Signs:

Physiognomy as a Literacy of the Flesh

Aeschines' metaphorical undressing of Demosthenes, a topical twist on Timarchus's own undressing, is itself but one explicit manifestation of another sort of uncovering: revealing someone's inner nature by "reading" their rhetorical deportment, voice and physique. The Physiognomic, a treatise attributed to Aristotle and probably written by one of his students, begins with this observation: "Dispositions follow bodily characteristics and are not in themselves unaffected by bodily impulses. . . . Conversely, that the body suffers sympathetically with affections of the soul is evident in love, fear, grief and pleasure" (I. 805a). Although written shortly after the classic age of oratory, this treatise systematizes a belief and a practice that must have been much older.

Even in Homer, we see a connection between dispositions, bodily impulses and bodily characteristics. Thersites was certainly no Achilles: "He was bandy-legged and lame in the one foot, and his two shoulders were rounded, stooped together over his chest" (II. 215-220). But Odysseus doesn't revile and clout him only for his deformities; he's also a "babbler" and immoral to boot, he dares to speak out against the insolence (hubris) of Agamemnon (along the same lines, that is, as Achilles himself had done earlier). In this, he is much like Demosthenes himself speaking out against the insolence of Meidias. And being at once a babbler, shameless and lame was, as we have seen, itself no coincidence. Because speech was also always action (delivery), no one with a speech defect, or "soft" or lame could, by definition, be a good speaker. Good speaking implied good physical, vocal and gestural qualities: good acting.

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This principle of *physiognomy* as identified by the writer of the Physiognomy, derives meaning from it roots: the principle of physis. The verb *phuein*—to have a recognizable appearance—occurs in Homer on many occasions. In the *Iliad*, the appearance of an imposing Nestor-like human figure in Agamemnon’s dream is connected to its *phue*: its nature and character (II. 58). But *physis* occurs only once in Homer, in relation to identifying a healing herb, a *pharmakon*, Moly: “Argeiphontes gave me the herb, drawing it from the ground, and showed me its nature (physis). At the root it was black, but its flower was like milk” (X. 303). Entraglio explains the significance of this occurrence:

With this word, the poet designates a reality characterized by three features: it is born and grows and hence can be named with a word derived from the verb *phuein*; it has a constant shape, subject to precise description... In short, the regularity with which a visible outward appearance reveals the latent existence of a particular quality is called physis (16).

Physiognomy, or the science of reading human *physis* on the basis of regular features, transferred this basic principle of regularity to realm of human form and action. Physiognomy could be applied to the “interpretation” of individual characteristics, but as we shall see, it also applied to general typings of gender, race, or morphology to read one’s “Greekness,” one’s “maleness” or one’s basic animal disposition.

Cicero (*de Fato* 5.10) mentions that by the time of Pericles, a certain Zopyrus claimed proficiency in the field of physiognomy; and Diogenes Laertius identifies an Antisthenes who wrote a treatise about the time of Socrates. Finally, Evans mentions an
epigraph from Theocritus describing the physiognomist Eusthenos: “skilled to infer the character of the mind from the eye” (10). In each case, a sympathy or regular bond is presumed to exist between visible or audible signs, and inner dispositions or character. Sometimes this connection can be quite literal. Aristotle, for example, held that men had lower voices because the testicles acted as weights which stretched the voice, as it were, “just as women do who weave at the loom; they stretch the warp by hanging stone weights on it” (V. vii. 787b25). This weight stretched the seminal vessels, which in turn were attached to the blood-vessels. “which has its starting-point at the heart, near the part which sets the voice in motion” (787b30). Apparently, in his fondness for the image, Aristotle neglected to notice that stretching a chord raises its pitch rather than lowering it. But the important point, the heart of the matter, as it were, remains that men’s anatomy and their voices are connected. Elsewhere (On Things Heard), voices are similarly characterized in terms of masculinity and its lack: “The voices of children are weak, as also those of women and eunuchs” (803b). Children, women and eunuchs go together in that all depart from the firm, strong and steady masculine ideal.

But it is in the pseudo-Aristotelian Physiognomy that we have the earliest complete systematization and interpretation of bodily types. In this treatise, as with Aristotle, the physiognomist relies heavily on gender types, but he also uses animal characteristics (the zoological aspect), ethnic variations (the ethnological aspect) and facial expression (the dispositional aspect) to chart the meanings of physical and vocal signs. Not surprisingly, the image of the kinaidios appears in the physiognomy. What is surprising is that this is the only instance in which gestures, movements and postures
dominate the description (rather than more stable markers of morphology like size, shape, or color). More surprises: this is the only description for which an individual is named as an example of the type. But, no surprise, the example is a sophist:

The signs of a *kinaidos* are an unsteady eye and knock-knees; he inclines his head to the right; he gestures with his palm up and his wrists loose; and he has two styles of walking—either waggling his hips or keeping them under control. He tends to look around in all directions. Dionysios the sophist would be an instance of this type” (III.15).

Gestures of the eye and head can reveal the *kinaidos* just as a weak voice reveals the eunuch, and they are seen here to be, by accident or by some deeper kinship, just the gestures and movements of the sophist. Several centuries later, Polemo will describe the Roman *androgyynos* in very similar terms:

You may recognize him by his provocatively melting glance and by the rapid movement of his intensely staring eyes. His brow is furrowed while his eyebrows and cheeks are in constant motion. His head is tilted to the side, his loins do not hold still, and his slack limbs never stay in one position. He minces along with little jumping steps; his knees knock together. He carries his hands with palms turned upward. He has a shifting gaze, and his voice is thin, weepy, shrill, and drawing (63).

This type is “substantially identical” to the Roman *cinaedus* (Gleason). While the *angrogynoi* presented an appearance of gender-indeterminacy, the *cinaedus* describes deviant sexual behavior: to “males who prefer to play a “feminine” (receptive) role in
intercourse with other men” (Gleason 64). Like the androgynos, the cinaedus betrays himself by his shifting eyes, his arms turned outwards, his tilted head, mincing gait, wiggling shoulders and weak voice.

But these similarities do not negate the multiplicity of physiognomic systems that could co-exist. The deportments of Ajax and Odysseus, or Meidias and Demosthenes, or Aeschines and Timarchos were not simply better or worse approximations to the same ideal. They also point to real differences in the ideal images and actions which were imitated and upheld. The differences articulated by Aristophanes in Clouds between Better and Worse Arguement (see note 9) point to real differences in conceptions of beauty, between the smooth and supple beauty of prepubescent boys, for example, and the manly ideal of rough, hardness. Similar differences of opinion can be noted concerning the acceptable range of mimicry, rhythmical variation, gesture and movement in a performance.

As we have seen, gender was not a mutually exclusive binary system--either/or--but a matter of degrees and of partisan interpretation. The incremental approximation to a gendered ideal matched the opinion of ancient physiology, in which male and female seed could mix in different proportions in both men and women. As Gleason puts it, “masculinity in the ancient world was an achieved state, radically underdetermined by anatomical sex” (59). Males could have significant female characteristics and be of the female “type” just as females could be of the male type. Effeminate men, Greek kinaidioi, and Roman androgynoi, demonstrate their female character both through their disposition, and their bodies. They are soft, their eyes and slack arms and mincing gait
are in constant motion, and (because so many find this pleasing) they must be anxious to please (recall the Batalos variant as prone to pleasure: Halperin, 133).

These two basic characteristics, softness of limb, joints and sinews, and incessantly shifting motion—are the calling cards of women, boys, and effeminate men (and, when they are mentioned at all, children). The true masculine type can always be predicted through the negation of these characteristics: the flesh, joints and sinews of men are firm, solid, hard; their movements are steady, controlled, slow, constant. But if it was morally (rhetorically and politically) preferable to display masculine characteristics, it was aesthetically preferable to observe and pursue those whose gender was more typically non-masculine: boys and women. The problem was determining who was really masculine and who feminine by nature, and who was imitating one or the other, either to gain social status or to gain admirers. This was more difficult than it looked.

The kinaidoi, like women, either waggle their hips or keep them under control. Like the dress of Timarchos and Demosthenes, one can be accused from either end of the spectrum, one end being an over-compensation for the other. Kinaidoi attempting to conceal their real character, but not knowing how to walk like a real man, hold their hips too stiffly, thus giving themselves away. The hermeneutic problem is to differentiate the real man from the excessive pretense of masculinity by the effeminate, to differentiate the appealing softness of youth and the disgusting softness of self-pampering: “The boys of those days were downy soft, creamy and smooth. . . . [but] your pupils are sissies and soft” (Clouds 1138-45). Youthful softness was an appealing virtue in youth, but artificial softness (to look appealing) was a scandal. This ambiguity was the natural consequence
of an artifice, a *techne*, the pleasing aspect of any performance which was admired as
pleasing but condemned as art, which had to be displayed but could never be explicitly
stated or publically admitted. The ambiguity was related to the self-erasing art of
delivery.

Interpretive ambiguity, the collapse of apparently similar traits into polar opposite
moral valuings (and of opposing character types into essentially identical outward
manifestations), allowed any performer to contrast his own natural virtue with an
opponent's excessive, overdone, and therefore obviously artificial and essentially
deceptive artifice. While I am simply speaking my mind, my opponent is clearly playing
a role to please the audience and line his own pockets.

The Attraction of a Well-Oiled Presentation

The very possibility that one might consciously monitor and adjust one's
movement and posture, though, indicates the universal slipperiness of this embodied
hermeneutic system of scrutiny and display. The physiognomist has to admit that real
men and women don't always (read, "never") fit the mold: they compensate, act,
habituate themselves to being other than what they really are. They mold themselves and
have been molded. Physiognomy and a culture of gender scrutiny thus both demands and
condemns *askesis* as self-discipline and self-grooming: attention to how one carries
oneself. When Plato notes in the *Laws* that a nursemaid molds children's souls with
stories the way she mold their bodies with her hands, he is referring to a process of
physical disciplining which began at birth and continued through professional life. One
had to adjust and perfect gender characteristics. Physical and moral *askesis* began with swaddling (around the chest for girls, around the loins for boys) and continued through childhood at the gymnasium. Galen, following Hippocrates, notes that by massaging, squeezing and molding the infant body—the face, chest, buttocks, limbs, hips—the nurse can help it to conform to cultural ideals, “so that imperceptibly that which is as yet not fully formed may be molded into conformity with its natural characteristics” (Galen in Gleason 70). The forehead, nose, chest, waist, hips, and genitals alike could be massaged, pulled, pushed and swaddled to more closely mimic the “natural characteristics” which the child both did and did not possess (Gleason 71).

Further, this early disciplining was not simply superficial, but imprinted itself upon the body and could became its nature, its physis: this was precisely the point of youthful massage and gymnastic training, to make culture back into nature. The flesh must be groomed while it is still soft. Youthful behaviors and dispositions, too, were “impressionable” and could become a sort of second nature, even affecting the body’s physiology. The Aristotelian *Problems* notes this possibility precisely in terms of men who are naturally effeminate:

This situation comes to be true for some men out of habit, since whatever they regularly do they come to enjoy, even emitting their fluid in this fashion. So they desire to do whatever it happens to be that brings this pleasure, and actually habit becomes, as it were, their nature (*physis*). Therefore any man who not before adolescence, but at adolescence develops the habit of being acted upon sexually, since memory follows the experience and pleasure follows the memory, because
of the habit they, as it were naturally desire to be acted upon. The repetition and 
habit become for them a sort of nature. And if a male is both hypersexual and 
effeminate, all the more so.

Itch scratching leaves its residue in the body’s nature, making it a palimpsest of 
the flesh, revealing in its proclivities past actions and habits. The same sentiment is 
rehearsed in Aristotle’s *Rhetoric* (1.11. 1370a) and in Plato’s *Republic* (395d). In this 
frame, nature functions precisely as habituated action, as convention. These men really 
do become soft, wiggling, lax, shift, weak, mincing dandies.

Boys who indulged in the pursuit of sensual pleasures would, as adult men, 
become habituated to this practice. It would infect them and become part of their nature. 
Thus actions, dispositions, habits and “natural” inclinations were fluid and open to 
alteration or corruption. In this way, humans differed from animals which were always 
simply what they were. The very cultivation required of nurses for their charges became, 
when initiated by men themselves, an abomination, perhaps because no longer necessary 
and therefore against nature. Between boyhood and manhood, being “receptive,” or 
grooming the self takes on very different meanings. What is required earlier soon 
becomes reprehensible and unmanly.

Further, the very question of molding the body into conformation with its 
“natural” characteristics begs the question of what is natural. If men are naturally thinner 
at the hips and broader in the chest, then there would be no need of swaddling and 
massaging. But precisely because the image, the appearance of the masculine type, rarely 
expresses itself as it should, the nurse must help it along. In this way, humans must
cultivate what animals express naturally, that is, without the aid of nurture. The
Physiognomic notes that “it is especially in the creations of nature that one can see how
body and soul interact with each other, so that each is mainly responsible for the other’s
affections. For no animal has ever existed such that it has the form of one animal and the
disposition of another” (I. 805a).

But, with humans, there is no such guarantee. In fact, it is precisely the slippage
possible in the human case that makes physiognomic so difficult a science to master:
“Those who proceed in their science entirely by characteristics are wrong; first of all
because some men, who are in no sense alike, have the same facial expressions (for
instance the brave and shameless man have the same expressions), but are widely
different in disposition” (I. 805b). Here the physiognomist must assess many
characteristics together in order to arrive at an overall impression, but never admit that the
system, while semiotically arbitrary, is nevertheless politically useful.

The question of molding and askesis generally crystallizes around the problem of
gender deception, imitation and posing: concepts included in the term hupokrisis. If
susceptibility to physical molding, imitation and consequent deception are characteristics
which separate humans from animals, they are also the characteristics which separate
females from males. Women, and particularly prostitutes, are known and expected to
attend to their looks through careful attention to clothing, cosmetics, and the like. They
have to cover up or compensate for imperfections they do not wish to have noticed. They
pose, they act. For this reason, the physiognomist admits, the science must deal both with
“natural affections of disposition, and with such acquired ones as produce any change in the signs studied by the physiognomist” (II. 806a).

Females are “more susceptible to rearing and handling” and are as a class “less honest” (Physiognomic V. 809a-b). Females, like infants, have “softer, moister” flesh; this softness is just the receptivity that makes molding possible in infants, but only the feminine type will retain this “softness” and this tendency to deceive. Males should become hard and unyielding both in body and in spirit. Women, because they are both soft and deceptive, adorn and pamper themselves with costumes, jewelry and cosmetics, like Peitho (Persuasion) and adopt gestures and poses designed to please and arouse others. Persuasion is, after all, a goddess in the train of Aphrodite, and she is known by her necklaces, an adornment that signifies the visual and erotic side of persuasion as desire. To mold oneself to please another is precisely what characterizes feminine deceptive wiles.

Aristophanes in Clouds has Better Argument make this contrast between the shameless youth of today and the proper deportment of boys in the good old days, who “would not make his voice weak, molding it to please an adult admirer, or walk about while acting as a procurer with his eyes” (1135). The signs that both pseudo-Aristotle and Polemo mention, the shifting eyes and walk, including the weak voice, are in this case seen as conscious adoptions rather than “natural” characteristics. These boys are trying to act this way, trying to please and “procur” the desire of others just as prostitutes, and women generally, were understood to do. Demosthenes, it seems, had the bad fortune to be born with just the signs that others took on to gain admirers.
Of course, in keeping with the general slipperiness of the system, when an older Athenian male was aroused, he could always claim that the beloved was at fault, that their shameless and inviting behavior “caused” the attraction. The physiognomic attitude held by elites, which could read in a boy’s attractiveness signs of deceptive “over-compensation” or self-indulgent pampering, can enforce an interpretation of intent that may tell us nothing about what Athenian boys were actually trying to do. Their intent may have often been just the opposite. In a move paralleling that in Aristophanes, Clement offers this advise about proper manliness, claiming that it originated with Zeno:

Let the face be open, the eyebrows neither drooping, nor the eyelids wide apart nor turned back. The neck should not be stretched up stiffly, nor the parts of the body be loosely jointed together. Let the limbs be held by a proper tautness. The mind should be keen and well keyed for discussion, and in firm possession of what has been said. Let the gestures and movements give no hope to the intemperate, but rather let modesty rest upon the countenance, and firmness be evident in the face. (Evans 27).

This set of prescriptions seems intent on producing an attractive appearance defined precisely in masculine terms: “tautness,” “firmness,” not losing control of one’s own desirability such that it arouses others. If anyone is aroused by your behavior, Clement seems to suggest, you will be held to blame. Whether to attract a suitor or to not attract a suitor, one must groom oneself, attend to one’s deportment, act. The actor’s art on the stage, and the orator’s art on the platform were, in this sense, simply heightened
recreations of the sort of posing that Athenian males had to perfect in public life generally.

In each case, arousing the audience (or the spectator) is the sign of an effeminate desire to please, and firmness in men acts as a metonym for the firm control over another’s arousal. But in each case, the subjunctive verb belies what follows it. Real men do not pamper, adorn or “unnaturally” beautify themselves in order to please others. But to strive not to appear to be “pleasing,” not to arouse expectations, is itself a form of molding performed in the service of other expectations. The open face, clear brow, lively glance and taut limbs are just the sort of controlled bodily form and posture considered proper and beautiful for men, just as a strong voice is considered pleasing. These are the things men should do and would prefer. Enacting modesty and firmness, even as it was intended to prevent arousing desire or pleasing the spectator, was itself a form of attractiveness, itself inherently pleasing.

In the same way, in The Clouds, Better Argument laments the fact that boys no longer oiled themselves as they did in the past. But is this the oil of self-discipline, of the gymnasium, of masculinity, or was this the attractive oil of self-grooming. The system continued functioning by virtue of this slippery undecideability. That is, it remained well oiled without appearing to be so.

Like someone consciously striving to be spontaneous, Athenian male public action was a study in self-contradiction, but a useful one. Anyone who lusted after another male, especially a social inferior or a youth, could lay the blame on the arouser: they did what they should not have done. Self-fashioning that begins in infancy should
serve merely to reinforce "natural" tendencies. But the more important this early molding might be to approximate that type—in those males like Demosthenes whose weak bodies and voices are of the female type (kinaidoi and androgynoi) for example—the more deceitful it will be, and the more problematic. Because the cultivation and performance of discipline was so important and so beneficial to human "nature," men could be simultaneously expected to mold themselves to an ideal while being scrutinized for evidence of this very molding, evidence of posturing, deceiving, pretending to be what they were not.

An anonymous Latin physiognomist sums up the whole problem "The true character of a human being may be obscured by assiduous effort and deceptive behavior, so that it frequently happens that a single individual may exhibit a complex disposition compounded of various animal signs, whereas animals are simple, naked, take no precautions, and show their true nature out in the open" (Gleason 76). For this very reason, the pseudo-Aristotelian treatise goes to great lengths to discount earlier physiognomical systems that relied only on individual characteristics for interpretation.

The need to approximate the ideal from which one deviated became more important the more profound the deviation. The less one appeared to be naturally masculine, hard, and tough (or soft, smooth, and supple) the more one had to practice seeming so, and the more this practice was successful, the more anxious an audience would be about the artifice surrounding any display. A man might desire a youth whose supple softness was the result of depilation and oil. Another's natural weakness or breathiness might be hidden behind the seamless self-molding of a deceptive artifice. In
this sense, delivery became the more crucial as evidence of it was the more damning, and was always pitted against a cultural physiognomic anxious to root out the pretense of artifice lest it award honor to the undeserving. Delivery and physiognomy thus constituted complementary arts of concealing and revealing the fashioning of appearances.

Demosthenes and Hupokrisis: a Man Acting like a Real Man

Deception, then, can proceed in several directions. Kinaidoi may attempt to conceal their true nature, appearing to be more manly than they really are (which one can detect through the inevitable slip or overcompensation). Or, on the contrary, young men may mold their “natural” selves so as to control the arousal of others, whether to incite it or dampen it. And if a masculine attention to and maintenance of one’s own arousing form is itself a form of beauty, the two converge and become, in effect, the same. Aeschines’ decloaking of Demosthenes works upon both: the soft and pretty clothing suggests the pampering which Demosthenes affords himself to write speeches, win clients and please audiences. But the suggestion also is made that Demosthenes has concealed his true effeminacy, unlike Timarchus who reveled in it. If Demosthenes were to act true to character—i.e. as a kinaidos—he, too, would reveal body parts that he does not reveal. Either way, Demosthenes loses: as a speaker, he should not bare his limbs before the Assembly or the jury, but as a kinaidoi, Demosthenes should reveal his true nature by taking off his clothing; if only so that they could see it for what it really was.
What is true in this case is also true generally. Orators and sophists, because they are under heightened public scrutiny, should attend carefully to their deportment, their voice, their looks. This is the aspect of *askesis* to which Eunomus and Satyrus allude in the Plutarchan episode concerning Demosthenes’ training. But, because they are under heightened scrutiny, the masculine ideal demands that they must not appear to be catering to or attempting to please or arouse the audience. Demosthenes must cultivate his voice and body to please the audience and win a hearing, but molding one’s voice and body for the pleasure of another is just what separates the real man from the *kinaidoi*, women and children.

Aeschines the physiognomist can interpret for us what Demosthenes really is if for no other reason than that orators had to perform the reality that physiognomy claimed to interpret. In other words, Aeschines charges were guaranteed to hit the mark by virtue of the expectations placed upon orators in general. The question was, simply, whose hits would be more pleasing and persuasive to the audience, more risky, more quick, subtle, nuanced, and effortless. Action required the best actor. In fact, when we look at the earliest rhetorics to include detailed discussions of action—the *Rhetorica Ad Herrenium*, Cicero and Quintilian—their recommendations closely follow the physiognomy of the time. Cicero in *Orator* illustrates for us the action of the orator:

He will maintain an erect and lofty carriage, with but little pacing to and fro, and never for a long distance. As for darting forward, he will keep it under control and employ it but seldom. There should be no effeminate bending of the neck, no twiddling of the fingers, no marking the rhythm with the finger joint. He will
control himself by the pose of his whole frame, and vigorous and manly attitude of the body” (xviii. 59).

Action, comprising both actio and pronunciatio, was the expressive equivalent of physiognomy. Both relied upon the assumed connection between the soul and the body, both deplored and relied upon the human deception/cultivation that made their art important and difficult. The Ad Herennium begins by separating those aspects of delivery that can be cultivated from those that can’t, giving attention only to the former as within the scope of rhetoric. He concludes by noting the usefulness of what ought to be done and reminding his reader that “good delivery ensures that what the orator is saying seems to come from his heart” (III.xv.27) even though it is, by definition, cultivated. This contradiction—between admitting that action proceeds from cultivation and practice, and the believing that its results “come from the heart” rather than that very practice—parallels the physiognomical paradox in which the physiognomist claims to interpret an effeminacy given away by the very attempt to conceal it. In both, the authors feign to accept a cultural rule that makes a body tell the souls truth, even if forced to do so through a strict regimen of cultivation and practice that makes of truth a convention.

I have suggested that scrutinizing others through a physiognomy focused on gender performance constituted a significant cultural hermeneutic with important political ramifications. To be powerful, one had to control desire: the desire aroused in others and the desire aroused by others in oneself. A speaker had to please others even as he appeared not to be attempting to please them. To be powerful, he had to approximate masculine ideals through molding and self-discipline and meet competitive challenges to
his masculine nature through this very self-molding (as Demosthenes did in response to Eunomus’ advice). But he had to do so without betraying any artifice while, if possible, persuasively interpreting the naturalized artifice of your competitor as an artificial nature (as Aeschines attempted to do in his recrimination of Demosthenes and Timarchos). The rhetor performed nothing that wasn’t expected of Athenian citizens generally, or of Athenian elites specifically; he simply had to do it better, more consistently before a larger and more critical and suspicious audience. Hupokrisis was at the center of this task.

For Aeschines, then, Demosthenes batalos, the stutterer, the kinaidos, can be uncovered through public, visual scrutiny in his status as rhetor, as public speaker. Demosthenes’ performance, his dress, his voice, his mannerisms, his physique, are all relevant to and a part of the speech. Fine clothing and their arrangement, are, for Aeschines, aspects of Demosthenes speech worthy of examination and criticism, they are necessary, and they reveal even as they conceal relevant information about Demosthenes’ character. Writing, on the other hand, is not necessary, not part of a rhetores legitimate activity. Writing constitutes a separate, though equally suspect activity that needs to be invoked, revealed as it were, with the imagined stripping of Demosthenes’ clothing. Beneath the soft, fancy cloaks and shirts is a soft, effeminate body that speaks volumes about Demosthenes true character. Beneath the flawless eloquence is an equally damning body of literacy, paradoxically revealed in the too well-spoken, the too carefully worded, and therefore inauthentic, deceitful and flattering speech. What Aeschines prefers is spontaneous, manly action where everything happens at the moment, out in the open.
Writing, this excessive attention to words, flatters audiences and deceives them into allowing what ought not to be allowed. What’s worse, it is done in private and at night. Because it is not part of the speech, its effects must be uncovered, exposed as it were, in just the same way that other unseemly nighttime activities are exposed: by scrutinizing the practitioners for the lasting traces of softness, weakness, effeminacy. The virtue of speech is not its ability to be written down and perused, but rather its public exposure to the light of day as performed, where all the traces of a man’s action, public and private, can be seen and judged. A speech is the sum of all a man’s life because all his actions, habits, practices, all his inclinations, desires and weaknesses are written there. To reduce persuasion and the art of rhetoric to words, to that written in the mind, is a long way from the world of ancient Greek oratory.

Delivery was thus centrally important not only to performance per se, but specifically to the public and political persuasiveness of a speaking performance, and it participated in a larger culture of bodily display and scrutiny which had to be practiced and learned so well that traces of its presence were erased. Ancient Greek sensitivity to physiognomic practices suggest that public self-presentation was not simply inborn and natural, but was achieved and rehearsed, that it had to be taught and learned, through performance contests, the most significant of which was speaking before the assembly and the courts. Conversely, this delivery/physiognomy coupling, because it was necessarily tied to personal identity (as written words were not), distinctly outranked writing as tools for winning cultural capital, bestowing honor, and determining innocence, even when some form of literacy was widespread and widely acknowledged.
To locate ancient Greek rhetoric in the art of composing words is to seriously misread the art of persuasive self-presentation called delivery. Rhetoric was not a written, but a performing art.
NOTES

1. From _eoika, eika_ and its verbal form _eikazo_, indicate a likeness or similarity, a portrayal, and from there to mean what is “likely” or “seemly” or probable. English here nicely matches the sense in which a visual similitude can come to indicate a mental guess about what is most probable. The probability that Corax and Tisias were said to have invented was simply a later refiguring of the same _eoika_ recounted in the Homeric _Hymns_: when a slippery Hermes was accused of stealing Apollo’s cattle, he acted “like” a baby.

2. Rhetoric, especially classical rhetoric, has always been intimately tied up with politics, education, and literacy. If I can show delivery to be important at the center of these three realms, then some of the strength of these objections can at least be questioned. (Sources for these objections?)

3. The clarity of the focus depends in large part on the number of texts that we can juxtapose: they offer the overlapping contours necessary to establish a perspective and enhance our resolution. I don’t know whether or not gender was experienced as an axis of identity for gaining honor and political influence more important than others.

4. Liddell and Scott’s _Greek-English Lexicon_ (Oxford, 1985) is the standard lexicon for English speakers.

5. On the _aulos_ or flute being considered “unfitting for a free man” (as opposed to the _lyre_), see Cambiano (1995), 106. Alcibiades apparently found the flute to deform the face into a sour expression, whereas the _lyre_ freed the voice for singing.

6. The Greeks would perhaps have appreciated the joke that Baptists frown upon sex because it looks too much like dancing lying down.

7. The terms Demetrius allegedly used: _agenere_: low-born; _malakon_: soft and yielding or effeminate and cowardly; and _plasma_: “anything molded, an image, figure; anything imitated, a counterfeit; a formed style, affectation _in orators and actors_” (Liddell and Scott). These latter two illustrate the problem: molding or forming oneself into a pleasing or admirable style, when effective, was simply pleasing and admirable, but could always backfire (and among enemies always would be read as) an affectation and a trick of literary skill. Being molded, even self-molded along generally admirable lines, when revealed as such, implied a softness and hence an ignoble effeminacy that erased any advantages that one’s polish might have garnered. Ajax can always accuse Odysseus of _plasma_ and _malakos_, since he was willing to let even his slaves beat him in order to carry out his ruses.

8. For an excellent account of self-presentation in Sophistic Rome, see Gleason’s _Making Men_, a work which influenced and profoundly shaped my own thinking.

9. A similar line of reasoning is found in Aristophanes’ _Clouds_ when Better Argument compares the honest manliness of the gymnasium in the good old days with a new style of effeminate self-pampering to gain admirers: “If you follow me . . . the rewards will be these: a healthy tan; a manly chest; broad shoulders; a modest tongue; massive buttocks; a small organ. Follow him and you’ll get bird shoulders, a
'lemon skin, chicken ribs, a serpent's tongue, a camel's behind, an elephant's organ--and a million admirers' (1174-1184). Beauty, when tied to self-pampering, was thereby inverted from a moral quality (a sign of true manliness) to a moral flaw (a sign of effeminate artifice and affectation).

10. Recall the recurring problem in the Assembly of the audience heckling and interrupting the speaker. In another speech, Demosthenes complains about Aeschines and Philocrates sitting beside him during a meeting in order to heckle him; worse, the audience found it amusing (19. 23). Two decades later, Hyperidies notes that one could purchase the services of "lesser rhetors" who specialized in mocking a speaker and inciting the crowd against him.

11. For detailed discussions of Aeschines' Against Timarchus regarding Greek gender practices, homosexuality, and prostitution, particularly concerning their legal and political consequences see Dover (Greek Homosexuality 1978) and Winkler (Constraints of Desire 1990).

12. See Halperin (1990) "The goal . . . was not practical or moral but symbolic: it was designed not to alter the facts of Athenian social life or to reform individual Athenians but to disseminate among the citizens of Athens a new collective self-understanding" (99).


14. Kinaidios is defined by Liddell and Scott as lewdness or lust. More on this term below.

15. Decorous=sophrones: wise and sound; having control over the sensual desires, temperate, self-controlled, moderate, chaste, sober. (Liddell and Scott)

16. The term atimia meant dishonorable or valueless, but also was the technical term for disenfranchisement: the loss of just those citizen privileges at stake in the dokimasia.

17. On the changing ideals of physical beauty and manliness, see Dover (1978) 68-81; on the changing bounds of acceptability in rhythm, meter and mimetic range for a performance, see Herrington (1985) on Timotheus' controversial performance of his Persians, p. 151-160.
CHAPTER 5

THE ORIGIN AND TRADITION OF RHETORIC:
THEORY AND PRACTICE

Although Greek literature from the earliest times was “rhetorical” and illustrates techniques that were eventually defined and described, the fifth century was a crucial time in the emergence of a consciousness of rhetoric on the part of speakers and audiences.

Kennedy -- *A New History of Classical Rhetoric*

Rhetoric is an entirely Western phenomenon. As far as one can judge from surviving evidence, the Greeks were the only people of the ancient world who endeavored to analyze the ways in which human beings communicate with each other.

Murphy -- *Synoptic History of Classical Rhetoric*

Rhetoric is usually seen as originating in Greek culture at the beginning of the fifth century B.C.

Barilli -- *Rhetoric*

The Origin Myth

The story of rhetoric’s origin has been narrated repeatedly according to a simple and consistent plot, often revised and adapted without ever losing its central elements. According to this narrative, speech at its origins was natural, given, routine, and
inevitable, punctuated only by the inspired appearance of eloquent bards, poets, and demagogues. Non-or pre-literate cultures appear primarily en mass. Oral cultures, we are told, exist primarily on a corporate scale, and they are best characterized in terms of their non-individualistic qualities: homogeneous, communal, tradition-bound, conservative, conformist (see McLuhan, 1967; Ong, 1982). Because the collective lacks writing and objective logic, they exist close to their “life-world” (Ong 42) and cannot easily formulate critical judgements, objective criteria, or abstract principles. Thus, the “mass” is naturally susceptible to the infectious power of the spoken word and can be moved easily by emotional appeals. They lack the ability to step out of the moment in order to establish an objective, critical perspective.

Gifted demagogues and poets alike take advantage of this susceptibility. Speakers rise from the mass to persuade through “natural” talent or through the rote memorization of formulae or the unthinking imitation of models, or they are given inspiration from god(s). Their ability relies not upon art, but upon chance and upon the natural tendency of an unthinking mob to be swayed by any powerful emotional appeal. But no one, least of all the speakers themselves, understand the stable principles upon which their persuasive abilities might depend. They achieve these principles haphazardly, by trial and error, but they cannot reduce them to a regular system that can be taught, learned, and applied to the infinite diversity of future speaking situations. They cannot separate the persuasive form of an appeal from its unadorned ideational core. Rhetoric has not been invented yet.

Gradually, around the 5th or 4th century B.C., the rise of democracy in ancient
Greek city-states (rhetorical historiography ignores for the sake of simplicity the many stages, tensions, and reversals complicating this "rise") created new demands for persuasive speaking skills, and a new technology, phonetic writing, (rhetorical historiography also ignores for the same reason the many, conflicting, and for us counterintuitive uses to which writing could be put) along with new powers of abstraction and logical thought (epitomized by Plato) made it possible to isolate, systematize, and preserve the principles according to which persuasion could be achieved. At the same time, these factors began to alter the consciousness of the people from "oral" to "literate," resulting in new powers of logic, abstraction and objectification. Persuasion began to look more like rational deliberation and less like passionate mob appeal. (Recall the similarity to Corbett's discussion of the open hand and the closed fist). It became methodical rather than haphazard as theory allowed the rhetorician to articulate and control the means of persuasion. Writing and abstraction enabled a new rhetorical consciousness to isolate stable principles of persuasive speaking, set them in order, and preserve them for individual study and application to any subsequent speaking task.

Thus persuasion, once the slave of trial and error or native genius, once the stronghold of emotionally charged mob-appeal became rationalized and democratized as a universal system of knowledge and communication that could be methodically enumerated, learned, and applied by anyone to any theme or subject matter, so that no extraneous, irrelevant, or counterproductive practices might intervene, and so that no important, relevant, or persuasive strategies go unexploited. Through this revolution, an individual consciousness could now isolate stable principles of theory from the dark
labyrinth of embodied speaking practice.

It has been the purpose of this dissertation to explode this myth as inconsistent, needlessly logocentric, and historically inaccurate. Arts of persuasive speaking (or persuasion generally) can be shown to have existed long prior to the discoveries of the early sophists and philosophers according to the very definitions of theory, persuasion, and speech implied by advocates of the Greek origin myth. One has only to admit the intelligence (cunning or otherwise) of the acting body. In the preceding chapters, I have argued that the “rhetorical theory” which writing made possible was simply one version of persuasive artistry, a version championed by philosophers either openly hostile to or only marginally tolerant of persuasive performance technique. This version of rhetoric defined persuasion narrowly in terms of its verbal matter, and remained explicitly inimical to bodily display, no matter how persuasive, teachable, theory-like or politically useful (even to a democracy).

Alongside and prior to this version of rhetorical theory existed a logic of persuasive practice which relied little on writing, on verbal proofs, on enthymematic development or stylistic terminology. Rather, rhetorical practice required the public display of wisdom as intelligent cunning through audible and visual means, emphasizing the ability to imitate and stylize in appealing ways mythic characters and moral qualities, particularly when doing so could win unexpected victories from dire situations, making the worse situation seem the better. But to be successful, the performer had to skillfully conceal the evidence of artifice or careful planning, lest the display of manly action be mistaken for the awkward imitation of what one was not. This dance of self-presentation
and its self-erasure made of ancient rhetoric a palimpsest of the body.

Rhetoric was about self-fashioning through repeated public self-presentation, evaluated in terms of an ideology and a physiognomy of masculinity, ethnocentrism, and class interest whose qualities intersected in highly specific and complex ways. The ancient world would not recognize the stable categories of selfhood bequeathed to us by modernity; instead, ancient rhetors and citizens generally were as they acted. Gentili notes how ancient Greek personhood was experienced as an “open field of forces” rather than a durable, internal essence (71). These forces were known and understood through their visible manifestation in action, and they constituted Greek selfhood as performed. Thus both Martin and Gentili discuss the sophos or wise man as an expert in “public discourse, whether poetry or prose, pertaining to history, religion, or the nature of the physical world” (Gentili 14). No amount of skill in written composition could make up for or replace expertise in this sort of public self-presentation. In this way, ancient rhetoric’s origins and its most “authentic” theory might be said to turn on performance, and especially on those qualities now referred to under the name of delivery.

This is not to say that ancient Greek persuasive practices as embodied were more original, “authentic,” “natural” or morally preferable than the written theory of rhetoric which philosophers opposed to it. Body rhetoric, too, was constructed according to the interests of power and privilege along lines of race, class, and gender (even if those lines do not match up well with the ethnocentrisms, the classism or sexisms of today). But persuasive practices that antedated or otherwise fell outside the scope of what we have come to know as “rhetorical theory” were no less important, useful, or persuasive for their
having been lost to rhetorical history. Nor were they any less legitimately a theory of rhetoric, whether or not they were systematically written down.

The traditional (but not uniform or unchanging) practice of ancient Greek rhetoric implied a theory, as does any cultural practice of persuasive speaking, able to function precisely as theory functions, often with greater sensitivity to local conditions, resources and constraints. In other words, rhetorical theory was not invented in ancient Greece. Rather, one version of rhetorical theory was invented in ancient Greece (not the implicit and embodied theory of persuasion traditionally practiced there), a version circumscribed by the writable word, and therefore conducive to being written down. It survived for this reason, not for its exclusive claim to knowledge about persuasive strategy.

The corollary that follows from this is that no stable distinction can be drawn between the practice of persuasion (as natural, inspired, given, infinitely diverse, inartistic, and therefore unknowable) and the theory of persuasion (as invented, written, patterned according to stable principles, thus artistic and knowable). That is, all the terms used to separate out western rhetoric from its antecedents and its non-literate or non-western realizations (orality, eloquence, oratory, demagoguery, or “rhetoric” itself as opposed to the new “metarhetoric”) function simply to mask an essential continuity between cultural practices of persuasive speaking everywhere and the local, timely, everyday principles which guide them, written or not. What we have come to know as western rhetorical theory cannot be said to have any intrinsic relevance to the practice of artful persuasion for any culture or any time period until practices of persuasion can be shown to correspond to the dictates of this theory and to be in agreement with cultural
practices of self-presentation and the ideals which they approximate.

Just as there is no naturally persuasive speech which is not at the same time a learned human product, a regularly enculturated social practice, and a culturally informed theory of persuasion, so there is no reliable way to pinpoint that moment at which a given, inartistic, inspired, or "natural" persuasion gave way to reliable, stable, artistic, and teachable theory. The origin of rhetoric cannot be narrated historically from ancient Greece or anywhere else; rhetoric's origin is not a function of history. History knows of no point at which a relevant rhetorical theory suddenly arises which was not already known to its practitioners, nor can any written theory add one iota to rhetorical technique except through the avenue of practice, with which it must already be in agreement.

The origins of reliable knowledge about persuasive technique (rhetorical theory), then, cannot be elucidated historically, but it might be articulated either experientially and phenomenologically (Bourdieu might say dialectically) as the process through which performers and spectators develop a self-awareness of the techniques they use and the ideals they approximate, or developmentally and educationally as a study of a child's growing ability or willingness to respond to a caretaker's symbolic appeals. But whatever the meaning of "origin," its study must always proceed with reference to local and timely cultural patterns of expectation and reward, to culturally specific aesthetics and politics of human self-expression and self-representation.

One might, for example, examine the phenomenological or dialectical sense of practical mastery which reliable persuasive skill requires, the difficulties that must be overcome, the ideals that must be approximated, the excesses that must be avoided, the
resources that must be utilized in moving from inarticulateness to eloquence. Such an inquiry can take place most immediately through self-examination as speaker and spoken to, as actor and audience, as agent of persuasion and object, or it can take place through the ethnographic study of persuasive arts and the principles which guide them. Such studies, in fact, have been done or approximated within the fields of anthropology and folklore\(^1\). But rhetoric as a discipline and a critical perspective cannot proceed with a model dating originally from ancient Greek philosophy, nor can it any longer imagine itself as a singular and essentially unchanging “tradition” originating in classical antiquity.

We cannot understand \textit{a priori} how persuasive speech was or is felt, experienced, or accomplished in other cultures or at other times, nor can we say which features will be valued or necessary to make any form of self-expression a “speech,” much less a persuasive one. Without such knowledge, theory can tell us nothing. The manipulation of vocal qualities, the visibility of bodily actions, the interaction of the audience, and the intervention of the mind must be reconstructed piece by piece from available evidence for each time and place. The researcher and reader of archival or ethnographic data must only be mindful of one warning: the moon is not the finger pointing to it; the performance is not the text. Spoken performance exists on its own plane and leaves clues, but not itself, in the writing which it leaves behind.

Because speaking is not “natural,” every persuasive, appealing, successful speech is always already the product of art and an implicit theory of proper self-expression and social interaction. Every expressive culture possesses an implicit rhetorical theory, one

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which can be neither known nor judged independent of the culture and the place of persuasive speaking in that culture with respect to other means of self-expression. No theory of rhetoric, however well-lit, can claim priority as beginning, as “tradition,” or as end of the possible ways of speaking well. Rhetoric as an art of proper, appealing, informative, or persuasive speech can exist only at the local level, polymorphous and diverse. Rhetoric as a single tradition of all the available means of persuasion that runs through western civilization is a metaphenomenon that has perhaps less to do with how people feel themselves to persuade and be persuaded than it does with the textual pedigree of ancient institutions and the reverence bestowed upon them by their disciplinary champions, jealous to demonstrate their ancient and pure lineage. The only question that matters, though, is “Will it hunt?”

And any such study of rhetorical artistry must take into account and begin with rhetorical practice: with all the forms of self-presentation through which people express meaning. The usefulness of “practice” here as a “key” term lies in its distinction both from theory and from thought. Just as rhetoric cannot begin with theory, so it cannot begin with consciousness or mental operations alone, which do not communicate. Rhetoric must begin with expression, with how meanings are externalized, and the only way in which humans can externalize meaning is through the body. Not all rhetorical practice will take place as “performance” or as “action,” but all rhetorical practice requires forms of bodily mastery which traditional rhetorical theory typically overlooks as irrelevant. They are, on the contrary, absolutely central.

Terms like *metis*, *strophe*, *mimesis*, *sophos*, and others point to patterns and
techniques of self-expression relevant to one cultural milieu and whose value depends heavily upon practical mastery as it is performed before a critical public. They are not universally applicable, nor were they universally or "naturally" put to use in ancient Greece. Ambitious citizens had other traditions and forms of cultural capital and public prestige to utilize and benefit from (like military or athletic prowess). But this cluster of terms relating to bodily styles and dispositions begin to suggest a culturally stable pattern of practice which informed persuasive artistry independent of the rhetorical theory for which ancient Greece is known, and they can act as a first step in seeing all cultural communicative practices as implicit theories of rhetoric, depending heavily upon the visible and audible forms of self-presentation which has traditionally gone by the term delivery. The terms are not relevant in and of them selves (or at least they have not been shown to be relevant to the rhetorical practices of any other cultural site), but they demonstrate how popular ideology, everyday practice, public self-presentation, stylized deportment, and oratorical delivery all intersect and inform each other.

The example from ancient Greece can suggest that no speaking tradition, or any other system for producing and displaying meaning, simply, naturally, occurs: it must be learned, practiced and put to use. No child is born speaking; no child persuades or is persuaded without being spoken to, without hearing speech, without speaking, observing the results, and modifying future attempts. No child communicates without learning culturally established patterns of value and practicing how to appropriate and express these patterns with and through a body semiotic. Speaking has to be learned and taught, with all the constituent parts of speech (style, gesture, pacing, mood, tone, etc) gaining
value only insofar as they are given value and shaped by a process of enculturation.

Verbal matter is not necessarily the most important (and never the only) variable worth judging in the attempt to persuade.

In the same way, in any culture the pace and progress of learning will vary from child to child. In even the most "oral" cultures, speakers will be more or less adept, more or less confident, more or less successful, graceful, confident, or persuasive, not because of any natural gift, but because of the variability of practical skill, the application of art, and the accident of circumstance. Limiting the invention of rhetoric to ancient Greece at its literate beginnings fits well with the image of pre- or non-literate cultures (oral cultures) as homogenous, tradition-bound, conformist, and static. But in no culture does traditional conformism or communalism exhaust individual effort or exclude stable knowledge. The natural, artless and mass anonymity of oral peoples is a popular remnant of romantic ideology, and it has survived many varieties of social evolutionism, but it tells us more about our own system of discursive value than it does about how others persuade (see Finnegans 30-51).

In even the most "oral" of cultures, some will be stammerers and some will be bards, not simply by nature, but also by disposition and by training in a logic of practice: by the structural exercises through which practical activities are taught and passed on. Nothing about this process is simply "natural." Not that nothing about speaking is natural, but that any form of speaking, to be experienced as natural must first be produced as both natural and as fitting, persuasive, or eloquent for the culture within which it is practiced. And it is through this repeated process that humans learn how to be in their
culture, as persons, as selves, as types, as subjects, as individuals, or as pieces of a larger collective. Speaking by itself accomplishes none of these forms of experiencing the “I” and its relation to society, culture and the world except insofar as the nature of proper, appropriate and persuasive speaking has been molded and put to use. The trouble with delivery is that attending to it forces us to abandon the notion that speech naturally forms subjects, selves, individuals or agents. It can do no such thing because it is not yet a “thing” until cultural practice shapes it as something.

Some types of cultures, ancient Greece included, value highly and reward lavishly certain aspects of speaking skill, certain genres, certain venues. Effeminate performances (or those by non-males) or performances before non-citizens are not particularly valued. Performing questionable masculinity or being seen as a non-masculine speaker (such as Timarkhos) was sufficient to have one’s right to speak as a citizen revoked. In ancient Athens, the category of matchmaker was not associated with political power or prestige, nor were matchmakers necessarily gifted performers. In Quiche Mayan cultures, on the other hand, “matchmakers are admired above all other public performers for their eloquence” and they figure prominently in Quiche myth (Tedlock 58)⁵. In those cultures where persuasive speaking is a performance contest, speech becomes a challenge to be overcome, not just a “nature” that expresses itself. Practices, exercises, and forms of instruction will arise to rehearse what is expected and render it “natural,” easy, and fluent. Some will succeed, others will not.

Those who are silenced by the challenge of public speaking will thereby surrender this as a medium for personal achievement or public recognition. Those who seize the
moment, surmount it with composure, and win an audience’s attention and admiration will be more likely to speak more often in more important settings as ability and reputation grows. To do so, they will have to master the established variables and criteria by which speeches are judged. Anyone consistently successful as a speaker will have to have internalized these variables and criteria, and will rely upon them in the same way that a writer might rely upon a written theory of composition to understand the choices that can be made and their consequences. In such a culture, motives for learning to manage speaking moments successfully will be strong (democracy is not the only goad to speaking skill), opportunities to practice diverse (with or without written texts), and methods for inculcating speaking tactics well refined (regardless of the presence of a distinct group of professional teachers). Within those structural exercises through which speaking is learned lies an implicit theory of rhetoric.

But aren’t ancient bards and poets simply “inspired” to sing their songs? Perhaps. Ancient poets do claim to get their words from the muses, and Plato has Ion claim “inspiration” rather than admit to useless and dangerous ignorance, but this rigged choice can hardly be used as evidence that inspiration was the real source of a poet’s skill, even if Ion weren’t weaseled into the admission by Socrates’ faint praise and dialectical skill. And even if we understand “inspiration” to refer to the eloquent but unenlightened voicing of traditional songs and mythic themes through the rote memorization of formulae, this does not yet address the question of how one individual poet comes to stand out as skilled in eloquent public performing. Just because I know the formula doesn’t mean I can pull off the rage of Achilles, the cunning of Penelope, or the wisdom
of Athena, much less that I can adapt and stylize these characters and their narrative roles to address contemporary situations or embody a relevant vision of excellence in appealing ways. Concluding on the basis of Homer or Plato or any textual evidence that any rhapsode or poet was “inspired” or simply “formulaic” is merely to mistake the effect for the method, the literary device for the learning process.

If a poet’s desired effect is to render the likeliness of what is being performed, its veracity and verisimilitude to the events portrayed, then the poet will tend to emphasize the real presence of the events within the performing body, as it is acted out before the audience. No actor wants to remind the audience, at the beginning of a performance, how much hard work and practice went into the part. No poet wants their truth claims to rest on the unseen exercises and rehearsals through which their techniques were perfected. If a poet must memorize stock formulae to insert at specific places dictated by the requirements of a meter, this doesn’t address how he will embody and stylize what is being said so that it produces the proper effect on an audience.

This doesn’t mean the words spoken were unimportant or that poets or rhapsodes were cynical atheists, claiming to hear the voices of gods that they did not really believe in, simply that we should not confuse their interpretation of the feeling of performing or their rhetorical use of accepted sources of knowledge and truth with the absence of artistry. We should not confuse textual evidence with the requirements of performance. The harder I work to move from clumsy ineptitude into easy grace in the performance of a speech or a part, the less I will want an audience to be aware of this work during the performance (see, for example, Goffman 1959). Practice implies artistry and theory,
While as actor, I want to portray spontaneous and sincere realization of character and scene. Just because the apostles expected the spirit to put words in their mouths didn’t mean they neglected to study their scriptures, but the scriptures themselves were useless in the preaching moment. The rhetorical effect of attributions that foster the illusion of artlessness (being inspired by a Muse; being a real man rather than acting like one) should not be confused with the methods actually employed to carry off the effect. A cultural practice of persuasive speaking always implies a techne, an art, and a theory even when this artistry is denied for its own rhetorical effect.

If rhetoric before theory was no rhetoric, but simply oratory (inspired, unselfconscious, the result of memorization and intuition but not reliable knowledge); or if rhetoric to be rhetoric had to evolve (or revolve) into something which it was not (a non-communicating consciousness, a written theory of its own embodied practice), then nothing can really be known unless and until it is written down and as it is written down, practice is ignorance, and the intelligence of the body is simply a phantom of dizziness, a sound and a fury signifying nothing. But if practice is something else, a form of knowledge and a source of power, then we might expect logocentric cultural interventionists to take pains to discipline practice, to demote its status, or to limit and direct its persuasive power. I have shown how ancient Greek philosophy attempted to do just this. But since every form of hegemony has its cracks, the task of intervention in cultural practice is never finished. Throughout western history, different versions of rhetorical theorizing continued to direct cultural attention away from persuasive tactics thought improper, indecent, primitive or scandalous. With the advent of modernity (if not
before) these diversions and suppressions were accomplished through the figure of a human nature which not only need not but must not be studied or even attended to. This human nature was often defined in terms of an expressive body whose power must be made to submit to rational, verbal thought.

The Rest of the Story: Elocution and its Effects

The portrait of speech as the powerful and enchanting demagogue which leads the captive and unthinking mob is painted not by ancient Greek performers, but by the written history of rhetoric. Speech, what it was and what it could do, was always a hotly contested and constantly changing cultural practice. History's winners (that is, literate elites, teachers and philosophers) inscribed their own rhetorical history by silencing the contested, performed manifestations of speech (its delivery), rendering it as natural, wild, unchanging, illegitimate and dangerous. As long as speakers, chanters, and singers were simply "inspired," mouthing a tradition, or memorizing formulae by rote, then Corax and Tisias, Antiphon and Gorgias. Socrates and Plato can be "discovered" as founders of an art of speaking well. And as rhetoricians know, rhetoric is the art of discovery.

A parallel discovery was manufactured in modern Europe. The coming of modernity saw a rise in debates about speech similar to that occurring in ancient Greece. Figures like Vico, Bacon, Locke, Fell, Condillac, Amman, Sheridan, Herder, and Whately initiated new inquiries into the nature and origins of speech, its proper sphere of functioning, the qualifications for its use, its place in civilization and culture, its role in
polite society and scholarly inquiry. These and other Enlightenment thinkers and writers revisited a question that might have been familiar to classical Greek sophists and rhetoricians: 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?

Speech, leading up to the Enlightenment, was up for grabs, with embodied and non-verbal media frequently being valued alongside the verbal matter of a speech, and, conversely, words being challenged as no better or more useful than any other form of expression. Bulwer (Chironomia 1644) noted that in human conversation, “the Speech and Gesture are conceived together in the mind,” so that in any studied composition, “the gestures of the Hand must be prepared in the Mind, together with the inward speech, that precedes the outward expression” (4, 142). Elizabethan acting was apparently similarly conceived, such that “not only the sound, but also the gestures, could be imagined at the same moment when thoughts were turned into language in the mind” (Joseph 29). Such an assessment accords well with the rise of physiognomy in the renaissance and later attempts to read body-language in terms of social evolution.

In a like manner, Bacon disputes the Aristotelian tradition that “words are the images of cogitations.” Concerning delivery, he notes that “whatsoever is capable of sufficient differences, and those perceptible by the senses, is in nature competent to express cogitations” and, I might add, be the most fitting image of them (The Advancement of Learning). Bacon recognizes the possibility that any sensible system of differences could function as a language, in mind and in body, dethroning words as the
only medium of thought. Margaret Fell further disputes the traditional view that full
speech (read “public, serious, religious”) was properly the province of men alone.

Working against centuries of Judeo-Christian and Greco-Roman misogyny, Fell asserts
scriptural authority for women speaking, teaching, prophesying, and interpreting scripture
and church doctrine. By extension, the argument became possible that full speech, with
everything this faculty implied, was the property of other disenfranchised groups as well,
regardless of gender, nation, culture, or class.

From another perspective, Locke denied that words had a natural connection to
the things that they referred to: “the very nature of words makes it almost unavoidable for
many of them to be doubtful and uncertain in their significations” (An Essay Concerning
Human Understanding III. ix. 1). Speech was no longer, as Aristotle thought, the
transparent image of thought. Speech was no longer (and perhaps never had been) what
Plato wanted to make of it: the subdued verbal and intimate expression of men’s internal
thoughts. Speech could no longer be maintained as the preserve of enfranchised
gentlemen, the only linguistic medium, or even adequate to the task of self-expression,
social intercourse, or scholarly inquiry. It would have to become both more inclusive and
less universal than previously assumed by its stewards: elite, white, male, speaking
rhetoricians and philosophers.

Rhetoric, along with other related disciplines (especially moral philosophy and
natural science), responded vigorously to these lines of questioning. After centuries of
post-classical restriction to one or another field of activity—homiletics, letter-writing,
stylistics—rhetorical theory in the Enlightenment produced a vigorous redefinition and
expansion of its focus and methods, now referred to as the “new Rhetoric.” Principal among these developments was the Elocutionary movement. With roots in the cultural practice and training of voice, gesture and bodily deportment dating back to the Hellenistic age, the Elocutionary movement sought to legitimize the study of non-verbal aspects of speech in terms of new (Lockean) epistemologies and ancient rhetorical practices. Many of these initiatives were undertaken not by professors of rhetoric, but by actors and popular performers, preachers, and lecturers. Sheridan (*Lectures on Elocution* 1762) was an actor and stage manager. Perhaps one of the best known of elocutionists, Sheridan placed oratorical practice at the center of his plans to reform education throughout the British Isles. Though in many ways naive and overly-optimistic, Sheridan argued strenuously for the value of practical training in spoken English over traditional educational study of written classical languages. Central to his program was the careful study of oratorical delivery: voice, body, movement, and expression.

As had happened in ancient Greece, though, rhetoricians responded to elocutionary interests by separating speech-as-embodied-practice from speech-as-verbalized-thought. By rejecting the former as “natural” and inartistic, and valorizing the latter as the only legitimate approach to an art, rhetoric again authorized and popularized one narrow definition of speech from the wide spectrum represented in this long-standing cultural debate.

A “new” rhetoric validated its renewed importance by defining an art of persuasion in terms of written words and rejecting outright any concern for or treatment of delivery or “elocution.” Elocutionists like Sheridan attempted to recover delivery as a
legitimate field of rhetorical application by reforming the ways in which education took place, reforming in the process the signs of privilege and power. But other rhetoricians, especially the influential and widely read Richard Whately (Elements of Rhetoric 1846) declared that some regions were too delicate to study, and would be spoiled by the attempt. Any cultivation of the speaking body—gesture, stance, tone or inflection—would be either pitiful or ridiculous, in any event a sad imitation of “natural” vehemence and passionate conviction. Studying speech would be, like an Algonquin in an ascot, a ridiculous attempt to civilize the native: “Many accordingly have, not unreasonably, conceived a disgust for the subject altogether; considering it hopeless that Elocution should be taught by any rules; and acquiescing in the conclusion that it is to be regarded entirely as a gift of nature or an accidental acquirement of practice” (254).

Natural speaking, that is, speaking in which the speaker attended exclusively to the matter of his thoughts and not at all to the manner of his delivery, could not help but be more clear, forceful, energetic and persuasive than the most studied delivery or practiced reading. Natural speech was infectious, evoking a natural sympathy from hearers even when the composition was poorly framed or the sentiment indifferently agreeable to the audience.

Whately formulates as a principle “not only to pay no studied attention to the voice, but studiously to withdraw the thoughts from it, and to dwell as intently as possible on the sense; trusting to nature to suggest spontaneously the proper emphases and tones” (265). Much like Plato’s prohibitions against acting in his republic, Whately wants to remove delivery from the realm of artifice and consciously crafted display, making it
subservient to sincere conviction and spontaneous sentiment. Whately displays a by now familiar attitude of suspicion against any conscious attempt to draw attention to the body as meaningful and expressive. For Plato, courageous and temperate men do not imitate others or offer theatrical outbursts amenable to imitation, whereas for Whately, "everyone is expected to attend exclusively to the proper object of the action he is engaged in, which in this case is the expression of the thoughts, not the sound of the expressions" (259). Despite the differences in moral philosophy, each of these observations judges the moral effectiveness of an action on its ability to limit the visibility of and attention to the manner of its delivery. A speaking performance is only good insofar as it is not "acted."

Whately’s objections, like Plato’s, slid easily from being advice about individual performance styles (both refer to the good types of performance that "everyone” already accepts) to being programmatic assertions. When he said we should avoid attending to our delivery, he was read, I think, to be referring to the discipline of rhetoric as much as the individual performance. Rhetoric must itself withdraw all attention away from delivery and from the performing body in order to survive as a legitimate and accepted field of inquiry. After Whately, rhetoric could, without regret, channel the bulk of its energies into the art of written composition.

Following Whately’s lead, rhetorical scholarship as a whole vigorously rejected elocutionary concerns as trivial at best, misguided and dangerous at worst. And this rejection has only been reinforced by recent histories. Wilbur Samuel Howell (Eighteenth Century British Logic and Rhetoric 1971), the principle historian of Enlightenment rhetoric, for example, saw elocation as “a futureless idea that was destined
against logic and common-sense to have a two-hundred year future in England and
America” (146). For Howell, rhetoric is an intellectual endeavor best understood in the
context of contemporaneous developments in logic. In this context, bodily movement,
gesture, tone, and expression play no part.

Howell’s dismissal of elocation simply reiterates the response of eighteenth
century rhetoric itself; rhetorical theory, as opposed to popular practice, quickly moved
away from explicit attention to the performative aspects of speech, first demoting
elocution to ancillary status alongside other practical skills like penmanship and typing
(as Campbell does), and later dismissing it altogether as a dangerous distraction from the
substance of the speech (as Whately does).

Though criticism has softened more recently, this dismissal of elocation has, with
a few minor exceptions, gone unchallenged³. Wilbur Samuel Howell’s apparently
exhaustive condemnation of the movement is still referred to by Horner as “the best
discussion of the books and figures associated with the elocutionary movement.” In the
same vein, Golden and Corbett call Whately’s “stinging rebuke of the elocutionary
movement. . . the ablest critical analysis of one of the important trends in rhetorical
history” (14).

Elocutionists are discussed now only to illustrate the distance we have traveled
from their unfortunate excesses. They are marvels displayed for observation from the
wonder-cabinets of rhetoric’s past. Their works function like nature’s lesson in humility,
reminding us of the shameless extravagances into which our tradition has occasionally
fallen and the corruption which this abomination has spawned. For Howell, the sins of
elocution "led to declamation without sincere conviction and earnest feeling. . . . and when these practices came to stand for the whole of rhetorical doctrine, rhetoric came to mean empty and insincere speaking" (145). Like Adam's fruitful desire, elocutionary goals brought dissimulation into a world of rhetorical innocence. Such moralisms may carry little weight today, but their effect remains in force, as rhetorical scholarship continues to downplay the importance of physicality as a rhetorical system.

When delivery is considered, it is typically conceived in terms of recent innovations in print and electronic media. These innovations are certainly important, but the effect of this emphasis is the renewed suppression of a body rhetoric similar to that effected in western tradition generally. But embodiment as a significant aspect of selfhood and its attributes is not unknown. The current work being undertaken in anthropology, folklore, gender studies and cultural studies concerning performativity and embodiment can suggest the future direction for rhetorical theory and practice. Scholars like Judith Butler, Marilyn Strather, and Donna Haraway illustrate the degree to which embodiment and performativity function as powerful and persuasive discourses of selfhood, of otherness, and of the real power of rhetoric. Rhetoric can both add to and draw upon this and related work by reconceiving delivery as a central component both of its heritage and of its future.
NOTES

1. Kennedy (1998) offers a sampling of sources on oral persuasion in several non-western contexts. Resources in folklore and anthropology are numerous, but do not often highlight persuasive technique as a primary theme. See for example Hymes (1964); Finnegan (1977); Fine (1984); Bauman and Briggs (1990).

2. Tedlock’s translation of the Popol Vuh, the Quiche Mayan “council book” of the “dawn of life and the glories of gods and kings.”

3. See, for example, such secondary discussions on gesture (post classical Greece) as Gleason’s Making Men: Sophists and Self-Presentation in Ancient Rome; Schmitt’s “The Rationale of Gestures in the West: Third to Thirteenth Centuries” in A Cultural History of Gesture; Benson’s Medieval Body Language; Bevington’s Action is Eloquence: Shakespeare’s Language of Gesture. Bremmer and Roodenburg’s Cultural History of Gesture offers a bibliography by period.

4. The most complete statement of delivery is Quintilian’s, in Book XI of his Institutes. Bulwer’s Chironomia and Chirologia (1644) and Louis de Cressolles Vacationes Autumnales (1620) relied on this and a wide range of sacred and secular texts to chart the proper use of gesture. Howell charts the beginning the elocution movement with the anonymous Essay upon the Action of an Orator (1702).

5. Scholars like F. W. Haberman (1954) and G.P. Mohrman (1966), for example, challenge Howell’s claim that elocution was inconsistent with the “new rhetorics” of the eighteenth century. They connect the movement to eighteenth-century scientific method and specifically to an empiricist psychology and Scottish common-sense philosophy.

6. Gray (1960) and Parrish (1957) have, unsuccessfully I think, attempted to save elocution from charges of “hollow bombast and grandiloquence” (Baskerville, qtd. in Parrish, 1) leveled primarily by American educators in newly-formed Departments of Speech who disdained elocution and sought to distinguish their own--the oral interpretation of literature--from it. Elocution has not been significantly re-interpreted or re-theorized since Howell’s book (1971).
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