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Excellent work



Feminist Revisionary Histories of Rhetoric:
Aspasia's Story

An Honors/College Scholars Thesis
by Amy Lawless

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INTRODUCTION

In this thesis, I will argue that a woman named Aspasia, who lived during the 5th century B.C.E, is a rhetorical figure whose story we should include in the rhetorical tradition. In order to accomplish this, I will address historiographic issues at two levels: general definitions of rhetoric and history, and feminist historiographic issues (should a feminist history attempt to “reclaim” women like Aspasia?). I will first argue that we must adopt a pluralistic definition of rhetoric to include non-traditional works of rhetoric in order to address the absence of variety in the tradition. Also, we must acknowledge that social ideology influences the writing of history, which has translated into a masculine rhetorical tradition. In the second section, I will argue that including women’s unique accomplishments to the history of rhetoric will resolve the feminist criticism of female silence in history. Furthermore, the inclusion of women into the tradition will contextualize the history, offering a more complete understanding of rhetoric in society. Finally, I will offer an analysis of Aspasia’s story, demonstrating the new rhetoric for which I argue in this thesis.

When I first began studying Aspasia’s story, I viewed Aspasia as an obscure female historical figure whose story represented the fragmented, often absent place of women in the history of rhetoric. I felt that the contributions to rhetoric of women like Aspasia were important; however, I became increasingly skeptical of attempts to recover Aspasia and place her within the rhetorical tradition as I read texts that questioned the very usefulness and reliability of evidence that contains references to Aspasia. In Prisoner of History: Aspasia and her Biographical Tradition, Madeleine Henry questions our knowledge about Aspasia’s life because she asserts that “biographical anecdotes that

arose in antiquity about Aspasia are wildly colorful, almost completely unverifiable, and still alive and well in the twentieth century” (3). Henry points out that even recovering the facts about male historical figures in classical history poses a formidable task:

In order to establish the life events for the greatest figures of classical Athenian history within even a tentative chronology, historians leap perilously among the ice floes of contemporary inscriptions, forward to Plutarch and back to fourth-century revisionist historiographers, only to advance again to papyrus fragments and Byzantine lexica (5).

Therefore, recovering information about Aspasia, a non-citizen woman in fifth century (B.C.E.) Athens, proves particularly daunting because women’s lives were simply not important enough to record during that era.

I began to understand the value of studying and recovering Aspasia’s life when I realized the contradiction of ignoring Aspasia’s story. In “Sex, Lies, and Manuscript: Refiguring Aspasia in the History of Rhetoric,” Cheryl Glenn highlights the hypocrisy of discrediting Aspasia’s story by paralleling our knowledge of Socrates to that of Aspasia. Though Henry states that we can never know Aspasia because “there is no good evidence for her inner or intellectual life” due to the lack of primary sources that describe her, Glenn points out that we know and accept Socrates through secondary sources (Henry, 10). Therefore, if we reject evidence that suggests Aspasia’s intelligence and influence while we accept similar sources for men like Socrates, we demonstrate a blatant double standard. Glenn tells us that “although the historical tradition has readily accepted secondary accounts of Socrates’ influence, teaching, and beliefs, the same cannot be said about any female counterpart” (182).

This contradiction highlights a discrepancy in the historiographic methods or practices that result in the ingrained tradition of a patriarchal discipline such as rhetoric. The traditional history tells only the story of those (men) who held enough power in society to have their voices recorded. In "Revisionary Histories of Rhetoric," James A. Berlin points out that rhetorics "are constructed at the junctures of discourse and power" (117). Therefore, under-represented groups such as women lose their place in history because they do not hold the power to speak and be heard by society, and consequently, by history writers.

If rhetorical scholars want to amend women's silence in the rhetorical tradition, we need to look in different places for their voices, thereby broadening the definition of rhetoric. Because men held different roles in society, their rhetoric was different than that of women. Taking the differences of speakers in to account, we imply a plurality of rhetorics that exist on different levels, intertwining and interacting to form a broad concept of rhetoric.

Working within today's social ideology (specifically feminist ideology in this case), we can justify looking for women's voices if we articulate our agenda. The rhetorical tradition arose from historian's political ideologies, which traditionally have relegated women to a lower social position, whereas the proposed inclusive method results from contemporary feminist ideology that attempts to raise the status of women in rhetoric. The variation in ideologies necessitates the author's straightforward declaration of their political and social agendas when writing an historical account. Berlin advises revisionary historians to "own up to [their] own political agendas" (118). The admission of the ideologies that guide the interpretation of history allows the reader to read the

history with the knowledge that the work is one of many ways of writing the story. For example, in Rhetoric Retold: Regendering the Tradition from Antiquity Through the Renaissance, Cheryl Glenn openly admits that “rhetorical history is not neutral territory” and that our “new maps...reflect and coordinate our current...values,” such as feminism, as a preface to her work on Aspasia and other female rhetoricians (4). Similarly, Berlin criticizes those histories, such as many traditional histories, that neglect to articulate their viewpoint.

Feminist scholars criticize the rhetorical tradition because it excludes women, but feminists have divided on the issue of including women’s voices in the tradition because some rhetoricians believe that this inclusionary method does not “enfranchise” women in rhetoric. For example, in “Coming to Terms with Recent Attempts to Write Women into the History of Rhetoric,” Barbara Biesecker contests that “the inclusion of particular texts spoken by women serve, albeit unwittingly, to perpetuate the damaging fiction that most women simply do not have what it takes to play the public, rhetorical game” (142). Thus, these scholars find the inclusionary approach to amending the lack of women in the tradition inadequate and non-feminist.

Most feminist scholars agree that we should do something to address women’s rhetoric in history, and I will argue that the inclusive method accomplishes this goal. Adding women’s voices to the tradition allows us to celebrate our female “heroes,” reminding us of the *potential* of all women. History tells the stories of heroes who demonstrate the potential of mankind; including select women’s voices in the tradition simply follows this trend and does not imply that all women did not possess the ability to enter the public sphere. Though feminists point out important issues that we should

consider in writing a feminist rhetoric, we should not stop looking for female voices in history.

Not only will including women's voices further the position of women in rhetoric, it will augment our understanding of rhetoric's function in society. By creating new rhetorics that include sub-groups in society, such as women, we can understand the power dynamic that underlies rhetoric in society, and therefore obtain a more complete understanding of rhetoric. Women's voices in the tradition will contextualize the history by showing the interrelation of different rhetorics as they work in society to form our new, broader understanding of rhetoric.

SECTION I

Historiography and Revisionary Histories of Rhetoric

*"I often think it odd that it should be so dull,
for a great deal of it must be invention."*

*-Catherine Morland as quoted by Edward Carr
in What Is History, p.1*

To allow women like Aspasia to enter rhetorical history, we need to adopt a pluralist definition of rhetoric that acknowledges silences in the tradition and recognize that history is subject to bias and ideological interpretation. Traditionally, this has translated into a male-dominated history of rhetoric because prevailing social and political beliefs have influenced historiography. Once we admit that history is not objective due to the influence of the historian's social and political beliefs, we can begin to create new histories that tell stories based on different ideologies, thus adding texture and shape to the rhetorical tradition.

The traditional history of rhetoric demonstrates the false appearance of an objective past and relies on a narrow definition of rhetoric. The tradition can be seen as a straight path that leads from rhetorician to rhetorician. In "Revisionary Histories of Rhetoric," James Berlin states, "the tradition of rhetoric is one, and its authentic exponents are united in a common language and purpose" (112). Along the traditionalist path of rhetorical history, we read Plato, Aristotle, Cicero, Quintilian, and Augustine because these men fit comfortably into a single definition of rhetoric. In Rereading the Sophists, Susan Jarratt criticizes the selection of traditional histories because they rely on a narrow concept of rhetoric:

Traditional histories of rhetoric could be defined as those histories haven taken as their subject matter chiefly documents explicitly calling themselves 'rhetorics': i.e., pedagogical treatises concerned with the composition and delivery of persuasive orations...this selection is based on a narrow definition of rhetoric. (12)

By accepting a broader definition of rhetoric to include concepts and people that were not traditionally considered rhetoric, we can add different viewpoints, such as that of women, to the rhetorical tradition.

Historiography and the Definition of Rhetoric

P. Albert Duhamel was one of the first scholars to approach the subject of historiography in rhetoric. In "The Function of Rhetoric as Effective Expression," Duhamel calls into question the definition of "rhetoric" and warns us not to restrict its meaning, which would consequently affect the way historiographers write the historical tradition. Duhamel believes that "effective expression" represents the "least common denominator" in the definition of "rhetoric," but "the idea or concept of effective expression is not simple, but complex, for it contains more than one element and is invested with several relations" (37). Thus, he writes, "if histories of rhetoric are to be written after first postulating a definition of the concept and then re-examining the history of the assumed concept, the resulting inquiry would be the history not of rhetoric but of one conception of rhetoric" (38). Duhamel implies a plurality of rhetorics that can be conveyed by historiographers, each rhetoric depending upon the particular definition used by the author. Duhamel tells us what is at stake if we attempt to limit the definition of rhetoric:

The determination of the concept of effective expression to any complete definition as an assumption of a projected history forestalls the recognition of the relations of the concept and deprives the study, which should be the

study of an idea and its inter-relations, of its most fruitful potentialities.

(39)

Therefore, Duhamel believes that historians should not continue to base their histories upon preconceived definitions of rhetoric because these definitions change and interrelate to other concepts, disciplines, and ideologies. By limiting the scope of rhetoric, we limit our understanding of history and the various places that rhetoric can be found. Duhamel implies that past histories have been built upon assumptions about the scope of rhetoric and calls for a change in the writing of future histories:

If future histories of rhetoric are to avoid such criticism that...they are but the 'monotonous enumeration of doctrines'...they must avoid assumptions such as those made in the past, which have always been implicit determinations or limitations of the idea of effective expression to preconceived or accepted definitions. (38)

It is at this point that the case of Aspasia surfaces as an example of a new history of rhetoric that "breaks free" of the "implicit determinations" about the constitution of rhetoric. According to Duhamel's assertions, recovering Aspasia's story represents a valid pursuit because the definition of rhetoric changes to reflect the ideology of our times. Duhamel states, "the varying subject matter attributed to rhetoric by individual theorists, the changing conceptions of the purpose and value of rhetoric, are reflections of more basic change in the broad spheres of individual ideology" (39). Thus, attempts to recover the rhetorics of powerless sub-groups that existed throughout history simply follow Duhamel's reasoning that various rhetorics exist and that we should not base our histories on a limited scope of what *should* constitute rhetoric because our ideologies

always change. Certainly, the “liberal” or “progressive” ideologies that guide recent attempts to raise the status of under-represented groups, including those of gender, class, or race, reflect a change in ideology that consequently changes the way in which we view the definition of rhetoric.

Robert L. Scott and Douglas Ehninger serve as examples of other early rhetorical theorists who challenge the traditional view of rhetorical history, which is based on the idea that rhetoric is a cohesive, coherent force moving through history. Both Scott and Ehninger argue for a plurality of rhetorics because practice in each period of rhetorical history shows “tendencies that do not align perfectly with the predominant patterns, tendencies that may persist from period to period” (Scott, 446). In other words, Scott says that we cannot conclusively define “rhetoric” because the patterns of rhetoric change both during a particular time period and over the span of different time periods. Scott attempts to “underscore Ehninger’s sensible insistence that we shall see more clearly if we stop looking for a definition of rhetoric, i.e., a single set of attributes that will serve to mark off the limits of rhetoric once and for all” (439).

Though Scott and Ehninger argue for a broad interpretation of rhetoric and call for a plurality of histories of rhetoric, the scope of their ideas seems narrow. For example, Ehninger describes his view of rhetorical history in “A Synoptic View of Systems of Western Rhetoric”:

Reacting against the notion of a single, all-encompassing conception of rhetoric, I chose to speak in the plural and to attempt broad characterizations of what I regard as the major rhetorics of the Western world. To this end, I described the rhetoric of the classical period as a

pragmatically oriented art of oral persuasion; the stylistic rhetoric of the Renaissance as an aesthetically oriented art of ingratiation; [and] the British rhetoric of the later eighteenth century as a psychologically oriented art of adapting means to purposes. (440)

Though Ehninger's categorizations are fairly broad, they merely leave open more room for traditional concepts of rhetoric, placing rhetoric within bounded limits. Ehninger simply fits the traditional rhetoricians and rhetorical theories into broad categories that incorporate the prominent ideas of the time period.

By categorizing the periods as such, Ehninger somewhat restricts the concept of rhetorical practice. His idea seems at odds with his assertion that humans are "inevitably and inescapably" rhetorical beings and that "the implications of the assumption we are exploring do not stop with a new conception of man...in addition, they have the most profound effect upon our attitude toward rhetoric itself" (452). Ehninger's statement implies a definition of rhetoric that surpasses the bounds he places on the history of rhetoric(s). If all humans are rhetorical beings then history should be permeated with innumerable rhetorical practices, many of which do not even fit within the broad designations of the period.

Therefore, Ehninger's concept of a plurality of rhetorics makes a first step toward the contemporary movement of "progressive" rhetorical theorists who attempt to recover lost rhetorics, but his ideas do not reach far enough. If we attempt to make a case for Aspasia using Ehninger's concept of historiography, we would need to overlook his categorizations of historical periods, which build upon traditional rhetoricians and theories. We can, however, refer to his broad definition of rhetoric and to his prediction

of modern rhetoric as a “socially oriented art,” “a new and amazing vital rhetoric [in] the contemporary period” (448, 453). His view of modern rhetoric leaves open the possibility that Aspasia represents contemporary rhetoricians’ socially oriented goals of recovering the rhetorics of under-represented groups in history. These attempts represent theorists’ social and political ideologies, indicative of our society’s current emphasis on raising the voices of minority groups. Therefore, though Ehninger leaves little room for Aspasia in his historical categories, he opens a place for her within the modern period of rhetoric, as an example of the social orientation of our rhetoric today.

More recent scholars who explore historiography in rhetoric include Carole Blair and Mary L. Kahl. In their article, “Introduction: Revising the History of Rhetorical Theory,” Blair and Kahl criticize earlier ideas of pluralism as merely semantic or “nominal.” For example, the authors state, “if historians have selected ‘theories’ for inclusion on the basis of their being named ‘rhetoric’ by their authors, then historians have in fact operationalized pluralism in their histories” (150). In other words, the histories are “plural” in that they include various works of rhetoric instead of maintaining the “monistic” quality of traditional rhetorical history, but the pluralism denies the existence of works outside of the label “rhetoric.” This semantic form of pluralism leaves no room for intellectual or conceptual history. Blair and Kahl assert that semantic pluralism “structure[s] our historical attention in ways that exclude concepts we would call ‘rhetorical’ in the present, for they were called ‘grammatical,’ ‘philological,’ ‘political,’ ‘psychological,’ ‘historical,’ or ‘philosophical’ in their own times” (150). Therefore, Blair and Kahl believe that many historiographers who attempt to write from a pluralistic viewpoint actually utilize an idea of pluralism that does not represent a true,

complete pluralism because it relies on semantics and denies a place for concepts that we might label as rhetoric today. For example, Blair and Kahl criticize that “Ehninger’s standard, though appropriate for a diversified and rich history, leaves open the possibility of a narrow and confining view of rhetoric in historical practice” (150).

If we adopt the semantic form of pluralism, we deny the opportunity for the emergence of many practices and concepts developed by minority groups, whose contributions might be considered rhetorical today. The theories and voices of many subgroups in societies throughout history were not considered “rhetoric” during the time period in which they were developed. Aspasia serves as a representative example of a rhetoric that, even by earlier concepts of pluralism, does not hold a firm place in the rhetorical tradition. Only by labeling Aspasia’s contribution to history as “rhetorical” in modern rhetoric can we begin to place her in the tradition. While Blair and Kahl “do not mean to argue for rejection of traditional histories of rhetoric,” they “advocate a more reflective attitude” about designating rhetoric and their “intent is to forestall the canonization of what we have regarded, up to now, as our ‘canon’” (151). By recognizing Aspasia’s story as representative of a rhetoric of women in ancient Athens and placing her within the rhetorical tradition, we do not reject traditional history, but broaden our definition of rhetoric to include those practices not labeled as rhetoric during their time period.

Historiography and Defining History

If we wish to make a case for placing Aspasia in the history of rhetoric, we must first establish the meaning or function of history and how this meaning affects historiography. In "Making Up Lost Time: Writing on the Writing of History," Nancy F. Partner discusses the definition of history:

Most definitions of history begin with some term like inquiry, mode of thought, or knowledge...the fact that the only history we know anything about is an artifact of words is ignored, sunk beneath serious discussion as though that fact were too obvious and insignificant to deserve attention.

(96)

With this statement, Partner refers to history's reliance on language, which she describes as "the human meaning-maker." Because history relies on language to impart meaning, Partner proposes a close link between narrative and history. To illustrate this idea, she refers to the "first definition of the word 'story' in Samuel Johnson's *Dictionary*: 'Story: History, account of things past'" (96). Partner points out that "all accounts tell things and what is told is contained in the telling" (96). In this statement, Partner emphasizes the role of language in both history and storytelling. More specifically, the language of the historian or storyteller creates the history or the story because language creates meaning.

Partner emphasizes the connection between fiction and history. She states, "the central conventions which govern all narrative—the organization of time, the distinction between contingent and significant sequence, alias story—unite history and fiction profoundly and permanently" (96). According to Partner, the role of the novelist differs

little from the role of the historian because both use persuasive techniques to create a “sense of reality.” Partner points out the seemingly absolute nature of history:

The historian has to persuade the reader not only of the *possible* reality of his array of verbal elements, but that those on display in the text are ‘guaranteed’ by their relation (reference, logical inference) to things outside the text, and thus the result is a real mimesis. (97)

Here, Partner refers to the rhetoric of history writing and proposes a close link between the intentions of both the history writer and the fiction writer. Partner states, “history aspires to the ancient philosophical demand for pure reference and correspondence with reality, although its ambition is hopelessly compromised from the start because the past, being what it is, incorrigibly slips into fiction” (97). In other words, historians cannot fully convey the past within historical accounts because history writers can never grasp or control “the intractable ‘out there’” (98). History writers cannot create a true picture of historical reality because they are confined to language and symbolic representation to create meaning in historical accounts.

History writers, through language, create meaning that is inevitably guided by their personal ideologies. Partner points out the altered reality that history portrays:

In its professionalized form, among the academic disciplines, history is, I think, specially and peculiarly open to immorality: simple dishonesty, subtle dishonesty, distortions of self-interest, the rationalized spite of ideology, thefts from the living, from the dead, impertinence, disrespect, tendentiousness, and every variety of bad faith. (110)

The fictional element of history must be influenced by the historian's ideologies. Accordingly, Partner points out the resulting "immorality" of presenting historical accounts as purely factual. She states, "once we loosen our grip, however desperate, on an objective past and mimetic truth (those amoebic objects shrinking from our grasp), how can we distinguish between interest and disinterest, between interpretation and ideology?" (111). Partner warns us that the ideologies and personal beliefs that guide interpretation are not obvious when we are reading historical accounts, so we usually accept the concept of an objective past. If we disregard the "objective past," then we cannot know what is truth because interest and ideology have skewed it.

In What Is History, Edward Hallett Carr also discusses the history writer's effect on the meaning of the conveyed history. Carr reminds us to consider the author of a history while read the past that it conveys:

The facts of history never come to us 'pure,' since they do not and cannot exist in a pure form: they are always refracted through the mind of the recorder...when we take up a work of history, our first concern should be not with the facts which it contains but with the historian who wrote it.

(24)

With this statement, Carr refers to the inevitable influence of personal beliefs and ideologies that guide the selection aspect, the invention aspect, and the tone of the author in history writing. Accordingly, Carr believes that "interpretation...is the life-blood of history" (32). Thus, the history writer's influence determines history as we know it. Historians give shape and meaning to facts, which consequently gives shape and meaning to our view of the world.

Today, scholars of rhetoric who wish to unearth a new history of rhetoric that includes social subgroups, such as women, view the past with the influence of contemporary social and political ideology. Carr defines history as “a continuous process of interaction between the historian and his facts, an unending dialogue between the present and the past” (35). In other words, the present always affects history writers’ concept of the past. Carr points out that our contemporary beliefs and attitudes inevitably affect our view of the past:

All history is ‘contemporary history’...meaning that history consists essentially in seeing the past through the eyes of the present and in the light of its problems, and that the main work of the historian is not to record, but to evaluate; for, if he does not evaluate, how can he know what is worth recording?” (22)

Our present ideologies influence our evaluation of the past and our selection of stories to record.

Contemporary feminist ideology, which attempts to raise the status of women in society, guides the evaluation of the rhetorical tradition and impels us to recover and record women into the history of rhetoric. Feminist scholars of rhetoric see the problematic lack of female voices in the rhetorical tradition and attempt to recover the stories of women like Aspasia to create a new rhetoric. As attempts to recover the stories of women like Aspasia surface, we see the significance of Carr’s assertion that “our view of history reflects our view of society” (76). The progressive focus on the rhetoric of social subgroups in the rhetorical tradition reflects our society’s focus on minority

groups. As Carr states, “great history is written precisely when the historian’s vision of the past is illuminated by insights into the problems of the present” (44).

Berlin’s Methodology for Revisionary Rhetorical Histories

Having argued for a broader definition of rhetoric and a progressive, subjective view of historiography, we can move to a discussion of revisionary history and methodology. James A. Berlin, in “Revisionary Histories of Rhetoric: Politics, Power, and Plurality,” offers a cogent argument for creating new rhetorical histories and provides a methodology for writing and reading the revised histories.

In rhetoric today, the history books that we read tell the same stories of the same rhetoricians. The rhetorical tradition relates the history of men who represented the power-holders of their time. In “After the Fall: Reflections on Histories of Rhetoric,” Hans Kellner states, “dominant rhetorics tend to express dominant social forces” (27). Kellner’s statement explains the power dynamic in society that allowed men’s voices to dominate. Consequently, the rhetorical tradition has recorded only the dominant rhetorics of the past, creating an incomplete view of rhetoric.

The traditional view of rhetorical history is only one of a plurality of actual histories that can be told. James Berlin argues that the map of possible rhetorical histories includes many branches such as the rhetorics of “women, subordinate classes, and other subaltern groups” (113). Today, “progressive” rhetoricians attempt to place these socially and politically disadvantaged groups into the history of rhetoric because

recent scholarship highlights their conspicuous absence. However, Berlin contends that both groups remain fixated on the idea of rhetoric as a single entity:

Whether one, true, holy, catholic, and apostolic rhetoric is situated in the golden age of the past or anticipated in the golden age of the future, there is no disagreement about its monolithic character, even though the two constituencies—the traditionalists and the progressives—disagree about the elements that make up the monolith and their trajectories (112).

In other words, though traditionalists and progressives disagree about the objectives and foundation of rhetoric, they both accept the same singular view of history, perhaps with certain modifications. Furthermore, both groups view rhetoric through history as a unified, unchanging whole. James Berlin warns against this tendency and urges us to “resist the notion of rhetoric as a unified, coherent, and univocal collection of texts stretching over time, texts that support either truth and virtue on the one hand, or error and vice on the other” (115). Berlin suggests that we recover multiple rhetorics and examine their interaction:

The revisionary historian must instead locate the variety of rhetorics that exist at any particular moment and examine their interaction with each other and with the conditions of their production...[which] will require seeking out the suppressed rhetorics of women, workers, and other marginalized and silenced groups. (116)

Thus, Berlin’s revisionary historian performs a “synchronic investigation” to recover lost stories of rhetoric from under-represented speakers and examine how they interact with their context. In this way, we can create a more complete, textured history of rhetoric.

Many groups were excluded from the rhetorical tradition because they could not pose a challenge to the powerful. As Berlin states, rhetorics “are constructed at the junctures of discourse and power” (117). Even the Sophists have been excluded from the tradition that flows from Plato and Aristotle, which Berlin believes is “a result of the judgments made on them” by the more powerful rhetoricians (117). Berlin suggests that “certain Sophists represented a set of discursive practices that stood for another economic and political order, an order that their more established and popular rivals found dangerously subversive” (117). Some believe that this group of Sophists offered political arguments that reflect our contemporary ideologies by challenging the basis of slavery and the inferiority of women. This rhetoric only passed through history because “it achieved enough currency in its own day to require resistance by its opponents...thus, although we know it almost exclusively through the denials of it by its adversaries, at least its existence was thereby made a part of the historical record” (117). Some scholars today, such as Susan Jarratt, attempt to uncover sophistic history to add their stories to the tradition. Jarratt, in Rereading the Sophists, proposes a parallel between the position of the sophists and of women in history:

For Plato, the sophists signified opinion as opposed to Truth, the materiality of the body (e.g., in association with cooking and cosmetics) vs. soul, practical knowledge vs. science, the temporal vs. the eternal, writing (explicitly as an artificial aid to memory) vs. speech (as the vehicle of intuited knowledge)...the cluster of terms coincides on many counts with the cultural stereotype of the ‘feminine’ operative in the West for centuries. (65)

Berlin warns us that “the revisionary historian of rhetoric must realize that there are also numerous other rhetorics of the past that never attained enough currency in their own day to offer a serious challenge to the powerful” (117).

Thus, we must attempt to recover unspoken rhetorics, such as the rhetorics of women in Athens. However, this task will involve recovering neglected documents that may be incomplete. Berlin says, “since the texts of these marginalized rhetorics were often not formally recorded or were destroyed by their oppressors, finding the past will often mean examining the fragments of documents in which a rhetoric is demonstrated or discussed, in which the adversarial position is articulated” (117). For example, scholars such as Cheryl Glen and Madeleine Henry attempt to recover the rhetorical tradition of Aspasia of Miletus by examining secondary sources such as Old Comedy and philosophical dialogues to place Aspasia as the first female rhetorician.

As readers and writers of history, we must remain aware of the context in which the rhetoric was created and of the context in which the history was written. Berlin points out that “the examination of historical rhetorics...must be historicized” (116). Each rhetorical history develops as a result of the social forces during the time period and from historians’ ideological biases. Berlin advises us to examine the history’s “unique economic, social, political, and cultural conditions” to find “their differences from us as well as their similarities” (116). A rhetoric can never be seen as a whole unto itself, but as a functioning part of its context. Berlin states that “rhetorics provide a set of rules about the dispositions of discourse at a particular moment... they codify who can and cannot speak... what can and cannot be said... who can and cannot listen and act... and the very nature of the language to be used”(116). Therefore, rhetorics reflect a social

class stratum that allows the power-holders to take the dominant position in discourse at that particular moment.

Berlin's criticism of the traditional history of rhetoric arises from the definitive nature of the author's presentation of rhetoric. Upon discussing several prominent authors of rhetorical history, Berlin states that "their method is unproblematically exemplary: all that is genuinely important in pursuing the history of rhetoric has been here presented, and the reader need look no further" (119). Berlin urges readers to be aware of the incompleteness of the histories, which often "omit other rhetorics and other ways of reading the rhetorics included" (119). Thus, Berlin emphasizes the importance of reader's acknowledgment of bias in historical accounts. We must learn to read rhetorical history in this manner if we wish to forestall the view of history as monolithic and definitive.

In addition to proposing new ways of reading history, rhetoricians should acknowledge their political and social ideologies that guide the foundation of the histories they propose. Berlin advises us as revisionary historians to "own up to our own political agendas" (118). Berlin states, "we are situated in politics and power, and our awareness of this inevitability must be self-consciously included in our investigation" (118). When writers develop a history, they examine a set of data that "is simply too overwhelming to be dealt with without selection, and some ideological principle will always guide the selection" (121). Berlin proposes that historians should acknowledge the set of principles that guide the writer's interpretation. With regard to the traditionalist historians, Berlin writes, "the historian who sees no reason to search for the rhetorical texts of those out of power at a particular moment because these are not important in the unfolding of

historical events has made an ideological decision, not a choice of fact” (121). Thus, the historian ultimately chooses data that she believes represents the most important people and events, with her interpretations of the data forming a “vision of the world as it ought to be” (121). Historians may choose to record the same people and events, but the interpretations may differ significantly. Berlin summarizes his position:

The historiographic method recommended here, then, demands honesty of the historian, a candid acknowledgement of her ideological stance, her conception of perfect economic, social, and political arrangements, her vision of utopia...she is...writing an account of the present and of equal importance, a hope and vision of the future. (127)

Thus, Berlin proposes a new way of writing histories that allows the reader to understand the history more completely because the stories become contextualized. The author’s declaration of purpose and position adds meaning to the historical accounts and does not eliminate the possibility of other histories (or interpretations) of the same historical era.

In terms of adding Aspasia’s story to the rhetorical tradition, Berlin’s methodology requires that we acknowledge the feminist ideology that guides the history. Cheryl Glenn, in Rhetoric Retold, offers a promising example of an ideological statement as well as a statement of her methodology. Glenn states, “postmodernism...demands our awareness of situatedness, our angle (in my case, reading [and writing] as a feminist, as a woman)” (5). Berlin hopes that all future histories will contain similar prefatory, contextualizing statements, but does not expect this change soon “since the faith in the ‘definitive’ history, despite its very denial of historicity, not to mention rhetoricity, remains strong in certain conservative quarters” (120).

SECTION II

Feminist Conversations on Adding Women's Voices to the Rhetorical Tradition

*"It is necessary that woman put herself in the text—as into the world, and into history—
by her own movement"*

-Helen Cixous, "The Laugh of the Medusa," p. 39

Most feminist scholars agree that we need a new and different approach to the history of rhetoric to replace the traditional methods that completely ignore female voices. However, feminist rhetoricians have split into two groups that disagree about *how* to create a place for women in rhetorical history. One group of scholars believes that we should seek out women in history to place within the tradition, while another group believes that including women's stories in history is inadequate and non-feminist.

In this section, I will argue for the inclusion of women like Aspasia into the traditional history of rhetoric. I assert that we need to create new feminist ideas of what constitutes rhetoric because limiting the definition of rhetoric to the traditional definition negates the possibility of finding women's rhetoric, which may be found in entirely different places than male rhetoric. Feminist scholars who follow the inclusionary method recover women like Aspasia who do not conveniently conform to the traditional definition of rhetorician (prominent male theorists with self-proclaimed works of rhetoric) and place them into the tradition. Feminist scholars who have taken this approach include Cheryl Glenn and Madeleine Henry, who have devoted much of their research to recovering Aspasia's story.

I will also argue that placing women on the rhetorical map adds texture to the one-dimensional traditional map of history and provides a more complete picture of historical reality. Studying women's position in a society that denied females the power to speak illuminates the role of rhetoric and public discourse in society throughout history. When we examine women's exclusion from the public sphere of rhetoric, we begin to understand the power dynamic underlying discourse. It is important that we

understand not only who is talking at a particular time, but also why they were chosen or allowed to speak.

Including Women in the Tradition

In “Opportunities for Feminist Research in the History of Rhetoric,” Patricia Bizzell calls for more inclusionary feminist research in the history of rhetoric and proposes three methods for research. Bizzell refers to the first approach as the “resisting reader” approach. She states,

To be a ‘resisting reader’ of traditional rhetoric would be to notice aspects of the canonical texts that the reader is not supposed to notice, but that disturb, when the reader is a woman, and create resistance to the view of reality the work seems to want to purvey. (51)

The masculine nature of the rhetorical tradition provides the “resisting reader” with many opportunities for resistance. A feminist scholar might be disturbed when reading the table of contents of a somewhat recent (though traditional) history of rhetoric by Thomas M. Conley: “Isocrates, Plato, Aristotle, Cicero, Quintilian, Boethius, Erasmus, Ramus, Bacon, Campbell, Blair, Whately, Richards, and Weaver” (Bizzell, 51). Traditional historians rarely add a single female name to their lists of historical rhetoricians. Patricia Bizzell writes from the viewpoint of a “resisting reader,” offering methods of resistance for feminists. Other examples of feminist scholars utilizing the “resisting reader” method include Susan Jarratt’s Rereading the Sophists: Classical Rhetoric Refigured (1991) and Jan Swearingen’s Rhetoric and Irony: Western Literacy and Western Lies (1991).

Bizzell's second approach involves writing about women who most resemble male rhetoricians. Scholars who follow this method "look for women who have done work similar to the work done by the traditionally canonized male authors, and frame arguments for inserting these women into the traditional history and setting their work in dialogue with the canon" (51). Many women have created works that resemble the work of prominent male rhetoricians. By writing these women's contributions into the rhetorical tradition, scholars begin to change the masculine map of rhetoric into a more contextualized history. For example, Bizzell used the second approach in her

decision to include in the [Bizzell and Bruce Herzberg] anthology the work of Christine de Pisan to represent Renaissance writings on the rhetoric of courtly conversation, instead of, say, Castiglione or Machiavelli, who might have been chosen for a more traditional anthology" (53).

Bizzell's third approach describes the inclusionary method that involves a new concept of rhetoric. Feminist scholars who tell the story of women like Aspasia "seek to redefine rhetoric so as to make it inclusive of work by women that would not be construed as rhetorical under traditional paradigms" (54). Because history has denied most women the opportunity to enter the public sphere, thereby preventing the publishing of speeches or other works by women, most of their works do not resemble those of male rhetoricians. Thus, the third approach would broaden our view of rhetoric to include women whose contributions could be construed as female rhetoric, under a new paradigm.

One approach to the third method involves searching for female issues, instead of for female names. Bizzell states, “if women are not represented in the traditional history of rhetoric, we might look for the issues that throw into relief the social practices that resulted in this exclusion, thus also highlighting where women are, as well as where they are not” (54). For example, some female issues include women and education, women speakers for social reform, and women in religion (serving as leadership). These issues certainly gave rise to female concerns and provided an opportunity for female public speaking.

To arrive at the third approach, we must first test and move beyond the first two approaches, labeling them as inadequate or “not enough.” Bizzell states, “the resisting reader seeks readings, by women, that she doesn’t have to resist, and in order to find and read them finds herself articulating new principles of rhetoric” (57). Bizzell’s description of the blending of the three methods shows a progression:

1. women resist the traditional notion of rhetorical history;
2. women look for female rhetoricians to add to the tradition; and
3. women realize that female rhetoricians exist in non-traditional places.

Each approach naturally and necessarily leads to the next, culminating in a new concept of rhetoric that includes women’s voices.

If we wish to create a place for women in history, we must look in non-traditional places for women’s voices. By adopting a pluralistic historiography and a broader definition of rhetoric, we can acknowledge the silences in history that feminists find disturbing. Not only can we acknowledge the absence of women’s voices, but we can fill

the gaps with new works of rhetoric that expand and illuminate our concept of the discipline as we look in different places for different voices.

Cheryl Glenn utilizes the inclusionary method of recovering women to add to the rhetorical tradition. Feminist scholars like Glenn exhume and examine the texts of Sappho, Aspasia of Miletus, Diotoma, and many other women who could represent historical rhetoricians. Glenn “identifies women’s bodies, explores their contributions to and participation within the rhetorical tradition, and writes them into an expanded, inclusive tradition” (Rhetoric, 2). Glenn has devoted her research and writing to placing women on this masculine map of rhetoric with the goal of changing the map as well as the way we view the tradition. She attempts this project with the following steps that mirror Bizzell’s approach to an inclusionary rhetoric:

1. Resistant readings by women, as well as by men, of the paternal narrative;
2. Consideration of female-authored rhetorical works comparable to male-authored works;
3. Broad definitions of rhetoric that move it from an exclusionary to an inclusionary enterprise. (4)

Glenn calls for placing women in the rhetorical tradition, basing her argument on the concept that power governs who can or cannot speak or who can be heard at a given moment in history. Glenn states, “rhetoric always inscribes the relation of language and power at a particular moment” (1). Therefore, the rhetorical tradition records only those (men) who held enough power to enter the tradition. Consequently, women’s position in society negated the possibility of recording female rhetorical practices because they

simply were considered unimportant. For example, women in ancient Greece were not even considered citizens; no Greek word existed for the female citizen. The case of Aspasia of Miletus demonstrates one story of a woman, deemed unimportant by society in ancient Greece, whom feminist scholars might (re)claim as a historical rhetorician.

Women's place in society naturally excluded them from rhetoric because men maintained social dominance. Males held the privileged position of participating in the polis, "in the public light of rhetorical discourse, determining philosophic truth, civic good, the literary canon, and the theories and praxes of rhetoric" (Glenn, 1). According to Glenn, "for the past 2500 years in Western culture, the ideal woman has been disciplined by cultural codes that require a closed mouth (silence), a closed body (chastity), and an enclosed life (domestic confinement)" (1). In Man Cannot Speak for Her, Karlyn Kohrs Campbell points out that women were "to remain entirely in the private sphere of the home, eschewing any appearance of individuality, leadership, or aggressiveness" (10). Not only did society deny women the opportunity to speak, but also punished her if she deviated from her role. Campbell states, women who "entered the public sphere...thereby lost their claims to purity and piety" (10).

Glenn describes the tradition of rhetoric as a one-dimensional map that only includes the power-holders in rhetorical history. She criticizes the "master narrative" of principal male rhetoricians that flows from "Corax and Tisias...to Plato and Aristotle, then Cicero, Quintilian, and St. Augustine" because this view of rhetoric is homogenous (Glenn, 3). These aristocratic men form a straight line on the map of the rhetorical tradition. As Glenn states, "that canonized, masculinized map embodied and reflected our institutional focus on great, powerful men whose texts, lives, and actions surely

transcended the particularities of history and circumstance” (3). When we write or study the rhetorical tradition, we tend to ignore “the borders of our map, the shadowy regions where roads run off the edge of the paper and drop away at sharp angles” (Glenn, 3). Namely, we ignore the powerless, unrecognized groups, such as women, who could represent significant histories of rhetoric along the rhetorical map.

The new maps that scholars like Cheryl Glenn create reflect the contemporary ideologies that guide the way we view the past and future of the discipline of rhetoric. According to Glenn, the new maps “are ‘doing’ differently what maps do: they are taking us to more places, introducing us to more people, complicating our understanding in more ways than did the traditional map” (4). Consequently, we must read historical narratives with the knowledge of the ideologies that guide their creation and acknowledge our own ideological purposes when we write histories. Glenn states that “postmodernism influences our resistant readings of the paternal narrative, particularly since it demands our awareness of situatedness, our angle (in [her] case, reading as a feminist, as a woman)” (5). Though Glenn speaks specifically of reading the rhetorical tradition, James Berlin reminds us to consider the ideologies behind both the “paternal narrative” and all revisionary histories, as we read histories and write them.

Feminist Opposition to Adding Women’s Voices to the Tradition

The primary argument against the inclusion of women in the rhetorical tradition asserts that adding women’s stories to history does nothing to change the masculine nature of the history because we simply submit ourselves to male standards of

scholarship. Thus, we merely choose women who resemble men (or alter the women to meet male standards) to include their works in the tradition. By conforming to male standards, feminists argue that we somehow admit a female deficiency. In "Re/Dressing Histories: Or, On Re/Covering Figures Who Have Been Laid Bare By Our Gaze," Michelle Ballif contends that "our attempts to (re)read women, to (re)cover women, to (re)present women, and to therefore (re)cast history, are insidious acts of (re)appropriation" (91). Ballif asks us to explore why we desire to read the stories of women like Aspasia. She concludes that we recover women's voices because "to provide Woman with a history is to increase her value by making her legitimate, by giving her a proper name, by locating her within a proper family, by situating her in a proper narrative" (92). In Ballif's opinion, such an enterprise is "patronymic" and "phallogocentric." Therefore, adding women's voices to the tradition "does nothing to enfranchise [women]—because it does nothing to the phallogocentric economy which disenfranchised them" (95).

In "Placing Women's History in History," Elizabeth Fox-Genovese, similar to Michelle Ballif, rejects the inclusion of women into the tradition and calls for a new feminist history. In contrast to Ballif, Fox-Genovese writes, "the inclusion of women within conventional historical narratives cannot be dismissed lightly...their exclusion has been so total that every rectification must be welcome" (6). However, she qualifies her statement by saying "but adding women to history is not the same as adding women's history" (6). Fox-Genovese asserts, "the theory that informs most work in women's history implicitly accepts the dominant male view of women as 'the Other' and merely attempts to turn it into an advantage" (7). She proposes instead that women should "as

members of one sex, but also members of all societies, cultivate and take pride in that twoness of which [W.E.B.] Dubois wrote...and recognize that even their identification as gender is itself an historical construction” (14). Therefore, Fox-Genovese places importance on the distinct male and female in society that form the basis of historical analysis.

In “Coming to Terms with Recent Attempts to Write Women into the History of Rhetoric,” Barbara Biesecker argues against Karlyn Kohrs Campbell’s inclusionary feminist rhetoric in Man Cannot Speak for Her. One of Biesecker’s main arguments centers on the concept of “female tokenism.” Quoting Adrienne Rich, Biesecker describes the token woman:

The token woman is encouraged to see herself as different from most women, as exceptionally talented and deserving; and to separate herself from the wider female condition; and she is perceived by “ordinary” women as separate also: perhaps even as stronger than themselves.

(Biesecker, 141)

Biesecker contends that feminist scholars who include women in the tradition may perpetuate female tokenism, a “potentially debilitating consequence of their work” (141). Referring to “Women in Communication Studies: A Typology for Revision” by Carole Spitzack and Kathryn Carter, Biesecker states, “on the one hand, the inclusion of a few great women ‘lends richness and balance to research practices’ in the discipline; on the other hand, such projects ‘can easily support the presumption that the majority of women cannot rival male accomplishments’” (142).

Though feminist scholars like Michelle Ballif call for “new narratives” and the writing of the “other history” to replace our attempts of adding women to the tradition, they do not speak in concrete terms about the constitution of such a history. Ballif calls for “a history which is not One, which is not a story of the Same, of the Selfsame” (95). She explores different options of creating feminist rhetorical history, only to reject each possibility:

The task *is not* to add women to the already existing history...filling in the gaps is definitively not the answer...there is ‘no space from which the sexed subaltern subject can speak’ because she has no *proper* identity...but the task is *not* to endow the subaltern with identity. (96)

Ballif leaves us with a series of rhetorical questions and vague proposals that do nothing to explicate her intentions of a new feminist history. She proposes, “perhaps Woman can (un)speak in the unthought, not-yet-thought, non-spaces”(96). Though Ballif offers a cogent feminist argument against the inclusion of women to the tradition, she provides us with no concrete alternative.

Though Fox-Genovese argues for a completely new and distinct form of feminist history, I do not believe that creating a separate female history, distinct from mainstream history, will “enfranchise” women in rhetoric. I contend that this new history will merely serve as a collection of “other” stories, implying no relation to the traditional history of rhetoric. If we separate women’s stories and rhetorical women from the traditional history, then we separate women from rhetoric.

I argue that because male and female history interrelate, we should seek to analyze the interaction of the genders in the history of rhetoric, thus including women’s

stories in the tradition and demonstrating their function in society. Though Fox-Genovese argues against including women in traditional histories, she states, “it is necessary to search out and analyse the allocation of roles and identities between the genders in order to understand the dynamics of any social system” (15). Thus, if we are to understand the role of rhetoric in society, we must seek out women’s voices and examine their effect on the evolution of rhetoric. In order to accomplish this goal, we need to adopt a broader definition of rhetoric to include works by women, which may not resemble the traditional works of men in rhetoric. We should note the difference between the two forms of rhetoric and place the resulting differences in the context of society, giving us a more complete view of rhetoric in all of its forms and showing us the interrelation of different rhetorics.

Biesecker’s argument that including women’s voices in the tradition will result in “female tokenism” fails to consider that female rhetoricians serve as examples of female potential, reminders of what women *can* accomplish. We can rephrase Biesecker’s notion of the “female token” as the “female hero,” implying (more optimistically) that female rhetoricians do not represent a different, better kind of woman, but instead allow us to celebrate womankind as we remember our female heroes. When she states that inclusionary scholarship implies that “the majority of women cannot rival male accomplishments,” Biesecker neglects to acknowledge that not *all* men were heroes in history, as history only recounts selected stories that represent the potential of humankind. Consequently, calling attention to female heroes does not imply that the majority of women were incapable of such accomplishments.

Furthermore, Biesecker's statement that the inclusionary method "perpetuate[s] the damaging fiction that most women simply do not have what it takes to play the public, rhetorical game" neglects to consider the societal context that denied women the possibility of "playing the game." Instead, Biesecker assumes that readers will attribute women's absence, an absence that will only come to readers' attention after feminists recover women's stories, to an intrinsic lack of ability. Biesecker bases her argument on assumptions that readers are unaware of women's oppressed position in society and believe that women possess less intelligence than men. Biesecker's argument represents antiquated ideas of gender that do not reflect contemporary readers' assumptions. We should not reject the idea of writing women's stories in history, but instead reject the self-defeating approach that Biesecker takes to reading women in history.

Though feminists disagree about how we should enfranchise women in the patriarchal discipline of rhetoric, both sects agree that we should do *something*. Although feminist scholars debate adding women to the rhetorical tradition, I think the debate illuminates the issue and encourages more work in the field. As Patricia Bizzell states,

I think we need all the work we can get, theoretical quibbles
aside...therefore... I want to imply only that the traditional rhetorical
tradition needs to be corrected by greater attention to women, and that
almost any kind of material on women and rhetoric would now be
welcome. (51)

SECTION III

Aspasia's Story

"Aspasia...what art or charming faculty she had that enabled her to captivate, as she did, the greatest statesmen, and to give the philosophers occasion to speak so much about her."

-Plutarch, Lives of the Noble Grecians and Romans, p.200

Some scholars believe that Aspasia, a woman who lived in Athens during mid-fifth century B.C.E., represents the first female rhetorician. Because female voices in classical history have been suppressed or “lost,” little factual knowledge of Aspasia’s life exists. As Edward P.J Corbett explains, “rhetoric is one of the most patriarchal of all the academic disciplines...but because of the active feminist movement, we may be on the verge of recovering the names of women who could lay claim to being rhetors” (577). Extant literature that mentions Aspasia consists of Old Comedy and philosophical dialogue. These secondary sources constitute the basis of debate about Aspasia’s intelligence and rhetorical skills, a debate between scholars of rhetoric, classical history, and women’s studies.

Several factors must be considered to attribute the title of “rhetorician” to Aspasia: her status in society, indicated by her relationship to Pericles, a prominent Athenian political leader; her portrayal in philosophical dialogue and Old Comedy; and the lack of primary sources to describe Aspasia. Analyses of these determinants contribute to our perception of her intellect, rhetorical skills, and position in Athenian society. Though disagreement exists about Aspasia’s status in society and the reliability of the secondary sources that describe her, close inspection of her relationship to Pericles and of philosophical dialogue and Old Comedy leads to the likely possibility that she was an intelligent woman, worthy of the title “rhetorician.”

Aspasia's Relationship to Pericles

The nature of Aspasia's relationship to Pericles, whether marriage, prostitution, or pallakia (concubinage), suggests Aspasia's status as a woman in society and ultimately serves as an indicator of the extent to which the term "rhetorician" plausibly describes her. The contending positions on Aspasia's relationship to Pericles attempt to clarify her role in society. Madeleine Henry, author of Prisoner of History: Aspasia of Miletus and Her Biographical Tradition, asserts that Aspasia lived as Pericles' servile pallake because she came to Athens from Miletus as a metic, or a non-citizen, which was "in general characterized by many liabilities" (12). Robert Wallace, a Classics scholar at Northwestern University, criticizes Henry's position that Aspasia was a pallake and suggests that Aspasia and Pericles were married. Donald Kagan, author of Pericles of Athens and the Birth of Democracy, represents a compromise of these two extreme views by proposing that Aspasia was a hetaira, or a high-class, educated prostitute, who Pericles "took into his house and, whether or not they were legally married, treated her as his beloved wife" (182).

Pericles' Citizenship Law and its Effect on Aspasia

Interpretations of Aspasia's relationship to Pericles depend upon the interpretation of Athenian law regarding foreign women and further the debate about her status in society. Pericles' Citizenship Law of 451/450 B.C.E., which "limited citizenship to those freeborn persons whose mothers, as well as fathers were Athenian," serves as the basis

for interpretations of Pericles' and Aspasia's relationship (Osborne 3). Scholars debate whether the unclear specifics of this law prohibited marriages between Athenians and metics. Henry contends that Pericles' law prevented Aspasia from entering a valid marriage with an Athenian citizen. Therefore, "Aspasia's best option as a metic in Athens after 451/450 B.C.E. could have been to become the pallake of a well-born Athenian," which Henry believes was "in fact...her fate" (15). However, Wallace suggests that perhaps "only the offspring were affected by [Pericles' Citizenship] law" (4). He counters Henry's position by suggesting the possibility "that in marrying Aspasia—if he married her—or else consorting with her, Pericles was continuing a distinguished Athenian aristocratic tradition of marrying (or consorting with) well-connected foreigners" (4). Kagan, taking the middle-ground, acknowledges that the son of Aspasia and Pericles was legally a nothos, or bastard, but does not address the law's impact on their legal marriage status. Kagan concedes that it was "shocking and offensive" to many Athenians for Pericles "to treat such a woman [a hetaira], and a foreigner, too, as a wife" (18).

Aspasia: Concubine, Prostitute, or Wife?

Positions on allegations that Aspasia practiced prostitution upon her arrival in Athens aid in interpreting her relationship to Pericles and open the possibility that Aspasia had more freedom than other women during this period. Henry takes the position that Aspasia's guardian, or kyrios, would have attempted to marry her to another metic or place her in concubinage with a citizen to insure her future upon arriving in

Athens. Therefore, Henry claims that Aspasia served as a pallake to Pericles, an important politician, and “was unable to avoid colliding with Greek comedy’s misogynist scenario and being recast as a porne and procuress” (28). On the other hand, Wallace directly challenges Henry’s suggestion that Aspasia entered Athens as a pallake. He proposes that evidence suggesting that Aspasia descended from an influential family indicates that she was “an aristocratic, unmarried female member of a rich and powerful Athenian oikos” with “distinguished and powerful Athenian protectors” (3). If we accept this evidence, Aspasia would have little need to find protection in pallakia and would have entered into a relationship with Pericles willingly. Kagan describes Aspasia as a hetaira, “a kind of high-class courtesan who provided men with erotic and other kinds of entertainment” and who “may well have been trained in the latest ideas and techniques of discussion” (182). Kagan’s description of Aspasia as hetaira indicates that she enjoyed a certain freedom and independence that married Athenian women were denied. In this depiction, Aspasia could have been Pericles’ hetaira and entered into a relationship with him that allowed her to enjoy a degree of freedom.

The argument that Aspasia was Pericles’ concubine neglects to consider the inherently political and provocative nature of their relationship. Though Henry states that Aspasia probably served as Pericles’ concubine, Fornara and Samons suggest that this was simply a “charge” that intended to lower her status after the passage of Pericles’ Citizenship law. Fornara and Samons agree with Wallace that Aspasia and Pericles were married, though his “marriage with a Milesian was no marriage in respect of their issue, who could not be recognized as citizens of Athens. . . hence the charge that Aspasia was a concubine and her son a bastard” (164). Therefore, the accusation that Aspasia served as

a concubine may have arisen from the “politically disadvantageous” nature of their marriage (Fornara and Samons 163). Pericles’ marriage to a foreign woman after the passage of his Citizenship law would have showed a “contradiction that cannot but have excited rumor, which continued and expanded from Pericles’ time well into the next century” (Fornara and Samons 163).

Accounts of Pericles’ love for Aspasia, but the lack of concrete evidence that they were married leads some to dismiss the issue altogether. Kagan agrees with Fornara and Samons that Pericles treated Aspasia as his wife, but he does not address their legal marital status. Since no legal documentation exists that outlines their marital status, this dismissive view is probably wiser than Fornara and Samon’s assumption that the relationship was marriage. Kagan bases most of his argument on Plutarch’s description of Pericles’ love for Aspasia. Plutarch states that Pericles “loved her with wonderful affection; every day, both as he went out and as he came in from the market place, he saluted and kissed her” (201).

If Aspasia did not serve as Pericle’s concubine and we cannot prove that she was Pericle’s wife, we can infer the possibility that she and Pericles maintained a somewhat odd relationship for fifth century Athens. Kagan says that “what was by no means normal, but shocking and offensive was... to lavish such affection on [Aspasia] as few Athenian wives enjoyed, involve her regularly in conversation with other men, and discuss important matters with her and treat her opinions with respect” (201). This characterization aligns with Plutarch’s claim that “Aspasia, some say, was courted and caressed by Pericles upon account of her knowledge and skill in politics” (200). These descriptions suggest Aspasia’s unique status with Pericles because women in Athens

society were confined to the home and uneducated, having virtually no contact with other men. In her article “Sex, Lies, and Manuscript: Refiguring Aspasia in the History of Rhetoric,” Cheryl Glenn writes that “Athenian women’s activity, movement, education, marriage, and rights as citizens and property-holders were extremely circumscribed by male relatives” (182).

Aspasia’s relationship with Pericles, which was characterized by her unusual lack of restrictions, leads to the possibility that Aspasia was a hetaira, or courtesan. Though these terms refer to prostitution, a distinction exists between the common “porne” and the “hetaira.” According to Leslie Kurke, author of “Inventing the Hetaira,” “while the hetaira affirms and embodies the circulation of *charis* within a privileged elite, the porne in aristocratic discourse figures the debased and promiscuous exchanges of the agora” (112). In other words, “gift exchange” and “aristocratic friendship” characterized the hetaira’s relationship to the men of the symposium, while the porne embodied lewdness and commonality (115). According to Anakreon’s poetry, “the relationship of symposiast and hetaira is completely mystified as one of mutually comfortable and willing companionship” (Kurke 115). Many hetairai were educated to make them better companions for aristocratic men who attended the symposium. Accounts of Aspasia’s loving relationship with Pericles, in which she supposedly participated in intellectual conversation, fit the description of the hetaira.

Aspasia's Relation to Rhetoric

If we accept the view that Aspasia entered willingly, as a hetaira, into a relationship with Pericles, we open the possibility that she possessed rhetorical skills and was in a position to use them. Hetairai commonly accompanied aristocratic men, such as Pericles, to symposium, which “gave them a foot in the door of male society” (Keuls 162). Therefore, Aspasia would have the unique freedom, to a woman, of entering the male arena of political conversation. Sarah Pomeroy, author of Goddesses, Whores, Wives, and Slaves, states that “the hetaira had access to the intellectual life of Athens...and a popular courtesan who was not a slave had the freedom to be with whoever pleased her” (92). Hetairai were trained “in the arts of dancing, music, as well as rhetoric...and would have been able to hold discussions with the leading politicians and aristocrats...regarding philosophy, politics, and current events” (Hetairai 1).

Aspasia seems to have distinguished herself not only capable of entering conversation with men, but as an exemplary orator and intellectual. Plutarch writes that Aspasia “had the repute of being resorted to by many of the Athenians for instruction in the art of speaking” and that “Socrates himself would sometimes go to visit her, and some of his acquaintance with him” (200). Cheryl Glenn states that “her reputation as both a rhetorician and philosopher was memorialized by Plato (437-328 BC), Xenophon (fl. 450 BC), Cicero (100-43 BC), Athenaeus (fl. AD 200), and Plutarch (AD 46-c.120)” (183). Glenn believes that “Aspasia surely must have influenced Pericles in the composition of speeches that both established him as a persuasive speaker and informed him as the most respected citizen-orator of the age” (187). Aspasia's training as a hetaira and her

supposed education prior to entering Athens reinforce the possibility that she possessed superlative rhetorical skills.

The arguments about Aspasia's relationship with Pericles focus on her status in society. In the surviving fifth-century Athenian literature, no definite laws defining the status of a foreign woman exist and we cannot determine the legal nature of Pericles' relationship to Aspasia. This makes scholars' attempts at reconstructing Aspasia's life and her influence in the domain of rhetoric difficult, if not impossible because her involvement in Athenian politics depended upon her social status. However, scholars continue to debate Aspasia's relationship to Pericles because this relationship offers the possibility that Aspasia held a position that allowed her to exert some influence in the Athenian political arena. If we adopt the likely view of Aspasia as Pericles' hetaira, then we can acknowledge the possibility that her position gave her the freedom to exercise the rhetorical skills and intelligence that philosophers such as Plato, Xenophon, Cicero, Athenaeus, and Plutarch attribute to her.

Aspasia's Appearance in Old Comedy and Philosophical Dialogue

Madeleine Henry contends that philosophical discourse does not serve as evidence that Aspasia was an intelligent woman but uses her as a lowly female character to make political comment. Henry believes that "the Socratic contributors to Aspasia's bios were reacting largely to ideas first put forth in Old Comedy," which intended to disparage Pericles (30). She suggests that philosophical discourse simply created personae for her in "a very masculinist discourse" that attempted to use her character for

“the reinscription of Athenian history” (30). In a review of Henry’s book, Sarah Pomeroy agrees with Henry when she says, “the character Aspasia can readily be assigned a part in a dialogue wherever a woman’s viewpoint is required or where putting a speech in a woman’s mouth serves to undermine it” (2). Therefore, we can infer that Henry’s interpretation of the philosophical dialogue that praises Aspasia as an intellectual actually serves to reveal her unimportant status as a woman.

Plato’s Aspasia

Analysis of women in Plato’s works offers the probability that philosophical dialogue reveals Aspasia’s intelligence and ability, as opposed to Henry’s belief that philosophical dialogues intended to discredit that which she says. Elena Blair, author of “Women: The Unrecognized Teachers of the Platonic Socrates,” states that Aspasia “serves a function common to other Platonic works: the characterization of Socrates’ attitude toward women in breaking with tradition by introducing her as equal to the men of the city and as capable of teaching a receptive Socrates” (337). This assertion undermines Henry’s belief that the dialogues’ characterizations of Aspasia were based on attempts to disparage Athens by mockingly using a female to represent Athenian politics. Instead, Blair demonstrates that Plato commonly presents women characters equal to men, with “a tone of unquestioning acceptance” (337). Henry concedes that “Aspasia is the only provably historical woman to be accorded a speech in his entire corpus [which] is significant” (33). The significance of Plato’s attention to Aspasia includes the possibility that she exhibited qualities that were very different from other women, which

Socrates conveys when he describes her as a skilled orator. Socrates' respect for Aspasia appears in works by both Xenophon and Plutarch, but only Plato formally shows Aspasia as Socrates' teacher.

Aspasia in Old Comedy

Analysis of the intentions of Old Comedy's treatment of Aspasia uncovers the possibility that the comic works support the argument that Aspasia represented an intelligent, influential woman. Henry conveys her belief that the works did not support this idea by proposing that Old Comedy's disparagement of Aspasia intended to attack Pericles and Athenian politics instead of serving as direct commentary on Aspasia. For example, she says that Cratinus' *Dionysalexandros* "shows that a politician's irregular sexual behavior has political consequences" (22). Henry also proposes that Eupolis insulted Aspasia "for the sake of criticizing the nothos, Pericles, junior" (23). She also suggests that Hermippus' alleged prosecution of Aspasia for sexual impropriety actually intended to hurt Pericles by implying that, "like other popular politicians ... he felt himself above or beyond the law" (25). Furthermore, Henry states that accusing Pericles of "sexual excess ... may have inspired Aristophanes, and later, Eupolis, to call Aspasia a whore and to imply that she kept other women" (24).

By suggesting that Old Comedy used Aspasia to slander Pericles, Henry ignores the possibility that the comedies simply reflected the resentment towards an intelligent, politically influential female. Cheryl Glenn proposes that the Athenian citizenry was probably "unaccustomed to (or perhaps jealous or suspicious of) a public woman" (184).

She emphasizes “how extraordinary the foreign-born Aspasia—a public woman, philosopher, political influence, and rhetorician—would have been in fifth-century Athenian society” (184). Eva Cantarella writes, in Pandora’s Daughters, that it is not surprising that many Athenians hated Aspasia ... she was not like other women; she was an intellectual” (54). In a society that valued women only for sexual gratification and procreation, Aspasia could have posed a threat and inspired public denunciation through comedy, which was, as Henry states, “a genre full of commentary about politics” (19).

The fact that Aspasia appears in comedy implies that she held enough political influence to merit public commentary. Cheryl Glenn writes, “Aspasia seems to have been the only woman in classical Greece to have distinguished herself in the public domain” (183). The political invective of Old Comedy attacks influential men, but treats Aspasia differently in that “comic allusions to her are invariably sexual, sexualized and sexualizing” (Henry 19). With the view that Old Comedy constituted political commentary, the sexual nature of the disparagement could have arisen from the patriarchal society’s wish to lower Aspasia’s status to that of other Athenian women and to demean her political influence. In the book Women in Athenian Law and Life, Roger Just states that “Aspasia’s notoriety and the popular resentment her supposed influence aroused should ... be remembered—a resentment transmuted into mockery by comedy” (21).

Reliability of Aspasia's Story

Henry suggests that accounts of Aspasia as an intellectual rhetorician cannot be verified, based on Old Comedy and philosophical dialogue. She contends that “we can say remarkably little about Aspasia of Miletus” because “biographical anecdotes that arose in antiquity about Aspasia are wildly colorful and almost completely unverifiable” (127, 3). With this assertion, Henry refers to history's reliance on secondary sources to recount Aspasia's life. She believes that “ancient sources and modern interpreters have constructed her life...and the possibilities that existed for her life have been misunderstood” (3). Thus, Henry asks the reader to “forget Aspasia's reputation” and reminds us that “there is no good evidence for her inner or intellectual life” (9, 10). Therefore, Henry's assessment of the possibilities for Aspasia's life relies on documentation of conditions for women metics (non-Athenians) during fifth century Athens. Accordingly, Henry proposes that “Aspasia's best option as a metic in Athens after 451/450 could have been to become the pallake [concubine] of a well-born Athenian,” which was “in fact...her fate” (15). With this statement, Henry discredits the belief that Aspasia was an intellectual, influential free woman because the secondary sources that offer this depiction are unreliable.

However, if we review the use of secondary sources to describe other historical figures' lives, we see that Henry's argument contains contradiction. Cheryl Glenn counters Henry's argument by paralleling history's knowledge of Socrates to that of Aspasia. Primary sources from neither Socrates nor Aspasia exist; their lives are known only through secondary sources. Glenn points out that “although the historical tradition

has readily accepted secondary accounts of Socrates' influence, teaching, and beliefs, the same cannot be said about any female counterpart" (182). If we reject the sources that suggest Aspasia's intelligence and political acumen, we simply contribute to the patriarchal tradition of accepting male intelligence while questioning women's abilities. If we continue to accept men like Socrates, yet disregard evidence of Aspasia's influence, we demonstrate a contradiction that negates the point of searching for women's voices in history.

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