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DISSERTATION

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for
the Degree Doctor of Philosophy in the Graduate
School of The Ohio State University

By
Sandee Kay McGlaun, B.A., M.A.

* * * * *

The Ohio State University
2000

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ABSTRACT

Early feminist theatre theory and practice adopted and quickly dismissed rhetoric as a framework for analysis. My examination of the long-standing historical and theoretical connections between rhetoric and theatre demonstrates this pairing to be productive. Understanding feminist theatre as rhetoric proffers new insights into feminist theatrical performance and the practice of a feminist rhetoric that "beyonds" traditional patriarchal notions of rhetoric as persuasion and domination. To "beyond persuasion" is to acknowledge its inherent presence in communication while reaching further to a consideration of multiple points of view. The end of such a rhetoric is the opening up of conversation rather than the closure of consensus.

A rhetoric that beyonds persuasion may be most fully realized in the rhetorical situation of theatrical performance, in which performers, unbounded by linear narrative conventions, interact with a live audience and speak with their bodies as well as their words. Three contemporary theatre artists refigure the traditional rhetorical elements of persuasion, delivery, and ethos, and thereby enact a rhetoric of question and invitation. Playwright Joan Lipkin's plays raise questions rather than answering them, interrupting narrative conventions and inviting audience participation in the act of meaning-making. Writer/director Anne Bogart and her SITI Company collaborators interrupt "delivery's classical imperative," the mandate that the rhetor's bodily movement be subordinate to
his word, by separating the movement from the text and creating gaps that the spectator must fill. "Beyonding persuasion" is refined and complicated by pseudonymous playwright Jane Martin, whose disembodied, "fill-in-the-blank" ethos questions whether ethos is necessarily (re)constructed prior to and within texts, and whether it is possible to enact a feminist rhetorical strategy such as "beyonding persuasion" without knowledge of the embodied positionality of the rhetor.

Intertexts, short critical-creative performance pieces composed and performed to practice the theatre-as-rhetoric discussed in each chapter, both illustrate and constitute my argument that the feminist rhetoric they enact creates a unique space for an ethically aware rhetorical practice. This practice invites dialogue not only across the disciplines of rhetoric and poetics, but also creates room for the enactment of a more public and accessible feminist rhetoric, one that reaches outside the walls of academe to speak to a wider audience, a contemporized and inclusive version of the Greek polis.
Dedicated to my parents,

Garry and Margaret McGlaun,

with love and gratitude
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INTERTEXT 1

RETELLING RESISTANCE: LOST PATIENCE, FOUND TEXTS

Woman enters from the audience, singing the opening lines from "I Enjoy Being A Girl," from the 1959 Rodgers and Hammerstein Broadway musical "Flower Drum Song" (not, incidentally, one of their biggest hits, but big enough). Onstage sits a single wooden chair, facing away from the audience. She advances toward it.

Throughout the piece, the Woman interacts with the chair, sitting in it, tipping it sideways, balancing it on her back and head. The chair is feminism.

"I'm a girl and by me that's only great. I am proud that my silhouette is curvy. That I walk with a sweet and girlish gait, With my hips kind of swivelly and swervy. I adore being dressed in something frilly, When my date comes to get me at my place. Out I go with my Joe or John or Billy, Like a filly who is ready for the race!"

"Jiminy Christmas!"

My mother said when I asked her what she thought of Helene Cixous's "Coming to Writing," the opening of which I had asked her to read as part of my project on feminist rhetorics. "What does it matter who is listening?" I had begun to wonder just whom academic feminists were writing to, and so I asked my mother—gardener, professor, artist—to help me investigate: "does the use of specialized discourse consign
academic feminists to an equally specialized audience?"³ “You can desire. You can read, adore, be invaded. . . . Writing is reserved for the chosen.”⁴

“Jiminy Christmas!”

I might have said when in the eighth grade girls’ honors chorus I was asked to cast myself as a filly chomping at the bit for a date with Joe or John or Billy. But instead I skipped around the house singing—it’s such a catchy tune! “When I have a brand new hairdo....” Sing along! “With my eyelashes all in curl....”⁵

Pause.

Or don’t you know the words?

My mother, you see, didn’t know the words. “There was a face, with all the mysteries inscribed and preserved on it; she was before it, she sensed that there was a beyond, to which she did not have access. An unlimited place.”⁶

No. She knew the words, but not the melodies, not the plots:

to privilege, or not to privilege, experience;

to challenge, or not to challenge, ‘traditional’ discursive forms;

to write, or not to write, the body—

this last plot quite the mystery to a biology professor.

She did not have a context in which to situate the feminist rhetorics I had asked her to read. But feminists have been discussing these issues for years, so...?

Historically rhetoric has resided in the polis, the public space. It speaks loudly, if not always eloquently, in local and national newspapers. It gestures emphatically in the woman who undergoes plastic surgeries to embody a living Barbie,⁷ it spreads in fashion...
magazines, silences in film, sings enthusiastically on stages past and present: “I enjoy being a girl!”

And it speaks, cries out, yells, and tears the air in Cixous, and in many others, valued voices. But if a tree falls in the forest and no one (outside of academia) hears it...?

What is my relationship to the polis, to that “unlimited place”? Instead of turning away from rhetoric, I have to approach it in a different way, a way frowned on by most people in the field, but the only way I am able to take: “I have forgotten that I am an artist. I have forgotten that I am a woman.”

But maybe that’s too—personal.

What is our relationship to the polis? My mother insists that “[y]ou have to speak to the people at large if you’re ever going to get any changes made.” So I wrote a letter to the editor of the Columbus, Ohio Dispatch, responding to a man who had claimed that feminists’ greatest joy was attacking men. A professor of mine told me that that letter would probably reach more people than any book I might ever publish.

But of course it won’t count for tenure.

But maybe that’s too—political.

Sometimes “the end cannot fully justify the means.”

Then again, “To a surprising extent, the end is the means.”

Pause. Woman grasps chair and picks it up, holds it out in front of her with the seat facing the audience as an “offering.” She begins walking forward, toward the audience, out of the auditorium.

The End . . . . Continues walking.

A twist on Samuel Beckett’s question, “What does it matter who is speaking?” in *Texts for Nothing*.


This line is a piece of “found text” borrowed from Cixous’s essay, “Coming to Writing,” page 13.


This line is a piece of found text from Cixous’s essay, “Coming to Writing,” page 1.


This line is adapted from Cixous’s, “Coming to Writing,” page 15: “Speaking (crying out, yelling, tearing the air, rage drove me to this endlessly) doesn’t leave traces: you can speak—it evaporates, ears are made for not hearing, voices get lost.”

These quoted sentences are found text from Living Theatre founder Judith Malina, quoted in the introduction to Karen Malpede’s *Women in Theatre: Compassion and Hope*, page 1. The introduction to the quotation is also an adapted quotation, drawn from the same source: “Instead of turning away from the theatre, I have to approach it in a different way, a way frowned on by most people in the theatre, but the only way I am able to take.”

Margaret McGlaun, personal interview, 29 Dec. 1996.

From Sandee McGlaun, Letter to the Editor, “It’s the patriarchy that has to go, not the men,” published in *The Columbus Dispatch*, Sunday, February 1, 1998. This letter was written in response to Thomas M. Lowe’s letter, “Feminism has produced women who criticize men,” *The Columbus Dispatch*, January 18, 1998. I wish to point out that the editorial staff of the paper holds responsibility for all letter headlines.

This quotation has been attributed to Gloria Steinem. Its exact source is unknown.
Performing Introductions, Introducing Performances

*CCCC Chicago, 1998: Feminism Workshop.* I am performing a short critical-personal monologue entitled "Retelling Resistance: Lost Patience, Found Texts," included here as Intertext One. The piece opens with a snippet from a song I learned at a choral festival as a young teenager: "I'm a girl and by me that's only great. I am proud that my silhouette is curvy, that I walk with a sweet and girlish gait, with my hips kind of swivelly and swervy...." I follow these verses with "found" quotations from Helene Cixous, my mother Margaret, and other women of professional and personal significance to me, incorporating their voices into a brief narrative that describes my changing relationship to feminist rhetoric(s), specifically academic feminism and feminist performance. Somewhere along the way of constructing this monologue, a chair—which at various points in the performance I sit upon, balance on my back, and even flip over my head—has come to represent feminism. In my nervousness I sing the opening a bit off-key, but the rest of the piece goes beautifully, and amid applause I return to my seat, energized and ready to answer questions about the chair, about my sources, about my choice to perform rather than read a paper.

To my disappointment, no one really seems to have any questions. Several women say they were moved; everyone present tells me how much they enjoyed the
piece. Another woman congratulates me on having the courage to sing in a roomful of academics. After each laudatory comment, the speaker looks at me expectantly, but I suddenly find that I, too, am at a loss to respond to these remarks with much more than a "thank you." I cannot understand why no one asks "Why the chair?" or "How does the Broadway song fit in with Cixous' 'Coming to Writing'?" But I am even more distressed that I seem unable to turn the congratulations toward this kind of critical conversation, an exploration of meanings and choices, questions and concerns, the kind of conversation one so often has after presenting a paper at the "C's."

Only after I returned to my home institution of Ohio State University did I come to understand the significance of my frustration. I "performed" a theatrical monologue, complete with music (however off-key) and "action" (or actio). The responses very much echoed the kinds of responses I had received backstage in theatres as a player throughout my life—and the responses I had given to other performers when I attended theatrical events as an audience member. Directed, it seemed, by generic convention (as opposed to the context of the academic convention), the audience members at CCCC responded for the most part as they would to a play, a genre traditionally understood to "delight" and entertain (Horace 72): they enjoyed the diversion and responded primarily on an emotional level. They did not see the piece as a "text," and so did not respond to it as rhetoric. This, even though the piece was, in large part, a consciously critical, analytical essay arguing for a closer look at academic feminist language(s) and the audience(s) of academic feminist texts.

I might, then, be led to think that the writing of the piece itself, or my delivery of it, was ineffective or inept. The problem, however, was not that the piece did not
communicate; the warmth of the responses I received assured me that it had. When I collapsed the distinctions between the traditionally rhetorical (an academic argument) and the traditionally theatrical (choreographed movement and song), my colleagues were immediately engaged by, and one could argue, even disarmed by, the form of the message. Their response (or what I perceived as a lack thereof) disarmed me, leading me, at first, to believe that the critical content of the message went unnoticed.

In retrospect, in the researching and writing of this document, I have come to see that the opposite is true. Most of us have been conditioned so thoroughly to see any kind of theatrical performance as being directed at our pleasure and our pathos that we often fail to recognize or acknowledge consciously the broader rhetorical impact of such "entertainments." Yet it is specifically this lack of awareness of theatre's power to persuade that gives the theatrical performance such incredible rhetorical power. For while my collapsing of the theatrical and rhetorical might seem, in the context of an academic convention on composition, at the most innovative and at the least atypical, it is, to borrow a phrase from W.B. Worthen, "the normative case of dramatic performance" (1102). The distinctions conventionally made between theatre and rhetoric have, in fact, been called into question since they were first asserted and are collapsed anew every time a performer takes the stage and addresses, directly or "through" the fourth wall, an audience. Only in looking more closely at how these two arts substantiate one another can we begin to find ways not only to be entertained by theatrical performances, but also to entertain critically the stories, characters, and ideas they present. In doing so, I propose, we extend not only our understanding of theatrical performance, but also our understanding of the art of rhetoric.
Re-Staging Persuasion: An Introduction

"Re-staging Persuasion: Feminist Theatrical Performance and/as Rhetoric" explores, as its title suggests, intersections of rhetoric, theatre, and feminism. My inquiry is guided by two central questions: Why has theatrical performance traditionally been disassociated from the study of rhetoric, when, historically and practically, theatre can be shown to be a manifestly and profoundly rhetorical medium? And what can we learn about rhetoric by exploring it through the lens of theatrical performance, specifically feminist theatrical performance? My investigation into these questions focuses on three rhetorical concepts: the traditional definition of rhetoric as the art of persuasion, the fifth rhetorical canon, delivery, and the rhetorical appeal of ethos, most often translated as the "character of the speaker," as it precedes or is constructed in the "text"; and the work of three contemporary theatre artists: Joan Lipkin, Anne Bogart and SITI Company, and Jane Martin. I argue that the theatrical performances produced by these theatre artists enable the practical revision of these three key rhetorical concepts, and in so doing, enact a feminist rhetoric that moves beyond persuasion as its primary goal to invitation and conversation.

Re-Staging Persuasion as "Beyonding" Persuasion

I came to this project in the same apparently serendipitous yet absolutely inevitable way that most scholars come to their subjects of research. Faced with the prospect of a class presentation on "rhetoric and the arts" in a graduate course on rhetorical theory in the spring of 1995, I headed to the library and there discovered an essay entitled "Feminist Theatre: A Rhetorical Phenomenon," written by Patti Gillespie.
and anthologized in the collection *Women in American Theatre*. I did not know, at the time, that Gillespie's essay was only one of several works of feminist theatre criticism to directly link feminist theatrical performance with rhetoric; I was just pleased to have found the perfect essay for inclusion in the annotated bibliography I was to compile in conjunction with my presentation. But Gillespie's piece manifestly confirmed for me a connection between the arts of rhetoric and theatre, a connection I had already sensed existed, and it sparked my desire to explore this connection further. Having long had an interest in crossing genres and blending traditional scholarly forms with creative rhetorical practices, I decided—in what I have since learned was a rather daring move—to perform a short excerpt from performance artist Holly Hughes' *World Without End* to introduce my class presentation on the rhetoricity of the theatre arts. I emerged from the discussion that followed convinced that the relationship between these two arts, both in theory and in practice, warranted further attention.

As I began reading and researching in earnest, I discovered connections between the arts in classical texts as well as in twentieth-century rhetorical theory, connections I discuss in more detail in the chapters to follow. One of these texts deserves mention here, for it was instrumental in determining the theoretical frame for this project. Kenneth Burke argues eloquently (and circuitously, as only Burke can) in his essay, "Rhetoric and Poetics," published in *Language as Symbolic Action*, that the arts of rhetoric and poetics "overlap" (295). I was struck by one passage in particular. In examining Aristotle's definition of *catharsis*, which Burke notes is often translated as "through pity and fear effecting the catharsis of such emotions," he remarks that "the word that is translated 'effecting' or 'producing' (*perainousa*) is etymologically from the
same root as *peran*, which means ‘opposite shore’” (298). Burke confesses that his etymology is “arrantly amateurish,” but proposes nonetheless to “make up an English verb, ‘to beyond,’ and thus to translate the Aristotelian formula: “‘through pity and fear beyonding the catharsis of emotions’” (298). Burke argues that the audience of a tragedy does not merely experience the emotions of pity and fear but is moved beyond them to edification and perhaps even transformation.

The idea of the verb “to beyond” recalled for me another essay I had recently read in connection with my growing interest in feminist rhetorics. In “Beyond Persuasion: A Proposal for an Invitational Rhetoric,” Sonja K. Foss and Cindy Griffin posit a theory of “invitational” rhetoric based on feminist principles of equality, self-determination, and immanent value (4), a rhetoric “beyond” persuasion, as their title suggests. Foss and Griffin do not advocate *replacing* persuasion with invitation but offer it as an *alternative* form of communication. It seemed to me—and here I was already adopting Burke’s verb—that to “beyond” persuasion, it was necessary not to imagine alternatives to persuasion, “other” forms outside of or in opposition to persuasion, but rather to move *through* persuasion to something else, just as the audience that Burke describes moves *through* pity and fear to edification. To “beyond” persuasion, I imagined, would require acknowledging the inescapable aspect of persuasion inherent in any act of communication, while at the same time moving beyond the traditional rhetorical ideal of persuasion-to-belief to a consideration of multiple points of view. The rhetor who would beyond persuasion would make rhetorical choices that would ask her audience to think, to question; the “end” of a rhetoric of beyonding persuasion would be the opening up of a conversation, rather than the closure of consensus.
What would a rhetoric that beyonded persuasion look like in practice? I began contemplating this question close to the same time that I performed "Retelling Resistance: Lost Patience, Found Texts" at the Feminism Workshop at CCCC. Certainly I was already aware of the power of theatre to affect and challenge, having been a lifelong theatre patron and a devoted performer since my childhood. But my experience as a performer at CCCC taught me something new about rhetoric, something about the relationship between pathos and logos I did not recall reading in my rhetoric texts. As I understood the Rhetoric, Aristotle wanted to privilege logos as the most influential rhetorical appeal; he conceded that ethos might in fact be "almost...the controlling factor in persuasion" (38). I did not recall any passages in which he wrote about the power of pathos to disarm logos. And yet that is what had happened in the rhetorical situation of my CCCC presentation, a theatrical performance.

My feminist theatrical performance, then, had enabled me to understand a traditional rhetorical relationship in a new way; it had, in a sense, revised that relationship, recasting it, one might even suggest, from a feminist perspective, in demonstrating the power of emotion to eclipse "logic." I suspected that feminist theatrical performance might enable the rethinking, the revision of other traditional rhetorical concepts and relationships; in doing so, it might even enable a feminist rhetoric of beyonding persuasion. Early feminist theatre critics, I discovered, had turned first to rhetoric when they sought a definition of the art they studied. Why not, then, turn to feminist theatrical performance to see what it could teach a rhetorician about the art of rhetoric?
A Chapter Summary

The study that follows is both transhistorical and intertextual. It weaves rhetorical history and theory and feminist theatre criticism and theory together with close readings of playtexts and feminist rhetorical analyses of those same plays in performance. Chapter One historicizes the connection between feminist theatre and the art of rhetoric, tracing the prominent role rhetorical theory played in the early stages of naming and defining feminist theatre theory and practice and problematizing the subsequent rejection of rhetoric as a useful analytical framework. This pairing, I argue, was in fact a most productive one, as the chapters that follow demonstrate.

Each of the remaining chapters opens with a discussion of one or more “moments of overlap,” textual moments in classical rhetoric texts that demonstrate a link between theatre, rhetoric, and the rhetorical concept under consideration in that chapter: persuasion, delivery, and ethos in Chapters Two, Three and Four, respectively. These analyses, based on close readings of selected passages in Plato, Aristotle, Cicero, and Quintilian, situate the connections between the two arts and the specific concepts historically as well as theoretically. Not only do these moments of overlap offer evidence that rhetoric and poetics have shared, since antiquity, as many connections as they do distinctions, but they also suggest that the role the body plays in communication is a touchstone for many of those connections. These moment(s) of overlap are followed by a history of the rhetorical concept under consideration that recounts traditional and feminist understandings of the concept, and each chapter concludes with a substantial case study of a theatre artist and theatrical performances that revise the concept in practice, enabling
a rhetoric that beyonds persuasion-to-belief and opens up a space for dialogue among multiple points of view.

Chapter Two sets forth in detail my theory of beyonding persuasion as a rhetoric that invites question and conversation and reads the work of writer/director Joan Lipkin as an exemplar of the concept. Lipkin, founder and artistic director of That Uppity Theatre Company in St. Louis, Missouri, is a playwright, director, feminist, and activist who "believe[s] in naming and claiming the specific whenever possible" ("Who Speaks," 105). I focus on two of Lipkin’s plays, *He’s Having Her Baby*, a "pro-choice," sex-role reversal musical, and *Small Domestic Acts*, a domestic drama about two couples, one of whom is lesbian and the other heterosexual. Lipkin’s work asks us to reconsider the traditional equation of rhetoric with persuasion, as she challenges the audience with non-linear arrangements, raising questions rather than answering them, and inviting audience participation in the act of making meaning.

Chapter Three recuperates the canon of delivery, the rhetoric of the body, which has received little attention from contemporary rhetorical scholars. After establishing the strength and persistence of what I call “delivery’s classical imperative,” the mandate that the orator’s bodily movement be derived from and conform to his text, I look at the work of Anne Bogart, cofounder of SITI Company and writer/director of numerous collaboratively conceived plays, including *The Medium* and *Cabin Pressure*, the two discussed here. Whereas in so much of traditional theatre and traditional rhetoric, movement is bound to the text by the classical imperative, in Bogart’s work the movement is separated from the text and seen as a communicative force in its own right.
In this refiguring of the relationship between text and delivery, Bogart and her company also enact a feminist rhetoric "beyond persuasion."

In Chapter Four I turn to the central problem of *ethos* and explore its status in a theatrical world where it is radically destabilized: the world of pseudonymous playwright Jane Martin, a mysterious "playwright from Kentucky" whose real identity is a closely guarded secret. Jane Martin's disembodied, "fill-in-the-blank" *ethos* complicates and refines the concept of beyonding persuasion, forcing us to ask: What is the relationship of the playwright's *ethos*, as it is rendered in text, embodied and complicated in performance, and (re)constructed in reviews, to rhetorical efficacy? *Ethos* intersects the rhetorical canons of invention, arrangement, style, memory and delivery; it is *ethos* that allows the rhetor to locate herself rhetorically. "Jane Martin" and Martin's play *Keely and Du* provide us with the opportunity to discover whether or not it is possible to enact a feminist rhetoric beyond persuasion without access to *ethos*, the rhetorical art of representation.

**"Theatrical Performance": A Clarification of Terms**

While my analyses of the theatre artists and their works are based both on close readings of written playtexts and stage performances of those texts, I am chiefly concerned with the actual performances of these plays as in-the-present, embodied aesthetic-rhetorical entities. In a recent essay in *PMLA*, entitled "Drama, Performativity, and Performance," W.B. Worthen reflects on the relationship between "performance" or performance studies and "dramatic theatre" (1093). "Drama" or "theatre" is viewed as a "species of performance driven by texts," while "performance studies" is the moniker typically invoked to describe the exploration of "nondramatic, nontheatrical, nonscripted,
ceremonial, and everyday-life performances” (1093). Thus the two terms are set in opposition to one another, or, more accurately, theatre is viewed as a “limited genre, a subdivision of performance” (Schechner 8, quoted in Worthen 1094).

Recognizing, then, the different histories and genres connoted by using either of the terms “theatre” or “performance” individually, I wish to collapse the distinctions between the two terms and use the phrase “theatrical performance” to refer to the works of the theatre artists I discuss and my own work, represented in the Intertexts. Worthen suggests that “texts in the theater” are “transformed by the environment of the theater into something else, a performance” (1100, emphasis mine). For Worthen, a performance is not derived from a text so much as it becomes “a surrogate standing in that positions, uses, signifies the text” (1102). I believe that it is in the dynamic communicative moments of live performance that the possibility for re-staging persuasion—for discovering, exploring and enacting alternative communicative practices—presents and re-presents itself. Furthermore, since my study includes the work of an artist who does not work with a traditional playtext as the foundation of her theatrical engagements (or, in any case, who does not work with a playtext as a foundation in the traditional sense of “putting on” or mounting a performance “of” a play), but who most assuredly is producing work in and for the theatre, the term “theatrical performance” seems most accurately and fully to evoke the complexity and fluidity of the works I describe.

A Note on the Intertexts

Bridging the chapters are Intertexts, the texts of short critical-creative performance pieces I have written in which I attempt, in performance, to practice the revisionary theatre-as-rhetoric I have discussed in each chapter. Intertext One, *Retelling*
Resistance: Lost Patience, Found Texts, which precedes this introduction, demonstrates in practice that which Chapter One theorizes: it links the arts of rhetoric and theatrical performance as it enacts feminist theatrical performance as an alternative rhetoric.

Intertext Two serves as an introduction to the concept of "beyonding persuasion" as discussed in Chapter Two in relation to Joan Lipkin's practice. Dear Mom: Dear John: Dear Editor: Oh, Dear Me: Why I Write (Feminism) attempts to describe persuasive acts of letter-writing rather than prescribing a response or course of action for the audience. Even The Eyebrows Must Conform, Intertext Three, adopts and enacts Anne Bogart's theatre-as-rhetoric, transforming Quintilian's treatise on delivery into a lover's quarrel and demonstrating how the body remains at the center of a text (i.e. a rhetoric) that attempts to write it into the margins. The final Intertext is titled What a Doll: Barbie Bears All. In this full-length performance piece, I incorporate each of the alternative practices I have theorized in order to explore the complex emulsion of praise and blame that the iconic Barbie Doll has borne, seeking, as I do so, to enact a feminist rhetoric that offers and urges at the same time it acknowledges that it represents merely the beginning of a conversation.

These texts, or more accurately, the performances they represent, are both illustrative and constitutive of my argument that the feminist rhetoric of beyonding persuasion that these texts enact creates a unique space for the development of an ethically aware rhetorical practice, one that invites open dialogue not only across the disciplines of rhetoric and poetics, but across real and imagined boundaries of many kinds. In advocating feminist theatrical performance as a privileged form of feminist rhetoric, I am, finally, arguing for a more "public," and I hope, accessible and inviting
forum in which to discuss and forward feminist ideals, one which might reach outside the walls of academe to speak to a wider audience, a contemporized and inclusive version of the Greek polis.
Notes


2 In no way do I mean to dismiss the power of *pathos*; traditionally it figures strongly into the canon of delivery, which I address later in the dissertation. I was, in fact, consciously using *pathos* as a critical persuasive tool, as I go on to note in the succeeding paragraphs.

3 Worthen uses this phrase specifically in reference to a work by theatre artist Anne Bogart and the SITI Company. a play entitled *Going. Going. Gone.*

4 I am indebted to Professor Esther Beth Sullivan for the wordplay on "entertain," adopted from the course title of her Spring 1997 upper level undergraduate dramatic literature course, "Entertaining Feminism."

5 Studies in Critical Theory: Rhetorical Theory, instructed by Professor Brenda Brueggemann, The Ohio State University, Spring 1995.

6 The traditional rhetorical ideal of persuasion-to-belief was likely determined by its historical context: judicial, deliberative, and epideictic rhetorics, as they are described by Aristotle, were all practiced within "scenes of judgment," to use Nan Johnson's term, and as such, closure was expected and demanded.

7 Worthen cites John Rouse as questioning "just 'what the word of means'" in the phrase "performance of a play" (1095). Worthen asserts that there is a "rhetoric of of" that needs to be rethought in terms of "conventions of performance rather than in an essential relation between texts and enactments" (1100).
Feminist Theatrical Performance And/As Rhetoric

Definition is perhaps the most basic and yet most troublesome point of inquiry into any subject. From the moment feminist theatre critics first began writing about their chosen field, the question “What is feminist theatre?” and the answers proffered in response to it were and have continued to be problematized. Therefore it is of particular interest that feminist theatrical performance has been connected to rhetoric since these very early stages of naming and defining its theory and practice. Early feminist theatre critics, in seeking answers to this difficult question, turned first to the field of rhetoric.

The earliest discussions of feminist theatre were often, in fact, explicitly discussions of feminist rhetorics. The concomitant connection and distinction conferred upon rhetoric and feminist theatre by these texts is impossible to ignore. Unfortunately, feminist theatre critics had only just begun to scratch the surface of this potentially fruitful connection when they dismissed rhetorical theory as an effective framework for analyzing feminist theatre, citing two concerns: first, that as an historically patriarchal discipline, rhetorical theory could not account for feminist principles; and second, that
rhetorical theory could not account for or explain the artistic elements of theatre.

On the contrary, I propose that these critics' first impulse to consider feminist theatre in relation to rhetorical theory was in fact a positive and productive one. The problem was (unsurprisingly) one of definition: the early critics' dismissal of rhetorical theory was based on a limited and unproblematized definition of rhetoric, a product of their historical moment—the late 1970s and early 1980s—and disciplinary context. A survey of these texts demonstrates that the connections between these two arts are many and strong, and that a reconsideration of contemporary feminist theatrical performance in light of contemporary feminist rhetorical theories will speak back to those rhetorical theories in important and surprising ways.

Definitions and Connections: What is “Feminist Theatre”? 

Janet Brown’s 1979 Feminist Drama: Definition and Critical Analysis, one of the first book-length studies to posit feminist theatre as a viable subject of study, is perhaps one of the only such works to present a straightforward, clearly delineated definition: “if the play features as its agent a woman seeking autonomy in an unjust socio-sexual hierarchy, it can be considered a feminist drama” (17). Brown’s work is especially significant in this context, not only because her study is considered an inceptive text in the field, but also because she adopted rhetorical theory as the touchstone of her definition and framework for her analysis. Brown’s Feminist Theater draws on rhetorical theorist Kenneth Burke’s dramatistic pentad to develop both her definition of feminist theatre as a play in which a woman “agent” seeks independence from the “scene” of an unjust society, and a corresponding method of analysis to determine whether a given play
is, according to this definition, a feminist drama. For each play she treats, Brown analyzes the relationship between the agent and the scene, the two most dramatically significant terms of Burke's pentad: if the agent transcends an unjust socio-sexual hierarchy, then the play presents an idealistic feminist vision; if the scene and its resistance to change are emphasized, then the play may be said to be more deterministic (16).

The Burkean framework serves Brown well until she attempts an analysis of the work of several collectively-authored plays performed by feminist theatre groups. Because these plays vary considerably in structure from the single-authored works, and in most cases do not track the actions of one "agent" acting within one well-defined "scene," the Burkean model does not lend itself to theorizing such collaborative work. Brown herself makes note of the limitations of her model, concluding that "[a]daptations" to her method "may be necessary if it is to continue to be relevant to the study of feminist drama" (87).²

In the "first wave" of studies of feminist theatre, rhetorical theory was one of the only approaches "shared by more than two" critics (Canning 22), a detail which merits closer examination. Patti Gillespie, in a 1978 essay entitled "Feminist Theatre: A Rhetorical Phenomenon," published in the Quarterly Journal of Speech and later anthologized in Women and American Theatre (1981), argues that, as the title of her essay indicates, feminist theatre is a "rhetorical phenomenon," the "primary aim" of its practitioners being "action, not art" (277).³ This assertion is as close as Gillespie comes to positing a definition, as she notes—even at this early stage of theorizing feminist
Gillespie states that the goals of feminist theatre groups in the 1970s were to “promote the identities of women, to increase awareness of the issues of feminism, or to advocate corrective change,” and she suggests that theatre was the chosen venue of these groups in part because the symbolic nature of the theatre allowed for a more complex and less threatening exploration of feminist issues than other rhetorical forms (277). Drawing on the early work of feminist rhetorician Karlyn Kohrs Campbell, Gillespie notes that women were more readily accepted as actresses than as rhetors, and that, furthermore, theatre allowed the “particular and [the] universal” to be displayed “at once,” a feature which corresponded neatly with the feminist mantra “the personal is the political” (279; 280).

Similarly, Elizabeth Natalie, in her 1985 book Feminist Theatre: A Study in Persuasion, views theatre as a “communication process,” a process in which a “persuasive message is designed to influence the beliefs and convictions of the members of the audience of the theatre”; the stage becomes a “speaking platform” from which to “argue against oppression” (5). Natalie’s rhetorical analytical framework is Aristotle’s Rhetoric, and while she, too, resists overtly prescribing a definition of “feminist theatre,” titling a section of her first chapter “The Problem of Definition” and concluding “feminist theatre is in a state of flux” that makes it difficult (and perhaps irresponsible) to assert a stable definition or even a list of “criteria” (5), Natalie’s overall argument suggests that a defining characteristic of feminist theatre is persuasiveness. Natalie looks at twenty plays from ten different theatres produced between 1967 and 1982 and
categorizes each by one of three "central ideas"—"male power and its consequences for women," the "woman-identified woman," and "family roles and relationships" (31). Each play is analyzed for the types of persuasive strategies it employs, primarily "emotional argument" (*pathos*) and "logical argument" (*logos*) (33). Like Brown, Natalie centers her analysis on the "words that express the thoughts of the playwrights," stating that she has not addressed any nonverbal forms of persuasion because "enactment" (Charles Kauffmann's term) is "more properly the domain of Poetics" (132).

Perhaps most significantly, Natalie asserts that feminist theatre is "rhetoric *instead of* theatre" (132, emphasis mine). This statement echoes Gillespie's assessment of feminist theatre as "action, *not* art" (277, emphasis mine). Although both Gillespie and Natalie resist explicitly defining feminist theatre, their choice of rhetoric as an analytical lens nevertheless serves as a definition of sorts: in their discussions, feminist theatre *is* rhetoric. The problem with the particular version of this definition presented in these early texts is that rhetoric is distinguished *from* theatre even as feminist theatre is analyzed *as* rhetoric. There is an inherent contradiction in terms here. "Rhetoric" is explicitly—and very narrowly—defined by Gillespie as "[p]ublic address and debate" and referred to as the "presentation of systematic arguments" (280); Natalie assumes, as noted above, that action and nonverbal communication rightfully belong to poetics—an odd assumption, truly, given that the fifth canon of rhetoric is *actio*. Given this perceived split between rhetoric and poetics, and the extremely limited realm assigned to rhetoric, it is not surprising that later feminist theatre critics moved away from this analytical lens, a

Canning surveys some of the same texts discussed here. In her treatment of Gillespie's work, she points out that "[a]s long as feminist theater was 'action, not art,' theater itself remained an inconsequential detail as opposed to the shaping factor in the presentation of ideas, politics, and intentions" (25). Rhetorical theory, according to Canning, could not account for the interests or demands of theatre; neither could it "account for...how the theatrical forms being created were specifically feminist since it was not a theory shaped by the interests and demands of feminism" (23). Canning suggests that it was for these two reasons that subsequent feminist theatre critics such as Sue-Ellen Case abandoned the explicitly rhetorical perspective and adopted other theoretical lenses. Case's *Feminism and Theatre* (1988) inaugurated a sort of 'second wave' of feminist theatre criticism, which was characterized in part by its conscious attention to differing definitions of "feminism" itself, as well as more frequent borrowings from semiotic and deconstructive theories of sign and language. But while Case's work and the work of other later critics is of great significance to feminist theatre studies in general and to this project as well, I wish first to problematize Canning's assessment of the relationship between rhetoric and feminist theatre and the two reasons she proffers for the demise of this particular critical conversation. Canning's text, published seventeen years after Brown's *Feminist Drama* and eleven years after Natalie's study, occupies the position of an authoritative summation, and so I will respond directly
to her remarks in order to show why rhetoric was dismissed precipitately, and to
demonstrate the powerful and subversive possibilities in re-engaging that conversation.

Answering Canning's Charges: The Problem With (Ramist) Rhetoric

Canning notes the contradiction in terms suggested by Gillespie's and Natalie's
distinctions between "rhetoric" and "feminist theatre," but her critique also relies on
differentiating between the two arts. Her privileged term is theatre: she expresses
concern that the "specifics of theater" become "extraneous" when one analyzes a
theatrical performance from the "outside," that is, from a rhetorical perspective (25).
Yet this perception of rhetoric as existing "outside" of feminist theatre is based on
Canning's acceptance of a rather limited, very traditional, and often contested definition
of rhetoric. Feminist theatre critics, as I have noted, have been self-conscious of the
limits of defining "feminist theatre" as well as the dangers of the act of defining
generally from the beginning of their inquiries into the field. Unfortunately, as noted, the
definitions of rhetoric in these works have not been subject to the same questioning.
Canning states that, in the early studies, "[rhetorical] theory provided a way to examine
theater for its political aims and to differentiate feminist theater from other kinds of
theater"; she then remarks that "[w]hile rhetorical theory analyzes more form than
content, and avoids a specific political commitment on the part of the writer, it was not
necessarily intended to be apolitical" (23). Canning's statements suggest that she is
working from a Ramist definition of rhetoric, which results in an over-simplified
rendering of the art.
Canning’s distinction between form and content recalls the much-contested re-definition of rhetoric proffered by Peter Ramus in the late 1500s. As Professor of Eloquence and Philosophy at the University of Paris, Ramus desired, ostensibly, to link the two fields evoked by his self-created title; in practice and pedagogy, however, he ultimately advocated their separation. “Philosophy,” which Ramus essentially equated with dialectic, was to include the study of invention, arrangement, and memory; “eloquence,” or rhetoric, was to consist of style and delivery only. Thus Ramus pruned rhetoric, reducing it to two of its traditional five canons. And even those two canons were pared down. Ramus allots little space or significance to delivery in his Rhetoric, largely since oral communication was being rapidly eclipsed by written, and the province of style was limited to just a few figures and tropes.

Most rhetoricians have subsequently bemoaned Ramus’s “contribution” to rhetoric. The title of Walter J. Ong’s booklength study of Ramus refers to the “Decay of Dialogue” he feels has taken place as a result of Ramus’s foreshortening of rhetoric; Ong includes an epigraph from Justus Lipsius on his title page which might be said to sum up most contemporary rhetoricians’ responses to Ramism: “Young man, listen to me: you will never be a great man if you think that Ramus was a great man” (n. pag.). When Ong remarks on Ramus’ Commentary on the Christian Religion and suggests that the significance of Ramus’ theology lies not in its innovation but rather “in its curious deformation of religion,” one is tempted to substitute the words “rhetorical theory” for “theology,” and “rhetoric” for “religion” (5). The introduction to an excerpt from Arguments in Rhetoric Against Quintilian in The Rhetorical Tradition evidences this
view: the editors state that Ramus's work had "dire consequences for rhetoric" and that a "withering" of the art occurred as a result of his influence (Bizzell and Herzberg 560). Another contemporary sourcebook and textbook notes that twentieth century rhetoricians have actively worked to "revise" and counter this "Ramist heritage" of a truncated rhetoric (Covino and Jolliffe 79).

Canning's statement that rhetoric "avoids a specific political commitment on the part of the writer" (23) also evokes a Ramist definition of rhetoric. If rhetoric consists of "only the prescribed skill of style and delivery," as Ramus asserts in the *Arguments in Rhetoric Against Quintilian*, then it cannot, as Quintilian argued in *Institutes of Oratory*, demand that the orator be a "good man," for to raise the question of virtue is to step, according to Ramus, out of the realm of rhetoric—"language and speech"—and into that of dialectic and moral philosophy (570). This issue was first raised by Plato in the *Gorgias* when Socrates criticizes rhetoric for its apolitical, or perhaps more accurately, amoral, nature: if by definition rhetoric is the art of "persuasion for belief," and if the power of rhetoric is in the ability of the rhetor to speak (or write) convincingly on any subject, regardless of his or her knowledge of it, then rhetoric does remain unaccountable to any one philosophical (or ethical or political) stance (66).

It is true in this sense that rhetoric "avoids a specific political commitment on the part of the writer" (23), but the fact that rhetoric neither grew out of nor serves one specific governing ideology does not mean that it *cannot* be employed to serve a particular ideology, such as feminism. In fact, it is specifically the apolitical or amoral nature of the art of rhetoric that allows it to be used in support of varying ideologies.
This fact was precisely what concerned Plato, who argued that rhetoric should always be employed in the service of the good: Socrates argues in the final paragraphs of the *Gorgias* that “rhetoric is to be used for this one purpose always, of pointing to what is just” (112). Ultimately, not only is rhetoric “not necessarily intended to be apolitical,” as Canning suggests, it *cannot* be apolitical in practice. Rhetoric persuades to belief, and beliefs are always informed by ideology.

There are two central problems, then, with Canning’s sanctioning of feminist theatre criticism’s dismissal of rhetorical theory (and her own concomitant dismissal of it). First, she rejects rhetoric on the basis of a reductive definition of the art, a definition that is discredited if not outright rejected by most rhetorical scholars. While it is unlikely that Canning consciously adopted Ramism *per se*, the rhetoric she describes is undoubtedly a Ramist rhetoric. This adoption is even more troubling in the current context given that, according to Ong, the Ramist arts are “dominantly and incurably textual” (273). Although Ramus assigned delivery the second part of rhetoric, delivery “fitted uneasily” into a rhetoric which was monologic, rather than dialogic in nature (273): “By its very structure, Ramist rhetoric asserts to all who are able to sense its implications that there is no way to discovery or to understanding through voice, and ultimately seems to deny that the processes of person-to-person communication play any necessary role in intellectual life” (288). Clearly, such a rhetoric is diametrically opposed to the art of theatre⁸; it is also, for many twentieth century rhetoricians, diametrically opposed to the art of rhetoric, which is currently understood as a complex, continually evolving theory subject to revision, shaped and re-shaped by changing
contexts, perspectives, and practices.

The fact that Canning bases her assessment of the viability of the rhetorical lens on a Ramist definition of rhetoric is also problematic in that neither Brown, Gillespie, nor Natalie worked from such a definition. Natalie, who bases her analysis on Aristotle's *Rhetoric,* works from the most traditional (by conventional rhetorical standards) definition of the three: rhetoric as the art of persuasion. Since Ramist rhetoric is considered anti-Aristotelian, it is not a fair measure by which to determine the usefulness of Natalie's lens. Brown draws on the dramatistic theories of Kenneth Burke, as discussed above. While Brown's definition of feminist theatre, based on an analysis of the agent-scene relationship, is narrowly focused, Burkean rhetoric, in contrast, pushes at the boundaries of traditional rhetoric. It is true that Burke is a rhetorical patriarch of sorts, for while his work has proven useful to feminists such as Brown, it could not be argued that Burke explicitly espoused or advocated feminist ideals. However, in answer to Canning's second charge, that the rhetorical theories on which the earlier critics based their work could not account for the artistic elements of theatre—its "poetics," if you will—stands Burke's essay, "Rhetoric and Poetics," which appeared in *Language as Symbolic Action* in 1966. In this commentary, Burke argues that the two arts "have an area of overlap," and suggests, specifically, that Aristotle's discussion of *catharsis*—a much-debated but nevertheless defining element of drama, and one of the central ideas in the *Poetics*—"bulge[s] over into the realm of Rhetoric" (295; 297). Burke is no more a renowned scholar of the theatre than he is a feminist; nevertheless, his all-compassing theories of language and rhetoric are a far cry from the Ramist rhetoric Canning assumes.
And while Burke generally tends to focus his discussion of drama on textual artifacts like Aristotle's *Poetics* and playscripts, rather than theatrical production or performance, it is inaccurate to assert unequivocally that Burkean rhetorical theory "did not emerge from theory specific to theatre" (25), given that dramatism was, as Burke states, "developed from the analysis of drama" (*Grammar* 996).

Gillespie, on the other hand, bases her discussion on feminist rhetorician Karlyn Kohrs Campbell's early essay, "The Rhetoric of Women's Liberation: An Oxymoron," published in the *Quarterly Journal of Speech* in 1973. In this essay Campbell argues that the rhetoric of women's liberation differs substantively and stylistically from traditional rhetorical values: "[I]nsofar as the role of rhetor entails qualities of self-reliance, self-confidence, and independence, *its very assumption is a violation of the female role*" (75). Feminist rhetoric, then, "by definition," according to Campbell, "attacks...the most fundamental values of the cultural context in which it occurs" (75). According to Campbell, feminist rhetoric emphasizes the "affective," or emotional, appeal; places high value on personal experience; recognizes the need for self-revelation and self-criticism; privileges dialogue as a form of communication; and works simultaneously to create a sense of community among women at the same time it encourages a sense of autonomy in individual women (79; 83). The end goal of "women's liberation rhetoric" is to confront and "violate the reality structure," a phrase Campbell borrows from the Female Liberation Movement (81). This violation involves challenging traditional standards of "femininity" and other limiting cultural norms imposed on women (81). Campbell argues that such a rhetoric is in fact "anti-
rhetorical” in that it rejects traditional rhetorical concepts such as “the persuasion of the many by an expert” and the necessity of adapting to “audience norms” (78).

Canning grants that Gillespie “created a specifically feminist space for her critique” by drawing on Campbell’s theory of feminist rhetoric (25). However, Gillespie’s use of Campbell is contradictory, and her essay, while not harking back to a specifically Ramist rhetoric, does curtail this potentially revolutionary gesture by returning to a similarly restrictive definition. On the one hand, Gillespie draws on Campbell, who proposes a radically different rhetorical theory from what has come before, an “anti-rhetorical” theory of feminist rhetoric. Gillespie asserts that 1970s feminist theatre groups had enacted the rhetoric that Campbell theorized from examples of print women’s liberation rhetoric. In doing so, Gillespie gestures toward the idea that feminist theatre can help us to imagine—and even embody—a re-theorizing of rhetoric based on feminist principles. Furthermore, Gillespie suggests that the effects of feminist theatre are what define it as a rhetorical—and a feminist—enterprise, also a potentially productive strategy for dealing with the “problem of definition” recounted in this chapter, and a strategy to which I will return.

Even though Gillespie bases a large part of her discussion on Campbell’s “anti-rhetorical” rhetoric, she ultimately falls back, as previously noted, on a limited, traditional definition of rhetoric as “[p]ublic address and debate” and the “presentation of systematic arguments” (280). Gillespie suggests that advocates of feminism turned to theatre because of its inherent qualities as an art: it is symbolic, and therefore “deals in a world of hypothesis, not ‘reality’”; it “says more than its literal meaning and means
more than a single thing” (279-80). “Public speaking and debate” can only “assert” connections between the particular and universal; theatre can “embody” them. Theatre is more “social” than most other “verbal arts,” since it is composed of live actors and audience members: “the sense of immediacy and urgency is greater than that of music, painting, lyric poetry, or the novel” (279). Since Gillespie has distinguished between “action and art,” oratory, the rhetorical art most closely related to theatre (and one that might be said to possess some of the same qualities she has just assigned to theatre, such as the presence of the live speaker addressing a live audience), is necessarily excluded from her list of verbal arts. The problem is that Gillespie’s limited definition does not allow her to use the phrase “rhetorical art,” even as she makes the argument that the 

theatrical arts were adopted by feminists as an alternative rhetorical strategy.

Gillespie argues that feminist theatre is more rhetorical than it is theatrical; it is “action, not art.” But she then goes on to suggest that advocates of feminism in the 1970s chose theatre to convey their ideas specifically because of those qualities, iterated above, which define it as theatre. “Action, not art” implies that theatre and rhetoric are two different, distinct arts (the further implication, being of course, that rhetoric is not an “art” at all). If, however, as Gillespie suggests, feminist theatre (the art that is not-art) enacts Campbell’s “new” rhetoric (which it can do specifically because it is theatre, the not-art that is art); if it may be said to do so primarily because it intends like effects; and if those effects are that which defines feminist theatre as a rhetorical phenomenon, then these two arts are inextricably bound up together. Feminist theatre is feminist rhetoric. And vice-versa.
Feminist Rhetorics: Transforming the Tradition

Of those early works that made connections between rhetoric and feminist theatre, Gillespie's essay comes closest to recognizing and teasing out the complexity and the potential productiveness of the relationship between the two arts. Gillespie suggests that the art of theatre enables the enactment of (alternative) rhetorical practices, and I concur: these practices may help us to re-vise the traditional rhetorical concept of rhetoric-as-persuasion, reclaim the art of delivery as "body rhetoric," and re-imagine the relationship between (embodied) ethos and rhetorical efficacy. For the remainder of this chapter, I wish to pick up a thread in Gillespie's argument, a thread dropped in feminist theatre's turn to other analytical lenses, and tie it to contemporary rhetorical theory. For Gillespie's turn to the work of a feminist rhetorician indicates the beginnings of a slow transformation in rhetoric studies, as it shifted from an almost wholly patriarchal discipline to allow for the existence and exploration of alternative (feminist) rhetorics and histories of rhetorics.

Let us return for a moment to Charlotte Canning's assertion that a rhetorical critical lens remains "outside" feminist theatre because it does not "create a specifically feminist space" (25). As previously noted, rhetoric has historically been considered "one of the most patriarchal of all the academic disciplines" in terms of the theories and communicative ends it has privileged (Corbett 577); while it remains so in many ways, the contributions of feminist rhetoricians in the last two decades have begun to alter the shape of the body of rhetoric. In the late 1970s and early 1980s, Canning's assertion might be said to have been fairly accurate, although I have shown how such an assertion
might be complicated in relation to the work of Brown and Natalie, whose definitions of rhetoric are based on two of the patriarchs of the rhetorical tradition. Gillespie's use of Campbell, of course, paradoxical and contradictory as it may be, complicates Canning's assertion even further, and might even be said to refute it. Karlyn Kohrs Campbell was one of several feminist rhetoricians whose work helped to usher in a new era in rhetoric studies. At the same time that women scholars were beginning to revise theatrical history and criticism, women in rhetoric studies began to revise the rhetorical canon. Sadly, the two arts parted ways just as this connection could have been made even more productive.

Karlyn Kohrs Campbell's early essay, "The Rhetoric of Women's Liberation: An Oxymoron," discussed at some length in connection to Gillespie's essay, above, was a precursor to her two-volume booklength study, *Man Cannot Speak for Her*, Volume One of which was published in 1989. In the first volume of this work, Campbell describes and analyzes the rhetorical practices of women who participated in what she calls the "early woman's rights movement," a movement that first emerged in the 1830s and grew to become "focused primarily on woman suffrage after the Civil War" (*Man Cannot* 1). The second volume of the study anthologizes the actual speeches of the women whose rhetorical acts are recorded and discussed in the first volume. Campbell suggests that her task is primarily one of recovery and historicization. Noting that "[m]en have an ancient and honorable rhetorical history," while "[w]omen have no parallel" to that tradition, Campbell states that her goal as a rhetorical critic is "to restore one segment of the history of women" (1). In the process of doing so, Campbell further develops and refines the theory of feminist rhetoric she proposed in her earlier essay. After broadly defining
rhetoric as "the study of the means by which symbols can be used to appeal to others, to persuade" (2), Campbell states that her analyses of women’s rhetorical practices evidenced that "many strategically adopted what might be called a "feminine style" (12). Although this style was not exclusively practiced by women, Campbell suggests that its roots are in the relationships women negotiated with one another in their primary roles as housewives and mothers; this "feminine style" is characterized by Campbell as "personal in tone," inductive in structure, and invitational in nature; its goal is the empowerment of its audience with the belief that they "can act effectively in the world" (13).

Campbell’s work sparked an energetic debate surrounding what Barbara Biesecker, in her 1992 essay, termed “Recent Attempts to Write Women into the History of Rhetoric” (140). Biesecker argues that Campbell’s work, while important, even a "landmark... attempt" at re-envisioning the rhetorical canon, carries with it the danger of "female tokenism": identifying and naming a "few great women" and placing them in the rhetorical tradition may in fact "perpetuate the damaging fiction that most women simply do not have what it takes to play the public, rhetorical game" (141-42, emphasis mine). Biesecker critiques the "supplemental model" of simply adding women to the traditional canon, because such an ostensibly "inclusive" move does little to revise the criteria of canon formation; it is those criteria that have privileged the public, male "individual speaking subject" and so "have written the rhetorical contributions of collective women into oblivion" (144). Ultimately Biesecker suggests that "supplementing" the canon in this way serves only to uphold the rhetorical status quo.
In a response to what she terms Biesecker’s “attack,” Campbell points out that, since the rhetorical practices of the women she treats were not defined or valued as a “part of public address as it then existed,” she, “by definition...cannot have supported the status quo” in naming these women rhetors (154). And Campbell does, as noted above, assert that a different, perhaps more fluid, definition of rhetoric is needed to account for these women’s practices; it would seem, in fact, that her theory of “feminine style” arose out of her investigations into the rhetoric of the early women’s rights movement. Thus Campbell’s work and her defense of it raise an important question: is it possible to write women into the history of rhetoric without altering not merely its face, but its body, its very heart, as well?

I submit that the answer is “no.” The contributions of feminist scholars have already begun to change the shape, the body of rhetoric. A brief survey of selected other works whose primary aim is the reclamation of women in rhetoric—and/or the reclamation of rhetoric by/for women—supports this assertion. For example, in Reclaiming Rhetorica: Women in the Rhetorical Tradition, the essayists reclaim, among others, Aspasia and Diotima, two female speakers and teachers referenced by Plato in his works; medieval writer Christine de Pisan, author of The Treasure of the City of Ladies; and late nineteenth-century journalist Ida B. Wells, a nationally syndicated columnist, among many others, as rhetors worthy of study. According to Andrea A. Lunsford, editor of the volume, in so doing, they necessarily interrupt the seamless narrative usually told about the rhetorical tradition and...open up possibilities for multiple rhetorics, rhetorics that would not name and valorize one traditional, competitive, agonistic, and linear mode of rhetorical discourse but would rather incorporate other, often dangerous moves: breaking the silence; naming in personal terms; employing
dialogics; recognizing and using the power of conversation; moving centripetally towards connections and valuing—indeed insisting upon—collaboration. ("On Reclaiming," 6)

For example, in "recovering" nineteenth-century reformist Margaret Fuller, Annette Kolodny also "recovers" what she terms Fuller's "daring" rhetorical practices, including Fuller's privileging of a conversational style that rejects traditional persuasive strategies and resists closure (159-62); Kolodny suggests that Fuller's work, which has often been overlooked, might provide valuable insight into twentieth-century feminists' search for alternatives to the "one traditional, competitive, agonistic, and linear mode of rhetorical discourse" that Lunsford names, above ("On Reclaiming," 6).

Another more recent work that "retells" the tradition is Cheryl Glenn's *Rhetoric Retold: Regendering the Tradition from Antiquity to the Renaissance* (1997), in which she discusses the lives and works of such women as Sappho and Aspasia, Julian of Norwich, Margaret More Roper, and Queen Elizabeth I. Glenn describes her project in this way: "Rhetoric Retold identifies women's bodies, explores their contributions to and participation within the rhetorical tradition, and writes them into an expanded, inclusive tradition" (2). Glenn takes as her thesis the idea that writing women into the rhetorical tradition must of necessity alter that tradition: "we want to story rhetorical history, particularly a history inclusive of women. And such restorying entails our rethinking texts, approaches, narrative—and history itself"; doing so "implies not only a new history of women but also a new rhetorical history, in short, an *entirely new rhetorical map*" (3, emphasis mine).
It is clear that the relationship between writing women into the tradition and rewriting the tradition itself is a symbiotic one: it was necessary to reimagine rhetoric in order to write women in as rhetors, for “until recently, the figure of the rhetor has been assumed to be masculine, unified, stable, autonomous, and capable of acting rationally on the world through language. Those who did not fit this pattern—women, people of color, poorly educated workers, those judged to be overly emotional or unstable—those people stood outside the rhetorical situation” (Ede, Glenn, Lunsford 412). And once women are written into the tradition, it becomes necessary to re-imagine the history of rhetoric as well as our understanding of what “rhetorical theory” is.

A good example of this symbiosis is feminist writer and activist Starhawk, whose work is discussed in a 1992 essay by Sonja K. Foss and Cindy L. Griffin entitled “A Feminist Perspective on Rhetorical Theory: Toward a Clarification of Boundaries.” Starhawk’s sex, as well as her practice of Wicca, or Witchcraft, and worship of the Goddess would, for many people, set her outside the bounds of the conventional rhetor (331). In order to consider Starhawk a rhetorician, Foss and Griffin had to ignore the traditional conception of a rhetor, as described by Ede, Glenn, and Lunsford, above, and re-imagine a rhetoric in which Starhawk’s voice would be valued. Starhawk herself has theorized such a rhetoric, and this theory is one of the foci of Foss and Griffin’s essay. They describe two rhetorical systems defined by Starhawk, a “Rhetoric of Inherent Value” and a “Rhetoric of Domination.” The former is based on a belief in the inherent value of all beings, and privileges interconnection and the communicative strategy of “power-with” (334). A “Rhetoric of Domination,” on the other hand, functions
hierarchically and privileges those who enact “power-over” (336). Foss and Griffin juxtapose Starhawk's theories with the rhetorical theories of Kenneth Burke, and suggest that Burke’s theory—rooted in a patriarchal rhetorical tradition that privileges persuasion, akin to “power-over”—may be aligned with her “rhetoric of domination.” In naming Starhawk as a rhetorician and reading her work alongside Burke's, Foss and Griffin demonstrate that while Burke’s rhetorical theory is an “exemplar” of one tradition, that tradition is not universal in its “application and relevance” (345); it is subject to question, to challenge, to revision.

These examples make it apparent, I believe, that while Canning’s assertion that a rhetorical critical lens “was not a theory shaped by the interests and demands of feminism” might have been reasonably accurate in 1979, to continue to suggest that rhetoric is incompatible with feminism in 1996 is untrue. Indeed, “rhetoric’s boundaries are no longer so clearly delineated” (Ede, Glenn, Lunsford 403); the ground has shifted; the anatomy has, and continues to, change. At the same time that feminists such as Brown, Gillespie and Natalie were beginning to challenge and revise the dramatic canon in theatre studies, feminists in rhetoric departments were questioning the absence of women in the history of rhetoric. Just one year prior to the publication of Canning’s book on grassroots feminist theatre in the United States, rhetorical scholars Lisa Ede, Cheryl Glenn, and Andrea Lunsford published an essay entitled “Border Crossings: Intersections of Rhetoric and Feminism” (1995) which traces the “transformations to both disciplines” that have resulted from this intersection, some of which I have
suggested here. It is time for the parallel roads that feminist theatre and feminist rhetoric have been travelling to intersect as well.

Rhetoric and Representation: Answering Canning's Charges, II

The second reason rhetorical theory was dismissed early on as a useful lens through which to analyze feminist theatrical performance, according to Canning, was that rhetoric could not account for "theater as representation or cultural production" (25). In other words, rhetoric could not account for the artistic or imitative elements of theatre; neither could it account for theatre as an historical and ideological repository, as mirror and messenger of a community's history and values. Yet rhetoric, like theatre, is an arena of cultural production, reflecting and selecting the values of the culture it is produced in and, one might argue, produces. And rhetoric is manifestly an art of representation, a re-presentation of idea and image. As such, a fair portion of rhetorical theory, beginning with Plato and Aristotle and continuing up through the present day, concerns itself with the art and ethics of representation. Plato, in fact, was eager to dismiss both rhetoric and theatre from his ideal state primarily because both arts traded in representation, in imitation, "seeming." One might well argue that it is the fact of representation that connects these two arts most profoundly.

The art of representation is most explicitly addressed in rhetorical theory in discussions of ethos, or the character of the speaker, and the canon of delivery. Discussions of ethos have traditionally hearkened back to Aristotle's formulation of the concept as the character of the speaker as it is constructed in and by the text: the rhetor should work to construct an appearance of good will toward the audience, good sense,
and virtue, as a person "seeming to have all these qualities is necessarily persuasive to
the hearers" (121, emphasis mine). Aristotle instructs the reader of the Rhetoric in how
to represent the self as an honest and sensible person by, among other things, providing
extensive descriptions of the characters of the folk the rhetor might encounter (young
men, old men, middle-aged men, the wealthy, the powerful) so that the rhetor might
adjust his own "character" accordingly. Most contemporary theorists who have
addressed ethos have extended Aristotle's formulation of the concept as a textual
constructor/construction; Roger Cherry's essay, "Ethos vs. Persona: Self-Representation
in Written Discourse," discussed at length in chapter four, is a prime example, as its title
indicates.

Classical and eighteenth-century discussions of the canon of delivery also
explicitly cast rhetoric as an art of representation: the rhetor was instructed to make
careful choices in relation to his physical representation in terms of his voice,
countenance, and gestures, so that he might communicate effectively with and not
alienate the audience. Quintilian devotes page after page of his Institutes of Oratory to
detailed descriptions of appropriate facial expressions and hand gestures; Gilbert Austin
includes elaborate diagrams of correct foot placement in his 1806 Chironomia. After the
elocutionary movement of the 1800s subsided, however, "body rhetoric" ceased to be
addressed or theorized with any frequency. In fact, one might suggest that delivery as the
art of "body rhetoric" has only been "theorized" by rhetoricians in the most basic of
ways: most "theories" of delivery are simply instruction manuals detailing how one
might best use the voice, facial expression, and bodily gesture to communicate,
accompanied by some rationale for those instructions. Meta-rhetorical texts that critically analyze the manuals and the ideologies that inform them are almost non-existent.\textsuperscript{11} Thus, while it is not entirely accurate to say that rhetoric cannot account for theatre as an art of representation, as it itself is such an art and consequently must address representation, it is also true that rhetoricians have limited their analyses primarily to the theorizing of representation within \textit{texts} and have not theorized with any great complexity the body in space as an aspect of rhetoric.\textsuperscript{12} Feminist theatre critics, on the other hand, after turning away from rhetoric as an analytical lens, turned to theorizing representation, specifically representation of the (female) body on stage. Their analyses, and the stage work on which those analyses are based, can provide invaluable insights into the role the body plays in rhetoric as an art of representation as well.

I have cited Sue-Ellen Case's book \textit{Feminism and Theatre} (1988) as the inaugural work in a second wave of feminist theatre criticism. Much like the first wave of feminist rhetoric studies, early feminist theatre studies, such as those recounted earlier in this chapter, focused on definition and the recovery and reclamation of women in the tradition. Feminist theatre critics recognized, as did feminist rhetoricians, that including women in the tradition meant rewriting the tradition itself and more closely examining the philosophical systems the tradition grew out of and, most often, re-inscribed. In her book, Case identifies representation as the \textit{re}-presentation of the values and beliefs of the dominant culture, and argues that traditionally, female stage characters were "fictional representations" of women written and performed from a patriarchal point of view, an
obvious example being the literal portrayal of women by men on the Elizabethan stage (13). She argues that it is necessary to “deconstruct the traditional systems of representation” by identifying and recoding gendered cultural sign systems—such as gestures, speech patterns, and roles that mark women as passive objects of desire—and questioning and revising the linear narrative realism that enables this positioning of women as objects and suppresses them as subjects. In *The Feminist Spectator as Critic* (1991), another key text in the second wave of feminist theatre criticism, materialist feminist Jill Dolan also argues that the “representational apparatus” must be foregrounded in order to demystify its ideology (14), for theatrical representation is not merely a mirror but an active “ideological force” (16). One is reminded of Kenneth Burke’s statement that a reflection of reality is also a selection of reality and consequently also a deflection of reality (*Language*, 45). The most powerful way to intervene in this ideological force—to select differently, to recognize deflection—is to acknowledge the presence of desire in the performer-spectator relationship and, most importantly, to understand “the body as a material and representational site at which ideology might be rewritten” (Dolan, “Fathom,” 4).

Rhetoric can account for representation and the role the body plays in representation, but for the most part rhetoricians have not focused their attention on this aspect of rhetoric. Here, then, is another issue that makes clear an ongoing conversation between rhetoric and feminist theatrical studies could prove most fruitful. Dolan writes, “As the palpable material of feminist theatre and performance studies, the body has been theorized (first) here [in feminist theatre criticism] in ways that other disciplines have yet
to cite. . . . Theorizing the live body onstage is our peculiar, vital contribution to discourse in the academy. . . ." ("Fathom," 4). Feminist theatre criticism has demonstrated how the body in space is ideologically coded and has theorized ways that theatre practitioners and spectators can intervene in the coding itself as well as in the deciphering of it. And while feminist theatre critics have focused their analyses on the female body in particular, their observations prove valuable to understanding the relationship between the body, representation, and communication, the making of meaning, more generally. For example, feminist critic Elin Diamond advocates recuperating the theories of Bertolt Brecht for feminist theatrical practice and analysis, given that Brecht sought to demystify theatre's representational apparatus primarily through the historicization of the performer's body as "not a fixed essence but a site of struggle and change" (52). Historicization in the Brechtian sense enables an understanding of the body as a complex and changeable communicative force, one that simultaneously writes and is written on; historicization insists that performer and audience remain critically aware of the multiplicity of meanings the body re-presents. Feminist theatre scholars and practitioners remind us that the body, in many cases, "writes the largest portion of the text" (Dolan, "Fathom," 5), an assertion that feminist rhetoricians, in seeking new and alternative rhetorics, might put to good use.

(U)ndefinitions and (R)eConnections: The Uses of Feminist Theatre

I began this chapter with an exploration of the question, what is feminist theatre? and answered it, feminist theatre is feminist rhetoric. There may be no better, or less problematic, answer to such a question; as I noted, feminist theatre critics quickly
discovered "the problem of definition." Several of these critics, Charlotte Canning among them, turned to posing questions in lieu of positing definitions. Having become "more and more disenchanted with the project of struggling toward a definition, however provisional," as such definitions always seemed "ultimately artificial, exclusionary, and discriminatory" (29), Canning instead adopted the question, what are the uses of feminist theater?\textsuperscript{14} (29). From this perspective, she argues, "one could move to the uses of the form and terms as a way to identify the practices that could be productively labeled 'feminist theatre,'" and so focus on the "practices, relationships, and methods" of that theatre (29).

Canning asks, "What are the uses of feminist theatre?" Following in the spirit of Canning's question, and in the spirit of a rhetoric of "beyonding persuasion," a rhetoric that seeks open conversations rather than shaping closed, consumable conclusions, I am choosing to resist closure and end this first chapter not with a proclamation or pronouncement, but with a question: What are the (rhetorical) effects of feminist theatre? In other words, what can we learn about rhetorical theory by looking at it through the lens of feminist theatrical performance? The answer(s) to this question will allow us to—or insist that we—also consider what the rhetorical effects of feminist theatrical performance are on an audience. The ways in which the answers to both these questions inform one another, speak back and forth to one another, will no doubt raise even more questions: not the traditional end of rhetoric, perhaps, but, perchance, its rebirth.
Notes

1 In "A Survey of Rhetoric," published in Classical Rhetoric for the Modern Student, Edward P.J. Corbett notes, "Rhetoric is one of the most patriarchal of all the academic disciplines" (577). He bases his assessment on the belief that "for most of the 2500-year history of rhetoric in the Western world, there have been very few, if any, women who could be called rhetoricians, either as theorists or as practitioners" (577). Recent feminist rhetorical scholarship challenged this idea, as I demonstrate later in chapter one.

2 In 1991 Brown published a second book entitled Taking Center Stage: Feminism in Contemporary U.S. Drama. In this text she significantly revises her Feminist Drama argument, dropping the Burkean framework and replacing it with an organizing set of themes, strategies, and values drawn from contemporary feminist work. Later feminist critics such as Charlotte Canning consider this book more successful for this reason; for obvious reasons, I have focused my attention on Brown’s first book.

3 All page number references to Gillespie’s essay refer to the reprint in Women and American Theatre.

4 It is worth noting the Natalie’s perspective is influenced by the fact that she was based in communications studies rather than theatre studies. Both Brown and Gillespie, however, were scholars of theatre. Their turn to rhetoric suggests that that they found traditional theatrical criticism lacking in its ability to account for and explain the phenomenon of feminist theatre, perhaps due to the fact that overtly didactic theatre was often dismissed as being something less than “real” theatre and thus unworthy of serious consideration. In turning to rhetoric as a framework for analysis, the early feminist theatre critics situated the persuasive or didactic aspect of feminist theatrical performance as part of a long-standing and academically sound tradition, a move that gave weight and credibility to their claims that feminist theatre was deserving of attention.

5 I wish to note that my reading of Canning is based on several significant passages in the literature review she conducts in the introduction to her book, Feminist Theatres in the USA: Staging Women’s Experience. While I might well frame the discussion that follows as “Answering Early Feminist Theatre Critics’ Charges,” I turn specifically to Canning both because she and her work occupy a more authoritative position in the field than the other critics I discuss, and because, to her credit, she succinctly and accurately sums up in her introduction the reasons feminist theatre critics have proffered for their turn away from rhetoric.

6 Walter J. Ong suggests that in Ramus’s rhetorical scheme “memory” is in fact “simply liquidated by being identified with judgment” (272).

7 Ramus is in large part responsible for the belief that persists even today that “rhetoric” is synonymous with “style.” That same belief undergirds the oft-heard response given to public speakers: “Oh, that’s just rhetoric.” The implication is, of course, that there is nothing of substance underneath the words. Ramus’s theories did not strip rhetoric of its power so much as it stripped people of their awareness of its power.

8 An interesting note: according to Ong, Ramus demonstrated a “marked hostility to drama”: “his educational ‘reform’ included the abolishing of plays by the students at the Collège de Presles” (287).

9 In essays in Language As Symbolic Action, for example, Burke treats Shakespeare’s Coriolanus, Antony and Cleopatra, and Timon of Athens, he also discusses Goethe’s Faust and the Greek Oresteia. In all cases, his analyses focus on the texts of the plays.

10 Corbett uses the term “body rhetoric” to refer to “non-verbal rhetoric,” specifically “marches, demonstrations” and other masses of bodies gathered with intent to persuade (vii). My use of the term, adopted more directly from James Fredal’s usage, refers to the non-verbal rhetoric of actio, the movement and gesture attached to delivery, the rhetoric of the body.

I address this claim in more detail in Chapter Three.


Canning notes that she adopts her question from Peggy Phelan, who, “in a discussion on the foundations of comedy” at the 1993 Women and Theater Program Conference, “Making Feminism/Making Comedy,” “refused to offer a definition, demanding instead that we ask, ‘What are the uses of comedy?’” (29).
WOMAN walks to the front of the room and stops with her back to the audience. SHE carries a giant wooden pencil, some six feet long, and on the floor at her feet lies an oversized piece of blank, white paper. SHE wears black pants and a long-sleeve, button-down shirt. SHE turns and begins writing on the paper as she speaks.

Dear Mom: How are you? Things are going well here, staying busy as usual. I’ve been thinking about the conversation we had about the high school girls wrestling on the boys’ wrestling teams, how you thought that was inappropriate and potentially damaging to the boys’ self-esteem. If they were beaten by a girl, that is. I don’t completely disagree with you, as I said, because I do think we live in a society that teaches boys that they are lesser people if they are beaten at anything by a girl. But if we say that girls can’t wrestle boys because it might damage the boys if the girls beat them, what kind of message do we send to the girls? You know how much I struggled with being labeled “smart,” how I always felt like I needed to hide it because the minute I made a higher grade on a test than the fellow sitting behind me, I was no longer date material. (SHE pauses, erases.) HE was no longer date material.
(Aside to audience) You know what they say about hindsight.

(Returns to letter.) But in any case, it seems to me that what needs to change is not so much the makeup of the teams, but this belief so many people have that it’s belittling to a man for a woman to be better at something than he is. As you said, it’s going to take a long time to change some folks’ minds about that. But we have to start somewhere. 2 (Stops writing with a flourish.)

Dear John: (SHE begins to “dance” with pencil.) I went to the Humana Festival of New American Plays last weekend, and they were doing some offbeat things this year, exploring alternative theatrical forms. I was most intrigued by the “T(ext) Shirt Plays,”—the entire text of a play was printed on a t-shirt, and, the newsletter said, in order to perform the play, you just wore the shirt. (Leans against pencil, back-to-back with it.)

So I got to thinking about the debate we’ve been having about gendered reading and writing? (Walks around pencil, supporting it with one hand. Takes it to lean against chair, as if “seating” it. Begins to unbutton outer blouse.) See, when I got to the box office, the texts to all of the T-Shirt Plays were posted, and I read (flashes front of shirt) Jane Martin’s. 3 (Takes outer shirt off.) And I was disturbed by it, at least at first, and I’m still not quite sure what to think. Here was a text about bodies, a text that, if I wore the shirt (stand with back to audience), would literally be performed by my body (sways provocatively). It doesn’t get much closer than that! (Turn, arms encircle self.) But we’re too quick to assume that a text in a book or a newspaper is disembodied, when in fact it’s the point of intersection between an embodied reader and an embodied writer. How can we say those bodies don’t matter?
Anyway, in the play, the two characters, Alex and Vinny, argue about whether or not people should keep their clothes on when they have sex, given the fact that so many of us are “seriously inaesthetic.” That’s troubling to me—“weightist,” Vinny says—but Alex’s reply (and Alex could be male or female, an ambiguity which, interestingly enough, I also found troubling)—Alex’s reply did make me stop and think: *(Turn to face front.)* “A body isn’t apolitical, and I don’t like the politics implied by your body.”

*(SHE stands, takes pencil and starts it rolling on the floor; steps it front of it and walks so that it “rolls” along behind her.)*

Dear Editor: As I was walking to school clad in a long, straight trench coat, hat and gloves, pants and wide-heeled loafers visible beneath the coat’s hem, I was vigorously honked at by a group of young men in a van as it approached me from behind. I’ve lost count of the number of times I’ve been harassed in this way, and frankly, I’m sick and tired of it. Honking and hooting at a woman who is walking down the street is NOT a compliment. Why not? Because compliments are personal. They have a personal context. I was not a person to these young men. They identified me, perhaps from the few inches of blond hair showing from underneath my hat, as “female,” “woman.” So they took it upon themselves to let me know—what? That they noticed? Thanks anyway. That they could make me feel threatened and I had no power to stop them? Some compliment. No, I was not a person to these fellows; I was an object, some “thing” to be honked at instead of some “one” with whom to interact.

*(Yells at the “van.”)* “I don’t like the politics implied by your body.”
(Takes off Martin T-Shirt Play to reveal T-Shirt with the texts of the letters SHE has been speaking on it, underneath.)

The newsletter said that to perform the play, you just wear the shirt.

Well, I don’t think it’s that easy. I can’t always choose the politics implied by my body, even when my politics are literally written on it. But maybe having these conversations is a good place to start. Choosing to dialogue. To speak. To listen. (Picks up pencil and paper.) Even when it seems (take to the giant pencil) overwhelming. This is the work.

And that’s why I write feminism.
Notes

1. This piece was first performed at the Feminism Workshop, Conference on College Composition and Communication, Atlanta, Georgia, March 24, 1999.

2. This "letter" is based on a conversation I had with my mother in early spring of 1999.


CHAPTER 2

"BEYONDING PERSUASION"

AND THE THEATRE OF JOAN LIPKIN

In the previous chapter, I examined feminist theatre critics’ early efforts to define feminist theatre, arguing that their initial turn to rhetoric was a potentially productive move, for understanding feminist theatre as rhetoric not only gives us new insight into feminist theatrical performance, but also proffers us new insights into rhetoric, specifically into the practice of a rhetoric that beyonds persuasion. In chapter one, I made the statement that “feminist theatre is feminist rhetoric,” and vice-versa, and I wish now to extend and complicate that equation by examining how scholars of rhetoric have defined their subject of study. For to understand how feminist theatre can help us to beyond persuasion, we must first understand theatre as persuasion.

Moments of Overlap: Theatre as Rhetoric

There is ample historical evidence to consider theatre, even sans the “feminist” modifier, as rhetoric. In the Gorgias, one of the two Platonic dialogues that most directly addresses the value and nature of rhetoric, Socrates asks his host, Callicles, what the chief purpose of tragic poetry is. Is it, he inquires, directed to the audience’s gratification and pleasure, or is it directed toward their edification, including lessons and information that
might prove "unpleasant" but nevertheless "beneficial" to their souls (96-97)? Callicles replies that tragic poetry is "bent...upon pleasure," and his answer leads to the following exchange:

Socrates: Well, now, that kind of thing, Callicles, did we say just now, is flattery?
Callicles: Certainly.
Socrates: Pray then, if we strip any kind of poetry of its melody, its rhythm and its meter, we get mere speeches as the residue, do we not?
Callicles: That must be so.
Socrates: And those speeches are spoken to a great crowd of people?
Callicles: Yes.
Socrates: Hence poetry is a kind of public speaking.
Callicles: Apparently.
Socrates: Then it must be a rhetorical public speaking; or do you not think that the poets use rhetoric in the theaters?
Callicles: Yes, I do. (97)

In this dialogue, Socrates inductively proves to Callicles—and to the reader—that the theatrical performance of tragic poetry was in fact a form of "rhetorical public speaking" (97). He goes on to note that he does "not quite approve" of this form: the poets are "set on gratifying" their audience rather than on "making them as good as possible," making it is a less than ideal rhetoric that graces the stage (97).

But, significantly, it is rhetoric. Given the energy feminist theatre critics devoted to attempting to distinguish between the arts of theatre and rhetoric—arguing that feminist theatre is a "rhetorical phenomenon" at the same time they insisted that theatre cannot be rhetorical and still be theatre; it is "action, not art" (Gillespie), "rhetoric instead of theatre" (Natalie)—it might at first seem unlikely to find such a direct link between the two arts in a Platonic text. Such links, in fact, are many, but the connection made in this particular passage is of especial interest because of its foundational nature: foundational in that it suggests that theatre—any theatre—is inherently rhetorical and in the fact that
this powerful suggestion is made in a fundamental text of the western canon. Theatre is a “form of rhetorical public speaking,” “speeches” dressed up with melody, rhythm and meter (97). For Socrates, and thus for Plato, rhetoric and theatrical performance could and did co-exist.

It must be noted that, for Plato, marking these two arts as synonymous was not a compliment to either one of them. Socrates initially makes the comparison in the Gorgias (ca. 386 B.C.) in order to support his argument that rhetoric is merely “flattery,” since it, like the rhetoric of and on the stage, is primarily “set on gratifying” and pleasing its audience (97). The reservations about theatre that Socrates expresses in this brief passage in the Gorgias (ironically, one of Plato’s most “dramatically staged” dialogues (Bizzell and Herzberg 55)) are developed in more detail in the Republic, in which Socrates argues that the “mimetic art[s]” of tragedy and comedy should not be allowed within the ideal state he describes (Republic 27). Theatre was suspect not only because of its intended ends but also because of its “wholly imitative” nature: poets, writing in character dialogue, imitate another person; actors in performance imitate the characters imitated by the poet (26). The dramatic arts, then, are based on several layers of falsehood; in the ideal state, “one man plays one part only,” for one can play only one part well and honestly (27-28). Similarly, Socrates condemns rhetoric for its ‘false’ front, likening it in a famous passage to “cookery” and suggesting that as cookery “assumes the form of medicine, and pretends to know what foods are best for the body,” so rhetoric only imitates justice in the law courts, where the goal is to persuade the audience to belief, sometimes at the expense of knowledge or “truth” (72). Theatrical performance, like rhetoric, was dangerous for its seductive powers of imitation.
I, of course, do not sanction Plato's condemnation of these two arts (quite the opposite), but the parallels in his critiques point up the concurrence suggested by the Gorgias passage with which I opened this chapter. What does it mean to state that theatrical performance is an inherently rhetorical art? What did "rhetorical" or "rhetoric" mean in this time and place? To answer that question, I turn to a second moment of overlap, Aristotle’s Poetics-Rhetoric cross-reference.

Aristotle: Theatre as Rhetoric as Persuasion

To Plato, "rhetoric" meant "cookery" and deception, but these are judgments inasmuch as they are definitions. Plato’s student Aristotle found more merit in rhetoric, merit enough, at least, to formulate a more neutral definition: his notes on the subject have come to us as the treatise On Rhetoric. Likewise, Aristotle sought to define the art of poetics, and in his notes on that subject, he names six essential elements of the art: plotting, character, thought, verbal expression, visual adornment, and song-composition (26). Perhaps one of the most conspicuous moments of overlap between the arts of rhetoric and theatre is the Poetics-Rhetoric cross-reference, a textual moment in which Aristotle refers the reader of the Poetics to the Rhetoric for a discussion of the element of thought: “For a discussion of thought, then, please consult our treatise on rhetoric, for the problem is particularly concerned with that discipline” (52). Aristotle’s discussion of the element of thought, or dianoia, in the Poetics itself is brief, perhaps because he assumes the reader will turn to the lengthier Rhetoric per his recommendation. Even within the brief discussion in the Poetics, however, Aristotle’s remarks on “thought” strongly echo his remarks on persuasion in the Rhetoric. "Thought" is defined in the Poetics as "all the effects that have to be deliberately and consciously achieved through the use of speech"
in a tragedy (52). It consists of “proof and refutation” and “the stimulation of feelings such as pity, fear, anger, and the like” (52). In other words, it consists of logos, or “logical proof,” the use of examples and enthymemetic reasoning, and pathos, the appeal to the audience’s emotions, two of the three rhetorical means to persuasion discussed at length in the *Rhetoric*. Aristotle notes that the element of “thought” is present in the theatrical performance of tragedy in “all the passages in which [the characters] attempt to prove some thesis or set forth an opinion” (26). The characters in Greek tragedy, then, according to Aristotle, make verbal arguments in their dialogue; they speak “rhetorically” (28), and for Aristotle, “rhetorically” meant “persuasively” (28).

The fact that Aristotle adopted the term “rhetoric” from Plato, while others in the period used the phrase “art of speech” (*Rhetoric* 28, Kennedy’s note), establishes a clear connection between their understandings of the art. In the *Rhetoric* Aristotle specifically defines rhetoric as “an ability, in each [particular] case, to see the available means of persuasion” (36). Elsewhere he states that rhetoric’s “function is not to persuade but to see the available means,” and in a statement that might be seen as a direct answer to Plato’s analogy,\(^1\) Aristotle likens rhetoric to medicine, remarking that “neither is it the function of medicine to create health but to promote this as much as possible” (35). It might be said, then, to be rhetoric’s job to “promote” persuasion. The whole of the *Rhetoric*, then, details the process by which a rhetor might “see” these available means and promote—and enact—persuasion.

Thus, in Books 1 and 2, Aristotle details the *pisteis* or means of persuading through logos, logical arguments; pathos, appeals to the audience’s emotions; and ethos, the adaptation of one’s “character” to the perceived or presumed “character” of the
audience. He describes the forms and topics of argument ("the facts from which a speech has a persuasive effect" (217)) that would be most persuasive in deliberative, epideictic, and judicial rhetoric(s), and "how to compose [these facts] in language," style and the persuasive "force" of delivery (218).²

Although the information in Books 1 and 2 is typically referred to as the art of "invention," rhetoric historian George Kennedy points out that Aristotle does not actually offer a "general term" for these processes "until the transition section at the end of book 2, where he refers to it as dianoia, 'thought'" (25). The reader of the Poetics who seeks to understand the third most important element in tragic drama—dianoia, or "thought"—is referred to the first two books of the Rhetoric, a text that describes the art of persuasion. To speak or write "rhetorically," as the tragic poets and actors did, is, indeed, to do so persuasively. Thus we find theatre, rhetoric, and persuasion in conversation as early as the fifth century B.C.

The Present of Persuasion

Aristotle's definition of rhetoric was adopted and forwarded by Roman rhetoricians Cicero and Quintilian,³ and the understanding of rhetoric as the "art of persuasion" has remained the standard through the ages, continuing into the twentieth and now the twenty-first centuries. While it is not my intention to provide a complete historical survey of such works, one need only randomly pull a few items off of any bookshelf lined with rhetorical studies to understand the extent to which Aristotle's formulation grounds the works of rhetorical theorists and textbook authors. A few brief examples will illustrate. Actor and rhetorician Thomas Sheridan begins his first lecture in his 1762 treatment of the art of delivery, A Course of Lectures on Elocution, with the
statement that "the end of public speaking is persuasion (for the view of every one who harangues in public is to bring his hears into his way of thinking); and that order to persuade others to the belief of any point, it must first appear that the person who attempts it is firmly persuaded of the truth of it himself" (5). Sheridan argues that the speaker must "deliver himself" as one who speaks in earnest in order to be persuasive, and the whole of his treatise is intended to provide instruction in effective, i.e. persuasive, delivery. And Edward P.J. Corbett's classic textbook *Classical Rhetoric for the Modern Student*, published first in 1965 and reissued in a new edition in 1971, explains to students, "From its beginnings and throughout its history classical rhetoric was thought of as the art of persuasive speech. Its end was to convince or persuade an audience to think in a certain way or act in a certain way" (32). The contents and arrangement of the book are, unsurprisingly, explicitly Aristotelian, for as Corbett states, "With his philosophic treatise, Aristotle became the fountainhead of all later rhetorical theory" (543-44).

Even those twentieth-century rhetoricians who have consciously shifted the parameters of rhetoric in enlightening ways still return to and ultimately sustain Aristotle's definition. Philosopher and rhetorician Kenneth Burke proposes a modification of rhetoric in *A Rhetoric of Motives* (1950), taking as his key terms "identification" and "consubstantiality" in place of persuasion (20-21). The end of rhetoric would be for rhetor and audience to become "consubstantial," identifying with one another in part while at the same time remaining "an individual locus of motives" (21). Burke titles Part I of his book "The Range of Rhetoric" and argues for an extension of the scope of the art. But even as he re-figures the terms and extends rhetoric's range, Burke returns to "persuasion" as a fundamental element. At the close of "The Range of
Rhetoric," he notes that “in the course of discussing these subjects [identification and consubstantiality] we found ourselves running into another term: persuasion. Rhetoric is the art of persuasion. . . . We have thus, deviously, come to the point at which Aristotle begins his treatise on rhetoric” (46). Burke goes on to state that “there is no chance of our keeping apart the meanings of persuasion, identification ('consubstantiality'), and communication (the nature of rhetoric as addressed)” (46). In Part II, “Traditional Principles of Rhetoric,” Burke goes further to take as his first principle “persuasion,” ultimately naming it the “Edenic” term from which all other variations of aims and definitions of rhetoric have “Babylonically” descended (61). Persuasion, then, is Burke's rhetorical god-term.

Critic Wayne C. Booth's book *The Rhetoric of Fiction* (1961) also sought to extend the scope of rhetoric, in this case, to include works of fiction. According to Booth, “the author cannot choose to avoid rhetoric; he can only choose the kind of rhetoric he will employ” (149). Booth is not in the business of revising rhetoric, however. Instead, he applies traditional rhetorical theory to fictional works analyzing how they function (as oratory or overt argument do) as persuasive texts. Rhetoric itself is not re-theorized or transformed in this process. The reader is proffered a new and revolutionary way of reading works of fiction and thinking about that reading process, but Booth's neo-Aristotelian understanding of rhetoric remains firmly in place. The writer, according to Booth, has a moral obligation to clearly persuade her reader to a moral truth; a ‘good book’ is one in which the reader is fully persuaded by the writer, in “complete agreement,” complete consensus (137). Successful fiction is defined by achieved persuasion.
Burke and Booth’s works are also representative of how theatre and drama continue to be linked theoretically and generically with the art of persuasion throughout the rhetorical tradition as well. Though the bulk of Booth’s commentary focuses on novels, his definition of “fiction” includes not only narratives, but also poetry and drama. He draws on Gloucester’s outburst and the “prolongation of the gouging” scene in Shakespeare’s *King Lear* to illustrate his claim that “[e]ven if a presented object seems to the author to call for a natural response based on universals,” the author cannot count on such a response “unless he gives good reasons” for it to the audience (110, emphasis mine). In other words, the author or dramatist must, like the rhetor, consciously construct and present a convincing argument to the audience. Booth also quotes Cleante in Molière’s *Tartuffe* to illustrate how dramatized narrators may appear as “disguised” narrators, offering commentary on the action and other characters that directs the audience’s attention and emotional response (152). Similarly, he invokes Ben Jonson’s title character Volpone as a cautionary example of how an author might not succeed in persuading an audience to the particular emotional response of sympathy, given that Volpone’s faults spring not from an “excess of virtue” but from the simple vices of greed and miserliness (246). These are just a few examples that demonstrate how Booth’s argument both depends on and testifies to the rhetoricity and persuasiveness of theatre.

Kenneth Burke’s work demonstrates ties between rhetoric-as-persuasion and drama as well. In the introduction to *A Rhetoric of Motives*, Burke states that his goal is “showing how a rhetorical motive is often present where it is not usually recognized, or thought to belong” (xiii), and one of the locations he identifies is drama. Significantly, in his earlier work, *A Grammar of Motives* (1945), Burke develops his framework for the
study of motives from “an analysis of drama” (996), as noted in chapter one. This theory of “dramatism,” as Burke names it, “invites one to consider the matter of motives in a perspective that...treats language and thought primarily as modes of action” (996), and Burke goes on to explicate the dramatistic pentad with numerous citations from various plays ranging from Ibsen’s An Enemy of the People to O’Neill’s Mourning Becomes Electra.

Burke also makes explicit the idea that plays are persuasive in an essay in Language as Symbolic Action entitled “Shakespearean Persuasion: Antony and Cleopatra,” in which he sets out to show “how thoughts on persuasion would shape up, with regard to questions of poetics” (102). Burke closely analyzes the language of Shakespeare’s play, arguing that the language in the play enables the common audience members’ identification with the larger-than-life Antony and Cleopatra. For example, Burke suggests that the frequent references to “eunuchs” in the play serve not only to point up Antony’s “sexual prowess,” but also create a situation “implying that practically all the men in the audience were in the same class with Antony” (105-6). Burke terms this method of persuasion “classification-by-contrast,” noting that this choice allowed the playwright to emphasize Antony’s virility “without risk that persons of more moderate resources in this regard might lose their sense of ‘identification’ with him” (106). Burke also recounts how Shakespeare anticipates his audience’s objections to his hero and “disposes” of them immediately by including characters who remark on Antony’s tyrannous behavior but counter their criticism in the same breath (111). Shakespeare, according to Burke, was a master of such counter-arguments, this mastery being just one of the ways the Bard’s playtexts persuaded their audiences.

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In a second, more encompassing essay, “Rhetoric and Poetics,” discussed briefly in the Introduction to this document, Burke argues that the arts of rhetoric and poetics “overlap” one another, and that in fact the “two fields readily become confused, because there is a large area which they share in common,” namely that the principles of each exist “within the modes of symbolic action generally” (295, 302, 306). It is in this essay that Burke argues that the catharsis of tragic drama does not end with the purgation of feelings of pity and fear but goes beyond those feelings to edification and transformation—or, in other words, persuasion.

These examples suggest that persuasion has remained in place as the defining term of rhetoric, even for those rhetoricians who propose radical revisions or expansions of its scope. They also provide us with representative examples of ways in which persuasion has been connected to works written for and played on the stage. Clearly, the feminist theatre critics discussed in chapter one also rely on the equation of rhetoric with persuasion. Natalie’s framework is, in fact, Aristotle’s Rhetoric, and Brown draws, as previously noted, on Burke’s analysis of rhetorical motives and his belief that “all communication...is rhetorical because it attempts to persuade the audience of its particular vision of life” (Brown 8). Even Gillespie, who turns to Karlyn Kohrs Campbell’s revisionary rhetoric, argues that feminist theatres are “rhetorical enterprises,” specifically because “their primary aim is action”; they seek to “promote the identities of women, to increase awareness of the issues of feminism, or to advocate change” (277). These critics defined feminist theatre as rhetorical primarily due to its content and intent: its overt presentation of and/or attempt to persuade its audiences to a feminist worldview. This persuasive content and intent was what defined the theatre as different, as
“feminist.” For, as previously noted, although the critics generally avoid positing a finite definition of feminist theatre, their arguments imply that feminist theatre is “rhetoric,” and “rhetorical” means—just as it did for Aristotle—“persuasive.”

Re-figuring Persuasion, Re-defining Feminist Theatre

At about the same time that feminist theatre scholars were attempting to theorize feminist theatre as rhetoric-as-persuasion, a number of feminist scholars in the fields of rhetoric and communication, as well as feminist discourse theorists,^ began problematizing the equation of the art of rhetoric with the act of persuasion. At the same time that Janet Brown was writing her influential first study of feminist theatre, Sally Miller Gearhart wrote and published “The Womanization of Rhetoric.” Just a few years later, political scientist and discourse theorist Jean Bethke Elshtain asked, “How do we set about creating a feminist discourse that rejects domination?” (621). In contrast to the feminist theatre critics’ understanding of rhetoric as persuasion (and feminist theatrical performance as persuasive), Elshtain and Gearhart question whether “feminist persuasion” is ethical or even possible.

Gearhart opens her essay with the declaration, “My indictment of our discipline of rhetoric springs from my belief that any intent to persuade is an act of violence” (195). She resists the assumption of rhetoricians that “it is a proper and even necessary human function to attempt to change others” (195), condemning what she sees as the “conquest/conversion mindset” that accompanies the traditional theorization and practice of rhetoric-as-persuasion (196). Since the attempt to change another being results in “violat[ing] the integrity of that person or thing and our own integrity as well” (197), persuasion is an act of violence. Similarly, Elshtain associates “consensus” with...
domination (605). To counteract this negative force, Gearhart advocates altering the ways in which we use the rhetorical tools we possess, proposing a replacement of the intent to change with the “deliberate creation or co-creation of an atmosphere in which... those who are ready to be persuaded may persuade themselves, may choose to hear or choose to learn” (198).

Clearly, this was an historical moment when an ongoing conversation between feminist theatre studies and feminist rhetoricians would have proven productive. Certainly the equation of rhetoric-as-persuasion with violence and violation raises questions about the viability of the equation of feminist theatrical performance with rhetoric. But Gearhart and Elshtain offer us the starting point of a new way of thinking about rhetoric, a rhetoric that beyonds persuasion.

Beyond Persuasion to Beyonding Persuasion

Rhetoricians Sonja Foss and Cindy Griffin formalize Gearhart’s proposal in their 1995 essay, “Beyond Persuasion: A Proposal for an Invitational Rhetoric,” and it was, as I suggested in the Introduction, my reading of this proposal in combination with Kenneth Burke’s suggestion that we make up the verb “to beyond” that originated my theory of “beyonding persuasion,” explicated here. Like Gearhart, Foss and Griffin questioned the “desire for control and domination” inherent in a definition of rhetoric as persuasion (3). They propose an alternative “invitational rhetoric” based on feminist values and define this rhetoric as “an invitation to understanding” that “create[s] a relationship rooted in equality, immanent value, and self-determination” (5). Foss and Griffin focus on using language not to change another but to create an atmosphere or relationship in which change can take place if those in the relationship choose (self-determine) to change,
choose to be persuaded. This formulation is based on the premise that all humans have immanent value as humans and therefore differing perspectives held by those humans deserve equal weight and consideration upon initial expression. This idea stands in contrast to the premise of traditional rhetoric that one or another viewpoint is "better" than another and must dominate, with the attainment of consensus under this dominant viewpoint being the ultimate goal. I quote here the process of enacting invitational rhetoric as it is described by Foss and Griffin:

Invitational rhetoric constitutes an invitation to the audience to enter the rhetor's world and to see it as the rhetor does. In presenting a particular perspective, the invitational rhetor does not judge or denigrate others' perspectives but is open to and tries to appreciate and validate those perspectives, even if they differ dramatically from the rhetor's own. Ideally, audience members accept the invitation offered by the rhetor by listening to and trying to understand the rhetor's perspective and then presenting their own. (5)

I quote this description because the process of "beyonding persuasion" as I have theorized it is very similar to Foss and Griffin's invitational rhetoric, with one key difference. Foss and Griffin propose their theory of invitational rhetoric as an "alternative" to persuasion, stating, "Although we believe that persuasion is often necessary, we believe an alternative exists that may be used in instances when changing and controlling others is not the rhetor's goal" (5, emphasis mine). Invitational rhetoric, then, is "other" than persuasion; one might also think of it as "prior to" persuasion, in that, as Gearhart suggests, it advocates the creation of an atmosphere and kind of exchange which makes new understandings and change (and thus persuasion) possible. On the other hand, to think of "beyonding persuasion" is to, metaphorically, think through persuasion, beyond it, to the other side.
What is on the other side of persuasion? A process that looks much like the process that Foss and Griffin describe, but one that acknowledges that inherent even in an invitational rhetoric is an act of persuasion. One is persuaded not to belief, to a particular point of view, but instead to consider multiple points of view, to think and to question. As Karlyn Kohrs Campbell describes it, the audience is "empowered," persuaded to see themselves as thinking beings who are capable of "acting effectively in the world" (13) in response to those questions that may be raised in a rhetoric of "beyonding persuasion."

Thus, a rhetor who leaves her audience asking, "What do I believe?" has persuaded her audience to question and consider; she has "beyonded" persuasion in that the "end" was the opening, rather than a closing, of the terms of debate; continued conversation rather than domination of one point of view. It is the practice of a "transcendent" rhetoric that blends a rhetoric of persuasion with what Gregory Shepherd terms a rhetoric of "relational responsibility," a rhetoric that "illuminate[s] interdependence and foster[s] concern for others" as the rhetor maintains an awareness of the "relational consequences" of her language and delivery (207, 209). To "beyond persuasion," then is to "present a perspective" (Foss and Griffin 5) while maintaining an awareness that there are other valid perspectives and, in doing so, to open a dialogue with one's audience that invites thoughtful response and participation in the making of meaning.

I do not mean to suggest that the processes outlined here are specific to feminism in that only those who consciously profess a feminist point of view engage in rhetorical practices that "beyond persuasion." I do believe that "beyonding persuasion" is a
feminist process, in that it is based on ideals of inclusion, recognition and respect for
difference, reciprocity, and dialogue. Therefore those who practice “beyonding
persuasion,” whether or not they are self-proclaimed feminists, whether or not they are
addressing explicitly feminist content, are in fact participating in a feminist practice and
therefore enacting a feminist rhetoric.

The Uses of Feminist Theatre

The early feminist theatre critics positioned feminist theatre as rhetoric due to its
overtly persuasive content and intent; this formulation becomes problematized when
“feminist theatre” is put in conversation with feminist rhetoricians’ arguments that we
must find alternatives to rhetoric-as-persuasion. There are, of course, in addition to those
theorists referenced above, a number of feminist writers who have challenged the
privileging of narratives of persuasion, “narratives of control and exclusion, of
subjection/winning, of conversion,” in their practice as well as their theory (Ede, Glenn,
Lunsford 416); writers who have eschewed traditional linear patterns of arrangement,
resisted closure, and adopted forms more conducive to dialogue with their readers;
writers who have, in my terms, made efforts to beyond persuasion. Nineteenth-century
educational theorist and rhetorician Margaret Fuller, for example, as noted in chapter one,
privileges a conversational style in her writing that rejects traditional persuasive
strategies and resists closure (Kolodny); twentieth-century French feminist theorist
Helene Cixous challenges traditional rhetorical arrangement by “disrupt[ing] the linear
orderliness of prose,” working to allow for contradiction within her narratives, and
“writing the body” (Ede, Glenn, Lunsford 418); law professor and feminist Patricia
Williams locates herself more fully within her academic prose by blending personal narrative and academic critiques in her book *The Alchemy of Race and Rights* (1991). Without question, these women have made invaluable contributions to the studies of feminism and rhetoric. However, I wish to suggest that feminist theatrical performance allows us to beyond persuasion in ways that written texts cannot. Those who theorize and practice feminist rhetorical strategies "on the page" are necessarily limited by the linear format and (apparently) disembodied nature of the written text. The rhetorical situation of a theatrical performance is most conducive to "beyonding persuasion," because it involves living beings onstage, interacting with a live audience, speaking with the body as well as the word, unbound by linear narrative conventions. In chapter one I asked, What are the uses of feminist theatre? What are its (rhetorical) effects? and proposed that one use, one effect, is to model a rhetoric of beyonding persuasion. Feminist theatrical performance, as the performances I discuss will show, allows us not merely to envision, but also to enact and literally embody ways of communicating that do not privilege domination but instead encourage dialogue.

In their discussion of texts that challenge the dominant understanding of rhetoric as persuasion, Ede, Glenn, and Lunsford link the making of this challenge to a revisioning of the rhetorical canon of arrangement, suggesting that interrupting the "logical, linear" textual arrangements traditionally privileged by rhetoric interrupts the "logical, linear chain aimed at persuasion" (414). Feminist theatrical performance provides us with the opportunity to reconsider and revise our understanding of the canon of arrangement in ways not permitted by the written page; furthermore, as the following chapters will show, it allows us to re-imagine those aspects of rhetoric connected to
representation and the body, delivery and the rhetorical appeal of ethos. To begin this
exploration into the rhetorical uses/effects of feminist theatre, I turn first to a close
examination of two works by theatre artist and playwright Joan Lipkin.

**Beyonding Persuasion: Joan Lipkin and That Uppity Theatre Company**

“So why am I writing plays as opposed to novels?” Joan Lipkin muses aloud in an
interview. “It’s not just because I have this penchant for dialog; it’s because I want a
social and public forum for ideas. I want a public, rather than a private conversation”
(“Who Speaks,” 105). The idea that theatrical performance allows for a kind of
correspondence that could not occur elsewhere surfaces again and again in interviews with
Lipkin. “I view the theatre as one of the few places where ideas are still discussed; I see
a play as a public conversation that can go out into the world” (quoted in Branham). Joan
Lipkin, founder and artistic director of That Uppity Theatre Company in St. Louis,
Missouri, has been initiating such public conversations for almost two decades. Her
career in the theatre began rather untraditionally: after completing an undergraduate
degree in English literature at what was then Webster College, she earned a master’s
degree in art history at St. Louis University in the early 1980s. She began work on a
doctorate when she said to herself, “Wait a minute. I’m not an academic. I’m far too
lively for that” (quoted in Barnes 3C). She took a series of jobs, including a position as
arts editor of *The Saint Louis Literary Supplement*, for which she wrote art and theatre
reviews. Lipkin began writing plays in 1984, and after several years of producing her
work at various venues in the St. Louis area, founded her own company in 1988 “out of
necessity” (“Trouble,” 13). Since then, her plays have been produced across the country
in Arizona, California, Kentucky, New York, Washington D.C., and Chicago, Illinois;
internationally in Australia, Canada, England, Ireland, and Scotland; and been featured on National Public Radio and the British Broadcasting Corporation. Lipkin has written plays about foster parents (*Will the Real Foster Parent Please Stand Up?*), the 1988 presidential campaign (*See How They Run!*, with Tom Clear), and the 1960s (*The 1960s: the Times They Were A 'Changin*) in addition to several more well-known plays that focus on issues surrounding gender and sexual identity, such as *Some of My Best Friends Are...: A Gay and Lesbian Revue for People of All Preferences* (with Tom Clear), the role-reversal musical *He's Having Her Baby* (also with Clear), and the contemporary domestic drama *Small Domestic Acts*, the latter two of which I will be discussing at some length. Lipkin frequently speaks about her work at conferences and universities across the nation, and in February 2000, she was one of six individuals and organizations honored by the Missouri Arts Council as a recipient of the Missouri 2000 Arts award.

From That Uppity Theatre Company's founding, Lipkin has been explicit about her aims as a theatre artist. When asked about the company's name in a 1994 interview she stated, "I want people to be aware of who we are and what we do when they come through the door. . . . When I picked the work I wanted to do, I imagined that people might say, 'What kind of theatre is it that they do there? Oh, it's that uppity theatre company!'") ("Who Speaks," 104). Lipkin, in addition to having a good sense of humor, "believe[s] in naming and claiming the specific whenever possible" (105); it is part of her responsibility as a theatre artist, she feels, to be up front about her desire to make what she calls "critically political" theatre, theatre which examines "the crucial issues of our times," most often through a comic and nearly always through a feminist lens ("Rabble-Rousing," 367, 368). Lipkin explains that she "grew up with a sense of appreciation for
oppression of all kinds, and with a concern for addressing imbalances in society,” and
makes her theatre accordingly (quoted in Corrigan F11). This “stepp[ing] out of line to
question the status quo” is, according to Lipkin, “uppity” theatre (“Who Speaks,” 106).

Given her forthrightness on such matters, audience members might expect to
come to Lipkin’s productions and be subjected to some strong persuasion. One reviewer,
writing in response Lipkin and Clear’s Some of My Best Friends Are. . ., seems genuinely
surprised to find that Lipkin “doesn’t hammer on the audience” (Pollack D2). Lipkin’s
goal is not to hammer her own beliefs into the audience and persuade them to a single
point of view—although she does not shy away from expressing her perspective, readily
stating, “When I say that I want voices to be heard, one of the voices I want to be heard is
my own!” (“Who Speaks,” 104). But it is precisely Lipkin’s consciousness of her voice
as one of many in an ongoing conversation that enables her to create theatrical
performances that beyond persuasion. When interviewer Iris Smith notes that Lipkin has
often described theatre as “an intervention,” Lipkin replies: “Yes, but what’s important is
that theatre intervenes and the audience takes over. I often experiment in my writing with
the structure or altered subjectivity so that people can fill in the gaps with the elements of
their own story or so they see things differently” (“Who Speaks,” 122). In the two plays
considered here, He’s Having Her Baby, and Small Domestic Acts, these particular
“interventions”—altering the embodied subjectivity of the protagonist and interrupting
linear narrative structure—are, along with a nod to Brechtian alienation and a hearty dose
of humor, the ways Lipkin engages her audience in conversation and beyonds persuasion.
He's Having Her Baby

Lipkin's plays are often written in response to a specific historical (and rhetorical) exigence. Such was the case with He's Having Her Baby, subtitled "A New Pro-Choice Musical Comedy." The musical was written by Lipkin in collaboration with composer Tom Clear in 1990 in response to the July 1989 Supreme Court ruling in the case of Webster vs. Reproductive Health Services. The ruling went against the abortion rights precedent set in 1973 by Roe vs. Wade, and since St. Louis was the home of the Webster case, Lipkin felt strongly that she needed to respond to what she perceived as a threat to "individual freedom" (quoted in "He's Having").

As the title of the play implies, gender roles are reversed in the world of He's Having Her Baby. In the play, fifteen-year-old Joey accidentally gets pregnant when he is pressured into having sex on his first date with sexually aggressive Liz, the captain of the high school girls' hockey team. Act I chronicles Joey's unsuccessful search for safe, accessible contraceptives and his attempts to find support from the school guidance counselor, the local clinic, and Liz and her parents, after he becomes pregnant. The baby, a boy, is born at the end of the first act "[t]hrough circumstances rather than choice" (Lipkin, Letter). The second act of the play follows Joey as he attempts to manage "young, single, impoverished fatherhood": searching for decent and affordable child care, facing sexual harassment and frustration in the workplace, and looking for real love, which he believes he finds with a woman named Meredith ("Synopsis," ii). Joey accidentally becomes pregnant again at the end of the second act. This time, he is older and better equipped to make an informed choice, and he chooses differently.
The image of a very pregnant fifteen-year-old boy seems absurd and laughable; Lipkin deliberately chose to incorporate the gender reversals in large part for their comic effect. When she decided to write the play, she found herself asking, "How do you talk about this [sensitive and controversial subject matter] and make it appealing?" (qtd. in Hummel 5). Audience appeal was a crucial consideration for the playwright, who is acutely aware that theatre is less than effective as a communicative arena "[i]f you can’t even get people in the door" ("Rabble," 370). Therefore, Lipkin sought a new way in which to engage an audience in conversation about a serious and complex subject.

In the past, political theatre has frequently been didactic, simplistic, or alienating in such a way that the audience turns off. But that just points up how skilled and determined people who are doing this important work must be. . . . Backing away from examining the crucial issues of our times is not the answer, it’s merely a shirking of responsibility. ("Rabble-Rousing," 368)

Lipkin sees it not only as her responsibility to examine these issues, but believes that it is her "relational responsibility" (Shepherd’s term) to examine them in such a way that the audience tunes in rather than turns off. Lipkin believed that it would be "too painful" and too close to some very sad truths for an audience to watch a pregnant teenage female protagonist fight these battles ("Rabble-Rousing," 370). They would likely become so emotionally invested in the story of this one particular character that they could not retain sufficient distance to comprehend and discuss the complexity of issues and perspectives attached to the question of choice.

To create that essential critical distance, Lipkin and Clear play havoc with traditional Aristotelian dramatic structure, juxtaposing serious scenes with campy musical comedy numbers, and refuse the verisimilitude of realism. Lipkin also altered the embodied subjectivities of the characters through "gender reversal of both social roles".
and biological functions” (qtd. in “He’s Having”). In juxtaposing humor and pathos and reversing the social roles that male and female bodies inhabit, Lipkin and Clear heighten the play’s theatricality and achieve a sort of Brechtian Verfremdungseffekt, creating sufficient distance for the audience to laugh as well as to think critically, and thus enabling the dialogue born of a rhetoric that beyonds persuasion.

The play, as noted, is divided into two acts; six actors play multiple roles, with only the actor who plays Joey maintaining the same role throughout the performance. The play’s structure is a hybrid of the narrative book musical and a musical revue, a structure that allows for a number of juxtapositions. The scenes and songs move rather quickly and unexpectedly between the serious and the campy; at other times, serious subject matter is addressed in such a way that the seriousness of the subject is deflated.

For example, the play opens with a musical number entitled “Waitin’ By The Phone,” in which Joey and a chorus of swooning “Boys” lament the boy’s (in this world) fate of having to wait around for his “dream queen” to call (1). Joey’s lovelorn sighs are countered by Liz and the “Girls” with their crude gestures and hard-edged vocals, as Liz expresses her desire to “get in [some fellow’s] pants” (2). The number is reminiscent of the “Summer Nights” number in the musical Grease, in which Sandy sings sweetly of the romantic walks she took with her summer love Danny on the beach in one verse, while Danny sings suggestively to his male buddies about his (supposed) sexual conquest of Sandy on the same shore in the next verse. This caricaturish musical number—which succeeds in pointing up the absurdity of the prescribed gender roles by denaturalizing them through the gender reversal, a point I return to—is immediately followed by a rather poignant scene between Joey and his best friend Nathan, in which Nathan expresses hurt
that his "best boyfriend of three years" is deserting their friendship for a date with a girl; the boys then go on to discuss Joey's fear of sex and how to get "protection." The tender scene of two friends sharing their fears with one another is in turn followed by a comic, surrealistic visit to a urologist, in which Joey imagines being visited by a (female) priest who expresses sympathy and offers him help—in the form of a tome entitled "Never Had It, Never Will." When Joey tells the nurse he has no insurance, he is magically transported (with the half-rotation of a window-frame on wheels) to the free clinic, where he waits a mere three and a half days before being ushered into the doctor's office.

Thus, two primarily humorous scenes bookend a more serious, emotionally affective scene; and within the humorous musical numbers and scenes themselves, painful emotional and moral dilemmas are caricatured and taken to extremes. This arrangement (I use the rhetorical term deliberately) interrupts the audience's narratorial expectations. There is not a steady build to a clear, cathartic climax; verisimilitude is problematized and even poked fun at. The audience cannot sit back and relax in comfortable expectation of what is coming next, nor can they allow themselves to become fully emotionally immersed in another's story and "escape." It is worth asking: what does one "escape" from when one "escapes" in/through the theatre, anyway?

Joan Lipkin might very well answer, "responsibility." The self-conscious theatricality of Lipkin's plays helps to create a role for the audience that asks them to be responsible for active, critical listening and understanding. In lieu of a realistic stage setting, Lipkin collaborated with costume and set designer Randy Rowolt to design a basic black box set accentuated by brightly colored painted squares, circles and triangles scattered around the backdrop. These bright colors are echoed in the actors' costumes,
and most scene changes and character shifts are evoked by subtle shifts in set pieces or clothing accessories—changes sometimes made in full view of the audience. The bold shapes and colors of the costumes and set, the self-conscious, direct addresses made to the audience, and the juxtapositions in scene and music in *He's Having Her Baby* all serve to remind the audience that they are in a theatre, watching, responding, and—ideally—thinking. The result is a kind of Brechtian *Verfremdungseffekt*, or "alienation-effect," in which the mirror that is the stage is "made strange," defamiliarized or distorted, so that what one sees there requires thoughtful engagement to make sense of it. By making choices such as having the actors change costumes onstage, the actors repeatedly remind the audience they are in fact a theatre audience watching a play, a representation of life events. In this way the audience is made more conscious of the ways and means of representation appearing on the stage before them: the gaps between the "real" and representation are not elided or hidden as they are in much of traditional theatre, but foregrounded instead.

In Lipkin's work, this foregrounding of the theatrical-rhetorical situation allows for the constructedness not only of the theatre event itself to be made evident, but also the constructedness of the gendered social roles enacted by the characters, roles most of us play in some form in our everyday lives. According to playwright and dramatic theorist Bertolt Brecht, in the theatre "[w]hat is 'natural' must have the force of what is startling"; for "when something seems 'the most obvious thing in the world' it means that any attempt to understand the world has been given up" (71). While I do not mean to suggest that Lipkin's work be considered Brechtian epic theatre (Elin Diamond has succinctly and accurately pointed out the "blindness toward gender relations" and problematic
female characterizations in Brecht's epic plays), I concur with Diamond that there is "potentiality in Brecht's theory for feminism" (44-45, emphasis mine) in its incarnations as feminist theatre and/as feminist rhetoric. That potentiality is realized in Lipkin's work, as she makes use of the Brechtian alienation-effect to create a space for critical conversation about representation, gender roles, and choice.

Lipkin finds that comedy is one of the most effective means in creating this space, this distance "necessary to all understanding" (Brecht 71). The comedy in He's Having Her Baby is dependent in large part on the juxtapositions and self-conscious theatricality described above, but the gender reversals in the play are the primary means by which the audience's expectations are interrupted and the constructedness of "performances" on various levels are foregrounded. According to Lipkin, the play would not be a comedy without the reversals, nor would it function effectively (rhetorically) as political theatre (King). The reversal is "close enough that we recognize the reality of the situation, yet far enough removed that we can afford to laugh at it," Lipkin states ("Rabble-Rousing," 370), echoing Brecht's description of a "representation that alienates" as one that "allows us to recognize its subject, but at the same time makes it seem unfamiliar" (192). It is perversely this very alienation that gives rise to shared laughter, a dis/connection that invites and enables a rhetoric that beyonds persuasion.

The gender reversals in the play range from obvious reversals in biological and social roles to more subtle shifts in language use and musical styles. In the opening scene described above, for example, the (stereo)typical social roles of the male as the sexual aggressor and the female as the passive recipient and romanticizer of the male's advances are reversed: Liz is the aggressor who asks Joey out, and Joey sits and waits by the
phone, squealing with glee when he finally gets the call he has been waiting for. When 
these actions are assigned to the sex opposite of that in which the audience most often 
encounters them, the behaviors no longer seem “normal” or “natural.” The roles become 
dissociated from the particular bodies they are most often connected with, and, 
consequently, the assignation of a particular behavior to a particular sex suddenly seems, 
if not absurd, then at least questionable. Just why is it that the boy should be the one to 
call, the girl to wait? As Diamond notes, Verfremdungseffekt “challenges the mimetic 
property of acting that semioticians call iconicity, or the conventional resemblance 
between the performer’s body and the object, or character, to which it refers” (45). By 
alienating these gendered behaviors from the bodies they “naturally” belong to, the 
behaviors are revealed as gendered performances, constructions. The performance is no 
longer seamlessly one with the performer; instead, a gap is revealed, a space of questions. 
Thus the audience is invited to help fill that gap.

The character descriptions provided in the play synopsis offers several more 
examples of ways in which the gender reversals play out in the performance: Nathan is 
“Joey’s gawky and precociously political best friend who becomes a radical gay 
masculinist”; Joey’s Mother is “a prisoner who sings Country Western style about her fall 
due to liquor and boys”; and Mrs. Abernathy is “Joey’s crude, lecherous boss at 
Abernathy and Daughters Construction Company” (ii). In each case, the gendered 
stereotype has been assigned to a sexed body other than that conventionally expected. 
Instead of a deadbeat dad, Joey has a jailhouse mom; Joey fetches coffee and buys ties 
for his female boss, who pats him on the behind in thanks. The women are the providers 
who “wear the skirts in the family,” while the men scurry around dressed in aprons,
showing deference (29). There are more subtle shifts in language as well: “women” are most often referred to as such in the play, while young men are called “boys,” and when Joey fills out a form at the doctor’s office, he must give his “Father’s Maiden Name” (15). Even the musical styles challenge accepted gendered norms: a woman croons a country-western lament from the jail, while Joey, Nathan, and Joey’s co-worker Brian perform Andrews Sisters-style choreography in their musical number, “Married, Neurotic or Gay.”

Perhaps the penultimate reversal is Joey himself: the presence of his live, male, and very pregnant body onstage for the audience to see. “When spectators ‘see’ gender, they are seeing (and reproducing) the cultural signs of gender and by implication the gender ideology of a culture” (Diamond 45-6). By assigning pregnancy, a defining sign of femaleness, to a male body, the state of pregnancy itself is defamiliarized—and consequently, all of the issues attendant upon it, and the ideologies that inflect them, may be, must be, seen in a new light: choice, abortion, childcare, support for single parents, sexual desire and responsibility. Standard patterns and explanations neither fit, explain, nor remedy the situation the audience sees before them, requiring them to engage their critical faculties and explore other possibilities.

At the same time, the fact that Joey is played by a male actor means that his male body functions as a signifying element as well; the male body (even while it carries the pregnant belly) of necessity serves as a repository of ideological gender expectations, as it is tremendously difficult for the audience to leave all such baggage at the door. Thus, his performer’s body is, to adopt another Brechtian term, always already “historicized,” “loaded with its own history” as an individual male performer as well as the history of the
character—in this case, a pregnant male teen—and, because of the reality that it is the women of our species who gestate and give birth, the female body exists as an iconographic historical referent as well. In this way, “Joey” is made “available for both analysis and identification”; as all three of these histories co-exist in/with/of the same body, they “roughen the smooth edges of . . . the representation” (Diamond 52). The audience cannot escape into empathy for the character, for it is not merely the character they are watching; no audience member can identify completely with the character, although most can identify with some aspect. The audience cannot relax into the “obvious,” to return to Brecht’s term, because there is nothing obvious about what they are seeing. There are gaps between each of these histories, each of these constructions, gaps which encourage the audience’s participation in the making of meaning, gaps which persuade the members of the audience to question: Why is this the way things are? How are all of the issues addressed here—abortion, childcare, sexual harassment—connected? And how are they connected to me?

The sub-title of the play (“A New Pro-Choice Musical Comedy”) leaves no doubt as to the creators’ stance on the issue of choice, and in fact, Lipkin declared in a 1990 television interview broadcast on St. Louis: This Week that she is “vehemently pro-choice” and wrote the play to demonstrate why abortion needed to be “legal, safe, and affordable” (He’s Having, video). Nevertheless, the play does not “hammer” its audience with a particular point of view. Neither does it allow the audience to escape entirely into empathy. Instead, the play asks the audience to consider the issue of choice within a web of related subjects, including how the social roles we inhabit and expect others to inhabit can fix our terministic screens so thoroughly that we can no longer imagine alternatives.
By alienating the audience (in a Brechtian sense) though juxtaposition and gender reversals, Lipkin and Clear help the audience—quite literally—to re-imagine the world, to re-imagine theatre, and to re-imagine rhetoric as beyond persuasion.

**Small Domestic Acts**

In *He's Having Her Baby*, the arrangement of the scenes plays a role in the alienation of the audience, but it is the flesh and blood presence of a pregnant male teenager’s body that is most unfamiliar and most persuades the audience to think and question. In *Small Domestic Acts*, a play that premiered first as a staged reading in 1992 and was performed again with full production values at That Uppity Theatre Company in 1994, Joan Lipkin makes sophisticated use of arrangement, incorporating explicit discussion of the way a story is told into the dialogue and action of the play, which traces the relationships of Frank and Straight Sheila, a heterosexual couple, and Frankie and Lesbian Sheila, a lesbian couple, who have gathered together in the theatre to tell their story (or, as it happens, stories) to the audience. As the characters argue over who gets to tell the story and what should be included, the audience becomes engaged in a critique of traditional narrative arrangements that raises questions about how humans’ relationships to those arrangements structure the (gendered) roles we play in our lives. The audience, who is cast as a sort of mass confidante gathered to hear the story being told, is implicated even more directly and fully in this play in their participatory role as meaning-makers.

The inspiration for *Small Domestic Acts* came from a phone call Lipkin received from a college friend. The friend, married for fifteen years and mother of two children, told Lipkin that she was leaving her husband for a woman. “I was flabbergasted,” Lipkin
said of the incident. "There was nothing in my previous knowledge of her that would have lead me to think she was a lesbian" ("Who Speaks," 119). Lipkin began thinking about the nature of sexual identity and its potential for fluidity. Sexual identity is "much more fluid than is popularly recognized or accepted," Lipkin says, and she began to question human understanding of that fluidity. "At almost any point, anything from physical health to financial position can change, so why should sexuality be exempt?" ("Play Breaks").

As a way of exploring this question, she began work on Small Domestic Acts. In a press release for a 1992 reading of the play, Lipkin classified it as "an inquiry," which is a fitting description for a work that seeks to raise and explore questions about identity and the roles humans play in their domestic lives ("New Lipkin"). Prior to the present action of the play, we learn that the two couples, Frank and Straight Sheila and Frankie and Lesbian Sheila (as they are identified in the published script) met when macho Frank and the self-described "butch" Frankie, who both worked at the same machine shop, fostered—reluctantly at first—a friendship. Frank invited Frankie and Lesbian Sheila (a self-described "femme") over to play cards with him and his wife, Straight Sheila. While the two Sheilas both initially resisted the idea, the couples soon instituted weekly games. Lesbian Sheila and Straight Sheila became fast friends, talking on the phone, having lunch, sharing fears, and encouraging one another’s dreams of self-improvement. To everyone’s surprise, the two women fell in love.

The premise of the play itself is that the four characters have purposefully gathered to tell their story to the audience, to see if they can better understand what has happened and why. Certainly Brecht lurks behind this premise, as the audience is
immediately positioned as “the audience” and not allowed to forget that throughout the
course of the play. The play opens with Frank, Frankie, and the two Sheilas wandering
casually into the theatre through the audience while the house lights are up and the
audience is still getting settled into their seats. The stage directions specify that the
actors’ entrance should seem spontaneous and that “the audience should be unsure of
whether or not this opening scene is actually part of the play” (231). The four are
dressed in casual clothes: Frank wears a blue work shirt and jeans, Straight Sheila khakis
and a red blouse. Frankie’s costume—jeans and a reddish-orange button down shirt—
echoes both Frank’s and Straight Sheila’s, while Lesbian Sheila wears a floral tapestry
tunic over a black cat suit. They gather on the stage in an apparently haphazard manner
as they chat amongst themselves.

The spontaneous and “casual” exchange of dialogue that opens the play is, upon
closer analysis, anything but casual, however. As Frank complains that “everyone is
always late to the theatre,” Straight Sheila and Lesbian Sheila correct his totalizing
statement: “Not everyone, Frank”; “Not always.” “Besides things happen,” adds Straight
Sheila, “People have car trouble.” “Or the babysitter calls in sick” (231). With this brief
exchange of dialogue, we are introduced to two interrelated, central themes of the play,
themes that are played out both in content and structure. First, Straight Sheila’s
seemingly offhand remark, “things happen,” and the examples of unexpected “things”
she and Lesbian Sheila name, concretize the idea that sometimes one’s “best laid plans,”
as the poem reads, are interrupted, altered. There is, of course, a dramatic difference
between car trouble making one late to an evening out at the theatre and shifts in
emotional needs and sexual desires that lead a person to end one relationship and begin a
new one. Nevertheless, the women's remarks foreshadow the more complex shifts in sexual and intellectual identities and roles that occur in the play.

The casual straightforwardness of “things happen” tells the audience that Straight Sheila believes that these kinds of interruptions and changes are the given, not the exception, in human life. Her remark is echoed several minutes later by Lesbian Sheila telling Frank, “Things change. I don’t see where it’s set in stone” (234), as the four characters debate who should get to tell the story they have come to tell. Just as Frank’s totalizing comment about audience members arriving late is complicated by the women’s recognition that there are multiple variations of that particular “story,” Frank’s initial assertion that he should be the one to tell the two couples’ story is quickly brought into question by the others. Frank attempts to open the telling by theatrically announcing, “In the beginning,” and repeating it several times: “In the beginning…isn’t that how things always begin? You know, in the beginning?” (231). Though his histrionics initially elicit a giggle from Lesbian Sheila, the patriarchal overtones of absolute power in the invocation of this biblical phrase need hardly be pointed out: Frank assumes not only the role of the “teller” of the story, but also the role of “creator.” The scene asks the audience to think about how these two roles have traditionally been conflated—and who has been silenced by that conflation.

FRANK: [Con’t.] So, in the beginning, everything was fine. We had our friends. We all played cards. It was nice. Real regular like until one day when—
STRAIGHT SHEILA: [Interrupting.] Wait a minute. Why are you telling this story?
FRANK: What do you mean, why am I telling it? I’m telling it because it happened to me.
STRAIGHT SHEILA: Am I in it?
Frank: Of course you’re in it. You’re here, aren’t you?
Straight Sheila: Then it didn’t just happen to you. It happened to me, too. (231)

Straight Sheila quite literally “interrupts” Frank, who, in the world of the play, holds the culturally dominant position of heterosexual male. In doing so, Straight Sheila challenges Frank’s assumption that his story is the only one there is to be told; her interruption and the debate that follows, which recurs at various moments throughout the play, also challenge the conventional theatrical structure that privileges the story of the individual (male) hero acting within a tidy, unified, and typically linear narrative. It becomes apparent in the course of the telling that this traditional narrative structure limits and constricts not only on the stage, and not only those who have been silenced by the structure. Those who cannot see their way to play a new part offstage, to adjust the roles they have traditionally played to accommodate changing needs and circumstances, are the ones who founder.

It is significant, then, that Frank does not give over his power or his sanctioned place on the stage easily, as he flirts with Sheila “to get his way,” promising her that if she will let him tell the story, he will “make it up to her” (232). With her emphatic refusal, the question of ownership continues to grow more complicated:

Straight Sheila: [She zings him.] No, you won’t. Besides, then it’ll be some other story. It won’t be this one. I want this one. This is my story.
Frankie: Whoa, this is her story?
Lesbian Sheila: Frankie, stay out of this.
Frankie: Well, it’s my story, too. Why should she get to tell it when it’s my story, too? (232)

When Straight Sheila lays claim to the events as “her story,” even Frankie—who, the audience learns, is not generally much of a talker—chimes in, reminding the other
characters that what has happened is also her story, that she should have a say, too.

Straight Sheila finally declares that they will just have to start over and motions for the stage manager to bring the house lights up, at once reminding the audience of their role as a theatre audience, and calling attention to the constructedness of a story’s “beginning.”

In the course of this onstage argument, the “story” the four have come to tell becomes multiple stories. They are intertwined, to be sure, but the investment each character expresses in being the primary “teller”—and the fear each expresses that having someone else tell the story will make it someone else’s story, or make it into another story altogether—confirms the power held by the one who speaks. There is power in speaking, and a relinquishing of power in being spoken for. The onstage argument also points up the fact that there is no one “right” version of this story (or, the audience may discern, any story). When Frank insists that it is only “logical” that he should get to tell the story because “[t]he one who gets to tell the story is the one who was affected the most,” the others challenge his assumption, pointing out that they were each affected by the events, too.

This exchange might be read as an allegory for the roles women have been cast in and played in the history and practice of rhetoric. Traditionally, women were silenced in the public sphere; those who did speak were not always heard. Men held rule over the public sphere and determined what “counted”—as logical, as significant, as affective (and effective). Frank embodies this belief system when he insists the he should get to tell the story because he was the one who “suffered” (233); traditionally, the only “suffering” that counted (or was even recognized as such) was the suffering of the dominant group, in part because they were the only ones who could speak or be heard.
When Lesbian Sheila reassures everyone that just because Frank starts out telling the story, it does not mean that he will be the only one to speak, we can hear the voices of feminists who have created spaces for and recovered women’s rhetorical practices, making room for an inclusive plurality of speakers. Lesbian Sheila tells the others that they can “come in whenever [they] want, “ because, as she says, “Things change. I don’t see where it’s set in stone” (234).

Ostensibly the “it’s” in this line of dialogue refers to the telling of the story, about which the characters have been arguing. But the “it’s” seems purposefully ambiguous: it could refer to the telling of the story, or to the teller—who speaks, when, and what they say is no longer “set in stone.” The “it’s” might also refer to the story that is being told—its unknown and unknowable ending, in particular. The statement might also refer to the lack of fixedness of one’s sexual identity, the central idea that Lipkin set out to explore in writing the play.

It is the fluidity—one might even argue the necessary fluidity—of all these potential referents (telling, teller, story, identity) that is at the heart of this play. Lipkin’s play questions not only the fixedness of identity, but also the fixedness of the ways we tell our stories, traditional narrative structures with prescribed roles that, according to her, simply do not work. “What I don’t believe in, what doesn’t work for me, is the Aristotelian imperative,” she says. “Its linearity leaves out too many unexpressed side paths that so often make up the heart of a story” (“Who Speaks,” 123). These “side paths” are introduced into Small Domestic Acts in the characters’ “meta”-conversations about the telling of the story and the modified Brechtian “historicity” that comes into play.
as the audience watches the characters-in-the-present comment on and question their actions as characters-in-the-past, as they re-enact and discuss scenes from their story.

It is, in large part, this structure (one might say “arrangement”) that enables the play to “beyond persuasion,” for as the characters question, so does the audience: their presence is referred to explicitly by the actors from the beginning of the play—they are peered at, commented on, pointed at, and asked questions throughout the performance, and so are made complicit in the act of making sense of the story and its telling. By foregrounding the characters’ struggle to tell their story/stories and making that struggle and the questions of privilege and power that surround it visible to the audience, Lipkin asks the audience to consider how the way humans compose stories determines in part the stories that we (are able to) tell, as well as those we are able and willing to hear. As the audience watches the action unfold, it becomes clear that there is danger in simply following the narrow path prescribed by convention, subscribing to the gendered roles and sexual identities assigned by tradition. Frank and Frankie, in particular, are both shown to be victims of the traditional masculine ideology they subscribe to; both believe in ‘doing’ rather than ‘talking,’ and their partners—who have also cast themselves into particular gendered roles, but now find themselves wondering what other parts they might play—become frustrated with Frank and Frankie’s inability to communicate with them. At one point, Frankie remarks wryly, “And to think that all this time, I used to worry that I wasn’t enough of a man for her. Turns out, I wasn’t enough of a woman. Ain’t that a bitch?” (265). Frank and Frankie, it seems, have been written by this narrative to such an extent that they are unable or unwilling to re-write the roles they play in it; without re-writing the roles, they cannot re-write the story.
The opening conversation between the characters “raises the question of the story's boundaries and its ownership: whose story is it? When does the story begin? And why do such issues matter, in this play, in theatre, in life?” (Wolf 225). And we are not given any easy answers in this dramatic “inquiry.” As the four characters move back and forth in time, re-enacting scenes from the past involving moments within individual friendships and relationships, as well as scenes involving all four characters, they continue to debate the way that they are telling the story. After a short scene that replays Frank and Frankie’s first meeting, Lesbian Sheila balks at re-enacting the next scene, which recounts the conversation that took place between Frankie and her as they were getting ready to go over to Frank and Straight Sheila’s to play cards for the first time. When Frankie points out that they must replay this scene because that was “the way it started,” Lesbian Sheila replies, “Well, that’s the first time we met them. But I’m not sure that it didn’t start before that and that we shouldn’t start further back” (236). Where does a story start? Lesbian Sheila’s remark—and Straight Sheila’s earlier decision to simply stop the action and start over—call attention to the fact that what may appear as a natural and logical beginning of a narrative is in reality the result of a choice made by the teller; it is a construct. The events that make up a story are, to some degree, a construct as well. When Frank points out that it is not possible to include every single detail, Lesbian Sheila replies, “That’s true. But what we tell or don’t tell is really important. It affects the way they see it” (236). “They” refers to the audience; here Lesbian Sheila (and through her, the playwright) is exercising her “relational responsibility” toward the audience, recognizing that what she and the others include and exclude in the telling has a real impact. Straight Sheila finally convinces Lesbian Sheila to go ahead with the next
re-enactment scene by reminding her—and simultaneously the audience—that life itself is not "letter perfect": it is full of dropped lines and partial (in both senses of the word) tellings (236). This line of dialogue suggests the gap between conventional, unified narrative structure and the complex and rather untidy "stories" humans actually live.

It is clear to the characters and to the audience that what is excluded—whether from unwilled silencing, an inability to shift roles, or by choice—is just as significant in shaping the story as what is included. The questions of what does and does not get told and who determines that remain central throughout the play. When Frankie is troubled by an upcoming re-enactment scene with Lesbian Sheila, she wants to know why they cannot perform some other "really important" scenes, scenes that would showcase moments of tenderness and care on her part, instead of the chosen one that depicts a painful and, to her mind, very private argument she and Lesbian Sheila had had over having children. "I guess I don’t understand why your need to tell the story is more important than my need for it not to be told," Frankie says, turning to the audience and imploring, "Am I crazy here, or what?" (254). At another point Frank starts to storm out of the theatre, angered because he feels that the choices being made are making him "look like a jerk" (258). Obviously, were any one of the four characters solely in charge, the story the audience would see and hear would be different than the one being negotiated by the four together. It is impossible not to be aware of the constructedness of the story when one is watching its construction be negotiated and re-negotiated.

And when does a story end? How do we know when a story has ended? The final re-enactment scene in the play differs from the others in that it takes place partly in the past and partly in the future. The performance of it is also more frequently and
violently interrupted by interjections from the characters in the present than the previous
scenes were. A brief summary of these final moments will prove helpful. The scene
opens with Straight Sheila visiting Lesbian Sheila at work, confronting her about the
romantic and sexual feelings that have grown up between them. Frankie interrupts first,
telling Lesbian Sheila that if she will refuse to finish the scene, they “can go back home
and pretend this whole thing didn’t happen” (261). Lesbian Sheila is torn, and delivers a
heartrending monologue about how much Frankie means to her, but—significantly—in
the course of the telling, discovers that her feelings for Frankie have, indeed, changed. A
brief physical fight between Frankie and Frank ensues, followed by a long, tense pause in
which, it seems, neither the characters or the audience knows what will happen next.

Finally, Frank and Frankie each sit on opposite corners of the stage and address
the audience directly in interwoven monologues. Both speak to the audience rather than
to one another, but they are in agreement that, as Frankie says, “There have got to be
rules.” She continues, “Things were easy when she did her part and I did mine. Life’s
hard enough without mixing it all up like that. I can’t do it. I just can’t do it” (264). At
this point the two Sheilas finally have a chance to finish their scene, and shift from re-
enacting the past to enacting their future as they perform a scene of domestic harmony,
making a grocery list, checking on their new baby, and sharing a passionate kiss.

The final moments of the play take place in the present, as the characters reflect
back on the experience of telling the story to an audience. Frank reasserts that things
would have gone differently if he had been the one to tell the story and suggests going
back and re-playing some of the scenes differently; Frankie admits that she, too, was
hoping that there would be a different outcome in the telling than there had been in the
lived experience (266). Frank and Frankie verbalize their desire to relive the past, say or do something differently, and change the outcome, but without revising the gendered and sexual roles they played in the story—in playing by the old rules—they could not influence the narrative's course. They are entrapped in what Lipkin calls a "patriarchal stasis" ("Who Speaks," 120), and the fact that Frankie, a woman, enacts this traditionally masculine script, serves only to heighten its power as a role, a construct. The two Sheilas, on the other hand, are satisfied with having gotten to speak, with having been heard for the first time: "That was the point of telling our stories," says Lesbian Sheila, "So they would hear what usually doesn't get said" (267).

"They" refers, of course, to the audience, who has now heard the story told from four points of view, none of which has been privileged as the "right" one, all of which, taken together, disallow a single, neat interpretation of events. There are, as Stacy Wolf points out in her commentary on the play, echoes of Brecht here, as Small Domestic Acts incorporates the Brechtian concept of the "not, but," making visible to the audience the "representational and historical choices" made by the characters/the playwright "that might have been made differently" (224). So: how do we know when a story ends? When we stop telling it? Frankie doubts that the audience sees the four characters as "Four different people" with "Four different perspectives." "Bullshit," she says. "We're just the token lesbians now"; Frank is the token male "jerk." Straight Sheila insists that the audience "know[s] that this is just one story," and expresses disgust with Frankie's cynicism.

STRAIGHT SHEILA: You know something? It's a good thing that we're finished here because I am sick to death of you and your labels.
FRANKIE: Are you?
STRAIGHT SHEILA: Yeah.
FRANKIE: Are you now? You think they're just mine? [Beat.] Give it six months. (267)

And with Frankie's challenge, the play ends. But the story does not, as this "ending" clearly indicates to the audience. And neither does the audience's complicity in making sense of these events, for they are included and implicated in Frankie's challenge, as well as in all the other questions that have been raised throughout the play. The audience must now ask themselves about the power of labels, of roles, of the narratives humans tell to make sense of their lives. Can they be re-written, really? Or not?

Lipkin purposefully structured the ending of the scripted play as a "non-ending" and left questions unanswered. She explains that the writing of Small Domestic Acts was interrupted by two incidents that profoundly affected her shaping of the work. First, the 1990 Supreme Court ruling that threatened abortion rights in the Webster case prompted her to stop work on Acts and write He's Having Her Baby in order to draw attention to and spark conversation about issues of choice. Then Lipkin's mother was diagnosed with cancer. As she describes it,

I was thrown into a complete tailspin. I realized I didn’t know the ending to that story... When I was finally able to return to the writing of [Small Domestic Acts], suddenly the structure seemed staid and lifeless to me. As I had felt about these two events, the characters in the play now wanted to influence the direction of their story at the same time that they acknowledged that the ending was up for grabs. ("Who Speaks," 118)

Lipkin revised the play to include the "impromptu"-appearing opening scene and the ongoing debate about whose story should be told. By undercutting traditional narrative authority and the linearity of conventional plot structures in this way, Lipkin created space for questions, for dialogue with the audience.
The direct addresses made to the audience throughout the play are not merely theatrical convention employed for variety: these addresses are intended to invite the audience, intimately, into the conversation. As Lipkin explains it in her notes on the script, the audience, "[w]hile they are never called upon to participate in a literal sense.. should feel their role quite actively as the fifth character in this play" (228). "THE AUDIENCE" literally appears as the fifth character in the character list in the script. As that character "they function as a confessor, at other times, as a voyeur, and still at others, as a conduit for the characters who speak through them in order to say things they can't say to each other" (228). Furthermore, in performances of this one-act play, the "scripted text" of Act I is followed by an "Act II" that consists of an audience talkback. Lipkin's ultimate goal in performances of the play is to "create a theatrical town hall" in which the audience members share their own stories with one another after the play, a goal that clearly situates theatrical performance as an act of public speaking. "But that exchange of ideas can only happen if it's embedded in the structure of the script," she states, explaining that the willingness of the audience members to participate in such a town hall has to do with the way the play was written—it tries to renegotiate what is a conventional spectator position in most of contemporary theatre, and move it out of its passivity. I wanted to challenge [people] in their role as audience members, and because of the stories that are told on stage, to ask them to then go forth and examine their own lives and the lives of other people around them more closely. ("Who Speaks," 123; 117)

Many plays leave the audience thinking; some even ask the audience to think about specific issues. Lipkin takes that idea one step further and engages the audience in a dialogue over the issues right then and there; she wants to raise the questions and give the audience space—literally—in which to respond to them. Lipkin not only reconfigured the structure of the play; she also physically reconfigured the theatre space for
performances of *Small Domestic Acts*, instituting cabaret seating, where audience members (sometimes total strangers) were grouped around small tables, in order to promote conversation.

According to Lipkin, she is “challenging the audience to a sense of responsibility, so that there can be kind of a transformation for both the characters and the audience. . . . of the understanding of relationships, and what kinds of relationships are possible” (“Who Speaks,” 118). Though Lipkin is referring explicitly to the kinds of relationships expressed within the play, the ways in which she “beyonds persuasion” in *Small Domestic Acts*—interrupting linear narrative structures, questioning the “ramifications” of role-playing, casting the audience as a character with specific roles to play—also ask the audience to envision a new kind of actor-audience relationship. They become “actors” in a larger sense, actively responding and participating in the act of making meaning. They listen; they enter the dialogue as collaborators; they are persuaded to ask themselves, “What do I think?” In these ways, Joan Lipkin’s theatre models a rhetoric of beyonding persuasion.

**Dear Mom: Dear John: Dear Editor: Oh, Dear Me: Why I Write (Feminism)**

In the short monologue that precedes this chapter as Intertext 2, I sought to beyond persuasion by adopting some of the same theatrical strategies Lipkin incorporates in her work. The piece, as its title suggests, is structured in three letters, the first addressed to my mother, the second to a male friend, and the third to the editor of a university student newspaper. Each of the letters was based upon an actual letter or email I had written and/or on a conversation I had had with the addressee in which I felt compelled to act explicitly upon my feminist worldview and “write feminism,” that is,
present a feminist perspective on the subject at hand: girls wrestling (and beating) boys in high school wrestling matches; the influence of gender on reading and writing practices; and sexual harassment in the form of wolf-whistles at the bus stop.

In each letter I take a clear stance on the issue being discussed—"naming and claiming the specific," as Joan Lipkin might describe it, and the title of the piece clearly named the purpose of the play as a whole: my goal was to demonstrate to my audience why I write (feminism). Though each of the original letters might be said to be persuasive in intent, I do not at any point in the performance make an overt attempt to persuade my audience to write feminism; instead, I chose to simply describe and dramatize three different scenes of my own writing in such a way that the members of the audience—the women of the 1999 CCCC Feminism Workshop—would be invited to consider the questions: What does it mean to write feminism? And how do I, or might I, write feminism (differently)?

In performance, the central prop is a six-foot-tall pencil, which serves to visually link the three letters, as they are spoken, one following the other, accompanied by occasional additional commentary. The pencil is at once a familiar object—what Western schoolchild has not filled in bubble-sheets with a yellow "No. 2" pencil?—that is made unfamiliar by its outrageous size, thus serving as a device that invites both "identification and analysis" (Diamond 52). The pencil functions much as a second character who, like Joey in He's Having Her Baby, possesses multiple histories: it functions as a pencil for the first letter, as dance partner "John" in the second, and as the van full of rowdy young men in the third. At the same time, it both represents and comments on the act of writing feminism itself. As the stage directions indicate, the
piece opens with the Woman, as she is named in the script, holding the pencil, writing a letter to her mother on a piece of paper that lies flat on the stage floor and measures some five-by-seven feet. She struggles with the pencil throughout the speaking of the letter: it is indeed a big job, what she has undertaken. The pencil also represents a friend and a somewhat awkward dance partner—both metaphors for and comments on feminism. During the speaking of the third letter, the pencil represents the crowd of young men in the van who honk at, pursue, and “write” the Woman’s body. The act of writing feminism—and the act of reclaiming the pencil at the close of the piece—is, in a sense, a re-writing of that body.

Thus, as Lipkin and Clear might be said to (re)write the body in *He’s Having Her Baby* and *Small Domestic Acts*, complicating traditional representations of the body and raising questions about the social roles we attach to particular bodies, I also attempted to (re)write the body in the performance piece. In the speaking of the second letter, the Woman begins to perform what I call “a script-tease,” in the piece’s subtitle, as she takes off her outer blouse to reveal a t-shirt underneath printed with the script of Jane Martin’s T(ext)-Shirt play, *Stuffed Shirts*. The wordplay on “striptease” and the action the wordplay describes constitute another familiar scene made unfamiliar: the Woman’s body is written as the object of the gaze at the same time that it is “performing” writing itself; as I note in the performance piece, the advertisement for the T(ext)-Shirt Play said that one performs the play “simply by wearing the shirt” (*Subscriber and Patron News* 3). The Woman continues to hold the roles of object and subject in tension, as she takes a line of text from the Martin play spoken by the (male?) character who holds the gaze, and turns it back at those who would objectify her, yelling “I don’t like the politics implied by
your body!” at the young men in the van. When the Woman removes the Martin T(Ext)-Shirt to reveal a third shirt, this one printed with the texts of the letters she has been speaking—texts that position her as writing subject rather than/as well as (in their T-shirt form) written object—she literally (re)writes her own body, simultaneously fulfilling and confounding her role as the object of the gaze. The lack of a seamless identification between the body the audience sees and the roles most often ascribed to that body creates, as with Joey, as with Frank, Frankie, and the two Sheilas, a gap, a space for conversation and analysis.

Beyond Beyonding Persuasion

I opened this chapter with a quotation from Plato’s *Gorgias* in which Plato suggests that all theatre is rhetorical, even that which privileges entertainment and gratification over edification. One hears echoes of Plato in Joan Lipkin’s assertion that *all* theatre is possessed of a particular political point of view, usually that “of the entrenched establishment” (Barnes 3C); the theatre she creates attempts to challenge the establishment, present alternative ways of looking at and being in the world. For Lipkin, this is a feminist enterprise, for feminism is “about education; it’s about negotiation; it’s about changing the terms of the contract” (“Who Speaks,” 122).

Understanding feminist theatrical performance as a rhetoric that beyonds persuasion changes the terms of the rhetoric-poetics contract as it has too often been understood—that each art must remain separate from the other in both theory and practice. The artistic and rhetorical power of Joan Lipkin’s plays suggests that such a distinction is neither possible nor desirable: there is too much to be learned, too much good conversation to be engendered by understanding feminist theatrical performance as
a rhetoric that beyonds persuasion. Joan Lipkin’s plays put a rhetoric of beyonding persuasion into practice. In *He’s Having Her Baby*, she and Tom Clear clearly present a pro-choice point of view while maintaining an awareness of the multiplicity of social and gender issues their point of view impacts and is impacted by; by juxtaposing humor and *pathos* and reversing the social roles traditionally inhabited by male and female bodies, they create a dis/connection that engages the audience emotionally while asking them to think critically and question the meaning of what they are seeing and hearing. In *Small Domestic Acts*, the audience becomes a character in the play. The negotiation of multiple points of view is openly staged, and the audience is “empowered” to see themselves as participants in the making of meaning (Campbell 13). In theatrical performances of both plays, the audience is invited into a dialogue with the characters and issues presented.

This study of Lipkin’s plays makes clear that enacting a feminist rhetoric entails a revision of form as well as content. It also suggests that the presence of the body in the rhetorical moment and a greater awareness of the power of the body in rhetoric is crucial to understanding and developing a rhetoric that beyonds persuasion. On stage in theatrical performance, the body is a physical presence with communicative impact equal to that of the text. Because of its physical presence, the body can be re-written, re-presented in ways that it cannot on the page; it cannot be ignored or written out of the “text” altogether. In beyonding persuasion, then, we revise not only persuasion and arrangement, but open up the canon of delivery for re-consideration as well. Onstage, the physical body is necessarily located, and it may, as it does in Lipkin’s work, communicate in tension with the unspoken “text” of social convention previously written upon it, opening up a space for critique and conversation. It may also communicate in
tension with the written text of the play or with other bodies onstage, creating new possibilities for beyonding persuasion. I turn, then, in the next chapter to an examination of feminist theatrical performance and delivery, the art of "body rhetoric."
1 In the *Phaedrus*, Socrates states, "as self-adomment is to gymnastic, so is sophistry to legislation; and as cookery is to medicine, so is rhetoric to justice." (72). In other words, "cookery assumes the form of medicine, and pretends to know what foods are best for the body," just as rhetoric "pretends" to know what is just, when in fact it is simply flattery disguised as justice as "cookery is flattery disguised as medicine" (72).

2 In the section on delivery, Aristotle makes several references to actors and the art as it is manifested in poetics as well as in rhetoric.

3 Cicero's *De Oratore* and Quintilian's *Institutes of Oratory* are both synthetic works that draw on the theories of Plato and Isocrates as well as Aristotle. Cicero’s orator is reminded to "teach" and "delight" as well as "persuade," while Quintilian spends considerable time and space summarizing and recapitulating the words of those who have defined rhetoric as persuasion. It is worth noting, however, that Quintilian questions this definition on the grounds that rhetoric is not the only thing that persuades (money also does), nor is persuasion solely the province of the orator, as "harlots" and "seducers" may persuade one to ill. Though he does not abandon the idea of persuasion as the end of rhetoric altogether, his reservations about it lead Quintilian to formulate his famous definition of rhetoric as "the good man speaking well."

4 "Symbolic action" might be seen, in fact, as a synonym for representation, in the sense of re-presenting ideas and images in words and stage action (symbols) in order to communicate with and move an audience (action).

5 French feminist theorists and philosophers such as Helene Cixous, Julia Kristeva, and Luce Irigaray have all argued in their theory and practice for the need for alternative feminist rhetorics and discourses, as I note later in the chapter. This need has also been recognized and explored in the work of Karen A. Foss and Sonja K. Foss in their anthology *Women Speak: The Eloquence of Women's Lives*, which expands the scope of rhetoric to include forms such as dance, dress, and rituals in addition to more familiar forms such as language and letter writing.

6 Ede, Glenn, and Lunsford cite the work of Gloria Anzaldua, Sandra Cisneros, Helene Cixous, Mary Daly, Margaret Fuller, Julia Kristeva, Audre Lorde, Toni Morrison, Jane Tompkins, and Patricia Williams, among others, as feminist writers who have pushed at the boundaries of traditional rhetoric.

7 The response of *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* theatre critic Joe Pollack, who panned the production of *He's Having Her Baby*, inspired Lipkin to write a sketch and paper for the 1990 American Theatre and Higher Education Conference (which has since been revised and reprinted in *Feminist Theatres for Social Change*) that specifically addresses the "baggage" the audience brings to any performance. In the sketch, "Mr. Critic" enters the theatre carrying a mound of bags and suitcases. When asked by a "feminist theatre artist" if he would like to leave some of his bags (which are marked with labels such as "White," "Middle-class," and "Heterosexual") at the door, he responds, "I prefer to keep my baggage with me at all times." The feminist theatre artist queries, "But how will you be able to see our show?"

8 Frank has also traditionally been cast as white, although race and ethnicity are not specified in the playtext. If Frank is read as an archetypal representation of culturally sanctioned male authority, then his whiteness is necessary. It is interesting to note, however, that all of the characters are cast as blue-collar, working class folk—not a social class that carries a great deal of "power" in our society as a whole, but one in which male-female power relationships have tended to remain more traditional.

9 In her interview with Iris Smith, which I have quoted from throughout this chapter, Lipkin states that one of the questions she is most interested in exploring in her theatre work is "Who speaks, and who is spoken for?" (107).
The following play has been adapted from Quintilian's discussion of delivery in Book Eleven of Institutes of Oratory. It is also a love story, a classic comic plot: boy gets girl, boy loses girl, boy gets girl again. Or perhaps: girl gets boy, girl refuses boy, girl chooses boy again. The story is really one of a coming together and moving apart, genderregardless. But how does Quintilian's ancient advice on voice, countenance, and gesture translate into a love story? A great deal depends on delivery.

A theatrical performance may be thought of as a compendium of different "tracks": there are static visual images, movements and gestures, the dialogue the actors speak, perhaps music that underscores it all. In the rhetorical tradition, and in many if not most theatrical performances, each of these tracks supported the other—as Quintilian says, even the eyebrows of the speaker must conform to and support the meaning of the speaker's word. It's only natural, logical, "right." But what happens if we separate the tracks and mix them up a bit? What if the words and the delivery do NOT conform? What kind of story might they tell us then, what kind of response might be engendered?

The love story, which is told by the actor's inflection, movement, and gesture, is, unfortunately unrepresentable on the page, though I have tried to indicate it and give a
sense of the movement with selected stage directions. I have also altered Quintilian's punctuation to more clearly indicate the subtext that is evident in live performance.

WOMAN sits on a chair, body erect, feet flat on the floor, her right arm extended above her head, hand open, reaching upward. Her face is lifted, reaching upward, as well. MAN stands behind the chair, facing left, in profile to the audience.

WOMAN: How much power gesture has in a speaker, is sufficiently evident from the consideration that it can signify most things even without the aid of words. Nor is it surprising that such signs...make such impression on the mind when even painting, a voiceless production, and always keeping the same form, penetrates into our innermost feelings, and with such force that it seems at times to surpass the power of words.

MAN: (As MAN speaks, WOMAN slowly lowers her arm, bending it at the elbow, pulling it in to her side.) On the contrary, if our gesture and looks are at variance with our speech; if we utter anything mournful with an air of cheerfulness, or assert anything with an air of denial, not only impressiveness is wanting our words, but even credibility.

WOMAN: (As MAN begins to step slowly around the chair, circling toward her.) In action, as in the whole body, the head holds the chief place, as contributing to produce both...gracefulness (MAN leans down to embrace WOMAN just as SHE stands. HE falls into the chair and faces forward)...and expressiveness. (SHE circles around to stand behind him and the chair, facing front.)

MAN: What contributes to gracefulness is, first of all, that the head (her hand rests, palm forward, on the back of his head) be held in a proper and natural position.
WOMAN: For, by casting down the head (SHE pushes his head forward with her hand), humility is signified.

MAN: By throwing it back (HE throws his head back, resting his crown against her stomach), haughtiness.

WOMAN: By leaning it on one side (SHE leans her head so that her face rests against his cheek), languor (HE does not respond to her overture); by keeping it rigid and unmoved, a certain degree of rudeness. (SHE steps out from behind chair and begins to walk away; HE catches her right hand and stops her.)

MAN: But the head expresses meaning in various ways; for besides its motions of assenting, refusing, and affirming, it has those of—bashfulness.

WOMAN: Hesitation?! (SHE pivots on her right foot and straddles him: a challenge.)

MAN: Admiration. (HE leers.)

WOMAN: Indignation! (SHE stands and slowly turns to face forward) . . .which are alike known and common to all persons.

MAN: (HE stands, and repeats the movement sequence from above during the following lines: he casts her head forward, SHE raises it back up, HE leans his head against hers, holding his face against her cheek in tenderness.) But the chief part of the head is the face. . .on the face men hang as it were, and fix their gaze and entire attention on it, even before we begin to speak.
WOMAN: From the face we understand numbers of things, and its expression is often equivalent to all the words that we could use. . .what is most expressive in the face is the eye, through which the mind chiefly manifests itself, insomuch that the eyes, even while they remain motionless, can sparkle with joy. . .

MAN: Much effect is also produced by the eyebrows. . . (HE steps out from behind her and begins to walk away; SHE catches his right hand and stops him, repeating the movement sequence, above.)

WOMAN: It is a fault in the eyebrows, when they are either motionless, or too full of motion, or when they rise and fall unequally. (SHE sits.)

MAN: Or when their configuration is at variance with what we are saying! For anger is indicated by the contraction, sadness by the lowering, and cheerfulness by the expansion of them.

WOMAN: With the nose and lips we can scarcely signify anything becomingly.

MAN: (Aside) Though derision, contempt, and disdain are often expressed by them. (To her, describing her changing facial expressions as she enacts them.) For to wrinkle the nose, as Horace says, to distend it, to move it about, to rub it incessantly with the finger, to expel the air with a sudden snort. . .is extremely offensive. (A dig. Sends her a "kiss," mocking, taunting her.)

WOMAN: (Describing his "kiss.") As to the lips, there is something unbecoming when they are thrust out, (then describing his changing facial expressions) or held in (HE
presses lips together), or strongly pressed together (HE grins maniacally), or widely parted, so as to expose the teeth (HE makes an exaggerated funny face), or drawn back towards each side, perhaps almost to each ear. . . . (HE sticks out his tongue. SHE laughs. Conciliatory.) The neck ought to be straight, not stiff or thrown back.

MAN: (Gently teasing) To sink the chin on the breast renders the voice less distinct. (SHE shrugs and starts to leave. Teasing again, wanting to engage her so SHE will stay.) To shrug or contract the shoulders is very seldom becoming (SHE stops, prepared to do battle again. HE backpedals) . . . for the neck is shortened by it; and it begets a mean, servile, and knavish sort of gesture, (an apology, an explanation) particularly when men put themselves into postures of adulation, admiration—or fear.

WOMAN: (An apology, conciliation.) As to the hands, without the aid of which all delivery would be deficient and weak, it can scarcely be told of what a variety of motions they are susceptible, since they almost equal in expression the powers of language itself. With our hands we ask. . . ?

MAN: Promise.

WOMAN: Call persons to us—and send them away (a friendly warning).

MAN: Threaten?!

WOMAN: With our hands we signify joy, grief—

MAN: Doubt.
WOMAN: Acknowledgment.

MAN: Penitence.

WOMAN: Penitence. (*They return to their original posture of "togetherness.")

MAN: (*He begins again to insist on conformity.*) It is sufficiently apparent that the delivery, as I have endeavored to show, must correspond to the matter. By such conformity a force and propriety of meaning is given our thoughts—

WOMAN: (*Interrupts*) And without it the [delivery] would indicate one thing and the thought another. (*SHE is not agreeing that this is a bad thing, though perhaps HE thinks HE has convinced her; SHE is pointing out to the audience how this performance has just illustrated that, in fact, indicating one thing with the delivery and a second with the "thought" or text can stimulate thought and emotion. SHE hopes so, anyway. To audience, perhaps with a wink.*) Indeed.
Notes

1 The piece was first performed at the 1999 Conference on College Composition and Communication, held in Atlanta, Georgia, March 24th through 27th. I was assisted in the performance by Dr. Scott Miller of Sonoma State University, Sonoma, California.
One of the most effective ways that Joan Lipkin’s plays beyond persuasion in performance is through the dissociation of traditional sex and gender roles from the particular bodies with which they are most often connected. In *He’s Having Her Baby*, Joey’s high school “girlfriend” (for one night), Liz, is the swaggering sexual aggressor who grabs his backside and gives it a squeeze; Joey is the hand-twisting romantic who takes shy mincing steps toward his “dream girl” when she opens her arm to him. Each of these reversals calls attention to the constructedness of what are often assumed to be the “natural” gender roles: the male as the strutting sexual aggressor with bold, powerful gestures, and the female as the soft-spoken, passive object whose movements are kept close and careful. In *Small Domestic Acts*, the constructedness of “masculinity” is made more apparent when typically masculine gestures and postures are delivered and displayed through the female body of Frankie. As suggested in the previous chapter, these dissociations of the “text” of social convention from the language of the body create a gap, a space of questions, that enables a rhetoric of beyonding persuasion. These examples suggest that an understanding the art of “body rhetoric,” the art of delivery, is
integral to the theory of a rhetoric that beyonds persuasion. A willingness to play with and upon traditional expectations of delivery enable the practice of such a rhetoric.

Moments of Overlap: The Actor and The Orator

In Chapter Three of Book Eleven of the *Institutes of Oratory*, Quintilian writes:

Much effect is also produced by the eye-brows; for they in some degree form the look of the eyes, and exercise a command over the forehead, which, by their influence, is contracted, raised, or lowered; so that the only thing which has more power over it is the blood, which is moved according to the state of mind... It is a fault in the eyebrows, when they are either motionless, or too full of motion, or when they rise and fall unequally, as I observed just now with respect to those of the comic mask, or when their configuration is at variance with what we are saying; for anger is indicated by the contraction, sadness by the lowering, and cheerfulness by the expansion of them. (363)

The title of the short performance piece appearing here as Intertext Three, *Even the Eyebrows Must Conform*, is taken from this curious-seeming moment in Quintilian’s text. I term it “curious-seeming” due to the fact that ascribing such communicative weight to the eyebrows seems rather odd, until one reads all of Chapter Three and discovers that Quintilian gives equally focused attention to the nose, lips, neck, shoulders, hands...even the stomach gets a turn. In Chapter Three Quintilian treats the fifth canon of rhetoric, delivery, which is concerned with the expressiveness of the “voice, countenance, and gesture” of the speaker; as such, it is an art primarily of the body—of carriage, posture, movement, facial expression, vocal quality and projection. I will return to an analysis of *Even the Eyebrows Must Conform* at the close of this chapter; first, in keeping with precedent set forth in Chapter Two, I offer this passage from Quintilian as a illustration of a moment of overlap, a textual/historical site where the arts of rhetoric and theatre converge, this time in the canon of delivery, the rhetoric of the body.
To begin, I offer a reading of the passage, above: Quintilian’s discussion of delivery consists primarily of a thorough catalog of the “do’s” and “don’ts” of actio; this passage prescribes the do’s and don’ts of the eyebrows. Within this passage, Quintilian refers to a preceding observation he made about the “comic mask” in his discussion of the face. There he describes the stage actor’s masks, writing that the character of “the father, who plays the principle part, has, because he is sometimes in a passion and sometimes calm, a mask with one of the eyebrows raised, and the other lowered” (362). The actor, according to Quintilian, would turn to the audience that side of the mask that best portrayed his emotions at a given moment. This practice on the part of the actor is neither overtly condoned nor condemned by Quintilian, but the context in which his description occurs suggests that he approves of it for the actor. After remarking that facial expression “is often equivalent to all the words we could use,” Quintilian uses his discussion of theatrical masks to support this assertion: “Accordingly in the pieces composed for the stage, the masters in the art of delivery borrow aid for exciting the feelings even from their masks (362, emphasis mine). One might then ask, why it is that it is a “fault” in the orator’s delivery if his eyebrows should “rise and fall unequally” (363)? This distinction between the orator’s delivery and the actor’s, for which Quintilian does not offer an explanation in this passage, is only one of many such comparisons in Quintilian’s text, and in the texts of classical rhetoricians Aristotle and Cicero as well: the “fault” lies not in the act of raising one eyebrow and not the other, but in the association of this act with, or perhaps derivation from, the actor’s art. Thus the passage above serves as an illustration of the overlap between rhetoric and theatre particular to delivery. The actor is routinely posited as an anti-model for the “good”
orator, whose *ethos* and style of delivery are consistently defined against those of the stage performer. Ironically, this rhetorical move aligns the orator with, even as it distinguishes him from, the actor, even though the repeated emphasis with which the distinction is made suggests that any slippage between the two arts was greeted with a profound anxiety. What, then, was the source of that anxiety?

**Delivery's Classical Imperative**

In order to answer this question, it is necessary to step away from the illustrative specificity of Quintilian’s passage and examine the larger context in which the work the passage comes from, the *Institutes of Oratory*, is situated. It is not my intention here to construct a complete history of delivery, but rather to retrace the actor-orator discussion I have identified above as it occurs in Aristotle’s *Rhetoric*, Cicero’s *De Oratore*, and Quintilian’s *Institutes of Oratory*. The orator and the actor are linked, albeit with some resistance, in these classical texts, and the point of their alliance and difference is the practice of delivery, the art of the body. Retracing this anxiety-ridden discussion reveals that delivery was subject to what I have termed the “classical imperative”: an orator’s delivery was necessarily subject to and derivative of the word or text; it was to arise out of and support the thought (though not illustrate or mimic, for that was the job of the actor), if it were to be considered appropriate and effective. This imperative becomes most clearly articulated in Quintilian’s treatise, suggested by assertions such as the one in the passage I began with that claims the orator’s delivery is faulty if the “configuration” of his eyebrows “is at variance” with his words or emotions (363). Together, delivery’s classical imperative and the orator-actor discussion reveal a desire to contain if not efface
the persuasive efficacy of the rhetorical speaking and acting body, a desire that paradoxically serves to demonstrate the very power of delivery in the act of persuasion and thus in the act of beyonding it.

**Aristotle: On Hypokrisis**

In the previous chapter, I noted that Aristotle declares rhetoric the "ability, in each [particular] case, to see the available means of persuasion" in his definitional treatise *On Rhetoric* (36), and that in Books 1 and 2 of the work, he details the three *pisteis*, or artistic proofs, of *logos*, logical arguments, *pathos*, emotional appeals, and *ethos*, the making credible one's character to a specific audience. Aristotle also gives considerable attention to descriptions of the forms and topics of arguments that would be most persuasive in particular scenes of rhetoric, for particular audiences.

Books 1 and 2 have typically been understood as a discussion of the art of invention; in Book 3, Aristotle turns to what have come to be known as the canons of style and arrangement. At the opening of Book 3, Aristotle briefly addresses the art of delivery. Its placement suggests that he regards delivery almost as a subset of style, or *lexis*. Although Aristotle's treatment of delivery is cursory—a fact that would suggest that the writer believes this art to have little value—he claims that delivery has "the greatest force" in affecting the audience (218). Later in the same passage he states that it has "great power," but immediately qualifies that assessment by assigning that power to the "corruption" of the audience: the fact that the audience could be swayed not only by reason but by artful intonation was regarded with deep mistrust by Aristotle, who concludes that while delivery has "some small necessary place," speaking "in one way rather than another" makes only "some difference," but "not a great difference" (219).
Aristotle names the art of delivery "vulgar," even as he attaches it to the art of acting (218). The very term that Aristotle adopted for delivery, *hypokrisis*, reflects a direct etymological connection between oratory and acting: as George Kennedy points out in a footnote to his translation of *On Rhetoric*, "[t]he prevailing meaning of *hypokrisis* in Greek is 'acting,' and the regular word for an actor is *hypokrites*" (218). Aristotle attempts to make a distinction between the actor and the orator, noting that the "*lexis* of prose differs from" the poetic style made popular by the playwrights, rhapsodes, and actors. The reader of the *Rhetoric* is referred to the *Poetics* should he wish to know more of this poetic style—a style Aristotle clearly does not approve of for the student of rhetoric.

Aristotle's desire to distinguish the orator from the actor, and his suggestion that the art of delivery is "vulgar," are points of curiosity, given that theatrical performances were both state-sponsored and closely allied with Greek religious practice, suggesting that actors were held in high esteem by their society. Greek actors were "venerated as servants of Dionysus" and enjoyed such privileges as being "exempted from military duty" and participating in "diplomatic missions" (Macgowan 32). After a separate prize honoring the best actor of the annual play festival was established in 449 B.C., "the winning actor's name was inscribed on the official list of victors, alongside that of the victorious playwright-director and the *chorēgos*,” the wealthy citizen who funded the production at the state’s request (Rehm 28). Theatre historian Rush Rehm points out, "That the public record of contributions to the *polis* included the names of actors is a remarkable tribute to the importance of performers in Athens" (28), as is the state’s and its citizens’ considerable financial investment in the yearly performances.
Historians suggest, furthermore, that the differences between the orator and the actor in terms of vocal intonation—the aspect of delivery that Aristotle focuses his remarks on—were slight. Theatre historian Raymond Williams has attempted to reconstruct Greek drama in performance, and describes Greek actors as speaking primarily in “a mode of formal declamation” called *kataloge* that, while similar to everyday speech, was “distinguished from it by the distinct emphasis of metre” (18). It is perhaps this emphasis on metre that Aristotle wishes to discourage in prose-speaking orators when he holds up as a positive example the poets who have turned from tetrameter to “the iambic metre” because it sounded closest to “ordinary speech” (219-20). Aristotle concedes that the orator’s delivery will in fact “function in the same way as acting,” and it may be this very similarity that gives rise to his disdainful desire to separate one from the other: “just as actors are more important than poets now in the poetic contests,” he writes, “so it is in political contests because of the sad state of governments” (218). The “sad state of government” refers to a legal system that “converted both plaintiff and defendant into actors interpreting their lines,” lines composed by professional speech writers who attempted to construct a good “character” for their own client and smear the opponent (Rehm 4-5). Aristotle’s comment indicates his awareness of the fact that the “creation and interpretation of a ‘character’ for a single law court performance drew on, as it influenced, the comparable work of the dramatist in the theatre” (Rehm 5). Thus Aristotle’s concern with similarities between the orator and the actor, and his disdain of the art of delivery, seem rooted in a Platonic suspicion of the
possibility for imitating justice rather than genuinely serving it. Aristotle, however, is only the first of the classical rhetoricians to make a comparison between the actor and orator clouded by anxiety.

Cicero: The “Actor’s Trivial Art”

As in Aristotle, the canon of delivery holds a contradictory place of value in Cicero’s *De Oratore*. He privileges the power of delivery, stating that of the five canons it is the one that “influences everybody” (179). After discussions of arrangement, style, and the ways and means of taking into consideration the audience, the occasion, and the orator’s *ethos*, Crassus argues in Book III that the final “effect of all these oratorical devices depends on how they are delivered” (171). Commonly thought to be Cicero’s mouthpiece in the multilogue, Crassus asserts that delivery “is the dominant factor in oratory; without delivery the best speaker cannot be of any account at all, and a moderate speaker with a trained delivery can often outdo the best of them” (171). Crassus then recounts the story of famed orator Demosthenes, who when asked what the most significant aspect of oratory was, assigned the first, second and third place of influence to delivery.

Crassus’s comments emphasize the highly influential role that delivery plays in the effectiveness of an orator’s communication, and while its treatment is brief compared to the other oratorical devices he discusses, mention of delivery in *De Oratore* is not limited to this dedicated discussion at the close of Book III. There are in fact numerous references to the art of delivery throughout *De Oratore*, and the majority of them evoke a comparison between the actor and the orator. These comparisons suggest a definite
kinship between the two arts, and the very frequency of the references and their easy, unselfconscious quality suggest that the actor, in Cicero’s mind, was an obvious analogue to the orator.

In one instance, the contemporary actor Roscius is held up as an example for the student of oratory. Roscius is one of the most well known Roman actors, and Cicero reportedly was personally acquainted with him. In the multilogue, Crassus quotes several lines from Ennius’s play *Andromache* in his discussion of the need for variation and “build” in one’s delivery. He offers as an example a description of how Roscius effectively “shaped” the speech by approaching the first lines “quietly and gently,” then “press[ing] on...to an energetic delivery” of the climax of the speech (81, 83).

This reference to a specific actor occurs fairly late in the text, in Cicero’s discussion of style in Book III. I note it first because it is one of the few, if not the only reference to an actor that casts him and his art in a positive light. Earlier, in Book I, another of the multilogue’s characters, Antonius, mentions another contemporary actor by name, Aesopus, who was also an acquaintance of Cicero’s: “I hold that the criticism of our oratory is less squeamish than that directed upon actors. This explains why I see that, even when hoarse, we are often listened to with rapt attention...while Aesopus, should he be a little husky, is hissed off the stage” (191). Antonius suggests that “nothing is expected” from the art of acting except the “gratification of the ear”; oratory, on the other hand, possesses many “fascinating features,” and so one feature—the voice, in this example—may be less than perfect without offending or losing the attention of the audience (191). The suggestion that the actor’s art is possessed of fewer “features” or elements than oratory is, and that oratory is therefore considered the more sophisticated
and entertaining art, is one to which I will return. At present, I wish to emphasize another aspect of Antonius's comment. In his comparison between the orator and the actor, the actor serves as the reference point against which the orator is measured, and the orator—inevitably, as I demonstrate in the commentary to follow—out-measures the actor.

This positioning of the actor as the anti-model to the orator defines the relationship between the two artists that Cicero establishes throughout De Oratore, and it is in the context of this relationship that delivery is discussed. In the opening address to his brother Quintus, Cicero states that the

speaker's delivery . . . needs to be controlled by bodily carriage, gesture, play of features and changing intonation of voice; and how important that is wholly by itself, the actor's trivial art and the stage proclaim; for there, although all are labouring to regulate the expression, the voice, and the movements of the body, everyone knows how few actors there are, or have ever been, whom we could bear to watch. (15)

In one breath Cicero declares the importance of good delivery to the successful orator, suggests that the actor is the model by which the orator learns about the art of delivery, and then decries the actor's delivery as that which the orator should define his own action and vocal quality against. The actor's art is "important" at the same time it is "trivial"; the actor is a model who at once bears watching but whom one cannot "bear to watch"—or perhaps should not bear to watch. Later in Book I Crassus explicitly says as much when he states that "we must carefully consider whom we are to take up as patterns, whom we should wish to be like. We have to study actors as well as orators...." (107). If one reads only through the end of the first clause of the second sentence, as I have quoted it here, it reads as if actors are models of good practice from which the orator can learn. Yet the clause which completes the sentence—"We have to study actors as well as orators, that bad practice might not lead us into some inelegant or ugly habit"—tells the
reader that the actor is, instead, a model of bad practice, an “anti-model” the orator should specifically strive not to emulate (107). The actor-orator relationship might best be summed up in Antonius’s summation of the ideal orator in Book I: “But in an orator we must demand the subtlety of the logician, the thoughts of the philosopher, a diction almost poetic, a lawyer’s memory, a tragedian’s voice, and the bearing almost of the consummate actor” (91). Key to this discussion are the last two phrases: the suggestion that the orator should be possessed of the “tragedian’s voice” again invokes the actor as a model for the orator—this time, it appears, a positive one. Since the orator here is being compared to the “consummate” actor, it is perhaps unsurprising that the supremely skilled actor might be held up as an ideal. Yet again there is a distinction made, indicated by Antonius’s use of the word “almost.” The ideal orator is not to emulate the actor’s delivery in all points but instead to adopt “the bearing almost of the consummate actor” (emphasis mine), an instruction that, in the context of the other comparisons made throughout Cicero’s text, does not suggest that the orator can do no more than approach the skill of the actor. Rather it suggests that the orator should not be too much like the actor, for the actor’s bearing is “stagy” and even, it seems, dishonest in its imitative nature (175).

Cicero is, of course, writing a treatise on rhetoric, and so it is only logical and perhaps inevitable that he would privilege the orator’s art over that of the actor. But the persistent anxiety underlying these comparisons is too troubling to overlook. Why is Cicero so anxious to distinguish the orator’s art from that of the actor’s? Why does he assert and reassert the truth and naturalness of the orator’s delivery, differentiating it from the actor’s imitation? Some of this anxiety may be due to the fact that the status of the art
of theatre and the actors who performed it was not nearly so secure in Rome as it was in Greece. Although theatrical performances were, like the Greek festivals, connected with religious festivals, they were not held in as high esteem. Plays were classified with and in competition with, other, typically brutal, entertainments, such as chariot races, gladitorial duels, and animal battles. Modern sensibilities might lead a contemporary scholar to assume that it was the association of theatrical performance with these violent, “low-brow” pastimes that gave theatre its lesser status, but according to Horace, “the bear and the boxers” were preferred by the Romans, who might be found “clamoring” for such diversions in the midst of a theatrical performance that did not satisfy their craving for excitement (qtd. in Showerman, 315). Historians have speculated that the art of theatre was suspect due to its association, not with other Roman games, but with the Greeks, “who were held in contempt as womanly and unreliable by their Roman patrons and conquerors” (Showerman 311). In any case, the fact that the Roman Senate ordered the first theatre destroyed before its construction was even complete in 154 B.C. suggests that theatre was not accorded much respect and may even have been seen as a “demoralising” influence (Thomas 108).

The status of the Roman actor “has been much disputed” as well, according to theatre historian Oscar Brockett (67). Some companies of Roman actors were in fact companies of slaves owned by a company manager. This situation did not apply to all actors, however. Cicero’s acquaintances Roscius and Aesopus were highly respected; Roscius was “eventually raised to nobility,” while Aesopus served a member of the Optimates, “a group that exercised considerable control over public affairs because of its wealth, influence, and ability” (Brockett 67).
Thus, while Cicero’s desire to distinguish the orator from the actor may be, in part, ascribed to the dubious social standing of the actor and the art of theatre, there seems to be something more complex at work here. Orators are “the players who act real life,” while actors “only mimic reality,” and “reality beats imitation in everything,” writes Cicero (171). Roman culture, like that of the Greeks, seems to have been a culture of performance. Just as the litigants’ performances of speeches written for them by professional writers blurred the boundaries in the Greek law courts between oratory and theatre, between “acting real life” and “mimic[ing] reality,” those boundaries seemed to be subject to blurring in the Roman courts as well. According to Grant Showerman’s Rome and the Romans, actors Aesopus and Roscius, “said to have been [Cicero’s] models in gesticulation” were “observers in their turn of the lawyer Hortensius in court” (316, emphasis mine), the implication being that the actors looked to the orator’s performance for inspiration as much as the orator looked to the actor. Roman actors, in fact, were sometimes called “cantores,” or “declaimers” (Brockett 67). We might, then, understand Cicero’s persistent distinction-making as being rooted in his recognition—and fear—that the differences between the arts of the orator and the actor were not so numerous after all. Indeed, the similarities were perhaps greater than Cicero was comfortable acknowledging.

The move Cicero makes to distinguish the orator, the “player” who “act[s] real life,” from the actor, an imitator of reality, suggests that Cicero’s discomfort with the art of delivery is, like Aristotle’s, Platonic in origin. In the Republic, Plato banishes playwrights from his ideal state, arguing that their renderings of things and events are “thrice removed from the truth”; furthermore, the playwrights’ “imitations” are, as
Socrates suggests in the *Gorgias*, “set on” the gratification and pleasure of the citizens, rather than their edification and “making them as good as possible” (97). Since the “wise and calm temperament, being always nearly equable, is not easy to imitate or to appreciate when imitated, especially at a public festival when a promiscuous crowd is assembled in a theater,” theatrical imitation must (to Plato’s dismay) appeal to the “passions,” “desire and pain and pleasure,” to be successful (36-37).

The actor’s imitation of the playwright’s imitation—that is, the actor’s *delivery*—is, of course, one more remove from the Truth, in Plato’s worldview. It is also the mechanism by which the playwright’s imitations, and thus the pleasures that inhere in them, are communicated to an audience. Plato, as noted in Chapter Two, does not approve of the art of oratory any more than he approves of theatrical performance; orators, like actors, are bent on gratification and pleasure. Delivery is the mechanism by which the orator’s “flatteries,” as Plato sees them, are communicated to an audience as well. Delivery, the rhetoric of the body, is *hypokrisis*, “acting”; it is an art of imitation. The orator, like the actor, produces “pleasure and flattery...through *mimesis*, including mimicry in gesture, intonation, posture, and expression” (Fredal 168).

The orator, in order to appeal to the audience, imitates not only the ideals and beliefs of those whom he addresses, but also their physical bearing, appearance, and speech patterns. There was pleasure and persuasion to be had in watching the movements of the orator’s body, listening to the sound of the orator’s voice. Plato suggests as much in the *Phaedrus*, when Socrates tells his young student that he was “overcome” by Phaedrus’ delivery (a key word) of Lysias’ speech: “And this is due to you, Phaedrus, because as I looked at you, I saw that you were delighted by the speech as
you read. So, thinking that you know more than I about such matters, I followed in your train and joined you in the divine frenzy” (117). Socrates is being facetious in regard to Phaedrus’ intellectual superiority, as his student immediately discerns, but the reader might well trust Socrates’ description of Phaedrus’ enthusiastic delivery. The response Socrates momentarily pretends to—that of having been persuaded by the delight and presumption of knowledge evidenced in Phaedrus’ delivery—is one that a more forgiving, or less discerning, audience might well have experienced as reality. Clearly, Plato sees the desires and pleasures of the body as a corrupting force, as later in the Phaedrus he attaches these bodily pleasures to the “unruly” horse in his analogy of the soul as composed of two horses and a charioteer. The “crooked, heavy” horse of physical desire must be ruled by the “modesty” and “reason” of the good horse in order to live a “life of happiness and harmony, self controlled and orderly” (127, 129). Allowing oneself to be persuaded by the beauty and pleasure of the body “causes evil in the soul”; therefore the body must always be held “in subjection” to the mind (129).

Delivery, the rhetoric of the body, may be seen, then, as “the essential quality which makes both poetry and rhetoric imitative, immoral, and dangerous” (Fredal 175). It is not surprising, in this context, that Cicero would attempt to distinguish between the arts of the actor and the orator, or that he would urge the orator to “act” only the “truth” (or, rather, the “Truth”). Delivery was mistrusted because of its connection to the actor, and the actor and the art of acting were mistrusted because, contrary to Antonius’s assertion in De Oratore that oratory was possessed of more “fascinating features” than theatrical performance, the theatrical arts encompassed a greater range of communicative
and imitative tools than oratory—including an awareness of and *active cultivation of* the body as an expressive, and persuasive, instrument.

**Quintilian and the Classical Imperative**

The only true corrective to the body’s persuasive power, according to Plato, is the subjection of the body to the mind. Thus we arrive at delivery’s classical imperative, the insistence that the speaker’s delivery must be subject to and conform to the text. This ideal, as noted earlier, becomes most clearly articulated in Quintilian’s *Institutes of Oratory*.

Quintilian, like Aristotle and Cicero, emphasizes the “wonderful power and efficacy” of delivery (345), but his discussion of the fifth canon is longer and more concentrated than either of his predecessors. It consists primarily of a set of detailed strictures for the orator’s action. Included in the list of those things an orator should refrain from is any movement or vocal inflection that evokes the “attitude...of an actor,” rather than that of an orator, such as resting one’s weight on the right foot and inclining the whole of the body to the right (374-75). Quintilian offers no explanation as to why the action of leaning to the right is an “actor’s” posture, but elsewhere in the chapter he clearly spells out why the speaker should not mimic or illustrate his words with his gestures: “[F]or an orator ought to be a very different character from an actor in pantomime, as his [the orator’s] gesture should be suited to his sense rather than his words” (365). Quintilian, like Cicero, wants to assign imitation to the actor. Quintilian notes further that this mandate is not “to be observed in reference to the hands alone, but to every kind of gesture, and even to the tone of the voice “ (365).
Quintilian, in fact, devotes a large part of his discussion of delivery to
descriptions of what an orator should not do, more generally. The passage on the
eyebrows with which I opened this chapter provides one example, but no limbs or
features are spared. One such litany reads:

The neck ought to be straight, not stiff or thrown back. The throat cannot be drawn down or stretched up without equal ungracefulness, though of different kinds, but uneasiness is attendant on the tension of it, and the voice is weakened and exhausted by it. To sink the chin on the breast renders the voice less distinct, and as it were, grosser, from the throat being compressed. To shrug or contract the shoulders is very seldom becoming. . .

and so it continues, page after page (364). The cumulative effect of these instructions is to constrain the orator in his delivery: he is restricted to those movements and vocal inflections deemed appropriate or “decorous,” and only those which derive from the thought are considered such. The head “must receive . . . appropriate motions from the nature of the subject on which we speak”; the gestures created by the hands must “naturally proceed from our words” (361; 365). Again and again Quintilian insists that the thought, the process and product of the mind, is to lead the body; the orator’s delivery must follow and conform to his words. “[T]he delivery,” he writes, “must correspond to the matter” (386).

Why? The obvious answer is that delivery’s classical imperative is simply based on common sense, and making sense: would it not be terribly confusing for an orator to be gesturing randomly, or whispering an exhortation to endorse war? Yet, here again, there seems to be something else underlying Quintilian’s urgings. The classical imperative demands that the body be kept under tight control, be unobtrusive, contained.
Ideally, perhaps, the audience would forget that the orator even had a body, for then they could not, to return to Aristotle’s term, be “corrupted” by it.

The impetus for insisting that delivery (the body) conform to the text (the word) derives, like the actor-orator distinction, from a mistrust of the body and its power to influence, particularly its power to influence through imitation. Nowhere is this mistrust in delivery’s dangerous power more apparent than in Quintilian’s attempts to contain the body by circumscribing it within his text. What is ironic, however, about Quintilian’s elaborate descriptions and dissuasions—for his is a suasive text, one in which Quintilian seeks to dissuade the orator from “acting” like an actor, from focusing too much attention on the body—is that his text is itself full of the body and its indecorousness, full of movements both sanctioned and forbidden. The body’s expressive power, it seems, cannot be contained even in a text that expressly instructs the orator in how to do just that.

This fact hints at the larger problem with delivery’s classical imperative: its attempt, in insisting that delivery be derived from and subject to the word, to render the body invisible. As Quintilian’s text demonstrates, this was an impossible task, but the striving was not without consequences. Delivery’s classical imperative was advocated not only to keep bodies in check in a general sense; it also worked to dematerialize and silence specific bodies. Any movements appearing “effeminate” were to be “most of all avoided” (375), as were any effeminate vocal qualities: the orator was urged to develop “strength of body” so “that the voice may not dwindle down to the weak tone of eunuchs, women, and sick persons” (348). It is a commonplace, of course, that the female body—here equated with the mutilated and the diseased body—was absented from Greek and
Roman public life; these brief passages suggest that even the imitation of the female body would be suspect. Quintilian's desire to render the body invisible ultimately demonstrates that the body was not and could not be made immaterial in ancient Greek and Roman culture—bodies mattered, to paraphrase Judith Butler—nor can it be rendered such today. Nevertheless, the aftereffects of delivery's classical imperative have continued to be felt in the study and practice of rhetoric, as a few select examples will show.

The Imperative's Imperative: Bulwer and Austin, Sheridan and Whately

John Bulwer, an English physician, scholar, and "pioneer of non-verbal communication," published *Chirologia*, and its companion, *Chironomia* in 1644 (Gillis i). In these two volumes, directed chiefly to the practicing orator, Bulwer argues that gesture, a significant component of the art of delivery, is "the only Speech and general language of Humane Nature," and provides the seventeenth-century orator with an exhaustive list of gestures, descriptions of their use throughout history and "common life," and several plates of detailed illustrations meant to serve as models. Bulwer was significantly influenced by Quintilian and the classical imperative, as demonstrated by this passage in the preface: "For, the lineaments of the Body doe disclose the disposition and inclination of the minde in generall; but the motions doe not only doe so, but doe further disclose the present humour and state of the minde and will, for as the Tongue speaketh to the Eare, so Gesture speaketh to the Eye." Bulwer establishes an analogous relationship between what the tongue says to the ear and the gestures say to the eye; the gestures support, extend, uphold the speaker's words; the hands and body conform to the words and mind. It is worth noting that Bulwer professes less anxiety than his classical
predecessors about the body’s, specifically the hands’ power to communicate; indeed he seems to privilege it when he writes that “the Body...can emphatically vent, and communicate a thought, and in the propriety of its utterance express the silent agitations of the mind (Chirologia 1). Still: the key term in this assertion is “propriety,” for the hand was to “concur” with the mouth, and some gestures, such as those that were too “Scenical,” or theatrical, did not “become the Hand of an Orator” in any case (Chironomia 103).

In 1806 Irish clergyman Gilbert Austin published a book also entitled Chironomia, in which he treats the whole of “Rhetorical Delivery,” “the Voice, Countenance, and Gesture.” Though the co-editors of a 1966 edition point out that Austin never mentions Bulwer’s work and speculate that, in fact, he “may never have seen it” (Robb and Thonssen xi), there are striking similarities between the two texts, one of which is Austin’s phrasing in advocating delivery’s rhetorical imperative within his discussion of gesture:

The stroke of the gesture is analogous to the impression of the voice, made on those words, which it would illustrate or enforce; it is used for the same purposes and should fall precisely on the same place...so that the emphatical force of the voice and the stroke of the gesture co operate in order to present the idea in the most lively and distinguished manner, as well to the eye as to the ear of the hearer. The stroke of the gesture is to the eye, what the emphasis and inflexions of the voice are to the ear... (377)

Gesture’s function as Austin describes it in the early nineteenth-century is almost identical to Bulwer’s sixteenth-century description, and once again, Austin evokes delivery’s classical imperative: the body’s movement must “illustrate” and “enforce” the spoken words. By “illustrate” Austin does not mean “imitate,” however, for “[a]cting is distinguished from oratory, both by subject, the character of the speaker, and the manner”
Austin considers "the stage" one of the four "principal species" of "public speaking" (vi) and devotes a short chapter to "Acting," yet his discussion of actors attempts to write them out of the rhetorical tradition even as it writes them in. He distinguishes between the scope of imitation and gesture allowed the orator—"very narrow"—and that allowed the actor—"unrestrained"—and declares that "the liberty of the theatre would be licentiousness in the orator, and he is to guard himself carefully against it" (240).

Like Bulwer, Austin seems intent on legitimating the body's communicative power, even claiming outright that he wants to counter the "strange prejudice" he feels has prevailed against delivery, especially movement and gesture (5), but "propriety" (137) still demands that the orator achieve a "perfection of bodily control" (Robb and Thonssen xii). This control includes subjecting the body, including the countenance, to the word—the "sort of expression to be adopted...will be such as suits the nature of the subject"—and avoiding theatrical gestures, which are "indecorous and offensive" anywhere but on stage (5).

It is not surprising that Austin's treatise so strongly echoes Cicero and Quintilian, for his manuscript quotes extensively from both, as well as from a number of his contemporaries. Austin's *Chironomia* was intended to be used as a textbook, its most distinctive feature being the development of a system of notation for recording the orator's gestures and movements. Austin's scientifically-inflected scheme of notation, based on the orator's varying positions within an imaginary sphere, and Bulwer's prescriptive descriptions, both illustrated by several plates of explanatory drawings, place these two writers into what has been called the Mechanical or Artificial School of
elocutionists. Thomas Sheridan, generally considered to be the pioneer of the elocutionary movement, advocated the “Natural” method of delivery in *A Course of Lectures on Elocution*, published in 1762, some fifty years prior to Austin’s work; English scholar and minister Richard Whately also endorsed this method, which situated itself in opposition to the Mechanical school, in his *Elements of Rhetoric*, published in 1828. Delivery’s classical imperative is still strongly at work in both.

Sheridan’s debt to the “Ancients,” as he terms them, is equal to Austin’s; in “Dissertation II, On the State of Language in other Countries, but more particularly in our own, and its Consequences,” Sheridan compares the “state of Language” of “The English” to that of “The Greeks,” where it reached “the utmost state of perfection whereof it was capable” (155). This “perfection” was due in large part to the adherence to delivery’s classical imperative, as demonstrated in the following passage:

[T]he Ancients, founded all their instituted signs, on nature; from her they drew all their stores; fitted them in the nicest and exactest manner to the emotions which they were to express; and adapted them so to their artificial language, that their whole delivery form’d the compleatest harmony. . . . (117)

Thus, Sheridan’s “language of nature,” the artless delivery he advocated, still constructs the body as subject to the word—only now that subjection is seen as “natural” (116). Similarly, Whately advises the orator not to think about his delivery too much, for it then becomes affected and artificial; instead the orator should focus on the text, on its “meaning,” and “nature” will “suggest spontaneously the proper emphases and tones” and actions (383). The body, then, will spontaneously and naturally conform to the word and support the text.
Two aspects of particular interest appear in Whately's brief discussion of action. First, in apparent contrast to the imperative that action "follow" word, Whately argues that in the "natural order of action" the gesture should "precede somewhat the utterance of the words" (399). Nevertheless, Whately's concern is that the action not appear affected or inappropriate, but natural—an outgrowth, in other words, of the orator's feelings and meaning. Secondly, Whately notes a "general disuse of action altogether," remarking that orators have "form[ed] the habit...of keeping themselves quite still, or nearly so, when speaking" (398). Whately places the blame primarily on the "Artificial" school of elocutionists and the "disgusting affectation" of their "studied gesticulations" (398). I submit that it was in fact Sheridan who proffered the truest explanation for the decline of action. In the previously referenced "Dissertation II," Sheridan compares the state of language in ancient Greek culture "article by article" to its state in eighteenth-century England. The list is clearly intended to demonstrate the shortcomings of the English and make models of the Greeks. Sheridan's point of critique is plain when he begins the comparison with the assertion that the Greeks "[e]mployed their chief care and attention about their living tongue," while the English focus on "their written language" (163).

As Sheridan is well aware, by mid-eighteenth-century, the written language had become the privileged form of communication. The elocutionary movement may be argued to be a direct response to this state of affairs: Gilbert Austin's awareness of the ephemeral quality of oratory inspired him to create a system for recording action so that the art of "living delivery" might not be lost; Joshua Steel attempted to create a notation system for the voice. But even these champions of the art of delivery helped, however
inadvertently, to contribute to the disappearance of the body from rhetoric studies. Delivery’s classical imperative and the anxiety it grew out of wrote the body out of the study of rhetoric even as these rhetoricians wrote it in. For the body was, in some sense, always subordinate to the word, whether admired expressor of or feared detractor from it; but the body was not, could not, be considered separate from the word—unless it could be made bodiless.

The Imperative’s Legacy: Delivery in the Twentieth Century

Although I am loathe to say that the body was essentially erased—for the body simply cannot be made immaterial, a fact which is amply demonstrated by those very texts which would have had it so—the body did, at the very least, disappear from the view of most twentieth century rhetorical theorists and scholars. Since I have focused much of my discussion thus far on textbooks, I will continue that focus here and briefly note delivery’s “place” (or lack thereof) in two contemporary rhetorics.

In *Classical Rhetoric for the Modern Student* (1965, rpt. 1971), one of the earliest rhetoric texts directed to the student of composition, Edward P.J. Corbett notes the “neglect of delivery in rhetoric books” (39). He acknowledges “the importance of effective delivery,” and seems even to encourage his reader to develop oratorical skill as he writes that “[t]here is no denying the importance of delivery in effecting that end that one sets for oneself” (39). But these few remarks are the extent of Corbett’s treatment of delivery. The omission of a more detailed discussion is perhaps not surprising, given that Corbett’s audience is made up of students of writing—but that very shift is telling, as well.
In a more recent text, *Rhetoric: Concepts, Definitions, Boundaries* (1995), edited by William A. Covino and David A. Jolliffe, delivery is given more space on the page: the text includes a definition of delivery in its “Part II: Glossary” (43-44) and in “Part IV: “The Contents of Rhetoric,” the editors include a section entitled “Rhetoric and Oratory.” Yet delivery, particularly action as situated in the body, is still marginalized. In the glossary definition, the editors repeatedly emphasize how little attention has been devoted to delivery in the past: it was “hardly treated at all in ancient Greek rhetoric” and only “somewhat more fully explained in classical Roman rhetoric” (43). The definition quickly summarizes what Aristotle, Cicero, and Quintilian had to say (or not) about delivery, then points to the eighteenth-century elocutionary movement and the work of Sheridan, Austin, and John Walker, who penned a treatise on gesture, *Elements of Elocution* (1810). Within the definition, all cross-referenced terms—that is, terms that are defined elsewhere in the glossary—are bolded. Neither the elocutionary movement nor any of the three figures named central to it are bolded; none of them, it would seem, merited an individual glossary entry. The definition of “delivery” concludes: “Although delivery seems relevant only in oral delivery, some rhetorical theorists consider delivery of written material under the rubric of *graphemics*, the study of how information is presented on the printed page” (43). The study of “living delivery,” to use Austin’s term, is cast as a practice of the distant past; the study of textual delivery preoccupies the present—and the body is nowhere to be found.

Even the inclusion of a section on “Rhetoric and Oratory” (the title implies that they are two distinct arts, rather than one being a living embodiment of the other) does little to reclaim a position of importance for the art. The fact that it appears as the very
last section in Part IV of the text suggests its perceived lack of significance, and the three essays included in this section are revealing as well. The first, Roderick P. Hart’s “Speech and Power: The Tools of Presidential Leadership,” analyzes presidential speeches as commodities; Hart focuses his analysis solely on the texts of an exchange between Roy Acuff and Richard Nixon at the Grand Ole Opry in 1974 and excerpts from speeches Jimmy Carter made in Iowa during his presidency (796-8). Two book excerpts by Kathleen Hall Jamieson analyze political ad campaigns: in the first, she argues that the different speech styles possessed by men and women played a significant role in the response to Geraldine Ferraro’s bid for the vice-presidency; again the focus is on the words that were spoken with little attention to how they were delivered. In the second excerpt she focuses on campaign television advertisements. Though she addresses the persuasive power of visual images, she ultimately concludes that “the speech”—by which she does not mean delivery—“remains the staple of paid political broadcasting” (816). In the final essay of the section, Ronald K. Burke conducts a rhetorical analysis of a work by one of the twentieth century’s greatest orators, Martin Luther King, Jr. The work: the famous letter King wrote entitled “Letter From Birmingham Jail.”

I do not mean to suggest that any of the works by these scholars is deficient because it does not engage directly with delivery, action, the body; the foci of their projects lie elsewhere. Taken together, they do suggest that delivery as an art of the body has not been adequately addressed in rhetorical scholarship of the twentieth century. Interestingly enough, there is separate section in the Covino/Jolliffe textbook entitled “Rhetoric and the Arts,” which includes essays on architecture, music, and the rhetoric of
film criticism. The actor's art of theatrical performance, that art which has the most
direct connection to the art of delivery, oratory, rhetoric—and the body which is central
to that art—is not addressed.

**Feminist Rhetorics: Refiguring Delivery?**

Where delivery has been directly and productively engaged by feminist rhetorical
theorists (moving away now from textbook analyses), theatrical performance and the
performer's body still remain, if not invisible, then indistinct, the body a fuzzy image in
the background. In *The Contemporary Reception of Classical Rhetoric* (1990), Kathleen
E. Welch argues for a reconsideration of the significance of both memory and delivery,
for ignoring these two canons “divorces rhetoric from social context, from cultural
power, and from the dailiness of ordinary language” (131). According to Welch, the
Heritage school of classical rhetoric, in privileging the canons of invention, arrangement,
and style, privileged the text as independent and self-referential and denied the
significance of the “culture,” the “encoder, decoder, and ‘reality’” from which it emerged
(131). One might read Welch as pointing towards the need to consider the embodiedness
of the encoders and decoders, here, but delivery gets redefined almost soon as it is
introduced into discussion: “Rather than limiting delivery to the physical gesture and
expression, we can relate it to the idea of medium” (Welch 99). Delivery as an art of the
body is seen as “limited” by Welch, who further clarifies her re-definition of the fifth
canon a few pages later: “delivery signifies not merely gesture or the ability to present
material directly, through speaking in face-to-face encounters; rather delivery signifies
spoken communication and all other media as well” (134, emphasis mine). The fact that
the living body itself might be seen as a medium of communication is passed over as the
ancients' (outdated) definition of delivery. In redefining delivery as "media," most specifically electronic technologies such as television, Welch situates delivery outside the body into spaces in which, if the body (or its image) is present, it is inevitably "mediated"—the fuzzy image in the background.

The Body: From Background to Backstage to Spotlight

If the persuasive power of the present, performing body has not been theorized in rhetorical studies of delivery, where might we turn to find the body in focus? As I suggested in Chapter One, feminist theatre critics and practitioners have made great contributions to the theorization of the "live body onstage" as a "material and representational site at which ideology"—including that of a rhetoric that attempts to erase the body—"might be rewritten" (Dolan, "Fathom," 4). As feminist theatre critic Lynda Hart points out in her "Introduction" to Making a Spectacle: Feminist Essays on Contemporary Women's Theatre (1989), in the theatre the "word is made flesh," rather than ruling or restricting it (5, emphasis mine). "Alone among all literary productions, the theatre's medium is the physical body," Hart writes, and it is precisely the presence of the living body on stage that gives theatre the "power of transformation"(6). Feminist playwrights and performers have recognized the radically subversive possibilities of the medium, and have "practiced" those possibilities in many ways: African-American writer and performer Robbie McCauley "stages her body," claiming it "as a medium of articulation" in a play entitled Sally's Rape (a reference to her great-great-grandmother, a slave on Thomas Jefferson's plantation) in which she "strips naked and stands on a bench that serves as a slave auction block" while the audience is exhorted to create the "atmosphere of the slave market" as onlookers (Whyte 291; 277). Her "particular" body,
then, becomes the “means by which the past is brought into the present,” a site of contestation and intervention into accepted master narratives of domination (Whyte 291). The lesbian feminist performance company Split Britches, in collaboration with British gay male performance group Bloolips, subvert conventional notions of sex roles and sexuality in Belle Reprieve, their revision of Tennessee William’s A Streetcar Named Desire. This subversion depends on the impact of seeing Blanche played by “a man in a dress,” Stanley as a “butch lesbian” (992), on their bodies making present and calling into question our expectations about gender and sexuality. And, of course, it is the very present pregnant teenage boy’s body in Lipkin and Clear’s He’s Having Her Baby, discussed in the previous chapter, that makes visual the playwrights’ challenge to traditional gender narratives. “By seizing the body and subverting its customary representations,” playwrights and theatrical performers can re-vision and re-claim the power of the body as a subversive communicative force and in doing so, contest and intervene—to borrow Whyte’s phrasing—in “accepted master narratives of domination,” including interrupting of delivery’s classical imperative and refiguring rhetoric-as-persuasion as a rhetoric of beyonding persuasion, a rhetoric that privileges question and conversation over answer and consensus. “The presence of the living, speaking body in the theatre maximizes the potential for such startling reconceptualizations” (Hart 8).

There are a number of studies that theorize the body “on the page”—Cixous11 and Haraway12 come to mind first—and some of these studies, such as Susan Bordo’s booklength study of the female body and its representations in Western culture, Unbearable Weight (1993), might even be said to address, in tangential ways, delivery.13 But in suggesting that we turn to feminist theatrical performance “on the stage,” I am
following Lizbeth Goodman's call for a “theory influenced by practice” (225). Delivery, as an art of the body, enacted in the present moment, cannot be revised on the page. The living body always precedes and exceeds written text, and it is the body in presence, in practice that provides for the possibility of revision of the fifth canon and the realization, in the course of that revision, of a rhetoric that beyonds persuasion.

**Anne Bogart and SITI Company**

When asked by theatre critic Porter Anderson in a 1994 interview “just what it is that her theatre is about,” Anne Bogart responded in part, “I’m interested in the body, the human body that is the stuff of live theatre. For me it’s the body, it’s the meat” (qtd. in Anderson 125). The human body is very much at the center of the work of director and collaborator Anne Bogart, who has been changing and challenging the points of view of theatre audiences, artists, and critics for over two decades. Currently Co-Artistic Director of the Saratoga International Theatre Institute (SITI) which Bogart co-founded in 1992 with Tadashi Suzuki, and an Associate Professor at the Graduate School of the Arts at Columbia University, New York, Anne Bogart clearly recalls the first professional theatre production she attended: a Kabuki-style performance of Shakespeare’s *Macbeth*, directed by Adrian Hall at Trinity Repertory Company in Connecticut. “The production terrified, disoriented and bewildered me,” she reports. “The witches dropped out of the ceiling, the action surrounded us on big runways. . . . I didn’t understand the play, but I knew instantly that I would spend my life in pursuit of this remarkable universe” (“Terror,” 6). This “remarkable universe” was one that “changed everything previously defined”—a fitting description for Bogart’s artistic philosophy, particularly as it relates to
the role the human body plays in theatrical performance—and, I suggest, in a re-visioning of the art of delivery, the rhetoric of the body.

Since the introduction of Stanislavski’s “Method” to American actors in the early part of the century, an acting method rooted in the actor’s psychology, a large part of the acting in the United States has occurred, as director Jon Jory says, “from the neck up” (xv). But for Bogart, theater is not all in the head. On the contrary, as the title of a 1995 article in *American Theatre* declares, the “Body is the Source” of creativity, communication, and intervention in Bogart’s work (Coen 31-31). Bogart’s interest lies in “the relationship between choreography and psychology,” and the order in which she names those two elements is no accident (qtd. in Gussow, “Iconoclastic,” 11). For it is in the tensions between the body and the word that she and her collaborators create in performance that the possibilities for re-visioning delivery and rhetoric are made.

Bogart’s path to her career in the theatre was considerably more straightforward than Joan Lipkin’s. Inspired by her experience of seeing *Macbeth*, Bogart became involved in school drama productions as a teenager, and later attended Bard College, where she spent her junior and senior years “direct[ing] one play after another” (qtd. in Lampe 19). After graduating in 1974, Bogart entered the Master’s program at Tisch School of the Arts at New York University, where she directed her own production of *Macbeth*, and graduated in 1977. After some freelance directing, she returned in 1980 to New York University’s Experimental Theatre Wing, where she collaborated with postmodern dance choreographer Mary Overlie on a piece entitled *Artourist*. This collaboration with Overlie, who introduced Bogart to the “viewpoints,” a philosophy of movement that would become the cornerstone of Bogart’s artistic process, and the time
Bogart spent as a student, teacher, and director in Europe in 1981 and 1982, would soon emerge as two of the primary influences on Bogart's directorial philosophy and practice. Bogart's first critical success came in 1984 with a groundbreaking production of *South Pacific* set in a rehabilitation clinic for young veterans, who reenact the musical as a form of therapy. The production earned Bogart a BESSIE Award for Choreographer/Creator. In 1988 Bogart received an OBIE for her direction of *No Plays, No Poetry...*, an exploration of the theories of Bertolt Brecht, and received a second OBIE in 1992 for direction of Paula Vogel's *The Baltimore Waltz*. Since co-founding SITI in 1992 in an effort to "create a haven for innovative theatre" (Batistick 5), Bogart's and SITI original collaborations have been seen across the nation and around the world.14

Bogart's firsthand exposure to European theatre practice in the early 1980s led to two important revelations. In an artistic manifesto published in *The Drama Review* in 1983, Bogart writes of her realization that the power of the productions she had witnessed in Europe was due in part to the fact that "every production included an attempt to unmask or analyze the society that produced it" (26-7). Bogart, who had gone to Europe in part to escape her Americanness—"I hated my American roots and refused to speak English," she says—recognized that there was indeed worth in her American vision, her "American sense of humor and structure" (qtd. in Winn 29). She returned to New York advocating an art of social critique and mindfulness. "A mise-en-scene can jolt and disturb and delight and remind. We [theatre artists] can become mindful of new signs in our culture, around us. We can meet in the theatre to confront ourselves with our society and ourselves and reflect upon our influences," she writes in her manifesto ("Inertia," 27, emphasis in original). Bogart also returned to the United States with a clearer sense of
how she wanted to engender that mindfulness. In Europe, "the emphasis was on the analysis and interpretation of the word," whereas Bogart’s "American sensibility focused her scrutiny on action" (Lampe 22). Bogart’s understanding and acceptance of the American tradition as primarily visual and oral and her desire to "unmask and analyze" the society that tradition grew out of combined with her interest in postmodern dance and formal choreography to create a distinct theatrical (and, I would suggest, rhetorical) process and product that privileges the language of the body and disrupts delivery’s classical imperative in sometimes startling ways. The result is a theatrical rhetoric that opens a dialogue and invites, even insists on, response.

The Process: Creating a Rhetoric of Disorientation

New York Times theatre critic Mel Gussow categorizes Bogart’s work into four kinds of productions: taking new approaches to familiar plays, such as staging a front-porch classic like William Inge’s Picnic without the front-porch (and with hot-pink neon lights); directing first productions of new plays, such as Vogel’s The Baltimore Waltz, which debuted at Circle Repertory Company in New York in 1992 to much acclaim; creating “Bogart biodramas,” described as “theatrical profiles of significant people,” including such personages as Bertolt Brecht in No Plays, No Poetry. . . and media guru Marshall McLuhan in The Medium (which I discuss at greater length, below); and making collaborative “performance art” pieces that reflect and comment upon American culture and humans’ need for theatre, such as Bogart’s trilogy about “silent movies, marathon dancing, and vaudeville” (“Worlds,” 147) and the more recent Cabin Pressure, a meta-theatrical piece about audience response to theatrical performance (also treated in more
detail, below). During the process of creating any one of these four kinds of productions, Bogart draws on three tools: source-work, composition, and the philosophy of movement previously noted called the "viewpoints."

Source-work, according to Bogart’s colleague and collaborator Tina Landau, refers to "a series of activities done at the beginning of the rehearsal process to get in touch—both intellectually and emotionally, both individually and collectively—with the "source" from which [the artists] are working" (17). Perhaps most importantly, source-work allows the artists who are collaborating on a play to "immerse themselves in its physical, sensate milieu" (Newmark E1). Source-work often involves good, old-fashioned research: reading and discussing the theories of Marshall McLuhan, as well as contemporary commentaries on the effects of technology on society in preparation for The Medium, for example. In preparation for Cabin Pressure, Bogart interviewed fifty-nine audience members who had seen SITI Company’s production of Noel Coward’s Private Lives at Actors Theatre of Louisville, and the cast studied the interview transcripts as well as texts from theatre and performance theorists such as Herbert Blau, Joseph Chaikin, and Peggy Phelan. The collaborators on a production may also be given written homework assignments, such as one that Landau recalls from the process of creating Strindberg Sonata, a piece about the world of turn-of-the-century Swedish playwright August Strindberg. The actors were asked to fill in the blanks of the prompt: "When I think of Strindberg, I see ______, I hear ______, I smell ______" (Landau 19). Visual resources are an important part of source-work, as well. When composing a biographical piece about an historical figure such as Brecht or McLuhan, Bogart and the cast will collect as many photos of their subject as possible and post them...
in the rehearsal room. Photos and pictures that evoke a time, a place, or a theme may also be gathered and shared, as might physical objects, music, or even food. The creators of the play must understand the world they are inhabiting both intellectually and physically “if they expect an audience to join them [in that world] later” (Newmark E1).

Source-work may also involve the use of composition and the viewpoints. Bogart first experienced “composition” in a dance class she took in college with Aileen Passloff. Bogart and her classmates were given assignments such as, “Make a piece about a dream that doesn’t tell the story of the dream but expressed the expression of the dream,” or “Make a piece out of 2 percussive or vibrating moves, 1 sustained, 2 lyric, 1 gesture, 1 still” (qtd. in Lampe 19). “Composition” as Bogart incorporates it is defined by Landau as “a method for generating, defining, and developing the theatre vocabulary that will be used for any given piece”; Landau also terms it “an alternative method of writing” (27). Composition might be seen as the literal embodiment of Cixous’s exhortation to write the body. Typically the actors are given a frame—“create a portrait of fin-de-siecle Vienna entitled ‘The Joyful Apocalypse’”—and a series of elements they must include: a waltz, a piece of music from the period, something written or spoken in German, three sounds of everyday Viennese life.* The actors “compose” their pieces, often in a very short amount of time during a rehearsal, perform them for one another, and then mine them for scenes, phrases of movement, expressions of character, and tableaus that might be incorporated into the production as a whole.

The “viewpoints,” the cornerstone of Bogart’s method, is the philosophy of movement that underlies source-work and composition and “encourage[s] actors to root their work in physical realities” (Newmark E1). Originated by postmodern dance
choreographer Mary Overlie, the viewpoints are a set of terms that denote “points of awareness” an actor possesses and that “constitute a language for talking about what happens or works onstage” (Landau 21). As fits an evolving philosophy, the number and names of the “viewpoints” continue to grow and change. In her 1995 essay on the viewpoints, director Tina Landau discusses a total of nine. There are four viewpoints of time: tempo, duration, repetition, and kinesthetic response; and five viewpoints of space: architecture, topography, spatial relationship, shape, and gesture.18

Brief explanations of these terms are helpful in visualizing the descriptions of Bogart’s productions that follow. *Tempo* refers to the “rate of speed at which a movement occurs” (Landau 20); the performers who collaborate in making the plays are encouraged to explore extremes of tempo; for example, walking excruciatingly slowly so that it takes several minutes to traverse a short space, or clapping one’s hands together at an unnaturally frantic tempo. These two examples might also serve to illustrate the viewpoints of duration and repetition, respectively. *Duration* is defined as “how long a movement or sequence of movements continues” (21), such as a walk across the stage. The duration of a walk of a performer who traverses less space at a slow tempo might be the same as a performer who crosses the same amount of space at a faster one. *Repetition* refers to the repeating of a movement or shape onstage (21). A performer may repeat one’s own movement or gesture, such as the clapping of one’s hands, or she may repeat another performer’s movement or tempo. A performer may also repeat the shape or tempo of something outside the human body, such as the arch of the proscenium stage above her, or the rhythm of a piece of music. *Kinesthetic response* refers to the
spontaneous or impulsive reaction to a movement, sound, or other external stimulus and the timing (or tempo) of that reaction (21).

It is clear that the viewpoints overlap; it is impossible to describe one without touching upon another. Most of the five viewpoints of space have already been mentioned in the descriptions of the viewpoints of time. Architecture refers to the physical environment that surrounds the performer, as well as her awareness of it and relationship to it. (22). Topography is the landscape or floor pattern that is created and indicated through the performers’ movements; Landau offers the example of a “downstage area of great density” that is “difficult to move through” as compared to an upstage that is less dense and “involves more fluidity and faster tempos” (23). Spatial relationship is defined as “the distance between things on stage,” including the distances between performers, and the distance between performers and the architecture (23). Shape refers to “the contour or outline the body makes in space,” which may consist of lines and angles, or rounded curves, or a combination; a shape may be stationary or move through space (21). And, finally, gesture is defined as “a movement involving a part or parts of the body,” including the hands, arms, legs, head, mouth, eyes, feet, stomach—any body part that “can be isolated.” Gestures may be “behavioral,” that is, based on observable and common human behaviors, like pointing or blowing a kiss (22). Gestures may also be “expressive,” revealing an “inner state or emotion” (22).

The viewpoints are used in a variety of ways in rehearsal and performance. Actors must first practice and train in the viewpoints, working to develop their ability to “listen with the entire body” (Landau 24). The viewpoints then become an invention technique for source-work, compositions, character creation, and staging. For example,
actors may be asked to improvise movements in response to a related prompt, such as “The Future” for *The Medium* (Landau 24). Following the improvisation, Bogart and the company discuss what worked, identify any patterns in their movement, and note and recreate particularly interesting shapes, gestures, and phrases of movement. During rehearsals for *Cabin Pressure*, the structure of which traces an abbreviated history of the theatre, the actors “viewpointed” to the theme of “Restoration comedy” in preparation for a scene meant to evoke that dramatic time period and genre. A certain “gestural vocabulary emerged” from this exercise that was incorporated into the finished scene in which the actors each draw themselves up to their full height, walk with pointed toes, and crisply execute hand gestures such as opening and closing fans (O’Hanlon). Through viewpoints improvisations and composition exercises that incorporate the viewpoints, a movement vocabulary is created for the production under construction. Sequences of movement found in improvised viewpoints exercises—such as *Cabin Pressure*’s “audience ballet,” composed of the shifting postures, expressions, and movements of restless and engaged audience members—are later choreographed and set as precisely as a dance.

According to Bogart, entire scenes may be staged in this way before a word of text for the scene is written, much less rehearsed (Lecture). Only later in the process does the company lay text—in the case of *The Medium*, found-text composed of excerpts from McLuhan’s books; in the case of *Cabin Pressure*, excerpts from audience response surveys, other plays, and theatre theorists—over the movement. The movement, then, which in so much of traditional theatre is bound to the text (the objective is to get a secret out of Blanche, so rush to her and shake her by the shoulders!) is freed from it.
completely. Landau compares this separation to the separate visual and sound-tracks of a movie. The separate tracks work together and inform one another, but they are not the same; they can be taken apart and put back together in a variety of combinations to achieve different effects (25). Oftentimes in a Bogart piece a sequence of movement will be repeated numerous times throughout the piece, at different speeds, in different contexts, by different characters speaking different texts; occasionally something will be added to or subtracted from the sequence. The same action—a shape or gesture—is re-informed by the text and re-informs it each time. Conversely, the same text may be repeated under different phrases of movement, each re-informing the other with each shift, each new combination and contradiction.

Critic Mel Gussow describes the resulting aesthetic, what I would term the form and content of Bogart’s rhetoric, with a gloss on one of Bogart’s favorite quotations from Friedrich Duerrenmatt, one I have heard her repeat several times: “If you go to the theatre and put your hands over your eyes and still understand what is happening onstage, then the play is a lecture. If you put your hands over your ears and still understand what is happening, then it is a slide lecture. It is [Bogart’s] credo that theatre begins when there is a tension between the action and the word, choreography and psychology” (“Worlds,” 149). Or, as Bogart puts it herself, “Theatre begins with the disagreement between what you see and what you hear” (qtd. in Weitz 14).

The theatrical performances composed and performed by Bogart and her collaborators, then, run completely counter to delivery’s classical imperative that delivery, actio, voice, countenance, and gesture, derives from and is subject to the word or thought being expressed. Critic Eelke Lampe calls this technique “dissociation” (22).
Drawing on Bogart’s own descriptions of her work, I term it a rhetoric of disorientation. This disorientation, this disagreement between the body and the text creates a space in which we—and I refer to Bogart, the performers of her work, and the audience—can re-imagine the relationship of (rhetorical) form to (rhetorical) content. This disagreement creates, like Lipkin’s theatre, a Brechtian *Verfremdungseffekt*: the audience is not to sit back and relax into their auditorium chairs, but sit forward and ask, “What is that? What are they doing? And why?” (O’Hanlon). The disagreement between the body and the text creates tension, demands attention; it asks the audience to make connections, make meaning. Bogart’s rhetoric of disorientation is a rhetoric of beyonding persuasion.

*The Medium*

The power of this disjunction between body and text is made manifest in *The Medium*, a reflection on the life and predictions of media oracle Marshall McLuhan, the Canadian philosopher who devoted his career to prophesying about the effects technology, specifically television, would have on the world. Conceived and developed by Anne Bogart and SITI Company in 1993, with its first production in Saratoga Springs, New York, the piece is also a reflection on “how technology is changing our relationships” at the turn of the twentieth century (Bogart, qtd. in Gussow, “Iconoclastic,” 11). The central question *The Medium* asks its audience to consider is, according to Bogart, “Why should we think about the future?” (“Perspective,” 17).

*The Medium* asks that question by painting a portrait of the past and the future simultaneously. McLuhan died in 1980, and just prior to his death, he suffered a series of strokes. The play is set specifically at the moment of the stroke that paradoxically destroyed McLuhan’s capability to communicate through speech, the medium of
communication he insisted was primary in humans, but the universe created onstage is also exists in the present and future of virtual reality and cyberspace. The play opens with McLuhan, played by Will Bond, standing center stage under a spotlight, energetically expounding upon the future of technology, his demeanor somewhere between that of a religious prophet and a circus ringmaster. Suddenly interrupted by a painfully loud buzzing noise—signaling the onset of the stroke—McLuhan asks, "What's that buzzing?" only to grab his head in agony and be overcome by physical convulsions.

Thereafter McLuhan controls the futuristic universe of the stage—where he is joined by an ensemble of four automaton-esque actors portrayed by J. Ed Araiza, Ellen Lauren, Kelly Maurer, and Stephen Webber—with a handheld television remote control. The stroke appears to have transported McLuhan to a "kind of multichannel universe," where his predictions of a world dominated by technology have become a reality (Winn C1). With the push of a button on the remote control, he and the others are transported between different "channels," various worlds based on familiar staples of television, such as a detective show, a Western, a call-in talk show, a variety show, a dating gameshow, and what appears to be a televangelist program.

But these familiar frames are soon made unfamiliar by the juxtaposition of text and delivery. Most of the text in the play is sampled from McLuhan's own writings, with snippets from the ruminations of other champions and critics of technology occasionally spliced in. Thus the televangelist, aglow in a white suit, raises his arm to thump a hefty book the audience might assume to be a Bible. But the gesture takes place in slow motion while the "minister" speaks with great conviction—not Biblical scripture—but McLuhan's theories. The effect is one, as Bogart would have it, of disorientation. The
contradiction of the religious posture and gesture of the evangelist with words of
technological wisdom and warning invites the audience to question what, really, is held
sacred by contemporary American society. Was McLuhan truly a prophet of a new kind
of god? And where will the worship of technology lead?

McLuhan believed that “people are influenced more by how messages are
conveyed than by the content of the messages themselves” (McDaniel). Perhaps it is not
surprising, then, that Bogart sought to create a piece about technology that “had no
technology on stage, no video cameras, no laser lights” (qtd. in Winn 29). The actors’
odies dominate the stage space, and the effect of their mechanical and often frantic
movements, underscored by repetitions of “What’s that buzzing?” and “Numb, numb,
numb, numb” is “more teasing and abstract and scary than any construct of hardware and
software” (The Medium; Winn C1). The sense of automated emptiness the ensemble
evokes contrasts with the cheerful and almost ferociously hopeful delivery of one of
McLuhan’s frequently repeated lines: “You don’t like that idea? I got others!” (The
Medium).

In another scene, ensemble members Ellen Lauren and Kelly Maurer parody the
beautiful, flirtatious, and catty hostesses of the TV call-in show. The audience seems to
be in the realm of the familiar, until Lauren begins to increase the tempo of the
conventional come-hither hand gesture she has been using to invite callers. As she
continues to seductively invite calls with her voice, smile, and simper, her hand
movements increase to an almost frenetic tempo. The action suddenly no longer matches
her voice or countenance. Again, the audience is forced to ask: why is she doing that?
What does it mean? Lauren’s rapid gestures suggest a lack of control that belies her calm
face and steady voice. It is as if her body—the medium—is outpacing and even 
or overtaking her speech—the message—before she knows what has happened or can stop 
it. The brief moment literally embodies McLuhan’s greatest fear.

Other actions and gestures are repeated in multiple contexts. The expressive 
gesture of a raised open hand with a twitching index finger appears first in the opening 
scenes, and seems to symbolize McLuhan’s loss of control over his limbs as a result of 
the stroke. Later in the piece, the same gesture in a different context seems to represent 
the “zoning out” that McLuhan feared might come as a result of technology. When the 
hand is turned palm inward and the finger is tapped on the lip, a familiar behavioral 
gesture that often connotes deep thought or nervousness is simultaneously echoed and yet 
altered. The spectator watching The Medium cannot relax into her knowledge of the 
conventional meaning of any given gesture—such as a finger being tapped on the lip— 
or can she relax into the assumption that the same action or gesture will mean the same 
thing every time it is performed in the universe of the play. The spectator must engage, 
must participate in the making of meaning, in every moment and (literally) at every turn. 
When, in a scene toward the end of the piece, the movement vocabulary I have been 
describing (the raised open hand with twitching finger, the come hither gesture, the 
thump of hand on a book) becomes the basis for a “gesture rap” sans any text whatsoever, 
the effect is one of complete disorientation—and fascination: why is this happening, the 
spectator is continually forced to ask herself. What does it mean for the characters on 
stage? What does it mean for me? Bogart’s plays do not merely invite the spectator’s 
participation; they command it.
It is difficult, of course, to appreciate the full power of Bogart’s theatre-as-rhetoric from textual description, but I offer one final example to illustrate the way it reconfigures delivery’s classical imperative. In the closing scene of the play, McLuhan makes his way across a dimly lit stage with apparently agonizing effort. He steps into the circle of a downstage spotlight, a repetition of the opening scene. But there, in a tortured, hunched, humiliated stance, his body twisted and bent by the strokes he has experienced, McLuhan declares that to survive in an age of machines, “It is vital to adopt a posture of arrogant superiority” (*The Medium*). The moment is replete with irony and pathos. The audience is left to wonder if we have not already adopted such a posture in regard to technology, and if so, if our future will look, metaphorically, like the shrunken yet still hopeful figure before us.

*Cabin Pressure*

With *Cabin Pressure*, Bogart directly engaged with the audience not only through the product(ion), but in the process of creating the piece as well. *Cabin Pressure* is an exploration of the actor-audience relationship that grew out of a two-year collaboration between SITI Company, Actors Theatre of Louisville and Louisville area theatre-goers. Bogart believes that “all plays ask questions,” and the questions that gave shape to what was called The Audience Project were: “What is an audience? What is the creative role of the audience? What is the responsibility of the audience to the actor? What is an actor? What is the actor’s responsibility to the audience?” (Bogart, “About a Play,” 14). *Cabin Pressure* beyonds persuasion not only through revisions of delivery’s classical imperative, but also through its structure, which invites and even demands audience collaboration in its process and performance.
Cabin Pressure was first performed at the Twenty-third Annual Humana Festival of New American Plays at Actors Theatre of Louisville in Kentucky in March of 1999. During the first year of the project, fifty-seven individual Louisville theatre-goers from a variety of backgrounds and different levels of theatre experience were invited to attend rehearsals for SITI Company's Louisville production of Noel Coward's Private Lives. Each audience participant attended at least two rehearsals of the play, one technical rehearsal, a performance, and an audience talkback following the performance. Each audience participant was also interviewed by Bogart, and each interview was taped and transcribed so that the transcripts might be used as a text resource for the final, collaboratively created production. During the second year of the project, the literary staff of Actors Theatre of Louisville researched the history of the actor-audience relationship as it has been discussed by theatre artists and theorists over the centuries and collected "boxes" of text on the subject. Bogart and the SITI Company members who would create and perform the project production—Will Bond, Ellen Lauren, Kelly Maurer, Barney O'Hanlon, and Stephen Webber—gathered in a room in Louisville with all the boxes and all of the transcripts and worked together to make a play "in which the star of the play is the audience" (Lecture).

The result was Cabin Pressure.22 The play, as previously noted, is loosely structured as a history of theatre, including scenes that derive from Restoration comedy, early American melodrama, British murder mystery theatre, and twentieth-century American realism, the latter represented by an excerpt from Edward Albee's Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf. These historically-inflected scenes are interspersed with "audience talkback" scenes, scenes in which the ensemble, headed up by O'Hanlon as the
"stage manager" character, gather onstage and enact an audience talkback. *Cabin Pressure* also includes a scene that affectionately lampoons theatre critics, and two scenes refer back to the SITI Company production of Coward's *Private Lives*, including the opening of the play.

Yet the structure of *Cabin Pressure* confounds even this last, seemingly straightforward statement, turning it into a question and turning the question back to the audience, the "subject" of the piece. *Cabin Pressure* "opens" with a scene from Coward's *Private Lives*—or does it? As the audience for *Cabin Pressure* gathers out in the lobby, waiting for the house to open, they overhear music and dialogue: the play is already underway. Audience members enter a darkened theatre. The performers are onstage, in the midst of the final scene in *Private Lives*, in which the characters Elyot, Amanda, Victor, and Sibyl, all sitting in a line on a bench facing the audience, are having a very strained conversation over tea. Elyot (played by Will Bond) possesses the mysterious ability to stop the scene and start it over with three taps of his spoon on his tea saucer. An apparently insignificant, realistic behavioral gesture is infused with significant theatrical meaning: it causes the lights to shift, the music to pause and begin again, and the actors to start the scene over. The delight Elyot takes in his power disrupts the realistic narrative of the scene, reminding the audience of their presence in a theatre, while at the same time it serves to connect the audience with Elyot (or Elyot with the audience), as both are one step outside of the scene's action, watching and waiting for more theatrical magic. Elyot's power holds for five or six repetitions of the scene (or more? For the audience member cannot really know just how long the play has been going, nor how many times the scene has repeated prior to one's own entrance in the
theatre). Then, to his dismay, and the utter delight of the audience, he taps and taps and
taps, and nothing happens. *Private Lives* continues and concludes, the players come out
for a curtain call, and the house lights come up on the audience.

Curtain calls, applause, house lights: these are all theatrical conventions that
traditionally indicate the end of a play, of course, not its beginning. Beginning *Cabin
Pressure*’s play-within-the-play, quite literally, *in media res*, has several immediate
effects. The audience members, whether they wish to or not, become performers in the
action, as they climb over one another to take their seats, which are situated on three sides
of the playing area, and glance at one another in glee and consternation when the play
appears to end just when it is supposed to begin. Thus, the audience is immediately made
an integral participant in the play’s action. (In one performance I attended, this fact was
made even more apparent by the fellow who used the brightening of the house lights as
an opportunity to change seats. He was “onstage” every bit as much as the actual players
were—and was observed with almost equal interest.) The house lights come up during
several other scenes in the play, including the “talkback” scenes, focusing the audience
members’ attention on one another as well as on the cast. The audience is so much a part
of *Cabin Pressure*, in fact, that, according to SITI set designer Neil Patel, “you don’t
know what this piece is without the audience—they’re half the show” (qtd. at Lecture).

The “opening” of the play also asks the question: When does the play begin?
More directly, it asks the audience: When do you become “the audience?” When the play
begins? (Therein lies a conundrum.) When you take your seat? Or does it happen even
earlier? Bogart plays with still another theatrical convention to complicate this question
further. Before the audience enters the theatre, they pass an audience warning sign, a
standard device used to inform prospective audience members that a play contains the use
of a strobe light, or strong language, or a gunshot. The sign posted outside of Cabin
Pressure reads:

This play contains:
strobe lights
loud gunshots
strong language
nudity
cigarette smoke
graphic violence
live animals
bright lights
use of a fog machine
adult subject matter

None of these “warnings,” with the exceptions of “strong language” and “adult subject
matter,” genuinely apply to Cabin Pressure. The exaggerated list—which contains
almost every caution that is ever made on such a sign—reminds the audience of just how
much a part of any theatrical performance they are. They must be, and are, taken care of,
sometimes to an extreme extent. The sign also extends the question of when the audience
becomes an audience. When you read the cautions and accept the terms? Or does it
happen still earlier: when you pull into the theatre parking lot, when you order tickets,
when you read an advertisement for the show? Cabin Pressure ensemble member Ellen
Lauren suggests that the play begins, and the audience becomes, “the moment you wake
up” (Lecture). There are two readings of her statement: an audience member is always
already part of an audience, and brings her whole self and life and all her experiences to
bear on that membership, and/or an audience becomes an audience when they are
awakened intellectually, emotionally, even physically, by what they are watching. The
purpose of theatre, according to Bogart, is to “awaken what is asleep” (7)—to ask questions, to engage attention, to challenge convention. In other words, to beyond persuasion.

Several scenes in the play beyond persuasion specifically by re-visionsing delivery’s classical imperative. The text of the play, as noted earlier, is drawn from interviews with the audience participants and audience comments made during the talkbacks, as well as passages and quotations from theatre artists and theorists past and present and “fragments from existing plays that suggest variations on the actor/audience theme” (Bogart, “Director’s Note”). Thus, with the exception of the scenes from Private Lives and Who’s Afraid of Virginia Woolf, which are performed essentially intact, the text that underscores the remaining scenes is frequently, playfully at odds with action. As the ensemble repeats quotations from various sources that appear—due to their context—to answer the question, “What makes a play satisfying?,” one of the questions that had been asked of the audience participants, they enact a villain-ingenue-hero scenario from American melodrama; in another scene one ensemble member sputters that “representation is mendacity” as all five players parade around in Restoration-style wigs fashioned of tulle, passing a letter from one to the other in a slow-motion circle dance (Cabin Pressure). In a third, a line of theatre critics wearing dark glasses and frozen in postures of disinterest simultaneously speak passages from academic theatre critics’ texts with an energy belied by their stiff, remote stances.

Two scenes are of particular interest. Immediately following the first audience talkback scene, ensemble member Lauren sits on the bench upstage center. She wears a tall paper crown, lit from the inside, and a black suit. She tilts her entire body to the left,
her legs pressed together, feet lifted off the floor. To her immediate right, on the bench, rest a pair of stilettos. In this posture, her voice electronically amplified, she addresses the audience: “You are an audience. That is a relief... Try not to sweat – salivate – shift in your seat. Why, how terribly self-conscious you are.” Lauren’s precise, rigid posture and calm, almost robotic vocal delivery are in complete contradiction to her words, as well as to the actions of the audience, who, as the house lights come up, all begin, immediately, to shift in their seats (and, no doubt, to sweat). The effect of the contradiction is not so much to focus our attention on the difference between the clean lines and stillness of the stage tableau and the messy, restless content of the spoken text, but on the difference between the still clarity of the body on the stage and the messy restlessness of the bodies in the audience. The “audience ballet” that occurs toward the end of the play, a dance composed of the shifting movements, gestures, and reactions of a theatre audience, functions similarly to reflect the audience’s attention back upon themselves and their role in the creation of the live theatre. The moment is opened up to “both analysis and identification” (Diamond 52) as the audience and their actions are made present participants by this disruption of delivery’s classical imperative.

The British murder mystery scene re-writes (literally) the relationship between the text and delivery in still another way. The ensemble portrays four “suspects” and one Inspector; the Inspector (Webber) is the only character who speaks actual “lines” in the scene. The four suspect characters speak only their stage directions as they enact them. Thus, in this scene, the text and the action do in fact conform to one another. “Enters. Follows. Sits. More gin. Exit,” says Lauren, as she enters, follows the Inspector for a few steps, sits, holds out her glass for more gin, takes a drink, and rises to exit. When she
is stopped and questioned by the Inspector, her reply line is, "Uncomfortable pause"; when the Inspector informs the four suspects that one of them must be the killer, each suspect looks to the next in turn as they repeat, "Take." "Take." "Take." "Take." The differences between the conformity between word and action performed in this scene and the conformity demanded by delivery's classical imperative are two. First, there is no attempt made to contain or erase the body with the text; instead, the text focuses the audience's attention on the actors' bodies and their actions as the primary means of communication. Secondly, the body does not conform to the text in this scene. On the contrary, the text conforms to the body. The murder mystery scene grew out of a viewpoints exercise that was "written" first with the body. Ensemble member Barney O'Hanlon explained in an interview that "the question in terms of performance was whether we would say, (he whispers) "turns" under our breath because it's a stage direction, (he speaks loudly) "turns," as you do a big turn, or do you let the body inform how you say [the line]? Ultimately we ended up doing the latter." Here, delivery's classical imperative is reversed: the body is primary, and the text conforms to the action. In much the same way that the gender reversals in Lipkin and Clear's He's Having Her Baby make familiar gender conventions unfamiliar and thereby reveal their constructedness and, consequently, the possibility of constructing them other-wise, Bogart's reversal of the traditional relationship between word and action reveals the constructed nature of delivery's classical imperative. Doing so creates the possibility for the construction of a different kind of rhetoric, one that recognizes that the rhetoric of the body is central to any such re-construction.
For Anne Bogart, theatre is not a place of definition or answers. “All plays ask questions,” she says, and “the better the play, the bigger the question” (Lecture). For Bogart and her collaborators, the purpose of theatre is to question, to challenge, to revision. “The artist,” she says, is one who “attempts to undefine, to present the moment, the word, the gesture as new and full of unfilled potential” (“Terror,” 7). This, I submit, is ideally the role of the rhetor, the orator, as well: this is the art, the rhetoric, of beyonding persuasion.

Even the Eyebrows Must Conform

The Intertext which precedes this chapter seeks to explicitly call delivery’s classical imperative into question by adopting and enacting Bogart’s theatre-as-rhetoric. When I first read Quintilian’s chapter, I was struck by how it read much like a theatrical stage manager’s prompt book, individual movements recorded in minute detail, moment by moment. And although Quintilian was advising me against these gestures and expressions, and certainly was adamant about my not illustrating them, I immediately began picturing a speaker enacting every movement he described. I am not sure, frankly, if there is any other way to comprehend this text, other than—much as when one reads a playscript—supplying the movements in one’s imagination. As I read further, I began to see the text as an actual playscript, with a cast: a speaker reading Quintilian’s text, while a movement chorus illustrated each action as it was described.

But of course, mimicking what the text is describing, while it challenges the actor-orator distinction and the charge against imitation made by Cicero and Quintilian, does not disrupt or challenge the imperative to conform and subject one’s action to one’s words—though it did elicit laughter from the audience when, to provide a counterpoint
for the long text, I read the short passage on the lips while my colleague Dr. Scott Miller imitated my words when I presented this piece at the 1999 Conference on College Composition and Communication. However, disrupting the classical imperative which insists that delivery be mastered and constrained by the text it underscores allows us to re-imagine Quintilian's text in surprising ways. All of the lines in the Intertext are taken word for word from Quintilian. To prepare the script, I took cuts from Quintilian's text and assembled them in the same order that they appear in the original. As I worked, I began to hear an argument in the lines, an argument over the necessity of conforming word to action, so I scored the text for two voices. Then I laid over it a narrative (subtextual) track of a different kind of argument, a lovers' quarrel; and finally, with Dr. Miller, I scored a series of movements that suggested coming together and moving apart.

The movement sequence illustrates the first third of the text track, with movements derived from the text, up until the Woman says "which are alike known and common to all persons." Then, in Bogartian fashion, the sequence was repeated as a separate track underneath the remaining textual track, with varying repetitions and a few additions, disrupting the expectation of actions which support and consequently blend unmemorably into the words they accompany.

Though, again, it is difficult to fully imagine, through textual description, a theatrical performance whose meaning is made in large part by its delivery, I suggest that Quintilian's discussion of delivery, delivered as Even the Eyebrows Must Conform, is opened up to new possibilities, new conversations about its meaning. The text itself is opened up as, becomes a conversation: we can now see the contradictions within the text itself. A minimum of textual manipulation was needed to deliver this text as an
argument, a dialogue, which suggests that this ostensibly persuasive document is not entirely convincing, even to its author. We can see how the body is in fact at the center of, exceeds, a text which attempts to write it into the margins, and we can also see the affective power of the body in rhetoric.

What happens if we free delivery from the text; if, instead of viewing the classical actor as a dangerous anti-model whose imitative and theatrical delivery will implode the rhetorical triangle, we look to the contemporary theatre artist, welcome (back) into the rhetorical tradition the contemporary actor who embodies and enacts Bogart's theatre-as-rhetoric? The orator, the rhetor—just as Quintilian feared—does indeed have much to learn from the actor, who embraces the body and the power of corporeal ethos, who, as a fellow practitioner of the art of "imitation," cultivates an awareness of the constructed nature of that embodied ethos. It is perhaps impossible to "beyond persuasion" without making this invitation, without this cultivation: and this is precisely the problem that Jane Martin forces us to consider, in Chapter Four.
The Roman festivals were called *Ludi* and dramatic performances were held at four of them each year: the *Ludi Megalenses*, in honor of the Mother Goddess Cybele, held in April; the *Ludi Appollinaires*, in honor of Apollo, held in July; the *Ludi Romani*, the “Roman Games” honoring Jupiter, held in September; and the *Ludi Plebeii*, held in November, also in honor of Jupiter (See Cowell 185-86 and Showerman 308).

In Book II of *On Rhetoric*, Aristotle describes at great length different “types” of Greek citizens and their ideals and beliefs so that the orator might adapt his character to that of the audience as a persuasive tool (163).

Imitating women, the female body, was, of course, a practice that ancient Greek actors regularly engaged in on the stage.

Bulwer had a daughter who was deaf, and he worked as one of the earliest deaf educators. His work with the deaf and sign language had a great impact on, and was probably chiefly responsible for, his rhetorical theory.

At one point in the *Chironomia*, Bulwer claims that “without the concurrence of the Hand, the mouth is but a running sore and hollow fistula of the mind” (5)—a most charming image.

Charlotte Downey uses the term “Mechanical” in her introduction to a 1991 facsimile reprint of Sheridan’s *A Course of Lectures on Elocution* (New York: Scholars’ Facsimiles and Reprint, page 5); “Artificial” is Richard Whately’s more judgmental term, used in *Elements of Rhetoric* (1828).

This accusation is particularly interesting in light of Gilbert Austin’s statement in *Chironomia* that “instead of adding much to his action, he who studies it the most carefully, will only be inclined to alter it for the better, or perhaps in many places to retrench it altogether” (137). Whately blames the practitioners of the Artificial method of delivery for gesticulating so wildly and ineffectively that many speakers began to stand still in protest, or in fear of appearing ridiculous; Austin also suggests that the practitioners of the Artificial delivery led to its becoming a very subdued art, but the reason he gives is that the more one studies delivery, the more one recognizes that “less is more.”


James Fredal notes this move as well (15).

David Cole writes, “In theatre imaginative events take on for a moment the presentness of physical event . . . . All the arts, to some extent, make present; theatre alone makes presence” (5).

See “Coming to Writing” and Other Essays for Cixous’s discussion of “writing the body.”

See Simian, Cyborgs, And Women; of especial interest is Haraway’s essay “A Cyborg Manifesto,” included in this collection.

Bordo reads representations of the female body as they are delivered to women through the media; she also looks at how women consider and “deliver” their own bodies in response.

For complete listings of Bogart’s directorial credits, see Lampe, pp. 16-19 (from 1976 to 1991) and *Anne Bogart: Viewpoints*, pp. 33-43 (from 1976 to 1995).

The program for the December 1999 production of *Cabin Pressure* at the Wexner Center for the Arts in Columbus, Ohio provides a comprehensive list of some twenty-six texts from which the text of the play is...
"sampled." These include Blau's *The Audience* and *To All Appearances*, Chaikin's *The Presence of the Actor*, and Phelan's *Unmarked*.

16 *Strindberg Sonata*, written and directed by Bogart and Jeff Halpem, was first presented at the University of California-San Diego in La Jolla, California in 1989.

17 This example is drawn from the rehearsal process of the work-in-progress *FREUD*, directed by Tina Landau and developed at the Actors Theatre of Louisville in December 1992-January 1993. I was a participant-observer in this process, as I served as an assistant dramaturg on the project.

18 Bogart has also been experimenting with "vocal viewpoints," which include pitch, dynamic, silence, and gain, kinesthetic response (O'Hanlon).

19 I attended two performances of *The Medium*, one at Actors Theatre of Louisville in 1995, and one at the Ohio State University's Wexner Center for the Arts in 1996. Due to concerns with copyright restrictions on the "found" texts that SITI Company often "samples" from in putting together a production text, SITI Company routinely denies requests for copies of their performance texts. Thus, all my remarks on both *The Medium* and *Cabin Pressure* are based on my attendance at performances.

20 Bond portrayed McLuhan in both performances I attended. The role was originated by actor Tom Nelis, who portrayed McLuhan in the Saratoga Springs run.


22 I attended two performances of *Cabin Pressure*, one at Actors Theatre of Louisville in March of 1999, and another at the Wexner Center for the Arts at The Ohio State University in December of 1999. Again, due to the fact that SITI Company routinely denies requests for copies of their performance texts, my remarks are based on my attendance at these two performances, as well as on a panel lecture given by Bogart, Ellen Lauren, and Barney O'Hanlon and a personal interview with O'Hanlon.
General notes on the set: Upstage left stands a non-obtrusive dressing screen. Upstage center there is a scrim or screen upon which slides may be projected. Below and just in front of the scrim is a narrow wooden bench, approximately two feet long. Stage left sits a child's Barbie suitcase. It contains the Barbie dolls and other small props.

SCENE 1: Talk Show Nightmare

Lights up. Center stage stands a Barbie sized talk-show set. The set holds two Barbie-sized inflatable chairs and one Barbie-sized inflatable sofa. On one chair sits Malibu Barbie, our host. On the sofa sit Juanita Hispanic Barbie and Lindsay Scottish Barbie. One inflatable chair, the one closest to Malibu Barbie, is empty.

A WOMAN enters, stage left, backing in, apparently in a state of some confusion. Possibly we see a flurry of hands and powder from the makeup crew, who have just had their way with her. Her face emerges from the cloud to reveal that she is made up to look like a Barbie doll, insofar as that is possible. She makes her way warily toward the talk show set, center stage. She spies the empty—Barbie-sized—chair that awaits her. Take to the audience. Looks back toward offstage left for help. She is alone.
WOMAN (to Barbies): Excuse me.

Gamely she attempts to lower herself into the Barbie chair, slowly squatting, balancing, lowering, balancing, lowering, until she hits the chair, and POP. It blows out underneath her.

WOMAN: I’m thinking—metaphor?

Blackout.

SCENE 2: My First Photograph

Lights up on WOMAN, sitting in adult sized inflatable chair that is the twin of the Barbie-sized chair from Scene I. SHE holds Malibu Barbie. As SHE speaks SHE dresses her in the outfit described.

The first photograph I ever took was of my first Barbie, dressed in one of my favorite Barbie outfits—a smocked calico patchwork skirt in red, blue, and yellow, and a matching yellow polyester halter top, off the shoulder, which fitted snugly over her rounded breasts. (Pause, as if SHE has heard an objection from someone.) These were the old days, before all of Barbie’s clothes were trimmed in pink.

(SHE finishes dressing Malibu Barbie, and for a moment is in the past.) “Mom, can I take a picture of my Barbie?”

Was I somehow, some way conscious that this world of pleasures, of dolls and dress-up, would someday disappear?
(To her mother.) "Isn't she pretty?"

I was blissfully unaware. Barbie was just so beautiful to me. (SHE mimes the actions as SHE speaks.) So, when my mother said yes, I dressed Barbie and adoringly brushed her hair, long and blond and straight, just like mine—and still intact that day, prior to the somewhat awkwardly managed trim I was to give her later. I placed her, carefully, on the top edge of the openwork brick wall that ran along our front porch. Well, the porch was no more that an elongated stoop, really, but I was fascinated with its wall of tiny hiding places and Barbie-sized windows. I crossed Barbie's legs at the knee, and asked her to smile. Smile she did—she was always smiling. As I backed away, focused, and pressed the button on our silver Instamatic, I became in my mind the glamorous blond posed for the camera and the talented artist creating a memory, both at once. Innocent of my imagination's betrayal, I recorded and captured the othering of myself on film that morning, with one resolute snap of the shutter.

Simultaneous with the "snap" of the shutter, stage lights go out and a slide of the original photograph is projected on a screen, upstage center. Hold five seconds. Full blackout.

SCENE 3: My Fifteen Favorite Facts About Barbie

The WOMAN reads each of the following facts off of individual pink index cards. After reading each fact, SHE tosses the card off stage right.
One: In the time it took for me to count “one,” two Barbie dolls were sold somewhere in
the world.¹

Two: Barbie’s favorite color is *(SHE holds up card)*—all together now—PINK.

Three: Barbie has appeared in so many outfits of clothing over her forty years of
existence that if the clothes were human size, her wardrobe would clothe an entire
country.

Four: Fisherman in Siberia buy Barbies for the hair: it makes great fishing lures.²

Five: Barbie knee joints make excellent knuckle joints in prosthetic hands.³

Six: Barbie’s first career was as a Teen Fashion Model. Since then she has been a
teacher, an astronaut, a ballerina, a fashion editor, a Marine Corps Sergeant, a chef, a
pediatrician, a lead guitarist in a rock band, a veterinarian, a skateboarder, a babysitter,
and a pilot. Among other things.

Seven: The inspiration for the Barbie doll was a German doll named Lilli, a scantily clad
pornographic caricature marketed to men as a gag gift, a mascot to keep in the car or on
the bar.⁴

Eight: Every day in the Mattel Testing Laboratory, each Barbie is dropped headfirst ten
times from a height of five feet and scrubbed with sand to be sure her painted makeup
stays on.⁵

Nine: Barbie’s 1965 slumber party featured a bathroom scale set permanently at 110
pounds.⁶

Ten: Barbie’s full name is Barbara Millicent Roberts, the given name of the creators’
daughter.⁷
Eleven: Ken is named after the creators' son, a fact which may explain why Ken is seen by most girls as one of Barbie's lamer accessories.  

Twelve: If Barbie were a real woman, she would be so thin she would be unable to menstruate.  

Thirteen: If Barbie were a real woman, she wouldn't be able to stand up without falling forward; permanently perched on her toes, her top heaviness would pull her over every time.  

Fourteen: If Barbie were a real woman, her vital statistics would be 38-18-34.  

Fifteen: When Mattel introduced a newly proportioned Barbie in 1998 with a trimmer bust and larger waist, it was not so that her shape would more closely approximate that of a real woman. It was so that she could wear the hip hugger pants newly popular with preteen girls.  

SCENE 4: The House that Dad Built  

(As she speaks the following, a series of slides showing a young girl discovering the house and its accompaniments on Christmas morning is projected on a screen behind her.)  

This is the house that Dad built.  

This is the girl  

Who loved the tall house  

That Dad built.  

This is the smile
Worn by the girl
Who loved the tall house
That Dad built.

This domicile
Brought forth the smile
Worn by the girl
Who loved the tall house
That Dad built.

This is the doll
Whose domicile
Brought forth the smile
Worn by the girl
Who loved the tall house
That Dad built.

This is the working elevator
Used by the doll
Whose domicile
Brought forth the smile
Worn by the girl
Who loved the tall house
that Dad built.
This dresser of sticks her brother made her,
that’s just to the left of the elevator,
Used by the doll
Whose domicile
Brought forth the smile
Worn by the girl
Who loved the tall house
That Dad built.

This wardrobe, handknit by mom, creator,
Fills the dresser of sticks her brother made her,
That’s just to the left of the elevator
Used by the doll
Whose domicile
Brought forth the smile
Worn by the girl
Who loved the tall house
That Dad built.

The girl supposed—they wouldn’t trade her.
This wardrobe, handknit by mom, creator,
Filling the dresser of sticks her brother made her,
That’s just to the left of the elevator
Used by the doll
Whose domicile
Brought forth the smile
Worn by the girl
Who loved the tall house
That Dad built.

This is the house that love built.

SCENE 5: How Barbie Lost Her Virginity

(The beginning of this scene is simply told as a story directly to the audience. The WOMAN shifts into acting out the story where indicated.)

Part I: Coitus Interruptus

Kristin’s Barbie and Mandy’s Ken had a big date at the beach. They were going camping and tonight was the night. Barbie had waited a long time—eighteen years, in fact, since Ken had first come in to her life—and she loved him. It would be a night full of romance, moonlight, and pretty lingerie.

Kristin and Mandy packed the camper with a tiny plastic cooler filled with even tinier plastic hotdogs, play cans of soda the size of the tip of Kristin’s pinky, and a plastic orange that from Barbie’s perspective would actually serve better as a basketball. Kristin said, “It’s a cantaloupe,” and they let it go at that.

Some time ago Mandy’s mother had cut up an old brown grocery bag and folded and glued the small rectangles into Barbie-sized bags so that Mandy’s Barbie could go to the
grocery store. Kristin and Mandy packed one of these tiny brown bags with miniature plastic canned goods and loaded it into the back of the camper next to the Barbie-sized cooler, a Barbie-sized beachball, two Barbie-sized towels (cut from old washcloths), and two Barbie-sized sleeping bags made of gold and orange vinyl. *(Aside)* Luckily Barbie couldn’t sweat through her plastic pores.

There had been some disagreement about whose Barbie—both of their Barbies were named Barbie, a fact that was only occasionally confusing—was going to lose it. But Mandy owned Ken, so it seemed only fair that Kristin’s Barbie be the one. Besides, the beach was in Kristin’s sandbox.

The camper is packed. Ken takes the drivers’ seat, Barbie the passenger, dressed in her red and white checked bikini with a pareo over the top. Barbie smiles at Ken gleefully. She smiles at everyone gleefully, of course, but Kristin and Mandy each imagines she sees a daring new glint in Barbie’s painted eyes. Each keeps this observation a secret.

*(The WOMAN begins to act out the scene, shifting in and out of the roles of the characters and the narrator as appropriate.)*

Kristin crawls on her knees, pushing the camper across her red-carpeted bedroom floor, out into the hallway, onto the braided runner, then off. Bump.

‘Oh,’ Barbie says. ‘They must be doing road work.’

‘Damn,’ says Ken.

“Mandy!”
“What? That’s what my Dad would say!”

Into the kitchen, across the linoleum. The hard floor hurts Kristin’s knees, and she tries squatting and duckwalking as she drives the last few feet to the screen door.

Mom sits at the kitchen table, writing bills. “Where are you two girls headed?”

(The WOMAN mimes a take.)

“Out—“ Kristin’s voice catches. Mandy puffs out her cheeks. “Out to the sandbox. Barbie’s going to the beach.”

Mom sighs and wipes her forehead with the back of her hand. “Do you think that’s a good idea, hon? You’ll never get all the sand out of her hair.”

Mandy lets out a giggle and Kristin throws her a look. Mandy gets control of herself and stares at the ground, tapping her toe at some imaginary insect.

“We’ll be careful, Mom.”

“Well, okay, hon. But no complaints from you later.” Mom returns to her checkbook, Kristin nods triumphantly at Mandy, and she pushes open the door as Kristin squats and rolls the camper, bump, bump, big bump, over the doorframe and onto the carport. The sandbox sits at the upper left corner of the backyard. Kristin maneuvers the van over the slick carport, the rougher patio, through the backyard gate, into the grass.

“We’re out in the wilderness now, the mountains,” Mandy says.
“Too flat. It’s south Georgia. ‘Oh, Ken, look at the beautiful fields. It’s so green.’”

Kristin’s mother had moved to Georgia from the Southwest and had never gotten over the green of her adopted landscape.

Ken makes no reply.

‘Isn’t it pretty, Ken?’

‘Yep.’

Kristin pokes Mandy. “You have to make him talk. They can’t do it if they haven’t even had a conversation!”

“Who says?”

Kristin rolls her eyes and sits. This duckwalking thing is tiring. ‘Rest stop?’

As Barbie gets out to stretch her legs, Kristin’s little sister Sarah appears, pressing her body against the chain link fence. “Hey, what are ya’ll doing?”


“I wanna play.”

“You can’t. Go back inside. ‘Come on Ken, let’s get going. We’re almost there.’”

Ken steps on it, and they arrive at the sandbox—ah, the beach—in record time. Kristin peers back over her shoulder to see that Sarah is wandering back inside. “Honestly.”
Barbie and Ken set up camp, rolling out their sleeping bags side by side and unfolding the two orange and yellow camp stools so that they can rest. Ken asks Barbie if she'd like to go for a swim, and they take turns diving off the side of the sandbox into imaginary grass waves. When they return to the campsite, Barbie disappears inside the camper, while Ken sets a romantic mood with the firelight of the molded-plastic campfire. Barbie reappears in her pink party dress. (WOMAN steps out from behind screen. SHE is now Barbie.) ‘Wow,’ says Ken, and they begin to dance. (WOMAN turns her back to audience and mimes the actions as she describes them.) Ken puts his hand on Barbie’s butt, and they kiss. ‘I love you,’ he whispers. Barbie giggles. In unison they walk over to the sleeping bags, which Kristin and Mandy have carefully arranged so that they are blocked from view of the house by the girls’ backs. Barbie takes off her dress to reveal an aqua green tap pants and camisole set. (WOMAN allows the dress to drop to her ankles, revealing the lingerie as described. SHE mimes an embrace as she speaks.) Barbie and Ken lay down, putting their arms around each other, kiss again, and...

(A freeze.) “What are ya’ll playing?” Sarah is behind them, peering over their shoulders.

(The WOMAN frantically pulls her dress back up and turns around during the following.) “Nothing!” Kristin and Mandy pull the dolls apart so fast that Ken’s hand gets stuck in Barbie’s camisole strap and snaps it. Sarah’s eyes grow wide.

“I know what you’re playing. I’m telling! Mo-om!”
(Straightening clothing.) Someone once said that there are those who have been walked in on and those who will be. Barbie counts herself among the former. (Zips up dress.)

Blackout.

Part 2: The Realist

(WOMAN sits on stool. SHE holds or has easy access to an ice-pick, a blue pipe cleaner, and a pair of scissors.) When Stephanie's Barbie decides to have sex, she encounters a more pragmatic problem than a nosy little sister. Barbie and Ken embrace, get naked, and are about to take the plunge when they realize that—they can't.

Stephanie, you see, had a mother who, after Stephanie's little sister was born and she had asked, "Mommy, where do babies come from?" had sat Stephanie down and actually told her. Stephanie was a realist. No penis, no vagina—(SHE shrugs).

So, Stephanie heads to the kitchen to the drawer with the sharp knives and—yes, there it is—the ice pick. (SHE shows it to audience, sets it on her knees.) Rummaging through her mother's craft supplies, she finds a pipe cleaner. (SHE holds up the pipe cleaner.) It is blue, but she is not that much of a realist. Back to the kitchen for glue and a pair of scissors to cut the pipe cleaner. (She snips it once, considers, snips it again.) This much of a realist, she is.

Back in her bedroom Stephanie and her friend Claudia set to work. They penetrate Barbie with the ice pick to create a vagina. The pipe cleaner, after several tries, sticks to
Ken's plastic pelvis; the two girls gleefully discover that its flexibility allows Ken's blue, fuzzy penis (surely a sign of some sort of sexually transmitted disease, but Stephanie and her mother have not yet had that part of the conversation) to stand up erect and then return to normal, just as her mother had said it was supposed to.

But once Ken's pipe cleaner is inside Barbie, Stephanie and Claudia are not quite sure what else is supposed to happen. Barbie and Ken kiss, with sound effects supplied by Stephanie and Claudia, and say "I love you" several times, and it's over. (A take.) But as Ken pulls away from Barbie, his penis comes unglued from his pelvis and remains lodged in Barbie's tiny vagina. (A look of horror.) "That's not supposed to happen!" Stephanie shrieks. "That's not supposed to happen! That's not supposed to happen!" she repeats between gasps for air, until she can no longer speak for her tears.

Blackout.

Part 3: The Kiss

(WOMAN begins monologue seated on the floor, handling various Barbies as she speaks. SHE does not mime the actions she describes.)

My brother outgrew his G.I. Joe before I outgrew Barbie, so I inherited Joe, as I had a number of other toys. Joe had lost a hand and forearm in the playroom wars, but I preferred him to Ken, who I had bought at a yard sale somewhere, and whose head had a rather annoying tendency to fall off. When I could get his head to stay on for a period of weeks, or even months—Superglue providing a temporary cure—he couldn't turn it. So
it remained fixed, facing straight ahead. Neither could Ken bend his arms at the elbows, which made it rather difficult for him to hug or hold Barbie.

G.I. Joe, on the other hand, was jointed in the neck, shoulders, elbows, wrists, legs, knees, and ankles. No doubt all these loose joints were what had caused his arm to fall off, but he could embrace Barbie, stroke her hair, hold her down. *(Stands, holding one Barbie.)* Yes, much to my mother’s dismay, Joe didn’t always have a very healthy relationship with my Barbies. He tended to kidnap them, take off their clothes, and tie them up so they couldn’t escape. They always did escape of course, eventually, and Joe never got undressed himself, never hit one of my Barbies, nor, to my memory, did he ever rape one, or for that matter, have intercourse with them at all. I don’t recall any of my Barbies ever losing her virginity, though my mother had versed me in the facts of life as well as Stephanie’s had taught her.

No, what I was fascinated with were the possibilities of the kiss. G.I. Joe kissed my naked Barbie *(SHE begins to undress the doll)* in places I don’t think I even consciously knew were places that people liked to be kissed. He kissed her back, her shoulders, her feet. He kissed her breasts, tapping his molded plastic lips against the unforgiving curves of her hard plastic form. He kissed this female landscape as I held it—perhaps so I could hold it—hold it in my hands, study it, gaze upon it, wonder at it: this tiny woman’s body, this body so like and so unlike my own. *(SHE gazes at the doll for a moment, then cradles it like it is a babydoll. A beat. Blackout.)*
SCENE 6: The Woman Who Wanted to Be Barbie

_During this scene, the WOMAN stands center stage, trying to balance on her toes, while an assistant slowly laces her into a corset._

Once, when I was in the third grade, I spent the night at my friend LeeAnn’s house. I had forgotten to bring a nightgown, so she loaned me a long-sleeved lavender gown that fell straight from my shoulders to my ankles. I fingered its sheer chiffon sleeves, the ruffle at the bottom. I felt glamorous. The nylon of the bodice slipped softly across my skin, such a different feeling from the cotton gowns I was used to sleeping in. It felt like my Barbie’s long, pink nightgown, the one trimmed with white lace.

In the morning as I packed my bag to go home, LeeAnn’s mother told me to take the gown with me—LeeAnn was some two years older than I was, and she had outgrown the gown. So it was mine to keep if I liked it.

If I liked it!?  

When I modeled it for my mother that night I discovered a point of dissatisfaction: in this nightgown, I had no waist. Barbie’s pink nightgown skimmed her every curve, nipped in at her waist, flowed out over her rounded hips. But I had no shape at all. I asked my mother if we might make a belt for the gown. This request seemed to puzzle her—a belt would be uncomfortable to sleep in, she said, and I was being silly. But I persisted, and she at last relented, shaking her head. On our next trip to the fabric store, I carried the gown with me, and we purchased a yard and a quarter of matching lavender satin ribbon. I tied it around my waist that night, bloused the top of the gown, and was happy.
Cindy Jackson, born in Fremont, Ohio, is registered with the British Internal Revenue Service as the Bionic Woman. She is more commonly known as the Living Barbie. In twenty years, Jackson had more than twenty plastic surgeries: chemical peels, tummy tucks, face lifts, eye lifts, breast implants, rhinoplasty, and liposuction.\textsuperscript{15}

When I saw Jackson featured on a TV news magazine in the early 1990s, only her lower lip remained unaltered. I distinctly recall two images from this feature: a shot of a picture of Jackson as a young woman, as she looked prior to her surgeries—blond, smiling, simply lovely. And a shot of her on the operating table during surgery, her skin blanched, a jagged line of bloody black stitches running across her forehead just below her hairline, and the flop of her head as a nurse turned it. It was the same terrifying looseness I saw in the body of my cat after he had been put to sleep, the dead abandon I felt when his body rolled from my hands into his grave.

But I wanted to be Barbie, too! I wanted to have a tiny waist, wear glamorous clothes and high heels, and be perfect. And Cindy Jackson has achieved perfection. She said so herself. Her married executive sister, she says, “has the perfect life and I have the perfect face and body.”\textsuperscript{16}

SCENE 7: My Barbie Family Tree

(As she describes each Barbie, the WOMAN pulls her out of a pink Barbie case and sets her on a long bench that she has pulled downstage center.)
In the beginning, there was Malibu Barbie. Then came Quick Curl, dressed in modest pink gingham, followed by Ballerina Barbie, who could have been her twin, except that her hair was whiter and her legs kicked higher. Malibu Skipper in her orange polyester swimsuit joined the family as Malibu Barbie’s daughter, even though founder Ruth Handler had sworn that Barbie would never be pregnant. Oh, well.

Skipper soon had a twin sister, who arrived, like the first Skipper, a fully grown pre-teen. But this second Skipper came to the family soiled and naked, a forlorn garage-sale refugee. As you do unto these the least of my children, so you do unto me. Skipper Two was cleaned, clothed, and welcomed.

Then I awoke one Christmas morning to find that my Barbies had moved overnight into a grand mansion with red carpet, a rooftop deck, and a houseful of blow-up furniture. Seated on the green-and-blue flowered bed was a new doll. Lorna Hawaiian Barbie—named after a Hawaiian stewardess my mother had flown with when she worked as a flight attendant—took up residence with the rest of my Barbies in the great house. She was a friend of the family, much admired for her black hair and delicate facial features. She was the most beautiful Barbie I had ever seen!

Another generous Christmas: I found to my amazement not one but two Barbies under the family tree. Juanita Hispanic Barbie—also named after a former flight attendant—was lovely, with wavy dark brown hair, wide brown eyes, wearing a red and white fiesta dress trimmed in black and gold. She was the most beautiful Barbie I had ever seen. And she came to me with a daughter, blond, blue-eyed Teen Skipper, complete with a yellow skateboard, a pink and purple clothing ensemble, and two tiny starter-breasts!
Juanita and Skipper moved into the mansion with Juanita Hispanic Barbie's sister, Lorna Hawaiian Barbie. The next year they were joined by their long-lost sister Lindsay Scottish Barbie, in full Tartan regalia, with a headful of streaming red hair and emerald green eyes. Maybe she was the most beautiful Barbie I had ever seen. Then Lola Parisian Barbie with a golden chignon, and Ming Li Chinese Barbie in red and yellow brocade. They were so, so beautiful! And no matter their costumes or the labels on their boxes, the greeting from the other Barbies was always the same. "Sister!" all the other Barbies cried. "Sister!"

SCENE 8: Interlude

WOMAN stands center, facing forward, with her hand outstretched, palm up. On it lies Juanita Spanish Barbie, lifted toward the heavens as if for sacrifice. Juanita is attached to an invisible thread-fly of some kind so that she can be whisked from sight at scene's close. Small spotlight on Juanita; WOMAN is also lit from a spotlight directly above, so that her face is visible but marked by shadows.

When Katherine was twelve, her mother laughed at her for still playing with Barbies "at her age." So Katherine loaded her nine dolls into two red shoeboxes and dumped them in the neighbor's trash.

Juanita is lifted an inch, suspended for a split second above the WOMAN's hand, then flies out of sight into the rafters. The WOMAN's face lifts as she follows the swift flight of the doll so that her face, and the tear tracks, are now fully illuminated. Blackout.)
SCENE 9: Thinking (Pink)

(WOMAN stands downstage center. Speaks simply.) For her fourth birthday, my niece Natasha received Rock ‘n Roll Barbie. “You can make her ‘dance’ and ‘play’ her guitar,” the box says.

(The WOMAN disappears behind dressing screen. From a microphone, we hear her speak, as if she is a celebrity news reporter who has just interviewed Rock ‘n Roll Barbie.) Lead singer and guitarist of the Beyond Pink band, Barbie is dressed to dazzle in a trashy-sexy hot pink mini-dress with glow-in-the-dark stripes and black vinyl thigh-high boots. She is totally psyched for tonight’s concert, Dan, and we are psyched, too. In just a few minutes the Beyond Pink Band is going to take the stage and bring down the house! (WOMAN speaks into microphone, emcee-style.) “Live on Stage! Grab a front row seat for the greatest concert of the year as Barbie and her friends hit the stage to play the hot single, “Think Pink,” off their very first CD! The action is high voltage. . . . Get ready for hot rockin’, chart topin’ music from Beyond Pink!”

MUSIC starts: “Think Pink.” WOMAN steps out from behind screen, dressed in the outfit she has described and lip-syncs the lyrics.

“Think pink!

Think pink!

Think pink!

It’s the color of the world!

THINK PINK!”
As the music continues to play in the background, the WOMAN speaks into the microphone again, repeating some of the lyrics, and continuing.)

"We girls gonna shake it up,
Take on the world and wake it up,
You know you’ve got the power, girl,
You’ve got enough fire to light up the world,
Jump a little higher like you know you can
Paint the town pink, c’mon—join the band.

Guitar does not really play. Doll does not stand, dance, or move alone.

Think pink. Beyond Pink. Think pink. I’m thinking. (WOMAN slowly backs up in darkness and offstage. A slide appears on the projection screen of a beautiful, smiling child standing next to her lifesized Barbie, dressed in a white dress and angel wings just like her doll. Beat. Blackout.)
Notes

1 Barbie is “bought at a rate of about two every second,” according to Carolyn Cook, Michilinda Kinsey, and Scott Wood, authors of _I Had That Doll!_ New York: Park Lane Press, 1996, page 106.


3 This fact is based on a game question asked on the television program _Hollywood Squares_, air date unknown.

4 For a detailed description of Lilli and how she came to be the model for Barbie, see M.G. Lord’s _Forever Barbie_, New York: William Morrow and Company, 1994, pages 24-33.

5 _I Had That Doll!,_ pages 102-103.

6 _Forever Barbie_, page 229.

7 _I Had That Doll!,_ page 102.

8 In _I Had That Doll!_ on page 106, the authors write, “From the moment in 1961 when he first appeared on store shelves next to Barbie, Ken has merely been regarded as another of her accessories.”

9 In _Forever Barbie_ M.G. Lord cites a study by researchers at University Central Hospital in Helsinki, Finland: “Her narrow hips and concave stomach would lack the 17 to 22 percent body fat required for a woman to have regular periods” (226).


11 “Barbie Hits 38, opts for cosmetic surgery.” _Brand Strategy_ 21 November 1997, page 2. According to a Mattel company spokesperson quoted in the article, Mattel has always “been sensitive” to complaints about Barbie’s unrealistic proportions, but “it wasn’t the basis” the company’s decision to give her a new shape. The real impetus for the change was that “Barbie needed a more contemporary look which would allow her to wear more contemporary fashions, such as hip-hugging jeans.”

12 Based on the nursery rhyme “The House that Jack Built.”

13 Special thanks to Kristin Risley for sharing her Barbie stories, one of which gave me the kernels of truth from which I concocted this tale.

14 Special thanks to J. Cognard-Black for sharing her Barbie stories, one of which gave me the kernels of truth from which I concocted this tale.

15 All facts in this paragraph are drawn from M.G. Lord’s chapter on Cindy Jackson entitled “The Woman Who Would Be Barbie,” in _Forever Barbie_, pages 244-251.

16 Quoted in _Forever Barbie_, page 248.
It has perhaps become apparent that, just as it is impossible to discuss one of the Bogartian viewpoints without touching upon another, it is equally difficult to analyze how a feminist theatrical performance beyonds persuasion through revising arrangement without also discussing how it does so through revising delivery, and vice-versa. In this final chapter, I take up the rhetorical concept of *ethos*, the persuasive appeal of the character of the speaker, a concept that intersects the canons of arrangement and delivery. *Ethos* has played an important role in the tradition of rhetoric-as-persuasion, and as such, its revision necessarily plays a crucial role in refining a rhetoric that beyonds persuasion.

**Moments of Overlap: Revisiting Quintilian**

At the close of his chapter on delivery in the *Institutes of Oratory*, Quintilian returns to the subject of “decorum,” emphasizing that “different manners become different speakers” (387). To illustrate his point, he calls upon the examples of the comic actors Demetrius and Stratocles, describing them at length thus:

> It is not...surprising that the one acted gods, young men, good fathers, domestics, matrons, and staid old women, with happy effect, or that the other was more successful in representing passionate old men, cunning slaves, parasites, procurers, and other bustling characters; for their natural
endowments were very different, as even the voice of Demetrius was more pleasing, and that of Stratocles more powerful. But what was more observable was their peculiarity of action, which could not have been transferred from one to the other; as to wave the hand in a particular way, to prolong exclamations in an agreeable tone to please the audience, to puff out the robe with the air on entering the stage, and sometimes to gesticulate with the right side could have been becoming in no actor but Demetrius; for in all these respects he was aided by good stature and a comely person. On the contrary, hurry, and perpetual motion, and a laugh not altogether in unison with his mask...were extremely agreeable in Stratocles. But whatever excellence in either had been attempted by the other, the attempt would have proved an offensive failure. Let every speaker, therefore, know himself, and, in order to form his delivery, consult, not only the ordinary rules of art, but his own abilities. (389)

Here again, as in the several examples recounted in chapter three, we have the actor cast as a model for the orator: Quintilian describes two comic actors who employ different deliveries, different representations of character, and, Quintilian suggests, those representations are successful in that they issue from and are in concert with the body, the “self” of each of the actors, his natural qualities of voice and person. The action must conform not only to the text in support of delivery’s classical imperative; the character—composed of that action and speech—must indeed be “laminated” (Elin Diamond’s term) to the body that portrays it. The re-presentation is one with the body.

Like most of the references that posit the actor as the model for the orator, Quintilian offers the example, and then qualifies it, reminding his reader that he does not want his students to be actors but orators, and arguing that “moderation” is the key distinction. An orator’s delivery—what we might call his (self)-representation—must be “kept so far under control” that the orator “may not lose the character of a good and judicious man” (389); thus ends Quintilian’s chapter on delivery. Quintilian, then, in his discussion of appropriate delivery, is simultaneously talking about ethos, or character,
self-representation. Significantly, he would appear to be referencing Platonic or Isocratean *ethos*, rather than the more commonly discussed Aristotelian *ethos*.

Plato, although he did not specifically use the term *ethos* (the term is Aristotle's), nevertheless posits a theory of the ethical relationship a speaker should have with his text. As noted in previous chapters, it is precisely the mimetic or imitative nature of both rhetoric and theatrical performance that Plato finds discomfiting and unruly. James Baumlin, in his introduction to the edited collection *Ethos: New Essays in Rhetorical and Critical Theory* (1994), points us to the *Phaedrus* for insight into Plato's understanding of the speaker-text relationship, suggesting that Socrates' covering of his face while he repeats Lysias' speech about love to Phaedrus is an allegory for that relationship as Plato understood it. Since Socrates' "self" was not in the speech, as it did not represent his views (he, in fact, disagreed with its contents), he covered his face to physically represent the distance between his person and that which he was saying; there was shame in speaking that which was not "of him" (xii-xiv). The passage from Quintilian, above, suggests that an attempt by Socrates to read—one might say perform—the speech in Lysias' character might very well have proved "an offensive failure" anyway, since Socrates and Lysias seem to be as distinct in person and philosophy as Demetrius and Stratocles were in voice and action. But Socrates does not wish to pretend to Lysias' character at all (one might also argue that his covering of his face was the first example of Brechtian historicity at work, as he simultaneously performs Lysias and comments on that performance as something shameful). His choice to cover his face and put distance between himself (his "self") and a text that did not truthfully represent that self tells us that, for Plato, *ethos* resides in the speaker and should manifest itself honestly in the
words that issue from him. To speak otherwise is to speak falsely, to manipulate appearances, and to do so would be unethical.

Isocrates also posits an *ethos* that exists prior to the text, in the speaker's reputation and in his way of life. In the *Antidosis*, he writes that "words carry greater conviction when spoken by men of good repute than when spoken by men who live under a cloud," and goes on to state that the "argument made by a man's life" carries greater "weight than that which is furnished by words" (52). Thus, Isocratean *ethos*, like Platonic *ethos*, is situated in the person of the speaker, although Isocrates' attention to *kairos* differentiates his theory from Plato's, as I will explain momentarily. I suggest that Quintilian, in the passage quoted above, is working in the tradition of Platonic-Isocratean *ethos* because he, too, situates the character, the *ethos*, of the orator in the person of the orator, specifically, in his delivery: voice, countenance, gesture—body.

Though contemporary scholars have access to only a few fragments of Isocrates' theories of rhetoric, we cannot discount his influence, for Isocrates was quite popular in his day, his theories widely accepted and disseminated through his school. Quintilian might be said, in fact, to be drawing on both the Isocratean and Aristotelian traditions in the passage above, for he suggests that a credible *ethos* is created by matching the *person* of the speaker to the *text* being spoken. In contrast to Plato and Isocrates, Aristotle situated *ethos* not in the person of the speaker, prior to the text, but in the text itself.

Aristotle gave us the actual term "*ethos*" and discusses it in the *Rhetoric* as one of the three central *pisteis* or means of persuasion. He states that *ethos* or character is persuasive "whenever the speech is spoken in such a way as to make the speaker worthy of credence"; this credibility "should result from the speech, not from a previous opinion
that the speaker is a certain kind of person" (38). *Ethos*, then, is constructed by and within the speech itself; the speaker creates with his words an appearance (and appearance is a key term here) of good will toward the audience (*eunoia*), common sense (*phronesis*) and virtue (*arete*) (121).

In a note on his translation of Aristotle’s *On Rhetoric*, George Kennedy states that Aristotle’s formulation of *ethos* as a textual construction may have been a direct and “practical” response to the sociocultural context in which he was writing, specifically in regard to the practice of rhetoric in courts of law (38). Kennedy surmises that Aristotle wanted defendants and claimants in court to be judged on the virtues of their cases, rather than on their reputations, family names, money, or the attractiveness of their person, and therefore emphasized *ethos* as a textual construction, created in and by the facts and words of the courtroom debate. Contemporary western courtrooms still operate, formally, under this assumption; jurors are allowed to consider only the official transcript of the court proceedings when making their decision and must ignore any outburst or statement that has been “stricken” from that written record. Defense attorneys also take great care to ensure that their clients are neatly and conservatively dressed, however. Similarly, the care Aristotle takes to note that *ethos* does not derive “from a previous opinion that the speaker is a certain kind of person” but is, rather, a product of the texts, suggests that he was in fact very much aware of the element of influence present in the person, an *ethos* preceding speech (38); his theory of textual *ethos* attempts to contain that prior *ethos*. And since, as James Fredal has ably argued, Aristotle sought to codify a theory of rhetoric in writing, as writing, even though the practice of the art in ancient
Greece was primarily oral, his shift away from the person and the body to the text may also be part and parcel of Aristotle's larger theoretical project.

Given, however, that Aristotle clearly recognized the existence of and the influence exercised by this prior ethos and was, one might suggest, writing against it in positing his theory of textual ethos, his claim that "character is almost...the controlling factor in persuasion" takes on even greater resonance (Rhetoric 38). This fact is of especial significance in light of a second moment of textual overlap linking rhetoric, theatrical performance, and ethos: that which the rhetor presents in order to persuade is ethos, character; that which the playwright constructs and the actor presents onstage is also ethos, character. "Character" is one of the most significant elements in the making of tragedy, second in importance only to plot (Aristotle, Poetics, 28). Aristotle does not directly reference the reader of the Poetics to the Rhetoric as he does in regard to the element of "Thought"; nonetheless, the Greek word for the "character" constructed by a playwright and portrayed by an actor is the same—as it is in English—as the word for "character" as constructed and presented by the orator in the Rhetoric.

Thus, it would seem, that just as the orator's delivery (hypokrisis) is of the same ilk as the actor's acting (also hypokrisis), Aristotle's use of the term ethos in both instances suggests that the orator's re-presentation of character in person as well as in text (for, as I have suggested, Aristotle's postulation that ethos resides in the text may be read as evidence of his recognition that it also resided prior to the text in the person) is close kindred to, if not coincident with, the playwright's construction of a character and the actor's re-presentation of that character. The actor's ethos onstage is, as Quintilian suggests, constructed by a combination of the person/body and the text that one speaks;
an effective character is one who *persuades the audience to belief* through his or her consistency, appropriate behavior, and "likeness to human nature" (*Poetics* 43). Yet behind the characters onstage is the character of the playwright, the "speaker" of the whole, and in the *Rhetoric* Aristotle asserts that *ethos*, the character of the speaker, is the "controlling factor of persuasion" (38). How does the playwright’s *ethos* interact with and affect the believability of the characters the playwright creates? What role does *ethos* play in *beyonging* persuasion? How can feminist theatrical performance help us revise our understanding of *ethos*?

**Re-visiting Aristotle**

In order to answer the questions posed above, we might begin with still another question: Why is it that Aristotle’s theory of *ethos* as a textual construction takes hold and the Platonic-Isocratean tradition gets dismissed? The simplest answer is that Aristotle’s theory of rhetoric has proven to be, as noted in chapter two, "the fountainhead of all later rhetorical theory" (Corbett 544). And since Aristotle gave us the term *ethos* and the most detailed accounting of the concept, it is unsurprising and perhaps fitting that his definition of *ethos* has been privileged by scholars of rhetoric, even though those who came before him (namely Plato and Isocrates) and those who followed, including Cicero and Quintilian, also addressed in their rhetorical treatises that which has often been translated the "ethical appeal."

But there are more complex reasons for the privileging of the Aristotelian tradition. James Baumlin suggests that the Platonic-Isocratean tradition of *ethos* has been dismissed by scholars working in the wake of poststructuralist critiques because this
tradition is associated with the stable Cartesian “I,” the “I” that expresses a text and expresses the self to a degree within the text, but ultimately remains outside of it and is not constructed in or by it. In contrast, the Aristotelian tradition of ethos seems more amenable to poststructuralist constructions of the self in which the “I” is considered a purely linguistic construction. The poststructuralist “I” is constructed totally by and within the text; no separate or prior “self” is recognized (“Introduction,” xx-xxiii).

Although the poststructuralist perspective seems like a reasonable contemporary translation of Aristotle’s ethos, there are problems inherent in translating the classical Aristotelian concept of ethos to poststructuralist terms. Roger Cherry addresses this issue in his essay, “Ethos Versus Persona: Self-Representation in Written Discourse” (1988). He makes a distinction between ethos as a rhetorical term that focuses on “the speaker’s securing the trust and respect of an audience by representing him- or herself in the speech as knowledgeable, intelligent, competent, and concerned for the welfare of the audience” (256), and persona as a term descended from literary tradition that refers to “an intentional ‘mask’ a writer adopts in the written text” that allows the writer to play a particular “role” (259). While Cherry suggests that the “matter of authorial presence” is at the heart of scholarly debates over the definition and usefulness of the concept of persona specifically (258), I would suggest that questions of authorial (or “speakerly”) presence is at the heart of the distinction he is making between the two terms as well. Cherry distinguishes between the ethos of the historical author as it is revealed in the text and the various personae a writer might adopt within a written text to achieve particular ends, and proposes an ethos-persona continuum, alleging that even though the terms have distinct histories and uses, they “do approach one another and in many cases no doubt
Ethos, at one end of Cherry’s continuum, represents the writer’s “real” self, invoked and made credible by “identifying themselves as holding a certain position or having particular kinds of knowledge or experience,” while persona represents the writer’s “fictional” self, the role or roles they play in their written discourse that “portray the elements of the rhetorical situation to their advantage” (265).

I include a discussion of Cherry’s essay for two reasons. First, the distinction he makes between ethos and persona, and the concept of the continuum, proves useful in considering ethos in relationship to theatrical performance. Certainly in a play populated by several characters the playwright assumes—literally—various fictional roles, personae. The term persona, in fact, according to R.C. Elliot, “refers originally to a device of transformation and concealment on the theatrical stage” (quoted in Cherry 256); the actors who perform the characters, then, assume in performance the personae created by the playwright. These personae as constructed by the playwright do not, however, take the place of or supplant that historical constructor, or the presence of that historical constructor as it is revealed in the text, for that presence is the playwright’s ethos, something other than the character personae. Thus, while Cherry more closely identifies persona with literary texts and ethos primarily with nonliterary texts (“literary” and “nonliterary” being somewhat of a problematic distinction in and of itself), his continuum allows for, as it must, the analysis of ethos in so-designated literary texts: works of fiction, poetry, drama.

In making this distinction, Cherry ultimately asserts the presence of ethos in texts not traditionally subjected to rhetorical analysis, and texts is a key word in this claim. The second reason I include a discussion of Cherry’s essay is to demonstrate just how
strongly Aristotle's concept of *ethos* as a textual construction has continued to influence contemporary understandings of *ethos*. Cherry alludes to the fact that "the concept of *ethos* can be discerned in earlier discussions of rhetoric" prior to Aristotle and includes an endnote pointing to Sattler's more comprehensive discussion of *ethos*, but he then moves immediately to Aristotle's formulation of the concept and its influence. His focus on written discourse would be unsurprising were it not for the fact that, throughout his discussion of Aristotle's concept of *ethos*, he refers repeatedly to the "speaker" (as he must when quoting Aristotle, since that was the classical rhetorician's term), allowing, again, only in an endnote appended to the final sentence of that discussion that "[a]lthough the rhetorical tradition has focused primarily on spoken discourse, it is reasonable to assume that rhetorical concepts such as *ethos* play an essential role in written discourse as well" (271).

While Cherry seems to desire to minimize the oral origins of Aristotle's theory, he is of course correct in his assertion that *ethos* plays a role in written texts; certainly there are a number of other rhetorical scholars who have followed in the Aristotelian tradition of *ethos* as a textual construction and in doing so, have contributed greatly to the conversation. The work of these scholars—and the Aristotelian concept of *ethos* itself—is invaluable and useful in a multitude of ways. I wish to suggest, however, that in focusing the bulk of our attention on Aristotelian *ethos*, we have neglected an equally valuable alternative tradition, a fact that is especially puzzling given that Aristotle clearly was responding to his awareness of an *ethos* prior to the text in the development of his theory, and that that awareness was likely one of the factors motivating his efforts to codify *ethos* as a textual construction. Aristotle knew that the person, the body, had a

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role to play in ethos. Isocrates knew it as well, but unlike Aristotle, he sought not to avoid or contain “antecedent” ethos (Baumlin’s term), but instead acknowledged its importance and its influence—a most useful rhetorical turn.

Re-Figuring Ethos: Feminist Rhetorics

In order to trace a path back to Isocratean ethos, or even a simulacrum of such a path, we might well begin with what we know: Aristotle. In her feminist re-consideration of the concept of ethos as “location,” Nedra Reynolds, like the other scholars whose work is discussed here, focuses on Aristotelian ethos and the written text. She re-figures ethos in such a way, however, as to make the body of the writer/speaker present and essential to our understanding of the concept.

Reynolds offers an account of the etymology of the term ethos, noting that “its Greek roots are habit, custom, and character,” (327) and may have been used to denote “an accustomed place,” according to Arthur B. Miller (310, quoted in Reynolds 327). Reynolds, following Halloran, suggests that the etymological origins of ethos establish its connection to “space, place, or location” and situate the construction of a credible or authoritative ethos as a “social act” that depends not only on the individual rhetor but also on the social context and/or community in which the rhetor speaks or writes (327, 329), and thus also the “location or position from which that person speaks or writes” (326). Reynolds then describes two nontraditional sites or locations in/from which feminists have (re)constructed ethos: the “margins” and the “betweens.”

Although Reynolds focuses her analysis on written texts, her discussion of the “margins” and the “betweens” as sites of ethos, as well as her central metaphor of ethos
as location, help us trace a path to Isocratean *ethos*. In her discussion of the “margins,” Reynolds cites, among others, the work of Adrienne Rich and Donna Haraway. Reynolds claims that these theorists have opted not to “argu[e] a move to the center” for traditionally silenced and oppressed groups, but “to change the structure altogether, so that authority [ethos] can be claimed even by those whose differences are marked, and whose distance from the center is considerable” (330). Rich advocates greater attentiveness to the materiality of the places from which we speak and grounding that locatedness in the body; Haraway argues for “situated and embodied knowledges” and against “various forms of unlocatable, and so irresponsible knowledge claims” (583).

Both of these theorists claim authority, according to Reynolds, “by being responsible—by stating explicitly their identities, positions or locations, and political goals” (330).

One hears echoes of Joan Lipkin’s insistence on “naming and claiming the specific whenever possible” in Reynolds’ (as well as Rich’s and Haraway’s) statements (Lipkin, “Who Speaks” 105); the question of “responsibility” in relationship to *ethos* is one to which I will return. At this juncture I wish to emphasize the ways in which both Rich and Haraway claim their authority on the “margins.” Rich claims that in order to locate oneself one must “[b]egin...with the geography closest in—the body” (212). She then particularizes her claim, suggesting that instead of “the body,” one must write or speak of and from “my body,” for to do so “plunges” one into “particularity,” into the “politics of location” (215). As Rich names her body, from the moment of her birth, as both white and female, she points out that from the very beginning her body had multiple identities, thus resisting the idea that embodiment is equivalent to stasis and reification. Instead, Rich rejects any such “longing for certainty” and emphasizes the varied and
changing “conditions” that that body exists within, acts upon, and is acted upon by,
offering as an example the way in which the literal geographic location of her Jewish
body in North America during World War II—instead of in Prague or Amsterdam—
spared her the horrors of persecution in the Holocaust. Had Rich been otherwise located,
she writes, “I would be some body else. . . . Or I might be in no body at all” (216).
Naming and claiming one’s location(s)—and thus one’s ethos, according to Reynolds—
begins with one’s body.

Haraway’s argument for “situated and embodied knowledges” begins, in a sense,
with the body as well, as it is based upon a visual metaphor that “insist[s] . . . on the
particularity and embodiment of all vision” (189). Though Haraway specifies that she is
not necessarily arguing for “organic embodiment” and refuses a feminist embodiment
that is situated in a “fixed location in a reified body” (195, emphasis mine), she is, as
she puts it, arguing for “the view from a body, always a complex, contradictory,
structuring and structured body” (195). Like Rich, Haraway avoids totalizing “the
body” and refers instead to “a body.” The “view from a body” is a partial view, a
located view, a view “from below,” as Haraway describes “the margins” (191).
Whether one is situated at the “center” or the “margins,” to make “unlocatable”
knowledge claims, according to Haraway, is to make “irresponsible” claims.

I wish to suggest that Reynolds’ turn to Rich and Haraway—and my expanded
analyses of their work—suggests, as does Aristotle’s attention to the context of the courts
and reaction against the persuasive role that the “person” might play in that context, a
turn to Isocratean ethos. Isocratean ethos, as I noted earlier, has likely been dismissed
due to its connection with or assumed descendence from Platonic ethos, an embodied
*ethos* that relies and even insists upon a stable, unified "self," a "fixed location in a reified body," to borrow Haraway's terms (195). Isocratean *ethos*, I propose, differs from Platonic *ethos* in Isocrates' attention to that very issue of context and locatability that Reynolds addresses. In "Against the Sophists," Isocrates does not simply reject those teachers who taught blanket formulas for persuasive speaking for a fee of "three or four minae"; he also rejects philosophers such as Plato who seek "absolute truth," for, as translator George Norlin points out, Isocrates did not believe that there was any "'science' which can teach us to do under all circumstances the things which will insure our happiness and success" (46). Instead, Isocrates emphasized *kairos*, "fitness to the occasion," as an integral element of effective communication, thus acknowledging the great importance of the social context—the location—in and from which one spoke.

Isocratean *ethos*, then, is an embodied *ethos* in which the "person" of the speaker or writer is neither ignored nor reified. It is an embodied, located *ethos*, subject to "shifts and changes" across texts and contexts, between speaker, text, audience, and context (Reynolds 326), and these negotiations "between" are yet another space in which *ethos* may be located (332). Isocratean *ethos*, then, to return again to Haraway's terms, is "limited" and "situated," partial and particular—and therefore responsible (190).

But it is not merely irresponsible to make unlocatable, unsituated claims, as all of these theorists—and Joan Lipkin—have suggested. According to Reynolds, "*ethos cannot be determined outside of the space in which it was created*" (329, emphasis mine). If one cannot "locate" *ethos*, in the sense of situating it as Rich, Haraway, and Reynolds propose, *then ethos cannot be located in the sense that it cannot be found*. If, as noted earlier, *ethos* is the "controlling factor of persuasion," a text absent *ethos* would
have little or no rhetorical efficacy. If ethos is the controlling factor of persuasion, then it must necessarily play a role in beyonding persuasion. What happens, then, when we go looking for ethos where it can’t be found?¹⁰

Re-figureing Ethos: Feminist Theatre as Feminist Rhetoric

Cherry’s work on ethos and persona suggests that ethos can be found and analyzed in literary works such as plays; Reynolds proposes that ethos is location and without it we cannot find ethos; Isocrates, Rich, and Haraway suggest that ethos begins with a body situated in a knowable, claimed context. Here again we come to a place where theatrical performance can help us to see how these theories play out in practice, in the performances of playwright Jane Martin. In the previous two chapters, I have introduced my analysis of the playwright at hand and her plays with a brief history and comments from the playwright herself on her work. My discussion of Jane Martin will—indeed must—proceed somewhat differently, as “Jane Martin” is a pseudonym for a playwright who has chosen to remain anonymous in almost every sense. The only biographical detail made public by the writer—and thus all we know of her ethos (if we adhere to Cherry’s distinctions, which place ethos closest to the “historical author” in a literary text and the writer’s “real” self in a “nonliterary” text)—is that Martin is a playwright who resides in the state of Kentucky.

Martin presents an interesting case in relation to my exploration of beyonding persuasion, and I include this case study more for what we can learn about ethos from Martin’s anonymity than for what the actual playtexts can teach us about beyonding persuasion. Certainly one can argue that a number of Martin’s plays do in some sense
beyond persuasion. Martin often structured the earlier plays (Talking With, Vital Signs) as a series of monologues, a structure which allowed for surprising juxtapositions and direct addresses to the audience, reminding the spectators that they were in fact in a theatre watching a performance; later plays such as Keely and Du and Mr. Bundy follow a more conventional dramatic structure but refuse to “take sides” on the issues of abortion and Megan’s Law that each, respectively addresses.

I wish to suggest, however, that reading and viewing the work of Martin, a playwright absent an embodied and located ethos, complicates and refines what it means to beyond persuasion. The public knows that “Jane Martin” is a playwright who lives in Kentucky. It is also a fact that the majority of Martin’s works, including Talking With (1982), Vital Signs (1990), Cementville (1991), Keely and Du (1993), Middle-Aged White Guys (1995), Jack and Jill (1996) and Mr. Bundy (1998), have premiered at Actors Theatre of Louisville in Louisville, Kentucky to general acclaim. It is also a fact that the only two people who know Martin’s true identity are Jon Jory, former artistic director of Actors Theatre and director of all but one of Martin’s premieres, and Actors Theatre producing director Alexander Speer, who also serves as Martin’s trustee.

Thus, we can locate Martin geographically and professionally. We cannot, however, locate Martin, as Isocrates (and Rich and Haraway) would have it, from the body outwards. Although the chosen pseudonym is feminine, Actors Theatre officials “will neither confirm nor deny that Martin is a woman” (Dodds L19), nor will they comment with any specificity on any other aspect of the playwright’s person. “Jane Martin” is, then, a discursive construct, a textual performance of sorts. As characterized by Actors Theatre and theatre officials—what I call the “sanctioned” part of this
performance—"Jane Martin" is comprised primarily of former artistic director Jon
Jory's remarks, reluctantly offered to and frequently quoted by critics, and
representations of Martin in theatre newsletters and press releases.

Jane Martin: The Sanctioned Ethos

The official story is that Martin anonymously slipped the manuscript of
"Twirler," one of the monologues that would later find its way into the full-length play
*Talking With*, under the door of the theatre, and that it took some time for Jory to
discover who she was. "Twirler," in fact, was presented at the 1981 Actors Theatre
SHORTS festival under the appellation "Anonymous"; the pseudonym first appeared
with Martin's first full-length play *Talking With*, which debuted in 1982. Jory is
reportedly the only one to have ever conversed with the mysterious playwright, and,
consequently, he bears the burden of answering most of the queries made about Martin.
When questioned about the playwright, he generally focuses his replies on Martin's
works; when pressed to discuss Martin the writer, he demurs and/or constructs "Jane
Martin" as a recluse. Martin "doesn't want to deal with being a public figure," he states
in an article in the *Los Angeles Times* (Stayton F10); similarly, he tells a *Chicago
Tribune* reviewer, "She doesn't want to be [known as] a 'writer'" (Miller 16). Jory also
maintains that Martin's anonymity is crucial to her ability to produce texts; in *Time*
magazine he reports that Martin "honestly feels, for whatever reason, that she couldn't
write plays if people knew who she was and what she was" (Henry 71). The "what"
most likely refers to Martin's sex, though it might well refer to ethnicity, sexual
orientation, (dis)ability, class, or social position. Though he consistently uses "she" to
refer to Martin, Jory, as noted above, will not identify whether “Jane Martin” is a pseudonym for a male or female writer.

The pseudonym itself, especially the choice of “Jane,” is notable for its suggestions of “Jane Doe” as well as “plain Jane”; it signifies a sort of faceless Everywoman. Martin remains literally faceless in the Humana Festival newsletters that have been published annually since 1985. Each newsletter previews that year’s festival plays and typically includes a brief biography and accompanying photo of each featured playwright. Although Jane Martin is the festival’s most-produced playwright, neither the writer’s photo, nor, of course, a traditional biography, ever appears.

To illustrate: next to the “biography” accompanying the 1991 feature on Cementville are, in place of photos of the playwright, two photographs from the 1990 production of Vital Signs. The headline “Who is Jane Martin?” precedes a brief article in which Martin is identified as “a Kentuckian”; the remainder of the “biography” is composed of a production history and bibliography of Martin’s other previously produced and published plays. In the 1993 newsletter in which Keely and Du was the featured play, Jane Martin’s photograph is replaced by the headline, “Talking About...Jane Martin,” a wordplay on the title Talking With. There is, of course, no “talking with” Jane Martin, as there is with others of the playwrights included in the document. The playwright’s biography here is replaced by a collection of quotations drawn from reviews of previous performances of her plays; for the most part, these excerpts focus on the writer’s texts, rather than the writer: the Philadelphia Inquirer on Talking With: “The monologue has taken an aspect of a new poetic form...”; The Irish Times on Vital
Signs: “A kind of thoughtful verbal ballet” (12). Accompanying the quotations is an article previewing *Keely and Du*, introduced by the curiously ironic title, “Who is Accountable?” (Dixcy 12).  

Another “biography” accompanies the preview of *Middle-Aged White Guys*, Martin’s 1995 Humana Festival entry. Martin is called a “southerner with a caustic wit,” but the bulk of the piece focuses on a description of southern humor (Palmer 3). In contrast to the 1993 newsletter, which seemed to gloss over the absence of Martin’s photograph, the 1995 newsletter conspicuously marks off two rectangular boxes the size of wallet photos. Playwright Marsha Norman, whose biography also appears on this page, smiles out from one; Jane Martin’s “photo box,” however, is occupied by a line drawing of a writer’s quill. This graphic image recalls the “picture” of Martin in the photographic collage accompanying the preview of the 1993 Humana Festival in the *Louisville Courier-Journal*, in which a question mark was substituted for Martin’s photo.

Jane Martin’s *ethos* as constructed in these texts is characterized by absence, not only of photographs and biographical detail, but also of *attention to* that absence. Since 1991, no mention is made of Martin’s pseudonymous status in the annual newsletter; we have only the byline, “By Jane Martin,” with its connotations of generic anonymity and identity-lessness. “Jane Martin” as represented in these texts is faceless, bodiless, even, in a sense, voiceless, for unlike the other playwrights, she never speaks on her own behalf. The *ethos* of “Jane Martin” sanctioned by theatre officials, then, is one characterized by an absence of *ethos*. Martin’s *ethos* is disembodied, it is unlocatable and unsituated. Martin’s *ethos*—Isocratean *ethos*—cannot be found.

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What does this absence signify? Isocratean ethos implies the necessity of a body from which text “proceeds”; “there is ethos precisely because there is a body, because there is a material presence that ‘stands before’ the text that it speaks and writes” (Baumlin xxiv). When we turn to Martin’s plays, then, we are essentially without a speaking subject, a situation that has potentially significant repercussions for the ways in which the plays themselves are received. Can a disembodied ethos, without location, effectively enable persuasion? Can it beyond persuasion? Is it possible for critics, for an audience, to read or watch Martin’s plays “without already having received [them] as the expression of an intentional being with a particular...history” (Fish 12)? I submit that the answer to all three of these questions is “no,” and I begin with answering the latter question in order to explain my answer to the first two: it appears that it is not possible for critics and other audience members to read or watch Martin’s plays without presupposing a particular speaker with a particular history, for in the absence of an embodied and located “Jane Martin” ethos, ethos gets (re)constructed for Martin.

Jane Martin: The Plays

Let us begin—as many critics have—with the plays themselves, with Aristotle. Can we not discover an ethos for/of “Jane Martin” there, from reading and viewing Jane Martin’s works? An analysis of Aristotelian ethos is complicated in the analysis of plays, of course, because we have only the literary texts populated with characters, personae, from which to work. Keeping in mind Cherry’s distinctions and cautions, I offer an overview of Martin’s oeuvre, focusing on her full-length plays, to see what kind of ethos critics have (re)constructed from Martin’s works.
Jane Martin’s first play to receive critical attention and acclaim was *Talking With*, written in 1980 and first performed in 1982 as part of the Actors Theatre of Louisville’s 6th Annual Humana Festival of New American Plays. The play consists of twelve self-contained monologues, each spoken by a different female character. The women include a heartbroken actress wishing she could genuinely connect with the people sitting on the other side of the footlights (“Fifteen Minutes”), an aging woman who finds herself enchanted with lamps and lamplight as the end of her days nears (“Lamps”), and a homeless woman who believes in the healing powers of a McDonald’s Big Mac (“French Fries”). One of the most moving pieces in the play is “Twirler,” in which a girl named April March describes with awe and simple humility how she saw the face of God in her arcing baton before her hand was crushed in a riding accident and she could no longer “twirl at the highest level” (18). The play closes with “Marks,” the poignant and eerie tale of Alain, a tattooed woman in her early thirties who recognizes the banality of her younger days after she is slashed across the face by an attacker and the scar seems to draw others to her. Thereafter, she records the people and experiences that have marked her emotionally with literal marks on her body.

Though the monologues at first seem unrelated to one another, by play’s end one can see that each character is caught up in a search for the sacred, inevitably idiosyncratic and occasionally troubling in its manifestations: the act of baton twirling, a scarring knife wound, lamplight, and, in “French Fries,” the indestructible substance of plastic. These women’s voices are “authentic cries from the heartland,” according to the *New York Times’* Frank Rich. “Like a gallery of Diane Arbus’s photographs come to life,” writes
Jack Kroll, Martin’s portraits of women are “American grotesques that are unsettling and moving” (“Talking,” C16; 101).

Martin’s next full-length play, Vital Signs (1990) is also structured as a series of monologues, thirty-four short pieces, written to be performed by a cast of six women and two men. The San Francisco Chronicle refers to Vital Signs as a “female gallery,” echoing Kroll’s metaphor (E4), while the New York Times referred to it as “a vivid collage of 34 glimpses of women at crucial points in their lives” (Gussow, “Plays,” C15). The two male cast members serve primarily as foils and listeners; the focus of the play is on the snapshots the women provide of American life as they experience it. In “Lotto” a middle-aged cleaning woman rejoices over and then gives away her winning lottery ticket for fear that the changes it would bring could ruin her life; “Truck” features a waitress who tells of her stint at an all-nude truck stop where she was romanced and then unceremoniously dumped by an evangelist. In a bizarre, touching piece entitled “Spiderman,” which might be read as a commentary on our culture’s preoccupation with popular culture and the myth of the man-as-superhero who saves the day (not to mention the girl), a woman insists she was rescued from a burning building by Spiderman on her honeymoon. After her marriage broke up, she dated the superhero and became pregnant by him, and now, she relates tearfully, “filament spins out of [her] body” and she is “beginning to climb” (131).

Some of the monologues are primarily comic, such as “No Personality,” in which Miss Latonia proudly shares that the tests have revealed that she, indeed, has no personality; others recount more harrowing moments such as the night one woman’s pet iguana was shot by her boyfriend when he flashed back to combat in Vietnam. Together
the monologues paint an unforgettable picture of the drama in ordinary women’s stories. Critic Gerald Nachman of the *Chronicle* sees the play’s focus on these stories as evidence of what he calls the characters’ and the playwright’s “understated, but quite audible, feminist sensibility” (E4).

In 1991 Martin wrote *Cementville*, a violently comic study of the underworld of second-tier professional lady wrestlers that includes still another character “in Martin’s gallery of memorably etched women,” the penultimate stage mother, Mother Crocker, whose precocious (if not psychotic) daughters are determined to steal the show (Mootz 1D). Then, in 1992, Martin produced *Criminal Hearts*, the story of Ata, a high-strung agoraphobic whose husband has left her, and Bo, the hardened con-woman who breaks into Ata’s apartment and inadvertently forges a friendship with her.

The 1993 Humana Festival of New American Plays saw a shift in Martin’s work as the playwright moved from the comic into the tragic. In *Keely and Du* the two title characters, Keely, a young woman pregnant with the child of her abusive ex-husband, and Du, an elderly Christian anti-abortion advocate, form a bond even unlikelier than that of Ata’s and Bo’s, and with far more devastating consequences. The two women are called the some of the “most vivid” women characters Martin has created (Mootz, “*Keely*,” D3), and while some critics felt the play to be focused on “social issues,” it is, ultimately, as much about the two women’s relationship as it is about the abortion debate. I discuss *Keely and Du* at greater length, below.

*Keely and Du* was followed by the farcical *Middle-Aged White Guys* (1995) which takes place on the anniversary of the suicide of R.V., a pistol of a woman who comes back to haunt the three brothers who loved her. Next came *Jack and Jill* (1996) a
seriocomedy that "mines the treacherous depths of modern wedlock" as experienced by
the two title characters, and Mr. Bundy (1998) a play that explores the tensions that
arise between Catherine and her husband Robert when a convicted but presumably
reformed child molester moves into their neighborhood and befriends their eight-year-old
daughter.

Immediately apparent in this catalogue of Martin's work, especially in those
works preceding and including Keely and Du (the group that, I would argue, contains
Martin's strongest works), is Martin's preoccupation with women characters, voices,
friendships, relationships, and issues. Critics and reviewers have consistently highlighted
the playwright's "gift for depicting obsessive women in monologues of self-revelation"
(Gussow, "Plays," C15). The female characters who populate Martin's plays are, for
the most part, complex, individual, fully realized women whose voices and experiences
ring true. "Martin has always been a sure portraitist in her creation of vivid, perverse,
D3), and there are many critics and audience members who agree.

The ethos constructed through a reading of Martin's plays, especially the early
ones, supports to a degree the "sanctioned" Martin ethos. One might, in reading
Martin's plays with an eye toward discerning ethos in its Aristotelian configuration, posit
a writer who possesses a keen empathy for and understanding of women and women's
relationships to one another. One might even identify such a playwright, an anonymous
recluse who writes in the voices of marginalized women—rural voices, forgotten voices,
the injured and disenfranchised—as one who writes, in Reynolds' terms, from the
margins. One might surmise that, as the pseudonym suggests, Martin is in fact a woman.
But Martin does not claim such a location or site of authority, for the playwright does not speak or write (in any way that can be definitively identified) outside of the playtexts themselves. Martin might be said then, implicitly, to claim or locate authority in anonymity itself: the only official comment Martin has ever authorized Jory to make on her behalf, according to Jory, is that Martin wants to avoid fame. "She allowed as how that was alright to say, that she just doesn't want to deal with being a writer when she walks into a room" (qtd. in Erstein, "Keely," 4J). But an ethos of anonymity returns us to an ethos without location, without a person, disembodied.

"Who is Jane Martin?"

Returning to the distinction Cherry makes between personae and ethos in literary texts, we are reminded that the personae, the characters in the play, are not necessarily similar to and in fact might be far removed from the ethos of the historical writer, the location of the "real" writer. While the first impulse may be to look for the ethos of the playwright in the characters he or she has created, many of the critics reviewing Martin's work were aware of the possible distance between character and writer, and did not assume that the characters within the plays were a reliable means of locating Martin's ethos. Many were, in fact, distrustful of such an equation, and immediately been asking, as reviewer Jack Kroll did in the first line of his 1982 review of the Actors Theater of Louisville production of Talking With at the Manhattan Theatre Club: "Who is Jane Martin?" (101).

Frank Rich of the New York Times also opened his review of the same play with a paragraph devoted to the "pseudonymous Miss Martin" who "has kept her identity a
tightly held secret" ("Talking," C16). The mystery of Martin’s identity, it appears, was newsworthy from the start. In the nineteen years since the monologue “Twirler” debuted at the 1981 SHORTS festival, the identity of “Jane Martin” has been a subject of constant fascination, frustration, and speculation. I suggest, however, that the preoccupation with Martin’s anonymity reveals more than humans’ love of a good mystery. It demonstrates that, rhetorically, we need to know who is speaking to us, why, and from where. We need ethos.

This fact is made evident by the responses of critics to “Jane Martin.” The majority have found the incompleteness of the playwright’s character as constructed in the “sanctioned” performance unsatisfactory, for “it’s impossible to conceive of a dramatist so modest in person, so saintly in avoidance of fame’s corrupting spotlight, that anonymity is a chosen way of professional life” (Mootz, “Playwright’s,” 12). Neither are these critics satisfied with discerning an authorial ethos in and through the texts of the plays, for as the later plays have continued to diversify in tone and subject matter, it has become increasingly difficult to construct an ethos in the Aristotelian tradition. In response to what they perceive as the absence of a believable or viable ethos in the theatre’s construction of “Jane Martin” and in Martin’s texts, a number of critics have rejected the sanctioned Martin ethos and the construction of an Aristotelian ethos and constructed their own (Isocratean) accounts of the playwright’s character.

Some theories are more tenable than others. Early suggestions—quickly discarded—included the late Colonel Harlan Sanders and Phyllis George (Rich, “Talking,” C16); others suggested, a bit more realistically, Susan Kingsley, an Actors Theatre company member. Kingsley, tragically, was killed in a car accident in 1984,
however, and "Jane Martin" kept writing. Critic Lawrence DeVine playfully conjures a contemporary Emily Dickinson-esque scenario of a woman in a "shadowy" room upstairs writing amidst "wafts of lavender sachet and dust motes," Irish curtains on the windows and an RC-Cola on the desk (DeVine, "World Premiere," G1). One reviewer has even claimed that Martin "often don[s] a variety of disguises at premieres"—a curious proposition, since no one knows what the playwright looks like in the first place (Hurt-Patterson 15).

Regardless of the finer points of individuals' speculations, the (re)constructions of Martin almost invariably take the form of finding a body upon which to pin the pseudonym, and much of the speculation surrounding that body is related to the undecidability of the writer's sex—in all probability, due to the writer's focus on women. Kroll followed his opening question "Who is Jane Martin?" with "Well, she (or he, or they) is a pseudonymous playwright. . ." (101), and similar asides, such as "She (or he?) is a brilliant playwright" appear frequently in reviews (Kerekes 9D). In a similar vein, Columbus Dispatch theatre critic Michael Grossberg opened his review of Keely and Du with the statement, "An anonymous playwright made a bigger name for herself/himself during the weekend at the 17th annual Humana Festival. . ." (1G).

Significantly, the most common (re)construction of Jane Martin by critics is to name former Actors Theatre artistic director Jon Jory her "alter ego" (Mootz, "Humana," I1). Similarly, others speculate that "Jane Martin" is the pseudonym for a writer or group of writers who collaborate with Jory, with some critics specifically hypothesizing that the collaborator is a woman, others that the collaborator varies by play.
There are a variety of reasons for Jory's being the favored body upon which "Jane Martin" gets pinned (or, perhaps, penned). The two most obvious reasons: Jory is the only person who has ever talked with Martin, and he has directed almost all of Martin's premieres, with the exception of the Detroit premiere of *Criminal Hearts* (Jory was busy preparing for an Australian tour with Actors Theatre and so was unavailable to direct).

One of the most commonly cited pieces of evidence that Jory is Martin is the fact that Jory has been known to make small changes in Martin's scripts on the spot in rehearsals—though for more significant alterations, he confers with the playwright and does not return an answer or rewrite to the rehearsal hall for several days. Some claim to hear a "male voice" coming through some of Martin's work, and certainly stage directions such as those in "Marks" in *Talking With*—"A woman sits on a bar stool. She is in her early forties but attractive"—could be said to indicate a male perspective (31, emphasis mine). As noted earlier, the more recent plays have evidenced differences in tone; *Jack and Jill* was criticized by many 1996 Humana Festival goers for what many felt was, in contrast to Martin's previous female characters, an unflattering and unsympathetic characterization of Jill.

Those who propose that Jory collaborates with others often base their speculations on these differences and the incredible range displayed by Martin in the shifts seen in the playwright's work over the past five years. *Talking With* and *Vital Signs* were of a piece in their poetic language, idiosyncratic characters, rich theatrical metaphors, and blend of comedy and poignancy. The raucousness of *Cementville* seemed a result of carrying Martin's already half-cocked characters to their logical comic extreme, and the same might be said of Ata and Bo in *Criminal Hearts* and the entire cast of the
near-farcical *Middle-Aged White Guys*. In contrast to these works, the spare language, relentless focus, and deadly serious rage of *Keely and Du* sounded like the words of a different playwright, as did the urban and modern tones of *Jack and Jill* and the straightforwardness of the central characters in *Mr. Bundy*. "The differences are enough," writes William Mootz, "to justify one of the speculations about Martin's identity: namely, that she is not one but several writers toiling away in collaboration with Jon Jory" ("Playwright's," 16).

What to make of this preoccupation with the question, "Who is Jane Martin?"

The accumulation of speculations, on the whole, suggests that the audience in a given rhetorical situation—including a theatrical rhetorical situation—desires and needs a speaker and an understanding of that speaker's character in order to respond rhetorically to a text. Isocrates notes that the speaker must "establish a most honorable name among his fellow-citizens" in order to be persuasive (339). "Jane Martin" suggests that the rhetor need not only establish the name, but also a body, a person with whom that name is reliably associated. Thus, if one reads "honorable" as meaning not merely "honest" or "of good character," but "believable" in the sense that the audience is sure of whom it is they are listening to, then persuasion is at least in part dependent on the Isocratean, and, I would add, feminist, model of a prior, embodied, located ethos. Beyonding persuasion, then, as a process that moves through persuasion to the other side, is also dependent on the presence of an embodied and locatable ethos. And here's the rub: there is a radical difference in "Jane Martin," reclusive female Kentuckiana playwright writing about and from the margins, and "Jane Martin," alter ego of the male artistic director of a nationally acclaimed regional theatre company—a location at the center, if ever there was one. This
consequences of this difference become even more clear when we turn to an analysis of *Keely and Du* and specific critical responses to the play that suggest that critics’ perceptions of Jane Martin’s *ethos* play a significant role in the ways in which the playwright’s texts do—or do not—successfully beyond persuasion.

*Keely and Du*

*Keely and Du* premiered at the 17th Annual Humana Festival of New American Plays in March of 1993 at Actors Theatre of Louisville, in Kentucky. The production was directed by Jon Jory and starred veteran actress Anne Pitoniak at Du and Julie Boyd as Keely, and featured ATL company member Bob Burrus as Walter and J. Ed Araiza as Cole. The play was an immediate critical success and was awarded the 1993 American Theatre Critics award for best play; it was also named one of the top ten plays of the year by *Time* magazine. In subsequent years, the play has been performed at regional theatres all over the country, including a production at Connecticut’s Hartford Stage performed by the original cast, and productions at Houston’s Alley Theatre, Atlanta’s Theatre in the Square, and Marin Theatre Company outside San Francisco, to name just a few.

As the play opens, the audience witnesses an elderly woman, Du, straightening the bedclothes on a cast-iron bed in an almost bare basement room. Masked guards bring a young, unconscious women dressed in a hospital gown into the room and place her on the bed, and another man in a mask, Walter, tells Du, “It went very smoothly and cleanly” (259). Walter exits, and the elderly woman looks something up in a chart. She says, “Right-handed” aloud, and then calmly handcuffs the young woman’s left hand to
the bedframe. She folds the young woman's clothes, carefully takes her pulse, and sits down in a rocking chair to wait for her to awaken.

So plays the first scene. Keely and Du is structured in eighteen scenes, some as short as two lines, others ten to fifteen minutes in length. As the play unfolds, the audience discovers that Keely, who is pregnant as a result of being raped by her abusive ex-husband, has been abducted by a group of radical anti-abortion activists as she attempted to enter an abortion clinic, and has been spirited into what her kidnappers call the “Lord's underground” (287). When Walter, the patriarchal, evangelical preacher in charge of “Operation Retrieval,” next returns, he will reveal the activists' plan: Keely will be kept confined in the spare cell, watched over by Du, until she has reached the third trimester of her pregnancy, at which time it will be too late to abort. She will then have the choice of raising the baby or giving it up for adoption, and she herself will be held up by the group as an example for other rape victims seeking an abortion.

Keely and Du can be said to beyond persuasion in its characterizations and structure. The series of brief scenes allow for juxtapositions of character and the belief systems each holds sacred; they also provide space for questions to be raised and left unanswered. For example, in Scene 2, the audience “meets” Keely for the first time when she awakens. When she discovers that she is handcuffed to the bedframe, Keely becomes hysterical, twisting and turning until she falls off the bed, screaming at Du, begging to know why she is there, pleading with her to take the handcuffs off because they are hurting her. At this point Keely has the audience's sympathy. She has been trapped and caged as if she were an animal, and neither she nor the audience knows why. Her appearance is one of absolute vulnerability: she is dressed in a hospital gown, cuffed
to the bed. We learn that she takes care of her sick father, that she is works hard for a living—she is an ordinary woman, a victim, full of fear and desperation, worried about her job and her family: “My dad’s alone. He needs to be fed. Do you understand that?” (260). The fact that Du sits stoically, not responding to Keely’s pleas, only heightens the sympathy the audience feels for Keely.

Sympathies shift in the next scenes, however, as Du brings in water for Keely to bathe and trays of food for her to eat, and Keely hatefully and violently rejects Du’s overtures, screaming at her and knocking the trays of food onto the floor. Since Keely refuses to talk to Du, Du talks aloud to herself, and reveals herself to be far more human than one typically imagines a kidnapper to be. “Are you a bath person or a shower person?” she asks Keely. “I was bath, but I changed over when I got so I didn’t like looking at myself. You’re so aware of yourself in a bath, don’t you think?” (260-61). The audience glimpses Du in this moment as a vulnerable, self-conscious, and perhaps even wise woman. Du goes on to talk about her three boys and their love of basketball, a game she never understood the point of. She is no longer simply a kidnapper: she is a woman, a wife, a mother; she has arthritis, a good sense of humor, likes and dislikes. By the end of Scene 4, the audience likes both of these women, empathizes with them, as characters, as people.

When Walter reappears in Scene 5 and reveals the details of Keely’s abduction to Keely and the audience, the two women’s belief systems become clearly polarized: Du is a part of “Operation Retrieval,” a group of citizens so committed to their anti-abortion cause that they are willing to resort to kidnapping; Keely, on the other hand, believes it is her right to choose: “I’m not a goddamn teenager. You’re not God. I want an abortion!”
But Keely and Du are not simply mouthpieces for opposing viewpoints; the opening scenes have cast them as complex and sympathetic characters, put a face in place of the polemic, and the two women's characters grow only more complex as the play develops.

Of all the characters, Walter is the most apt to preach. A virtual fountain of anti-abortion rhetoric, he is at times, as even Du admits, "insufferable" (284). But even so, he is so deeply sincere in his belief that God is on his side, that abortion is murder, that he is saving a life, that even he cannot be quickly dismissed as a crank or a villain. Furthermore, Walter’s attempts to shock Keely with graphic photos and descriptions of procedures, and his frustrated outbursts when she refuses to listen, serve as a foil for Du’s more temperate, though equally staunch, expressions of her beliefs. When Walter, at one point, angrily grabs Keely’s chin to force her to look at him, Du stops him with a sharp “That’s enough!” (267), a character choice that raises the question of whether Du, even complicit as she is in Keely’s abduction, is capable of completely sacrificing her humanity to ideology.

The structure of the play enables such questions, and asks them relentlessly, sometimes directly. When Du talks about the rights of the unborn baby, Keely asks, “[A]m I just beside the point, handcuffed to this bed, carrying the results of being fucked by my ex-husband while he banged my head off a hardwood floor to shut me up[?]” Du can only answer, “I’m sorry” (270). When Walter brings in pamphlets on abortion and asks Keely to look at the pictures, he tells her, “If you cannot look at these photographs, Keely, you have no right to your opinions. You know that’s true” (271). The scene closes with her looking at the photographs, leaving the audience asking: does Walter
have a point, or is he just spreading propaganda? What is the difference between information and propaganda when it comes to something as freighted and controversial as abortion?

Most of the questions raised do not have easy answers. Would Keely change her mind if she had more information? Is the unborn child a “separate life” from the mother who carries and sustains it as it develops (263)? Is kidnapping in the name of saving lives—if one considers abortion to be murder—a “moral right” (Henry 71)? And—of course—whose right is it to choose? And what does it mean, finally, to “choose life”? Whose life?

Martin’s play can be said to beyond persuasion, then, in that it presents its audience with difficult questions about a polarizing issue without taking sides or telling the audience what to think. Walter’s graphic description of the abortion procedure “Suction Curettage” is juxtaposed with Keely’s graphic description of the horrors of her rape. Whose life? All of the characters have good reasons for the choices they make, for the convictions they hold. Du lost her only daughter as an infant after three heart operations; every baby’s life is sacred to her. Her “suitable” husband “bored [her] perfectly silent” until she and her husband found God; religion was and is her personal salvation (276). Keely was raped and fears that her ex-husband will never leave her alone if she has his baby; she fears that the baby will be born out of anger and hatred and “being chained to a bed” (279). Keely has never been alone, never been allowed to make her own decisions; first she cared for her brother, then her husband, then her paralyzed father. She is neither emotionally nor financially prepared to raise a child.
The play asks the audience: how do you answer the question, "Whose life?" Any answer one might proffer is complicated by the fact that over the course of the play, Du and Keely, ideological opponents, forge an emotional bond with one another and in doing so, grow increasingly sympathetic as characters. It is a shattering irony that it is this bond that enables the devastating climax of the play.

Although Keely vehemently resists Du's ministrations at first, the two women, left alone together for days at a time, gradually begin to open up to one another. By the time Keely's birthday arrives, they have arrived at a sort of personal—though not ideological—truce, and Du offers to break a few rules to help Keely celebrate. Du smuggles in the dress that Keely was wearing when she was abducted—freshly dry-cleaned for the occasion—so that the captive can wear real clothes for a day, and uncuffs her wrists so the two can share a six-pack. A little drunk, Keely breaks down and tells Du about the night her husband raped her as Du rocks her like a child.

The next morning the two women are discovered asleep, surrounded by party paraphrenalia, when Walter buzzes at the door. They hurriedly shove beer bottles under the bed and the dress under the bedsheets. Against her angry objections, Walter has brought Keely's supposedly reformed ex-husband, Cole, to see her; when Cole offers Keely his hand, she sinks in her teeth. The enraged Cole has to be forcibly removed by Walter and Du—leaving Keely alone with the coathanger Du brought the dry-cleaned dress in on. When Du returns, she finds Keely unconscious and bleeding, aborted.

The final scene of the play takes place in the prison where Du is incarcerated, the call she made for medical help to save Keely's life having discovered the kidnapping. Martin appears to have deliberately reversed the roles of the two women in this final
scene: now it is Du who is imprisoned, and she has experienced a slight stroke that leaves her without the use of her left hand, just as Keely, in being cuffed, was without the use of hers. Keely visits Du, bringing her breakfast from McDonald’s, again echoing the early scenes; Keely does all the talking, just as Du had in the beginning. “Every time I come here I come to forgive you,” Keely says. “Why can’t I say it?” When she tears up describing the man who sat next to her at a Judds concert with a little girl on his lap, Du finally speaks. “Why?” she asks. After a pause, Keely answers her: “Why?” And the lights fade, leaving the audience to find their own answers to each woman’s question (299-300). In the end, “[t]he only consensus about abortion which Keely and Du offers is that there is no consensus” (Allen).

A majority of critics have lauded the play for what they perceive as its even-handedness. “Pro-Life or Pro-Choice...you be the judge” reads the headline of one positive review (Hurt-Patterson 15). Several critics note that the play allows the audience access to and asks questions of both anti-abortion and pro-choice perspectives, and as such “is destined to antagonize people of passionate belief on both sides of the [abortion] conflict” (Mootz, “Keely,” D3). Shifting focus from the plays to the playwright, another critic writes that “Martin plays fair” (Grossberg, “Humana,” G1). And another: “The author maintains a dispassionate balance between both the personalities and the arguments, yet never allows the audience’s sense of horror to diminish” (Nowlan C).

These comments suggest that Martin’s play successfully beyonds persuasion: through richly realized characters and deliberate, careful construction, Martin moves beyond persuasion-to-polemic to a balanced presentation of conflicting perspectives that
in their dissonance give rise to questions that invite, even require, the audience’s participation to answer. But can critics respond to the rhetoricity of a text without an understanding of the speaker’s character, the speaker’s ethos? If theatre, as Joan Lipkin characterizes it, is a “public conversation,” what difference does it make whom one is talking with?

Not all critics felt that the play’s evenhandedness was a positive feature. Instead, a few critics saw the play as simply ambivalent, irresolute—one might best say “wishy-washy.” Though fewer in number than those who praised the play, I believe that there is something important to be learned from these voices on, as Reynolds would have it, the margins, for they demonstrate most clearly what role an embodied, locatable ethos plays in rhetorical efficacy.

As noted earlier, in the absence of an identifiable body, a “material presence that ‘stands before’ the text” from which the text proceeds (Baumlin xxiv), both the theatre and critics have (re)constructed Martin’s ethos. Two contradictory versions of “Jane Martin” have resulted: a reclusive female who gives voice to other marginalized women (an ethos that is, to some degree, reflected in Martin’s early scripts and Keely and Du); and a public, powerful male. A comparison of two specific critics’ responses to Keely and Du illuminates how and why these contradictory constructions of Martin’s ethos can alter the rhetorical effect of the play itself.

Mel Gussow of the New York Times does little to call attention to the Martin performance in his review of the 1993 Humana Festival, titled “Plays by Women, for Anyone and Mostly About Violence” (C15), although he demonstrates his familiarity with it by referring early in his review to “[t]he pseudonymous Jane Martin” (C15).
Gussow does not question or speculate on Martin’s identity; he appears to have constructed an *ethos* for Martin which is primarily influenced by Martin’s actual texts as well as the sanctioned Martin performance, repeatedly referring to the playwright as “Ms. Martin” and focusing his remarks on the “understanding of the intensity of the arguments” surrounding the abortion issue and the sensitive portrayal of female characters that Martin’s work exhibits. Gussow gives *Keely and Du* a rhetorical thumbs up; he states that the play is “compelling in its urgency” and claims that Martin has successfully negotiated the “irreconcilable conflicts” of the abortion issue. For Gussow, *Keely and Du* succeeds in beyonding persuasion: it clearly situates the issue as unresolvable and asks its audience to consider their own views on abortion in light of that fact. He concludes his review with the statement that “led by Ms. Martin,” the festival playwrights “probed questions of personal and family responsibility” (C19). Gussow, who ignores the conflicting constructions of Martin’s antecedent *ethos* and constructs his own version of a stable speaking subject perceives Martin’s play as politically and rhetorically efficacious.

Karen Fricker of the London *Financial Times* does not. Fricker explicitly reads Martin’s play through the destabilized *ethos* of conflicting constructions, opening her discussion of *Keely and Du* with the following:

> This year’s most talked about offering is *Keely and Du*, a play about abortion by one of the Festival’s most prolific and mysterious writers, Jane Martin. Jane Martin is a pseudonym, and it is widely believed that “she” is Actors Theater (sic) Artistic Director Jon Jory, who directed *Keely and Du*. (n. pag.)

Fricker, like Gussow, reviews the entire festival in her piece entitled “Dramatic Talent, Step Forward,” but focuses many of her remarks on Martin’s play. Both reviewers also
compare Keely and Du to David Mamet’s Oleanna, but while Gussow claims that “Ms. Martin has done for abortion what David Mamet did for sexual harassment” (C15), Fricker contends that “unlike Mamet, Martin’s pared down style does not expose the heart of the debate he (sic) tries to dramatise.” Fricker closes by noting Martin’s technical strengths as a writer, but claims that they “cannot make up for Keely and Du’s failure to talk about what it is really talking about: a political issue.” For Fricker, who reads Martin’s play through the lack of a determinable ethos—earlier in the review she refuses to count Martin in the list of “women playwrights” who had works premiere at the festival—Keely and Du loses its ability to beyond persuasion. The ambivalence exhibited in the text echoes the ambivalence of Martin’s unstable ethos, and without an embodied, located ethos, a situated speaking subject, the questions and lack of closure that otherwise enable beyonding persuasion seem, simply put, wishy-washy. We are left with a play which, in another critics’ words, “merely demonstrates that both sides have a point” (Soloman 98).

“What does it matter who is speaking?”

Embedded in Fricker’s response to Martin’s play is also the issue of an embodied, locatable ethos as it relates to responsibility. My discussion of “Jane Martin” suggests that it matters a great deal that someone speaks; without a speaker, rhetorical efficacy is compromised. We cannot, in other words, beyond persuasion without its presence. But this analysis of “Jane Martin” also suggests that we must refigure ethos as a rhetorical concept that takes into account who is speaking, why, and from where. My reading of “Jane Martin” complicates our traditional, Aristotelian understanding of ethos as a purely
textual construction and suggests the need for a revised reading of Aristotle that takes his location into greater account. For “Jane Martin” tells us—though perhaps not in her own words—that an embodied, located ethos is necessarily (re)constructed both prior to and within texts, and that that ethos “bears on meaning” in highly significant ways (Alcoff 16).

One theatre critic asks Jon Jory, “Would [Jane Martin’s] plays have the same impact if it turned out they were written by a man?” Jory responds, “Damned if I know” (Miller 17). Yet critics’ responses suggest that Martin’s plays are in fact perceived differently depending on which construction of Martin’s ethos is accepted by the reviewer. Linda Alcoff describes the phenomenon in “The Problem of Speaking for Others”: “Who is speaking to whom turns out to be as important for meaning and truth as what is said; in fact what is said turns out to change according to who is speaking and who is listening” (12). The dangers of making an essentialist argument are only too apparent to me here; I do not wish to claim that only women should or can write about female characters or issues of significance to women. The problematics lie not so much in who is writing about whom as in the absence of an acknowledged subject position in that writing, the absence of location. According to Halloran, “[t]o have ethos is to manifest the virtues most valued by the culture to and for which one speaks” (60, emphasis mine). To ignore the presence of these values, to ignore the context is to have “an ethos that denies the importance of ethos” (63), an ethos that assumes the ability “to transcend one’s location” (Alcoff 7), to claim authority simultaneously from nowhere and everywhere. Yet, according to Susan C. Jarratt and Nedra Reynolds, it is “precisely
the concept of *ethos* in rhetoric that theorizes the positionality inherent in rhetoric—the speaker having been created at a particular site within the contingencies of history and geography" (47).

Thus, the reclamation of an embodied, located, Isocratean *ethos* would demand recognition of this positionality. Such a reclamation would work to establish the necessary presence of the speaker within the rhetorical act at the same time it recognizes the ever-evolving, context-specific nature of that speaker's body, voice, location. For it is only in recognizing *ethos* as always already present and party to our understanding in this way that *ethos* then indeed becomes the enabler of beyonding persuasion.
Notes

1 James Fredal makes this argument in his unpublished dissertation, “Beyond the Fifth Canon: Body Rhetoric in Ancient Greece.”

2 Roger Cherry notes that Cicero discusses the adjectival form ethikon, which he contrasts with patheikon; ethikon is “‘courteous and agreeable, adapted to win goodwill’” (quoted in Cherry 255). He also notes that “Quintilian suggests that there is no exact equivalent in Latin for ethos, but that mores (an individual’s moral constitution) probably comes closest” (255).

3 For essays that discuss the relationship between poststructuralism and ethos, see “Introduction” by James S. Bauml and essays by Alcorn, Corder, Davis and Gross, Jarratt and Reynolds, Short, Sweatingen, and Vitanza in Ethos: New Essays in Rhetorical and Critical Theory; John Schilb’s “The Role of Ethos: Ethics, Rhetoric, and Politics in Contemporary Feminist Theory”; and Jim W. Corder’s “Hunting for Ethos Where They Say It Can’t Be Found.”


11 Where possible, I have avoided using gendered pronouns to refer to Martin (excepting quotations of others), since the playwright’s sex is unknown and I believe that undecidability to be of significance. Hence the “the” and various references to “the playwright” and “the writer” that follow throughout the text.


16 *News for Subscribers and Patrons: 20th Anniversary Humana Festival of New American Plays, Actors
Theatre of Louisville, March 1996."

17 See Ascheim; DeVine in "Louisville"; Erstein in "Future"; Gerard; Grossberg; Kroll; Kerekes; McBain.

18 For those critics who have speculated that Jory is the "real" Jane Martin, see Christiansen; DeVine in
"World Premiere"; Dodds; Dolen; Erstein in "Oddities"; Fricker; Gerard; Jones; Mootz in "Humana";
Pearce; and Stayton. For those who have speculated that "Jane Martin" masks a collaboration of Jory with
a female writer or a group of writers, see DeVine in "World Premiere" and "Wakes Up"; Grossberg;
Henry; Hurt-Patterson; McBain; Miller; and Mootz in "Playwright's."

19 I want to make it clear that I am not assuming that Jory and Martin are one and the same, nor do I intend
to forward any particular theory as the "right" one. In the interest of "naming and claiming the specific,"
(Lipkin, "Who Speaks," 105), I confess that the more Jane Martin plays I see and read, the less
comfortable I feel proposing a "real" Jane Martin. If anything, I am inclined to agree with those who
suggest that Jane Martin is more than one person, but I decline to speculate on who those persons might be.

20 Critic Lawrence DeVine reports that actor Murphy Guyer "recalled once asking if Martin would
consider a line change and Jory on the spot reworked the speech himself" ("World Premiere," 6G).


22 I attended several performances of the original production at Actors Theatre of Louisville in March and
April of 1993. I devote most of my comments to reviews of that production, with some additional
quotations from reviews of later productions. All references to staging and performance choices are based
on the original Humana production.

23 One might argue that reducing the abortion debate to "two sides" is problematic; certainly, Martin
seems to be trying to complicate that idea in the play. Nonetheless, most critics treated the issue as a
bipolar one in their responses.

24 It is questionable precisely what "David Mamet did for sexual harassment" or whether he was successful
in "expos[ing] the heart of the debate he tries to dramatise" as well. The fact that both of these critics made
the comparison is notable, however.

25 I have adopted Samuel Beckett's question, "What does it matter who is speaking?" from *Texts for
Foucault's "What is an author?", reprinted in *Modern Criticism and Theory*, ed. David Lodge (London:

26 James S. Baumlín and Tita French Baumlín, in "On the Psychology of the Pisteis," make reference to
*ethos* as the "enabling ground...of persuasion" (100).
CHAPTER 5
BEYOND CONCLUSIONS

The Intertexts that bridge each of the chapters, including the final Intertext, *What a Doll: Barbie Bears All*, both illustrate and constitute in performance the rhetoric of beyonding persuasion that I advocate in the previous chapters. The Intertexts enact a blurring of boundaries between rhetoric and theatrical performance. Perhaps most importantly, in recognition of the lesson taught by "Jane Martin," who demonstrates the necessary role a situated, embodied *ethos* plays in achieving rhetorical efficacy, the Intertexts also locate me, situate my *ethos*, as the writer and performer of this document.

The four Intertexts serve not only as self-contained examples of theatrical rhetorics that beyond persuasion; within the context of this argument, they also serve to locate me professionally and personally as a rhetorician, a feminist, and a theatre artist, as well as a woman, a daughter, an aunt, and an activist. If I am myself to beyond persuasion in this document, it is imperative that I embody the argument I am making, in the sense of locating the body and the context in and from which I write. Only then, as I suggested at the close of Chapter Four, is it possible for me to beyond persuasion not only in the performance pieces themselves, but also in the whole of the dissertation. In this sense, it is the inclusion of the Intertexts that, to a large degree, enables me to beyond persuasion. And to that end, I also resist concluding my argument in the traditional sense.
of offering closure. Instead, I wish to propose Intertext Four, *What a Doll: Barbie Bears All*, as an alternative ending and simultaneous beginning, and then “beyond conclusions” by opening some of the conversations in rhetoric studies that the foregoing chapters suggest.

**What a Doll: Barbie Bears All**

If the end of a rhetoric that beyonds persuasion is the opening up of conversation rather than the closure of consensus, then I must name the performance piece *What a Doll: Barbie Bears All* as the true “conclusion” of this document, for it serves as a summation of my argument at the same time it enacts the theory of beyonding persuasion as practice. In *What a Doll* I have incorporated each of the challenges to traditional rhetorical concepts that I have identified and described in the theatrical arts of Joan Lipkin and Anne Bogart and SITI Company and problematized in the art of “Jane Martin”: I interrupt linear narrative structures, incorporate extreme juxtapositions of the comic and the tragic, make visible the historicity of the body, and revise delivery’s classical imperative, while making plain my perspective on “Barbie” and inviting others to respond to it. In this way the piece literally brings together all of the central points of the argument and, what is more, *embodies* them in *theatrical performance*, reinforcing the idea that the live body onstage interacting with an audience is the rhetorical situation most conducive to theorizing and practicing a rhetoric that beyonds persuasion.

For example, the nine scenes of *What a Doll* were deliberately composed and arranged so that the negative encounters I have had with the Barbie phenomenon in more recent years are starkly juxtaposed with the primarily positive experiences I had playing with the Barbies I owned as a child. Therefore I placed the scene “My Fifteen Favorite
Facts About Barbie,” which closes with four disturbing facts about Barbie’s inhuman proportions and the Mattel Company’s utter disregard for the effects those proportions might have on young girls’ body images, just prior to “The House That Dad Built,” the story of my family’s incredible gift of time and talent, a beautiful, lovingly constructed and furnished Barbie townhouse that brought me many smiles in my childhood. The innocence of the little girl who discovered the Barbie house that was taller than she was on Christmas morning is emphasized by the form the story is told in: the familiar sing-song poetry of the nursery rhyme. On the other hand, the form of “My Fifteen Favorite Facts About Barbie” echoes the wry cynicism of the late-night talk show host, alluding as it does both to David Letterman’s “Top Ten List” and Tonight Show host Jay Leno’s habit of tossing the cards of jokes and headlines that fall flat with the audience over his shoulder or off the stage. Juxtapositions such as these in What a Doll do not allow the audience to sit back in judgment or escape into a heartwarming narrative for any length of time, for as soon as they relax into one mode of responding, they are asked to respond differently.

The arrangement of What a Doll functions similarly to the arrangement of Lipkin’s and Clear’s He’s Having Her Baby, in that it interrupts narrative expectations and juxtaposes the tragic (the little girl who threw her Barbies away because her mother laughed at her) with the comic (a grown woman—and an academic professional at that—dressed in a hot pink, glow-in-the-dark mini-dress, playing air guitar). The result is a sort of Brechtian alienation. The audience is not told what to think, nor are they led along a persuasive narrative path. They must, instead, take all the contradictions placed before them—such as that of the Woman dressed, like Barbie, for sex, in a hot pink, glow in the
dark mini-dress, standing in front of the picture of an angelic four-year-old dressed up in white and wings to match her Barbie, also dressed as an angel—and come to their own conclusions.

The piece demands that I play a number of roles in performance: myself as a child, other little girls who play with Barbie, and Barbie herself, among them. At the same time, I always play the primary role of the "Woman," a character whom I am tempted to simply describe as "me," but whom I might more accurately characterize as a carefully constructed version of myself as feminist storyteller. The Woman is always present; other characters are performed by, or through, her character. For example, when, in Part I of "How Barbie Lost Her Virginity," "Coitus Interruptus," I take on the characters of the girls Kristin and Mandy, I do not make an effort to transform myself psychologically or physically into the character of a young girl. The script does not allow for a full transformation; in fact, it demands that the Woman remain present in the scene as the storyteller, occasionally stepping out of the action and commenting on the situation. In this way, the performer's body (in this case, mine) is historicized, its historicity made visible to the audience. There is no attempt to mask or makeover the thirty-year-old woman who is, in the role of the character Kristin, playing with Barbies on the stage floor. The audience sees a grown woman playing that she is a child who is playing that she is an adult. In this way the story of the character Kristin, a young girl exploring her curiosity about sex and romance, co-exists in and with the body of the adult woman, which is necessarily "loaded with its own history" as a mature female, one who used to play with Barbies in much the same way for some of the same reasons, as the audience comes to discover. Both Kristin and the Woman are, to return to Diamond's
terminology, made “available for analysis and identification” (52). The historicization of the Woman’s body makes possible a scene that reflects nostalgically on the innocence of childhood at the same time that it questions the effects (both positive and negative) that this very adult doll has on the imaginations and self-images of the young girls who play with her.

Later in the same scene, when I, as the Woman, take on the role of Barbie herself, putting on and then taking off her pink sundress in anticipation of lovemaking with Ken, the presence of my lingerie-clad body on stage serves as a comment on the impossible proportions of the Barbie body it is supposed to be representing. Neither my body, nor any other “real” woman’s, can embody the “ideal” that the doll sets forth. This moment, then, provides a second moment of simultaneous identification and analysis for the audience. If it is impossible for any real body to look like this doll’s body, then what effect does this doll with the impossible proportions have on little girls’ ideals for themselves? Do they recognize Barbie as a fantasy when they compare her to the variety of shapes and sizes of the women who populate their world, or does she set them up for a sense of failure? The moment onstage is also intended to complicate these questions by purposefully placing my less-than-Barbie-perfect female body into the role of the object of desire—ostensibly Ken’s desire, but also, perhaps, the audience’s. Several questions might arise from this stage picture. If we grow up to find visual pleasure to be had in gazing upon a less-than-Barbie-perfect body, then is there any real concern to be had that dolls like Barbie permanently skew our ideals of beauty? On the other hand, how and
where have we learned to objectify the female body so easily? And if we cannot find
pleasure in the body before us, what ideals are we measuring it against, and from where
did those ideals arise?

In this moment of “How Barbie Lost Her Virginity: Coitus Interruptus,” the body
onstage does not conform to the text (which represents it as Barbie’s body) simply
because it is physically impossible for it to do so. In a later scene, “The Woman Wanted
to Be Barbie,” the text, which describes a girl spending time with her friends, dressing up
in a new nightgown, and shopping with her mother, is contrasted with the stage picture of
the Woman, standing on tiptoe and holding her arms out to side while being bound into a
corset by a stage hand—a pose reminiscent of a crucifixion. The liveliness of the girl and
her narrative contrasts starkly with the scene of sacrifice and constriction on the stage.
This challenge to delivery’s classical imperative invites the audience to consider the
ironies and implications of the girl’s demand for a belt for her nightgown: is she
declaring her independence by insisting on her own sense of fashion, or has she already
fallen victim to impossible ideals of perfection? The same stage picture—and the same
question—underscores the story of Cindy Jackson, who literally tried to make herself
over into a living Barbie through numerous cosmetic surgeries. The contrast between the
realistic narrative text and the highly theatrical tableau demands engagement rather than
providing escape.

By the final scene of the play, “Thinking (Pink),” it is clear that the Woman, a
feminist academic and artist who has had a lifelong relationship with Barbie, finds much
about the doll to praise, and equally as much to blame. I refuse to offer the audience the
ease or comfort of answering any of the questions I have raised. Instead, I indicate that I,
myself, am still thinking, and I invite them to continue thinking, to continue the conversation. The final image of the play juxtaposes the adult Woman dressed in one of Barbie’s tackiest, most highly sexualized costumes, with a picture of my four-year-old niece, proudly posing next to her life-size angel Barbie, in a dress and angel wings that match the doll’s. What will become of the little girl in the picture? What role will the toys she plays with, the images she sees, have on her imagination, on her ability to imagine herself as a woman? Ideally, any future performances of What a Doll: Barbie Bears All will be followed by an audience talkback, a conversation in which the members of the audience share their own stories and answers to the questions the performance piece poses.

Even as What a Doll brings together in one text the individual arguments made in each chapter of this dissertation, it does not “conclude” in the traditional sense, because it does not tie up loose ends or answer remaining questions. Instead, it asks questions. As a self-contained performance piece, it asks its audience to consider the influence of the Barbie phenomenon on themselves, as well as on other girls and women, and even on men; it asks the audience to consider their personal relationship to this iconic toy as well as the larger impact Barbie may have on imagination and self-image. As the “conclusion” to this dissertation, it asks the reader to think “beyond conclusions,” beyond persuasion to the possibility of a different rhetoric, one whose end is invitation and conversation rather than domination and consensus.

Beyond Conclusions: Conversations and Implications

Ideally, then, the foregoing chapters and Intertexts will initiate and open up new conversations within rhetoric studies as well as between the fields of rhetoric and theatre.
arts. Within rhetoric studies, this project points to the potential benefits of a closer examination of traditional understandings of the canon of delivery and the concept of ethos. Considering ethos and delivery through the lens of feminist theatrical performance refocuses attention on the role the body plays in our understandings of these concepts and the role "body rhetoric" plays in rhetorical efficacy. This shift in focus invites the rhetorician to revisit and reconsider Aristotle's discussion of ethos in the Rhetoric and its historical context: there is much evidence to suggest that Aristotle's formulation of ethos as a textual construction is in fact a response to his recognition of the power of antecedent ethos, the ethos embodied in the rhetor that precedes and inflects the text. Such a reading of Aristotle both challenges the traditional of privileging ethos as a primarily textual construction and sheds new light on the contradictions in Aristotle's discussion of delivery.

Such a re-reading of Aristotle also invites a re-reading of other foundational classical rhetoric texts and their discussions of the canon of delivery. It has become an accepted convention in recent years to assign the art of body rhetoric to the primarily oral rhetorical practices of ancient Greece and Rome, suggest that the classical conceptions of delivery as body rhetoric are consequently outdated or even irrelevant to our contemporary text-based culture, and then develop "revisionist" theories of textual and technologically mediated delivery. These theories are rightfully situated as revisions of the classical canon, and they have contributed greatly to our understanding of written rhetorics. It is also true, however, that delivery as the art of body rhetoric has yet to be theorized in any great complexity within rhetoric studies. In placing feminist theatrical theory and performance in conversation with classical models of delivery, I am inviting
scholars of rhetoric to re-visit the fifth canon and explore it from a fresh perspective, one that asks us to consider the implications of not theorizing body rhetoric and makes visible the benefits and necessity of doing so. Only in theorizing delivery as body rhetoric can we come to understand the ideological assumptions that have informed the classical tradition of delivery, and only by understanding those assumptions can we fully understand and revise the significant role that body rhetoric plays in persuasion and beyonding persuasion.

The theory of beyonding persuasion as I have outlined the concept here also invites conversation about the way scholars and professors teach rhetoric. Why might we want to teach a rhetoric of beyonding persuasion? In my own classes, I teach rhetoric as persuasion and rhetoric that beyonds persuasion, rhetoric as invitation. When the students and I discuss the differences between these two idea(l)s of rhetoric, we talk about specific rhetorical situations in which one or the other might be most appropriate and beneficial. We typically begin by designating our class lectures and discussions as spaces, primarily, of invitational rhetoric. As an instructor of writing, a large part of my job is to beyond persuasion by encouraging my students to think and question; my goal is to begin conversations about writing, reading, and critical thinking that they will continue with future instructors and student colleagues long after they leave my class. On the other hand, it is also my job to inform them, and I do spend considerable energy trying to persuade them that writing is rewarding as well as challenging. Once the students grow more familiar with the concepts of rhetoric as persuasion and rhetoric as invitation, they become shrewd analysts of the shifting rhetorical situations and goals that exist not only within our classroom, but within other college classrooms as well. The students’
understanding of the concept of beyonding persuasion helps them see more clearly the relationship between rhetoric and power. As writers, they come to understand persuasion to belief as a *choice* that they can make. They may choose instead to beyond persuasion: invite response, initiate conversation, open a dialogue. I suspect that students who understand these two rhetorics as choices have a deeper understanding of some of the ethical questions surrounding rhetoric as well as a greater sense of the potential consequences of their use of words.

Understanding these two rhetorical ends as choices offers students—and their mentors in the academy—a concrete and practical way to approach and revise the binary thinking that polarizes so much of our teaching, learning, and thinking. The need for those of us in the academy to cultivate and enact a rhetoric that beyonds persuasion was made clear to me at a recent workshop on diversity attended by the faculty and administrators of a small liberal arts college. Those in attendance, myself included, were asked by the facilitator to consider traditional values of “American” culture, such as individuality and competition, in comparison to traditional values of African culture, such as community and collaboration. The facilitator clearly stated that she was not asking the audience to place the two systems of values in a hierarchy; instead, she wanted everyone to take note of the differences and actively resist the impulse to assume or argue that one system was “better” than another. In other words, we were not to seek consensus, nor were we to try and persuade our neighbors to privilege one system over the other. We were being asked to allow the two systems to exist as different yet equally valid perspectives, and we were being asked to converse about those differences. We were being invited, then, to beyond persuasion.
I found it frightening and discouraging that the task proved all but impossible for a number of the participants. It is imperative, in a world in which the literal and figurative boundaries between individuals and nations, nature and technology are constantly being razed, restructured, rebuilt, and razed again, that we explore and enact rhetorical practices, communicative practices, that allow for difference, that resist the consensus born of domination, that open dialogues and invite conversation. It is my hope that I have, in this project, started a conversation about the need for these kinds of conversations. I have attempted to model such a rhetorical practice by placing the arts of rhetoric and feminist theatrical performance in conversation here. Rather than privileging one art over the other, as many scholars have done, or using one of the arts to define the other, I have placed the two arts side-by-side, in dialogue with one another. My exploration has focused on examining rhetoric through the lens of feminist theatrical performance, a perspective that has enabled the re-imagination of persuasion, delivery, and ethos and re-placed the body within the purview of rhetoric; looking at rhetoric through a theatrical lens also reminds us of rhetoric’s origins as an art of public conversation, as an art of the polis. Shifting the focus and looking at feminist theatrical performance through a rhetorical lens allows us to see the inherent rhetoricity of not only feminist theatrical performance but all theatrical performance, situating theatre as a productive site for rhetorical analysis and rhetorical revision.

Still, there are many more connections to be made, many more conversations to have. I first became aware of the incredible power that theatre has to persuade and to beyond persuasion while singing a snippet of a Broadway show tune at 4C’s. That experience led me to ask many questions: Why has theatrical performance traditionally
been disassociated from the study of rhetoric, when, historically and practically, theatre and be shown to be a manifestly and profoundly rhetorical medium? What can we learn about rhetoric by examining it through the lens of feminist theatrical performance? What does a rhetoric that beyonds persuasion look like, and why is the theorization and practice of such a rhetoric important and necessary? I have proffered my initial answers to these questions here. I expect to explore additional answers and discover new questions as I continue the conversation, for this work represents, finally, my invitation to others to join in the conversation with me.
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