

RE-MEMBERING THE BODY

Rhetoric, Performance, and Diogenes the Cynic

Can it be called anything other than vulgar when Diogenes lets a fart fly against the Platonic theory of ideas ... ? And what is it supposed to mean when this philosophizing town bum answers Plato's subtle theory of eros by masturbating in public?
Sloterdijk 1987: 101

In my parents' house, stuck to a kitchen cupboard, there is a Post-it note with the following written in my aunt's steady script: "I view my body as a way to get my brain from here to there". Meant to be a humorous sentiment shared between two intelligent but definitely sedentary sisters, this simple sentence always troubled me. As young woman coming of age in an era of increasing cultural awareness about, even obsession with, nutrition and exercise, I viewed these words as a cop-out, an excuse for flabbiness. As a dancer, I knew that bodies are something more than a mere forklift for a slimy gray mass of neurons. As an amateur musical theater performer, choreographer and an avid theater-goer, I harbored a certain (but as yet unarticulated) basic awareness that bodies, especially body movement, could communicate ideas in concert with, or even apart from, spoken words.

In this essay, I shall re-member the body as a locus of persuasive power by exploring a theory of *rhetoric as embodied performance*. Working against my aunt's Cartesian inclinations, I want to "re-member" the body in two senses: first, to remember mentally, i.e. to recall that thinking ("I think, therefore I am") occurs in, through, and with bodies. As Descartes's *cogito* - the autonomous, rational, disembodied subject - has been dethroned in recent years by arguments that 'truth' and 'reality' are socially and linguistically constructed, we would do well to remember that we are historically situated language-using agents who inhabit bodies, or, more accurately, who exist *as embodied selves*.¹ Turning specifically to the history of rhetoric, I offer the reminder that the art of rhetoric emerged as techniques of oral/bodily performance, situated in space and time, rather than as a detached contemplative generation of (written) 'texts'. I contend that, if we are to emphasize rhetoric as *performance*, we must engage this notion of performative rhetoric with a theory of the embodied, acting self.

In the second and metaphorical sense, I frame this project as a physical remembering, as the re-assembly of scattered parts. A recurrent motif of postmodernity is 'fragmentation': of culture, of society, and of the individual

agent. Positing a re-assembled, intending subject may seem to threaten to resurrect a modernist rational agent, however, we might be able to think of this re-membering as a temporary, non-essentializing assembly of subject fragments or positions, as a situational fusion which overcomes the division of body and mind.

Here, I want to try to navigate the tricky waters between the Scylla of solid, centered, idealist agency (where rational subjects stand fast against material and discursive tides) and the Charybdis of radical fragmentation and pure social determinism (where our passive bodies are swept up by the cultural whirlpool; are disciplined, inscribed, manipulated, and become incapable of directed action). Conceptualized as embodied performance, then, I hope to show that rhetoric offers a technique of resistance against rational, disembodied Platonic logic—and also, perhaps, against the dismembering tendencies of postmodern ‘logic’.

“Classic” Classical Rhetoric

Traditionally, the practice of rhetoric has taken the form of persuasive oratorical performance. In Ancient Greece, the conceptualization and codification of rhetorical theory arose to service a performative exigence: citizens needed to acquire skills in public oratory both to defend themselves in court before large juries and to participate in democratic politics among their peers. However, classical rhetorical theorists generally paid only lip service to bodily actions—and what scant references exist are most commonly found in discussions of “delivery”, that part of rhetorical education which instructed students how to speak clearly, loudly, and in an engaging manner. For example, Aristotle briefly mentions the vocal qualities of volume, pitch, and rhythm, but declares, “delivery seems a vulgar matter when rightly understood” (1991: 1403b). He admits that “[T]he subject of expression [*lexis*]...has some small necessary place in all teaching”, but goes on to say, rather dismissively, that delivery is much like acting, which “is a matter of natural talent and largely not reducible to artistic rule” (1991: 1404a).

The Roman orator-statesman Cicero wrote more favorably: “For [the orator] invests his speech with lucidity, brilliance, convincingness and charm not by his language but by changes of voice, by gestures and by glances” (1942: 25). Still, Cicero separates this short discussion of delivery from the more substantive notion of invention, “discover[ing] how to convince the persons whom [one] wishes to persuade and how to arouse their emotions” (1942: 5), thus treating bodily movement more as window dressing or

embellishment for the spoken word than as a persuasive, intentional resource in its own right.

Of the ancients, Quintilian provided the fullest surviving account of delivery, especially regarding physical gesture. Kennedy notes that Quintilian's discussion

starts with the movement of the head, moves down past neck, shoulders, and arms to the hands, then reaches the feet and the motion of the whole body, and concludes with remarks on how to manage the toga (1969: 99).

Even Quintilian's detailed account, however, focuses on practical instruction in gestural oratorical decorum rather than theorizing the rhetorical power of the body itself.

What is missing, then, is a conceptualization of an embodied rhetoric, of the generative power of the acting rhetorical body. As Farnell observes, "social actors consistently and systematically use bodily movement as a cultural resource in discursive practices and *not simply in addition to them*" (1995: ix, emphasis added). The body is not merely the vessel transporting the rhetorical mind nor the apparatus supporting the rhetorical mouth. Rather, the body-in-action, the rhetorically performing body, makes and communicates meaning with both action signs and speech.²

Limiting the study of rhetoric only to spoken or written language and reducing body movement to mere embellishment, then, impoverishes our understanding of this art of communication. I would like to highlight rhetoric as performance, paying particular attention to the embodied self as agent of rhetorical power. My working definition of rhetorical performance is a broad one: action, usually including speech, intended to move, affect, or persuade an audience. By the "rhetorical body," I refer to the acting corporeal body of the performer or rhetor, which is an integral part of this speaking subject or communicating self.

Plato: Against Performance

Plato, usually revered as the founding father of Western philosophy, was in many ways the arch-enemy of rhetoric. His attack on oral poetry in the *Republic*, explicated in Havelock's *Preface to Plato*, constituted a blatant rejection of embodied, performative, communal, mimetic knowing in favor of abstract, rational, individualistic, contemplative knowledge. Plato distrusted sensory experience, the common masses, emotion, bodies, and speech. These very same misgivings - particularly those about speech and emotion -

underlie Plato's distaste for rhetoric. He saw rhetoricians, especially the Sophists, as pandering to crowds, relying on suspect, quasi-magical literary forms, and conducting shoddy epistemology. Rhetoric dealt in *doxa* - opinions, or "mere" belief - rather than in *episteme*, true knowledge.³ Plato sought a philosophy removed from material experience, a method of inquiry which would lead towards clearer knowledge of pure forms. In contrast to the passionate, engaged agitation of the poetic performance, "The new [Platonic] contemplation is to be serene, calm, and detached" (Havelock 1963: 271).

Classical rhetoric in some senses occupied an amorphous middle territory between oral poetry and philosophy. On one hand, rhetoric was a performative, public activity, which used *mimesis* as a pedagogical technique and borrowed figures of style and embellishment from the *rhapsodes*. Like oral poetry, rhetoric, particularly in ceremonial or epideictic speeches, served the function of articulating and perpetuating cultural history and values. On the other hand, rhetoric leaned more toward philosophy in its concerns with argumentation, *logos*, and invention. Rhetoric found its calling in the negotiation of guilt and innocence (in the courts), praise and blame (in ceremony), better and worse courses of action (in the deliberative assembly).⁴ Like philosophers, rhetoricians were concerned with knowledge, ethics, the 'right' and the 'good', however, regardless of their particular epistemological orientations, they recognized that mastery of *language* was of key importance in a democratic polity. Language was a necessary tool for understanding (and, for many, constructing) the very concept of the 'good'.

Theorizing rhetoric as performance in the classical age can be justified not only negatively but also positively - I have illustrated that Plato similarly disdained both. Records of the democratic city-state of 4th century B.C. Athens present a thriving milieu of public performance and political debate. The performance arts of theater and public oratory were at this time intimately intertwined: many audiences and participants experienced both, and each genre referred to and sometimes imitated the other. Ober and Strauss make a compelling case for studying Greek political rhetoric and drama "as closely related forms of public speech" (1990: 238); they conclude that

there was no compartmentalized division between esthetics and politics. Athenian political culture was created in part in the theater of Dionysos, theatrical culture on the Pnyx [the physical space where political debate occurred] (1990: 270).

Emphasizing rhetoric as embodied performance is further supported at the individual level by evidence that the citizen's body had considerable symbolic significance in classical Athens. David Halperin's work on prostitution and homosexuality - both of which were common, and not necessarily disreputable during this era - offers illuminating insights on the politics of the flesh. For instance, while indulging in the services of a prostitute (male or female) was relatively innocuous, prostituting one's own body resulted in the forfeiture of most, if not all, civic privileges.⁵ Halperin locates the logic for this disenfranchisement in the "cultural poetics of manhood" underlying the Athenian democratic ideology, which was designed to safeguard the freedom and autonomy of every Athenian male.

The body of a citizen was sacrosanct...Freedom from servility, exemption from torture, and corporeal inviolability were markers that distinguished citizens from slaves and from foreign residents in Athens. To violate the bodily sanctity of a citizen by treating him as one would a slave, by manhandling him, or even by placing a hand on his body without his consent was not only to insult him personally but to assault the corporate integrity of the citizen body as a whole and to offend its fiercely egalitarian spirit (Halperin 1989: 155-56).

The rhetorical performer investigated below, Diogenes the Cynic, was not a native Athenian, thus his own carcass failed to qualify as a "sacred citizen body". However, Halperin's understanding of bodily integrity as symbolically bound up with democratic freedom suggests a *significant rhetorical potential* of the moving body, of embodied performance.

Diogenes: Cynic, Dog, Rhetor

Diogenes the Cynic (404-323 B.C., according to Diogenes Laertius) was a contemporary of Plato. Some historians have labeled Cynicism a school of thought, or even a philosophy, whereas others view it as a way of life. I make the somewhat unorthodox move to read Diogenes the Cynic as a rhetorician.⁶ I say "unorthodox" because Diogenes certainly wouldn't fit the classical vision of a typical rhetorician: one who composes and delivers formal speeches; one who serves as a statesman, attorney, or political adviser; one who might instruct privileged youth and perhaps write a treatise on rhetorical theory in his spare time. Treating Diogenes as a rhetorician and his 'performances' as rhetorical, though, enables us to push the boundaries of the classical conception of rhetoric and, hopefully, glean a richer understanding of rhetorical performance.

Exiled from his native Sinope, reportedly for “adulterating” the coinage (or for his father’s similar misdeed), Diogenes later came to live in both Athens and Corinth for extended lengths of time. Various and sometimes contradictory accounts of Diogenes’s life and adventures survive, however, the earliest texts we have about him were written at least three centuries after his death. Whether Diogenes himself left any written texts is disputed.⁷

The quasi-mythic *persona* of Diogenes the Cynic, however, has survived primarily in the form of pithy quotes and short anecdotes, also known as ‘Chria’ or ‘apophthegms’. Sayre reports that

the Greeks were fond of apophthegms and made collections of them....In these anecdotes *it is the saying or doing which is emphasized* and the person of whom it is related is of less consequence (1938: 103, emphasis added).

These story fragments were often carelessly told about more than one person. Apparently, the number of anecdotes told about a given individual served as a rough measure of popularity. It seems evident that Diogenes achieved considerable fame, given the abundance and vivid color of the surviving anecdotes.

Acknowledging intertextual conflict and historical uncertainties, then, the concern for biographical accuracy regarding the historical person, Diogenes, must be set aside. First, holding this study to strict standards of authenticity would render it forever paralyzed. Second, Sayre’s very admission that the “saying or doing” in each anecdote was most important suggests the propriety of focusing on the performances described in the Diogenes apophthegms, regardless of their historical accuracy. Finally, I argue that the surviving mythic fragments are themselves rightfully texts, even if they have been “adulterated” over the centuries.

Clearly, we cannot conduct an on-site ethnographic study of Diogenes’s performative rhetoric, nor do we have access to the second-best alternative, a video-tape. So, we are left with a smattering of sentences - rumors, letters, historical commentary, recollected utterances, described performances - some of which are perhaps of dubious origin. Nevertheless, these bits and pieces taken together comprise a body of material which is the best and only Diogenes the Hound we know.

He was called the Hound, or ‘Diogenes the Dog’, primarily because of his simple, almost animalistic lifestyle. He took shelter in a large barrel or clay vase on the street and renounced all but the most necessary of worldly goods. The word “Cynic” is actually derived from the Greek word for dog, *kynos*, which leads through Latin to our “canine”. On one occasion, Diogenes

literally played the part of a dog: "At a feast certain people kept throwing all the bones to him as they would have done to a dog. Thereupon he played a dog's trick and drenched them" (Diogenes Laertius 1925: 49). This event, as we shall see, is but one short scene in the "theater of vulgarity" through which Diogenes performed his cultural critique (Lipsey 1989: 55).

Because Diogenes was exiled, his name for some time was associated with ill repute. One anecdote reports that Diogenes was put up for sale as a slave. When asked what task he could best perform, he exclaimed, "govern men!" Official channels of Athenian government, of course, were closed to the Cynic, since he was not a native citizen. Diogenes did, however, make it a life-long project to "govern" by example—to demonstrate to Athenian citizens their hypocrisy and mistaken ways, and to boldly (and bodily!) criticize from the margins.

Diogenes (and most Cynics after him), strove to live a simple life as close to nature as possible. Freedom was the highest virtue for Diogenes, and he viewed poverty not as a *lack* of material wealth, but as freedom from it. The characteristic Cynic garb, which Diogenes learned from Antisthenes, was a rough double cloak (suitable for all seasons), a leather pouch for begging, a walking staff, and perhaps a cup or spoon. Diogenes looked to animals and children for lessons in frugality. Upon seeing a snail carry its lodging on its back, he decided he could do without a proper house. Upon seeing a child drink from his hands, he exclaimed, "a child has beaten me in the plainness of living" and discarded his cup.

The Dog was free not only from material cares, but also from social, familial, political, and occupational obligations. Nor was he bound by moral conventions: Diogenes saw nothing at all wrong with begging, stealing from the temple, or performing vulgar, taboo acts in public. Several sources relate that Diogenes was instructed by an oracle to "adulterate the coinage" (recalling his alleged crime in Sinope). Reading "coinage" metaphorically as "conventions" he fulfilled this command by challenging and transgressing Athenian social mores.

The Dog radically demonstrated to the Athenians their lack of freedom, their delusional confidence that they enjoyed virtuous autonomy: he launched a performative rhetoric to challenge the hegemonic social order. Diogenes transgressed traditional moral boundaries of public/private, external/internal, political/personal. We find Diogenes urinating, defecating, masturbating, and perhaps even fornicating in public. When dining at an opulent, ostentatious home, Diogenes coughed and needed to expectorate: finding no suitable place around him, he spat on his wealthy young host. "Do

you blame me for what happened and not yourself?" he retorted. "It was you who decorated the walls and pavement of the banquet hall, leaving only yourself unadorned, as a place fit to spit onto!" (Malherbe 1977: 163). On another occasion, after manually satisfying his sexual needs in public, the Cynic declared that he wished it were as easy to banish hunger by rubbing the belly. "Diogenes turns the tables" declares Sloterdijk. "He literally shits on the perverted norms" (1987: 168).

Social taboos invoking dirt and shame often work to control, regulate, and repress the individual. Diogenes broke free from this oppressive ordering through active transgressions. He sought to "shock sensibilities, to scandalize by profaning societal customs, to challenge...[our] pre-understanding about how one should talk and respond to ideas and actions" (Windt 1972: 6). Emperor Julian defends his favorite Cynic thus:

[W]hen Diogenes made unseemly noises or obeyed the call of nature or did anything else of that sort in the market-place, as they say he did, he did so because he was trying to trample on the conceit of the [hypocritical rascals], and to teach them that their practices were far more sordid and insupportable than his own. For what he did was in accordance with the nature of all of us, but theirs accorded with no man's real nature, one may say, but were all due to moral depravity (1913: 61).

Diogenes refused to be disciplined or docile; his transgressive performances exposed repressive moral standards and denaturalized restrictive social boundaries.

Grotesque Realism and the Carnavalesque

Perhaps most significant about these stories is the fact that Diogenes rejected not only social customs and moral laws, but also the rational rhetoric used in their articulation. Rather than positing a reasoned, logical argument against cultural norms and practices, thus recognizing and re-enforcing that method of abstract knowing and communicating, he devised a subversive, material bodily rhetoric. Diogenes's embodied performances exhibit the principle of "grotesque realism" articulated in Bakhtin's account of Rabelaisian carnival.

Carnival has served for centuries as a place and time of cultural inversion, when social rules are temporarily suspended: these ritual celebrations are characterized by licentiousness, gluttony, open sexuality, profane and combative speech, and general immodesty.⁸ The carnivalesque body is debased, grotesque; it transgresses the norms of propriety and cultural

decorum. Mikhail Bakhtin writes, “debasement is the fundamental artistic principle of grotesque realism; all that is sacred and exalted is rethought on the level of the material bodily stratum” (1968: 370). Here, the body subverts not only the outward moral order, but also challenges the hegemony of the rational mind!

The logic of the ‘wrong side out’ and of ‘bottoms up’ is also expressed in gestures and other movements: to walk backward, to ride a horse facing its tail, to stand on one’s head, to show one’s backside (Bakhtin 1968: 411).

The acting body thus becomes a locus for thought, the new source of argument.

The animalities are for the kynic a part of his way of presenting himself, *as well as a form of argumentation*....Spirited materialism is not satisfied with words but proceeds to a material argumentation that rehabilitates the body....To take what is base, separated, and private out onto the street is subversive (Sloterdijk 1987: 105, emphasis added).

In Diogenes the Cynic, then, we find an embodied and performative argumentation, a rhetoric that re-members the body through action signs that simultaneously disgust and fascinate.

We should note that Diogenes invokes guerrilla carnivalesque performances to invert social norms, but in non-carnival situations, which makes them more bizarre, but perhaps also more powerful.⁹ On the other hand, his fish-out-of-water actions may have been so misplaced as to render them senseless, evidence of mental derision. I suspect, given the diversity of surviving judgments of Diogenes, that his audience reactions involved a little of both—awe and revulsion, delight and disbelief.

Whatever the immediate response, Diogenes’s actions did have notable historical effects: as we have seen, he was an influential figurehead in the Cynic school of thought, and was revered by such great leaders as Alexander and Emperor Julian. In his embodied rhetorical acts, then, Diogenes demonstrates the emancipatory potential of the grotesque, carnivalesque, performing body.

Bodies: Personal and Social

In carnival celebrations, people trade social status, and their symbolic “new” bodily roles give rise to expressions of otherwise suppressed antagonisms:

The young can scold the old, women can ridicule men, cuckolded or henpecked husbands may be openly mocked, the bad-tempered and stingy can be satirized, muted personal vendettas and factional strife can be expressed (Scott 1990: 173).

These reversed interpersonal encounters symbolized the inversion of social norms and hierarchies. In a similar vein, individual bodies can also come to metaphorically represent the social body or the community as a whole. Mary Douglas explores the cultural significance of bodies, orifices, impurities, and taboos in her anthropological study, *Purity and Danger*. She observes that “rituals work upon the body politic through the symbolic medium of the physical body” (1966: 128).

This notion of the body as metaphorically representing society supports the assertion that Diogenes’s bodily rhetoric constituted social critique, rather than mere personal vulgarity. Also, recall Halperin’s historical claim that to insult or defile an individual Athenian body “was not only to insult him personally but to assault the corporate integrity of the citizen body as a whole” (1989: 156). By acting freely, perhaps Diogenes hoped to free Athenian society. In relying upon carnivalesque tactics, perhaps he was trying to engage

a play that pursues a distant, prophetic goal: to dispel the atmosphere of gloomy and false seriousness enveloping the world and all its phenomena, to lend it a different look, to render it more material, closer to man and his body, more understandable, and lighter in the bodily sense (Bakhtin 1968: 380).

Diogenes challenged the body politic not with traditional speeches in the *agora* or at the *Pnyx*, but metaphorically, through his own bodily actions. Read in this light, perhaps the story of Diogenes traipsing through the city streets in broad daylight, lantern in hand, shouting “I am looking for an honest man!” signifies his critique of a lost and confused city, searching blindly for truth, rather than the disgruntled ramblings of a cynical old man.

Attack on Platonic Rationality

Diogenes directly assaulted intellectualism and “high theory” with his materially grounded, embodied rhetoric. Diogenes Laertius recalls,

[W]hen somebody declared that there is no such thing as motion, he got up and walked about. When some one was discoursing on celestial phenomena, ‘How many days,’ asked Diogenes, ‘were you in coming from the sky?’ (1925: 41).

Always the skeptic, Diogenes scoffed at Plato's theoretical lectures, calling them a waste of time. When Plato defined man as an animal, biped and featherless, Diogenes plucked a chicken and brought it into the lecture room, declaring, "Here is Plato's man!" With this gesture, Diogenes has shifted the rules of the game, undermining Plato's abstract rationality with an embodied rhetorical performance. The Emperor Julian later asked,

And if Plato chose to achieve his aim through words, whereas for Diogenes deeds sufficed, does the latter on that account deserve to be criticised by you? Nay, consider whether that same method of his be not in every respect superior...(1913: 27).

Here, Julian seems implicitly to understand the power of action signs; that actions can *mean* as words do. Action signs, actions that "speak" are like the flip side of the coin of Austin's performative utterances - words that "act" (1975).

In perhaps the most famous of all the mythical Diogenes stories, we find yet another affront to authority. Almost every account recalls his encounter with Alexander: the young ruler had heard of the infamous Cynic, and apparently sought him out. Diogenes was lying in the street, sunbathing. Alexander introduced himself and offered to grant Diogenes any request. The Dog simply replied, "Move aside; you're blocking my sun". Here, Diogenes refused to acknowledge political power, to step into the genuflecting role of subject to monarch. "He is the first one who is uninhibited enough to say the truth to the prince" (Sloterdijk 1987: 161). Furthermore, the prince was himself awed by the great Cynic. Upon leaving the scene, he exclaimed, "If I were not Alexander, I should like to be Diogenes!"

We have seen, then, how Diogenes's performative rhetoric, often involving radical bodily acts, constituted a lively critique of privilege, social mores, and abstract rationality. The Cynic used laughter, silence, profanity, humorous illustration, obscene gestures, and unpredictable behavior to subvert aristocratic privilege and abstract, disembodied Platonism. Bakhtin writes,

[T]his is why the material bodily lower stratum is needed, for it gaily and simultaneously materializes and unburdens. It liberates objects from the snares of false seriousness, from illusions and sublimations inspired by fear (1968: 376).

The Cynical rhetor unseats the philosopher-king who reigns in the name of Truth: "The Emperor," mocks Diogenes, "has no clothes!"

A Strategic Postmodern Rhetoric

By appointing Diogenes as an honorary rhetorician and learning from his tactics, we capture a valuable strain of resistance to Plato and to the familiar dualisms which have plagued Western thought for over two millennia. Mind/body, reason/feeling, knowledge/experience, thinking/speaking, universal/particular: the first has typically been privileged, the second discarded as devious, dangerous, unscientific.

Whereas 'high theory' from Plato on irrevocably cuts off the threads to material embodiment in order instead to draw the threads of argumentation all the more tightly together into a logical fabric, there emerges a subversive variant of *low theory* that pantomimically and grotesquely carries practical embodiment to an extreme....With Diogenes, the resistance against the rigged game of 'discourse' begins in European philosophy (Sloterdijk 1987: 102).

Diogenes pulls at the threads of Plato's "logical fabric" unraveling the philosopher's epistemological foundation.

Furthermore, I would argue that Diogenes dances the precarious tightrope spanning the mind/body divide. He does not merely re-assert this dualism with his vulgar, bottom-up discourse; had this been the case, the mythical Dog would have been nothing better than his nickname - an obscene old street urchin whose bodily obscenities were seen as thoughtless, pointless. As I have read Diogenes above, however, his rhetorical performances engage mind and body, blending thought and action, even when his actions (and perhaps thoughts) seemed irrational.

Diogenes is re-membered, through a collection of mythic fragments, as a renegade philosopher who lived out and performed his beliefs. Indeed, two great world leaders - Alexander in Diogenes's time and Emperor Julian of Rome centuries later - revered Diogenes as a paragon of wisdom. Plato himself remarked that Diogenes was "Socrates gone mad". Though an insult in one sense, surely this statement is complimentary in another, since Plato places Diogenes in the same category of philosopher as his own masterful teacher.

This theory of embodied rhetorical performance in the tradition of Diogenes the Cynic holds promise for meeting the "challenge of the postmodern" which Pollock and Cox describe as "find[ing] a way to speak to and against dominant social codes, without re-inscribing dominance and at least engaging the possibility of revaluation" (1991: 175). Diogenes spoke and acted out through his performative rhetoric, refusing to bend to the dominant

social codes and discursive norms of his day. Admittedly, this theory of rhetoric grounded in the Cynical tradition is perhaps best suited for protest, dissent, and discourse from the margins. Diogenes would be a relatively poor model for rhetorics of moderation, conciliation, or control. The less subversive and non-vulgar performing body, however, certainly exerts rhetorical force in a wide variety of cultural practices and rituals.

Painting rhetors as performers, furthermore, imbues them with considerable cultural power. Bauman notes the tendency

for performers to be both admired and feared - admired for their artistic skill and for the enhancement of experience they provide, feared because of the potential they represent for subverting and transforming the status quo (1977: 45).

Indeed, this power of performance is analagous to the Greek word *dienotes*, meaning awe-, and fear-inspiring, which was commonly used to describe the most powerful of classical orators.

From this working theory of performative, embodied rhetoric arises the need for a performative rhetorical criticism. Here, we might look not only to rhetoric's history, but also to anthropology, theater, dance, art, and perhaps even literary criticism. This new criticism would be especially sensitive to aesthetics, the politics of space, notions of public and private. It would have to take account of social norms regarding the body, issues of identity politics (race, class, gender, age, disability, etc.), material conditions of the rhetor and performance, and the culturally-specific, symbolic power of bodily movement.

Finally, I want to emphasize that I do not mean to posit this embodied, performative rhetoric as a totalizing, all-encompassing theory of rhetoric, especially since Diogenes and his materialistic performances worked against master theories. However, as a practice of resisting dominant modes of discourse, a mobilization of situated, embodied agency in the face of fragmented subjectivity, and a technique of subversive social criticism, embodied rhetorical performance in the spirit of Diogenes provides a conceptualization of rhetoric well-suited for beginning to address some of the perplexities of the postmodern condition.

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Notes:

¹ See, for example, discussions of the social construction of person in Harré (1983 and 1986). Williams (1975, 1982) makes a case for the role of body movement in the construction of embodied selves, thereby extending the reach of Harré's approach. See also discussion in Varela (1995).

² I do recognize that the body-as-text can also function rhetorically: tattooing, piercing, hairstyles, body-building, dieting, and any number of "writings" of or on the body are certainly potentially rhetorical. In this paper, though, I will be concerned with the acting, moving body - I want to address the body *as acting subject*, not as object.

³ Cf. Plato's *Gorgias*, 1960: 453-458.

⁴ Cf. Aristotle's *On Rhetoric*, 1991: 1358b.

⁵ This applied, of course, only to native-born males who enjoyed the rights of citizenship to begin with.

⁶ To my knowledge, only one contemporary communication studies scholar has studied Diogenes from an explicitly rhetorical perspective. Cf. Windt (1972).

⁷ Diogenes Laertius lists a handful of works written by Diogenes of Sinope. Farrand Sayre doubts the authenticity of extant texts attributed to our Cynic. The *Cynic Epistles* date from the Augustan age and "purport to have been written by...Antisthenes, Diogenes, and Crates" (Malherbe 1977: 2).

⁸ Cf. Scott 1990: 172-82.

⁹ Scott points out the limitations of social subversion achieved during recognized carnival: "the grotesquerie, profanity, ridicule, aggression, and character assassination of carnival make sense only in the context of the effect of power relations the rest of the year". Though we can't directly measure the "effectiveness" of Diogenes's carnivalesque rhetoric, it seems fair to conjecture that his performances took more daring than those of a masked carnival-goer during a full-blown festival. Because they were out of the carnival context, Diogenes's antics were potentially, I think, more subversive.

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