RHETORICAL GESTURES IN BRITISH ELOCUTIONISM

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DISSERTATION

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ABSTRACT

This project uncovers the rhetoric of gesture in British elocutionist handbooks on delivery (about 1650 to 1800). In the work of Bulwer, Sheridan, Walker, Priestley, Austin and others, the gesture exceeds its caricature in histories of rhetoric: an ancillary, if "detached" mechanism for the coercion of audience. Instead, the gesture produces meaning as it promotes appeal. It recommends presence as an inventional resource, and moving-with as a means to coming to terms, drawing toward what Crowley, writing in the context of contemporary political action, calls "civil discourse." By tracking and analyzing the rhetorical gesture through interrelated thematic locations—medicine, theatre, pulpit, and philosophical chemistry—this project not only argues for re-embodying invention, but also (like the Elocutionists themselves did) suggests that theorists of material and body rhetoric would benefit by extending their cross-disciplinary reach. Rhetorical gesture points out an alternative to "invention" (as well as rhetoric) that is by nature personal, oral and alphabetic. I offer this study/ gesture in support of current efforts to theorize the body's role in the production of argument (Hawhee, Davis), as well as feminst rhetorics that assert the importance of looking beyond the speaker (Glenn, Ratcliffe) and even text, for rhetorical subjects and "stance."

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

For your iconic gestures;[1] your deictic gestures that signaled a way and your dream gestures; your gestures of complement, admonishment, applause, adjuration, yielding, confessing, cherishing, demanding, blessing, proving, confirming, saluting, entertaining, giving thanks, giving welcome, bidding farewell, consenting, upbraiding, rewarding, force, pacification, invitation, justification, disdain, forgiveness, promise, performance, invocation, request, charge, praise, direction, adoption, faith, exchange, benevolence, mercy, grace, silence, comfort, relief, demonstration, remonstrance, mirth, and wonder;[2] your patent emblems and patented touch-screen gestures; your gestures of interrogation, frankness, tenderness, dominance, rejection, consternation, triumph, irony, and confusion "(pêlemêle)";[3] your metaphoric gestures in all due forms—mixed, absolute, implied, dead, complex as the day is long; your beats, in time, as time, went by; gestures showing something as essential or fundamental, what is notable, narration;[4] your *affect displays*, *regulators* ("acts which maintain and regulate the back-and-forth nature of speaking and listening"), and *adaptors*;[5] your just plain "idiosyncratic spontaneous movements";[6] your

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1 For they are nothing if not iconic!

2 John Bulwer, Chirologia*, or, The naturall language of the hand composed of speaking motions, and discoursing gestures thereof: whereunto is added* Chironomia*, or, The art of manuall rhetoricke, consisting of the naturall expressions, digested by art in the hand, as the chiefest instrument of eloquence* (London: Tho. Harper, 1644), 9-10.

3 Adam Kendon, *Gesture: Visible Action as Utterance* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 86, paraphrasing Bary from *Méthode pour bien prononcer un discours et pour le bien animer* (1679).

4 Ibid.

5 Paul Ekman and Wallace Friesen, "The Repertoire of Nonverbal Behavior: Categories, origins, Usage, and Coding," *Semiotica* 1, no. 1 (1969): 82, 84.

6 David McNeill, *Hand and Mind: What Gestures Reveal About Thought* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992), 37.

Butterworths,[7] your batons,[8] and your cohesives;[9] for all of your signs; your in-between gestures, and your hitherto not classified gestures which by and by cast mine: thank you, teachers.

[7] Kendon, *Gesture*, 101.
[8] Ekman and Friesen, "The Repertoire of Nonverbal Behavior," 68.
[9] McNeill, *Hand and Mind*, 16.

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INTRODUCTION:

GESTURE LURE

1 THE BEST LAID CAST

In Book 6 of *Institutio Oratoria*, by way of touting the influence of appeals to emotion upon judges, Quintilian cautions that even the best-laid appeal can fall flat owing to body language. To illustrate, he describes courtroom scenes featuring the consequences of advocates' lack of attunement with (or disregard of) other bodies. For example, he explains, an advocate who defends a woman thought it strategic for his peroration to produce an image of her husband in order to elicit sympathy from the court. However, the room only laughs: "the persons whose business it was to produce it," unfamiliar with the genre, "displayed it to view whenever the advocate looked towards them and, when it was brought still more into sight at the conclusion," when it was meant to be shown, "it destroyed the effect of all his previous eloquence by its ugliness, being a mere cast from an old man's dead body."[1] Having emphasized that the best way to rouse feeling in judges is by rousing feeling in oneself—and that the surest way to "generate these emotions in ourselves, since emotion is not in our own power"[2] is through deeply cast impression, and thus feeling—Quintilian emphasizes that this orator had the right idea. The flaw was with his execution. For meeting the laughter, he forgets the living element of his delivery, and carries on as planned. The death cast is what becomes of his speech, and its reception.

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[1] Quintilian, *Institutes of Oratory*, ed. Lee Honeycutt, tr. John Selby Watson (Ames: Iowa State, 2006), VI.i.40.
[2] Quintilian, *Institutes of Oratory*, tr. H. E. Butler (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1963), VI.i.29.

2 RHETORICAL GESTURE

I begin with the cast to introduce rhetorical gesture: motions of the body that are more than ornament, more than rational, and more than one's own. Rhetorical gesture, I argue, is means not only to what Adam Kendon terms "manifest, deliberate expressiveness," but it is also means to thinking through and reclaiming movement, formation and deformation, excess, occurrence—the event—as rhetorical opportunity.[3]

Although this gesture is not containable to the hand—indeed, it will course a foot, a shoulder, a torso, a posture, or even a handful of postures, side by side by side—the hand is a fitting place to begin a historiographic narrative about the relationship between gesture and rhetoric. In "The Rhetoric of the Open Hand and the Rhetoric of the Closed Fist," Edward P.J. Corbett describes the rhetoric of the open hand as characteristic of "the kind of persuasive discourse that seeks to carry its point by reasoned, sustained, conciliatory discussion of the issues."[4] The closed fist "seeks to carry its point by non-rational, non-sequential, often non-verbal, frequently provocative means."[5] The open hand depends on the "seat of the intellect," while the closed fist depends on the "seat of the pants."[6] My project takes a part in contemporary efforts to restore the rhetoric of the closed fist—not by way of abandoning the open hand, but by arguing that reasoned engagement is also wholly bodily. Thinking through bodily gesture offers a model of invention that acknowledges both what Sharon Crowley describes as appeal to the gut

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[3] Adam Kendon, *Gesture: Visible Action as Utterance* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 15.
[4] Edward P. J. Corbett, "The Rhetoric of the Open Hand and the Rhetoric of the Closed Fist," *College Composition and Communication* 20 (1969): 288.
[5] Ibid.
[6] Ibid., 293. Paraphrasing Leland M. Griffin in "The Rhetorical Structure of the 'New Left' Movement."

and what Edwin Hutchins calls "cognitive systems that transcend the boundaries of individual bodies."[7] As Crowley says, "Beliefs can be learned by means of discourse, but they can also be learned through adopting bodily positions, making gestures, and performing movements."[8] Scholars of rhetoric should not merely treat bodies as receptacles for rhetorical effect. We should instead consider our own bodies, proximities, and gut sense as ways of thinking, and of coming to terms.

Although this rhetoricity of gestures might seem intuitive (gestures are, after all, like textual arguments, always *moving*) rhetoricians have been quick to cordon off gestures as

- unrhetorical, by ignoring them;
- slightly rhetorical, in that gestures "ornament" speech; or
- rhetorical, but only for sophists.

This last caricature—of gesture as lure—is the one that interests me the most. The spellbinding rhetor is caught in an unwieldy gesture. A sort of "zap" radiates from the posture, which dazzles the unsuspecting audience into concurrence. *These gestures,* this caricature suggests, *have a way of running away with you. You had better keep an eye out for their enchantments.*

This caricature reinforces the pervasive notion that invention and delivery are separate processes that occur in separate locations, at separate times, and had best be taken up separately. It also reinforces the notion that gesture is ancillary both to speech and to forming an argument.

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[7] Sharon Crowley, *Toward a Civil Discourse: Rhetoric and Fundamentalism* (Pittsburgh: Pittsburgh University Press, 2006), 4.
[8] Ibid., 4.

This caricature it is also the reason that I turn to the 18th-century British Elocutionists to search for a new use for rhetorical gestures. Rhetorical critics and historians (in the 18th century and now) sketch the Elocutionist as a *poser*—a little too caught up with facial expression, tone of voice, and foot position in delivery. I was intrigued by this embarrassing patch in British rhetorical history, which stands accused of mistaking delivery for rhetoric, and bodily persuasion for argument. But what I found in the work of these elocutionists was not merely a rigid code for comporting bodies. Not just gesture cookbooks. Instead, I found theorists who speak of gestures in terms of currents of energy, of the influence of heat on persuasion, and to the generative powers of the motions that move us. For these Elocutionists, the problem of rhetorical efficacy in Britain is precisely material: the British rhetor loses auditors to the cold. Symptoms of the chill manifest on both rhetor and auditor during rhetorical exchange and look like this: stolid bodies, folded hands, inscrutable faces, try to keep out of reason's way. While the still-bodied argument proves rational indeed, it suffers from something of a transmission problem. "Other bodies" are not targets in this equation so much as resources for *movement*.

My work undertakes a genealogy of gesture as the craft whose forgetting gives rise to the conventional relegation delivery to the bottom of the canon-totem. Gesture, I argue, is meaning-in-formation. Its appeal is both fully inbodied and fully relational. Considering gesture in this way puts rhetorical invention in material terms. Such invention enjoins what Jenny Rice calls "the sensation of involvement, and thought-

impingement," and inventional practice—or *moves*—that acknowledge the bodies with which we act and mean.[9]

I argue that the relationship between gesture and the bodily production, reception, and transmission of argument is a marginalized but vital component of current body rhetoric as well as the historical canon of rhetorical theory and practice. In what follows, I will first describe Quintilian's discussion of improvisation, which the Elocutionists in my case studies extend. Although these Elocutionists uses Cicero and Quintilian as sources for what *actio* is and does, each has distinctive ideas about how gestures operate in relation to speech and what role they play in deliberation. Quintilian fluently demonstrates the importance of gestural rhetorical production to eloquent speech, but fails to offer a clear basis for how the capacity for such production might be cultivated. This tension in Quintilian serves as a useful introduction both to the Elocutionists—who embody, take up, and respond to it—and to my own historiographic argument, which seeks to clarify the second point. Following that, I offer a summary of (rhetorical gestures, what I am doing in this dissertation, or my argument and its implications). To close, I briefly describe each of the chapters and the argument's arc.

3 SLEIGHT OF HAND

Other advocates, less efficacious than Quintilian, attribute postures to their client, which the client in no way manifests ("'He is raising his supplicating hands towards your knees'" while the client merely sits), or with dramatic flare, reference the unfolding

[9] Jenny Rice, "Executive Overspill: Affective Bodies, Intensity, and Bush-in-Relation," *Postmodern Culture* 15, no. 1 (2004): 9.

activities of a client who has long since left the room.[10] Needless to say, these appeals frequently collapse as those "who cannot vary from what they have composed [about the supposed posture of the client] are either struck dumb at such occurrences or, as is frequently the case, say what is not true."[11] For how can you move sympathy to the bodies of others, when you will not react yourself? Quintilian points out the simple fact that rhetorical appeal is excruciatingly momentary—and happening (or precisely not happening) irregardless of speech. Through these examples of advocates refusing to react bodily as a component of their own persuasion, Quintilian demonstrates that appeal is fully embodied; it is contingent on connections between people for its very formation—not merely some sort of "expulsion" that hits or misses its mark. The audience contributes to developing content, in terms of energy, feedback, and even disruption. Audience "gives strength to our voice, fluency to our tongue, and vigor to our gesture."[12] For this reason, rhetors "cannot develop the same intelligence and energy before a single listener as they can when inspired by the presence of a numerous audience…No, there would be no such thing as eloquence, if we spoke with only one person at a time."[13] The eloquence that Quintilian calls for is not pressed and starched style. Rather, this "eloquence"—"in sympathy with the emotions of which it is the mouthpiece"—is that which inhabits the term as it becomes used in (and since characterizes) 18th century rhetoric.[14] Eighteenth-century eloquence is likewise premised on the notion that "we should be moved ourselves before we attempt to move others."[15] It is "feeling,"

[10] Honeycutt, *Institutes of Oratory*, VI.i.42, VI.iii.41.
[11] Ibid., VI.i.42.
[12] Butler, *Institutes of Oratory*, X.vii.26.
[13] Ibid., VI.ii.29.
[14] Ibid., I.x.24.
[15] Ibid., VI.ii.26.

Quintilian says, that makes us be moved; and in this "the life and soul of oratory is to be found."[16]

Quintilian critiques the bad logistical habit (especially among young orators) of sticking so closely to the script as to ignore the dynamic space before one while delivering, "because our search for premeditated ideas makes us miss others, and we draw our matter from memory rather than from the subject on which we are speaking."[17] This tendency owes to rhetorical training, Quintilian suggests, because in school settings it is easy to separate what seems like the basic activity of composition from delivery. When practicing oratory in school, "we give play to our imaginations freely and with impunity, because whatever we wish is supposed to be done."[18] But as the story makes plain, "what the instant demands" is reception of and instantaneous response to the pulse of the field. One has "to build up what is to follow and to secure that there will always be some thought formed and conceived in advance ready to serve," even as one "pays out what he has in hand" in terms of voice, comportment, and gesture.[19] Quintilian articulates the clearance between uptake and output, wherein

> Whatever portion of our matter is consumed in speaking, an equal amount must be brought forward from that which is to follow, so that, until we

[16] Ibid., X.vii.15, VI.ii.7.
[17] Ibid., X.vi.6. He illustrates both what is lost in the former and gained by the latter practice with the story of Cicero's, in which an inexperienced advocate, delivering his rehearsed peroration, asks, "Why do you look so fiercely at me, Severus?" To which snaps Cassius, "I was doing nothing of the kind, but if it is in your manuscript, here you are!" and delivers a scowl (Honeycutt, *Institutes of Oratory*, VI.i.43).
[18] Honeycutt, *Institutes of Oratory*, VI.i.43.
[19] Butler, *Institutes of Oratory*, X.vii.9.

> arrive at the end, our prospect may advance no less than our step, unless, indeed, we are content to stop and stumble at every phase…[20]

The rhetor should look ahead to what he knows to say based on goals for the case (or premeditation). But he should plug in to the other bodies in the space, in order to continually reformulate as he unfolds that scheme. One is likelier to feel "some glowing thought, suggested on the instant."[21] So attuned, one has a higher capacity for generating effective arguments: "there are more things that may be discovered than ever yet have been."[22]

Otherwise it is the "unhappy coherence" of the death cast.[23] But how best to tap in to that field of action? How to maintain the flow once drawn? Quintilian has little in the way of practical answers to such questions. He suggests that it is a mechanical, vaguely physiological "knack" like that which allows one's eyes to read several lines ahead of that which the hand pens: "It is a similar knack which makes possible those miraculous tricks which we see jugglers and masters of sleight of hand perform upon the stage, in such a manner that the spectator can scarcely help believing that the objects which they throw into the air come to hand of their own accord, and run when they are bidden."[24] There is a certain medium (and "between") to such phenomena. In the penning example, the information seems to *be* someplace while it is neither on the eye nor yet in the hand—it seems to keep, intentionlessly. The juggler's motion triggers the viewer's release from rational thought. Describing writing inspiration, Quintilian cautions that "if retarded by the slowness of the pen," thoughts and images "are liable to grow cold and, if put off for

[20] Honeycutt, *Institutes of Oratory*, X.vii.10.
[21] Ibid., X.vi.5.
[22] Butler, *Institutes of Oratory*, X.vi.6. ("Quae inveniri possunt quam quae inventa sunt.")
[23] Ibid.
[24] Ibid., X.vii.11.

the moment, may never return."[25] Quintilian admits of the "irrational" aspect of this knack, which transfers readily to rhetorical improvisation; he merely stipulates that use of any such ineffable, physical component of invention "nevertheless be founded on reason."[26]

4 FIELD OF ACTION

Ultimately, the "certain medium" is left at that, although Quintilian does suggest that eloquence rests on what you carry with you. The rhetor "should have [the case] at his fingers' ends," because "there is no time to think."[27] Quintilian offers little in terms of specific practice, pedagogy, or theoretical basis for how a rhetor can cultivate the capacity for maintaining a case "at his fingers' ends," a lack that persists even in contemporary turns to material and bodily theories of rhetorical generation and persuasion.

Material rhetoric has an articulated history, but it is not a history of material rhetoric. The histories described by contemporary body rhetoricians often overlook past theories of rhetoric centered on bodies and materiality in favor of their refutation of rational rhetorics bound up with the Cartesian premise. In other words, there is not much of a canon (or working vocabulary) for material rhetoric, despite Blair's observation that materiality imbues and undergirds all that rhetorical critics do.[28] This project locates support and precedent for attention to rhetoric's materiality off the histories' better-worn paths. Quintilian's above admonition sets the stage for my account of those British

[25] Ibid., X.vii.13.
[26] Ibid., X.vii. 11.
[27] Ibid., VI.iv.8.
[28] Carol Blair, "Reflections on Criticism and Bodies: Parables from Public Places," Western Journal of Communication 65, no. 3 (2001): 271-294.

Elocutionists who are obscured and under-theorized—under-historicized—*because* of the nature of their theory, and the extent to which their work does not fit the caricature that has been written for eighteenth century rhetoric.

I picked four case studies, each centered on a different Elocutionist, and a different "disciplinary" approach to gesture. Works by John Bulwer, Thomas Sheridan, Joseph Priestley, and Gilbert Austin highlight the range of substantive approaches to "harnessing" gesture during this period, and the "story" of how gestures serve rhetoric (and vice versa). With Quintilian, the subjects of these case studies feel that invention and delivery are bound together, very much embodied, and that the best rhetoric is born of kinesis. Each of these theorists argue that the motions that course through our bodies during rhetorical engagement are not only means to persuade, but themselves key to making and sustaining such connections, and ultimately, for the process of lively invention. Probing the anatomy of gesture, from its inceptive motion outside the body to its manifest (skin, heart, hands), these theorists—running with Quintilian's admonition—track the gesture as it circulates and forms.

This gesture exceeds its caricature in histories of rhetoric: an ancillary, if "detached" mechanism for the coercion of audience. Instead, the gesture produces meaning as it promotes appeal. It recommends presence as an inventional resource, and moving-with as a means to coming to terms, drawing toward what Crowley, writing in the context of contemporary political action, calls "civil discourse." By tracking and analyzing the rhetorical gesture through interrelated thematic locations—medicine, theatre, pulpit, and philosophical chemistry—this project not only argues for re-embodying invention, but also (like the Elocutionists themselves did) suggests that

theorists of material and body rhetoric would benefit by extending their cross-disciplinary reach. This work points out an alternative to an "invention" (as well as rhetoric) that is by nature personal, oral and alphabetic. I offer this study in support of current efforts to theorize the body's role in argument, as well as feminist rhetorics that assert the importance of looking beyond the speaker, and even text, for rhetorical subjects and "stance."[29]

Although the names of these Elocutionists are somewhat familiar, my argument hinges on aspects to their rhetorical theory that are lesser known, and that lay ground for my larger historiographic project of broadening the stage for what counts as "rhetorical gesture." Together, these theorists challenge the assumption (implied by Quintilian) that delivery is somehow invention's lagging strand. More importantly, they challenge Corbett's assumption that "rhetorical activity [does] become coercive rather than persuasive when it resorts to the non-rational."[30] Presenting a bold case for "knack," I argue that suasion is inextricable from its gesture, living and pounding through us at times before we realize. Argument is quick and kinetic, that gesture foundational to its craft.

5 GESTURAL ECOLOGIES

In the thick of his praise for the immaterial realm of ratiocination, "purely spiritual, and not less distinct from every part of the body than blood from bone, or hand

[29] See, e.g. Glenn, Cheryl and Krista Ratcliffe, eds., *Silence and Listening as Rhetorical Arts* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 2011).
[30] Corbett, "The Rhetoric of the Open Hand," 293.

from eye,"[31] Descartes suggests at least two things which are useful to the project of Elocutionist rhetoric, and which set the stage for Chapter One, which takes up John Bulwer (1606-1656) and the influence of philosophical anatomy on seventeenth-century theories of rhetorical delivery.

First, Descartes makes a strong claim as to the prevalence of motion that happens without volition from the will, "as often happens when we breathe, walk, eat, and indeed, when we perform any action that is common to us and the beasts," and for the transference of this motion between bodies.[32] He allows, in other words, that "flinching" happens when one's friend moves a fist to one's face; he simply does not think that the category of action has anything to do with judgment. Second, he underscores the power of a passion unleashed. It is as if the water that runs through his famous fountain-automata takes on a life of its own. The fountaineer cannot keep Neptune from brandishing his trident if the stranger follows Diana to the rose bush:

> There is one special reason why the soul cannot readily change or suspend its passions…the passions are not only caused but also maintained and strengthened by some particular movement of the spirits.[33]

External objects "may be compared to strangers, who entering into one of the grottoes containing many fountains, themselves cause, without knowing it, the movements which they witness."[34] In such situations, the fountaineer's only recourse is to wait until the spirits have died down.

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[31] René Descartes, *The Passions of the Soul*, 1649, tr. Robert Stoothoff, in *The Philosophical Writings of Descartes* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 341.
[32] Ibid., 335.
[33] Ibid., 345.
[34] René Descartes, *Meditations on First Philosophy*, 1641, tr. J. Cottingham (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 260.

> [These spirits] have no property other than that of being extremely small bodies which move very quickly, like the jets of flame that come from a torch. They never stop in any place…pores conduct them into the nerves, and then to the muscles. In this way the animal spirits move the body in all the various ways it can be moved.[35]

Some movements issue so immediately from their commotion that "no amount of human wisdom is capable of counteracting" them.[36] Furthermore, Descartes says, "the utility of all the passions consists simply in the fact that they strengthen and prolong thoughts in the soul which it is good for the soul to preserve and which otherwise might easily be erased from it."[37] The description itself suggests that even "thoughts in the soul" have gestural cogs—a consistency, a lifespan.[38]

Chapter One provides the ground for the dissertation's subsequent case studies through an analysis of Bulwer's gesture manual, *Chirologia: Or the Natural Language of the Hand* and *Chironomia: Or the Art of Manual Rhetoric* (1644) in conjunction with his *Pathomyotomia, or a Dissection of the Significative Muscles of the Affections of the Mind* (1649). *Chirologia ...Chironomia* is crucial to a history of body rhetoric. Bulwer's treatise represents one of the last roads not taken en route to the Cartesian revolution in rhetorical theory. Bulwer claims movement as a resource for the construction of rational discourse—to find "civil conversation," rhetors must lead as well as follow with the hands.

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[35] Descartes, *Passions*, 331-32.
[36] Ibid., 403.
[37] Ibid., 354.
[38] But even wonder, he says, an "object of passion" that has been absorbed, and lent the body as well as the thought shape, must be checked, lest it "prevent or pervert the use of reason" (ibid., 355).

Bulwer's significance is more than canonical: rhetoric's contemporary material turn focuses on the body's role in the receptivity of appeal, but less so the body's relationship to the appeal's production. Bulwer argues that gestures are, quite literally, embodied topoi, commonplaces of the body, positions one puts oneself in to give rise, shape, and meaning to speech. Bulwer's gestures are what contemporary gesture theorist David McNeill might call "co-expressive but potentially non-redundant" with speech, and enact feedback loops between one's utterance and one's utterance formulation.[39] Bulwer's location of the construction of rational argument at the confluence of mind and hand provides an alternative to both Cartesian and contemporary body rhetoric. His treatises are an unrecognized but vital resource for exploring the moving body as inventional resource, and for understanding the quality of action-in-relation that moves between animated rhetorical subjects.

Although Bulwer suggests that these gestures draw impetus from nearby bodies, he does not offer means by which to think about their uptakes. In other words, Bulwer's gestures are rather personal things. Thomas Sheridan (1719-1788) offers a bridge from the work of Bulwer to that of Joseph Priestley, whose rhetorical gesture, contra Bulwer's, is extra-sympathetically fashioned *between* bodies, in currents that are not un-electric. Chapter Two begins this exploration of the sympathetic movement or transmission of rhetorical production through gesture by focusing on the aspects of Sheridan's rhetorical theory that bring to bear his experience as one of the most popular stage actors in Ireland. The chapter also uncovers productive overlap between contemporary theories of persuasion in the context of speech and stage. Sheridan's interest in gestures is manifest

[39] David McNeill, *Hand and Mind: What Gestures Reveal About Thought* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992), 339.

in his work as a stage manager, on stagecraft, and focuses on performers' ability to draw energy from one another through movement. Later, his elocutionary texts center on the gestural rhythms that form between rhetor and audience bodies, and on the role of these rhythms in "everyday" vernacular eloquence. This shift sets up a distinctive if gnarly (as in tangled up, and tough to tease out) rhetoric of what Sheridan calls, "social gestures."

I offer that Sheridan's claim for rhetoric-as-delivery is worth taking seriously. For all his fervency, Sheridan offers means by which to consider the relationship between gesture and the body public. *Sheridan*'s delivery is less decision than possession—less a question of containment than contaminant. Sheridan's work also offers a platform by which to think about "ecologies of gesture"—of currents of motion as resources that may be tapped and consumed; and of "appeal" construed of assemblages between bodies, rather than "private" motions that merely emanate outward.

Sheridan's *Course of Lectures on Elocution* (1762) is published more than a century after Bulwer's death, but picks up on and develops a number of Bulwer's exigencies—among them, the need to bring delivery back to the center of rhetorical studies. For Sheridan this derives in part from the national need to keep pace with the rest of Europe in terms of oratory, religion, politics, and art. As with Bulwer, however, Sheridan insists that any project for an improved oratory will fail absent gesture. Speech without facial expression and gesture, which together Sheridan calls "the natural language of the passions," is "artificial, weaker, and accompanied with no natural delight."[40] If Sheridan's claim is that oratory fails absent gesture, the scientific work of

[40] Thomas Sheridan, *An Oration, Pronounced Before a Numerous Body of the Nobility and Gentry, Assembled at the Musick-Hall in Fishamble-Street* (Dublin: Printed for M. Williamson, 1757), 17.

Joseph Priestley (1733-1804) provides a basis for considering how bodily movements are not so much pre-requisites for eloquence as they are fundamental to rhetoric itself.

Priestley, natural philosopher (best known for the discovery of oxygen) and dissenting minister proposes a more refined way to bring physical science to the aid of rhetoric. This chapter begins at the preface of *A Course of Lectures on Oratory and Criticism* (1777), where Priestley nods to Kames as the basis for his inbuilding of Hartlean associationism to his rhetoric's core. Priestley elaborates a rhetoric contingent on physical transmission and concatenation of ideas through the principle of vibrations, whereby a rhetor's word and gesture "conduct" as it were to the skin, and then to the mind of the audience, where it leaves an indentation (a change in constitution of the part)—or impression. Integrating contemporary work on rhetoric and affect, Chapter 3 argues that Priestley's notion of "cross impressing" helps to theorize an embodied and reasonable ethical speaking and listening. Here rhetors come to steer and *be steered by* their audience, so that one might, effectively, form a habit of embodiment in relation to particular listeners.

Priestley is most known as a chemist, but his chemistry and physics are both central to what I tease out as his contributions to the relationship between embodied persuasion and the agency of the rhetor. Rhetors do not "excite prey to self-motion" so much as provide incentive that prompts them to continue to move themselves[41]—i.e. do not awaken hidden electricity so much as *collect* it. Priestley's rhetorical gesture is more centrifugal than Bulwer's or Sheridan's, centering on the persuasive potential latent in the conductive possibility between particular bodies. Gesture simultaneously creates

[41] J. L. Heilbron, *Electricity in the 17th and 18th Centuries: A Study of Early Modern Physics* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1979), 133.

conditions of possibility, recognizes their existence, and fosters/guides them in particular ways.

Gilbert Austin's (1753-1837) *Chironomia: Or a Treatise on Rhetorical Delivery* (1806) is the only British treatise apart from Bulwer's that focuses on gesture exclusively during the long eighteenth century. Austin enables a pointed return to a theory of rhetoric that, as in Bulwer, and Priestley, is built around a scientific frame of rhetoric as an ongoing physical phenomenon. Chapter 4 argues that Austin's *Chironomia* gives us an extensive theoretical account of gesture's potential warming effect on bodies. For Austin, the effect is more than metaphor. His theory has much to do with Britain's weather, manifesting what had become a national fascination not only with weather's measurement and predictability, but also with its ultimate uncontrollability (for all the Enlightenment's effort), and the effects of its extremes as the Little Ice Age (ca. 1300-1850) drew near its end. Bulwer, Sheridan, and Priestley all demand that we think of eloquence—Quintilian's effective appeal—in terms of the cultivation of capacity for appropriate and effective gestural persuasion. Austin's climatic rhetoric points the way to a theory of rhetorical possibility, capacity, resource, and exigence less in terms of rhetorical situation, than rhetorical *climate*. In Austin's rhetoric, bodily movement physically transfers warmth through speech or composition to make microclimates, changing the temperature and thus disposition of the hearer.

Like Priestley, Austin understands rhetorical persuasion to be a physical process of influence-transfer across and through bodies. I examine what Austin takes to be the logistics of the transference or infusion of rhetorical effect between rhetors. If rhetoric is a process of influence (or energy) transfer, then ethical and effective rhetorical practice

should conserve heat. The Elocutionists were fond of manuals: Bulwer's catalogued hand gestures, Sheridan's bodily pose given particular exigencies of oration and stage. Austin went farther to incorporate gesture into written argument, developing a complex notation system that he hoped could enable the written trace or signification of gesture on the page. Austin's contemporaries, however—as well as recent Austin scholarship—tend to view his obsession with notation as part and parcel of a kind of fussiness, or a need to catalogue, delimit, and thus minimize the passion potential latent in gestural persuasion. I address Austin's notational system as a means not to minimize, but rather to capture the atmosphere of argument—and to increase popular participation, in parallel to a contemporary popular uptake of meteorological research, in that conservation effort.

The epilogue speaks to how these case studies inflect and inform contemporary conversations about material and body rhetoric, and why those inflections matter.

CHAPTER ONE:

PUTTING RHETORIC BACK IN THE FIST: JOHN BULWER'S *CHIRONOMIA, CHIROLOGIA*

John Bulwer (1606-1656) is best known to rhetorical scholars as "the one with the pictures." Billed as interesting, yet inconsequential, Bulwer appears most typically in rhetorical histories as a novelty figure, cast between rhetoricians of the Renaissance and the elocutionists, while untethered to both. Bulwer's gesture manuals, *Chirologia: or the Natural Language of the Hand* and *Chironomia: or the Art of Manual Rhetoric* (published together in 1644[42]), do not fit prevailing Ramistic or neo-Ciceronian narratives of seventeenth-century rhetoric. But this lack of fit, and with it, Bulwer's case for the embodied rhetoric of gestures, is critical to a history of material rhetoric. Appearing around the same time as Descartes' *Principia Philosophiae* (1647), *Chirologia* and *Chironomia* insist that argument forms and moves with the body. Bulwer's gestures far exceed what has become their caricature in the histories: ancillary if "detached" mechanisms for the emotional manipulation of audience. Laying out one of the last roads not taken en route to the Cartesian revolution in rhetorical theory, Bulwer instead claims movement as a resource for the construction of rational discourse—that to find "civil conversation," rhetors must lead as well as follow with the hands (171).[43]

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[42] Both essays are concerned with gestures in communication. *Chirologia* describes a broad range of commonly used "discoursing gestures"; *Chironomia* hones in on those gestures best suited to rhetors.

[43] Bulwer was certainly not the first to bring the hand to bear on rhetorical delivery. He draws heavily on classical sources to justify his project and as basis for many specific hand and finger canons—especially Quintilian. As Cleary observes, from Giovanni Pierio Valeriano's *Ieroglifici* (1625) Bulwer gets the idea of illustrative chirograms; and particular rhetorical gestures and examples from Ludovico Cressollius' *Vacationes autumnales sive perfecta oratoris actione et pronunciatoione* (1620) (James W. Cleary, "Editor's Introduction," in *Chirologia: Or the Natural Language of the Hand, and Chironomia: Or the Art of Manual Rhetoric*, (Carbondale: Southern

Bulwer's gestures constitute more than a canonical basis for material rhetoric.[44] Repositioning Bulwer in contemporary rhetorical theory takes up Hawhee's call for rhetorical theorists and historians to "stretch beyond merely noticing bodies" in rhetorical history so as to pointedly theorize the body's materiality in rhetorical acts.[45] Bulwer's treatises challenge contemporary scholars of material and body rhetoric to attend to gestures—to start seeing rhetorical acts for their component parts; to mind appeal in affinities of movement, and response or assertion that may be gestural; to consider especially the relationship between gestures and the production of what Crowley calls "civil discourse." A material rhetoric informed by Bulwer can help to develop vocabulary

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Illinois University Press, 1974), xxii-xxiii). It is less clear whether Bulwer was privy to more contemporary developments in Italy, like the 1616 work of Giovanni Bonifacio's *L'Arte de' Cenni* (1616), a compendium of bodily signs by which a person's inner soul may be read and sentiment projected onto others (according to profession), or Francesco Bartolomeo Ferrari's 1627 work, *De veterum acclamationibus et plausu libri septem*, which focuses on the gesture of acclimation (Kendon, *Gesture*, 17-42).

[44] For example, see Jenny Rice, "The New *New*: Making the Case for Critical Affect Studies," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 94, no. 2 (2008): 200-212; Debra Hawhee, *Moving Bodies: Kenneth Burke at the Edges of Language* (Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press, 2009); Richard Marback, "Corbett's Hand: A Rhetorical Figure for Composition Studies," *Rhetoric Society Quarterly* 38, no. 1 (2008): 46-65; and Phaedra Pezzullo's *Toxic Tourism: Rhetorics of Pollution, Travel, and Environmental Justice* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2007).

[45] Debra Hawhee, "Somatography," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 93, no. 3 (2007): 365-374. This analysis also continues the historiographic effort she and others have taken toward returning attention to how bodies were being theorized during this time period, in particular, given its attention to rhetoric's materiality. Recent scholars challenge assumptions in rhetorical studies that separate rationality from emotion in discourse; this includes Daniel Gross, whose *Secret History of Emotion: From Aristotle's Rhetoric to Modern Brain Science* rereads rhetorical history to show emotion as less the product of deep organism than complex social economy, and en route, calls pathos "the very condition for the possibility of rational discourse" (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006). Susan Miller, in *Trust in Texts: A Different History of Rhetoric* similarly aims to decentralize logos from pervading tradition to explore how a focus on emotion—and artifacts across disciplines and periods (including elocutionism)—complicating and expanding traditional rhetorical principles (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 2007). Other scholars explore diverse constructions of rhetorical bodies during this time period, like Jordynn Jack in "A Pedagogy of Sight: Microscopic Vision in Robert Hooke's *Micrographia*," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 95, vol. 2 (2009): 192-209. Philippa Spoel comes to the long eighteenth century through renewed interest in delivery: "Rereading the Elocutionists: The Rhetoric of Thomas Sheridan's 'A Course of Lectures on Elocution' and John Walker's 'Elements of Elocution", *Rhetorica* 19, no.1 (2001): 49-91; as does Paul Goring, *The Rhetoric of Sensibility in Eighteenth-Century Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005).

that supports inter-bodied, atextual appeal, including the bodily, rhetorical participations of the listener.

1 THE DRIVING STROKE

Gestures are typically conceived of solely in terms of their communicative function—that is, their "output." This notion, built in part on Aristotle's consignment of gesture to delivery, has long kept rhetorical theorists treating motions as ornaments that may somehow be taken or left. Quintilian, for example, describing improvisation, acknowledges "gestures which accompany strong feeling, and sometimes even serve to stimulate the mind, the waving of the hand, the contraction of the brow"—but quickly adds that these "become ridiculous, unless we are alone."[46]

Nevertheless, scholarship on body rhetoric now points to the downright creativity of bodies in motion[47]—if less to component gestures, per se.[48] Gestures are, however, worth taking on their own terms not only because they comprise the forms that rhetorical bodies take in relation to one another (and in this sense deliver)—but also because they forge appeal. Bulwer's manuals provide a vital resource for understanding gesture as such, challenging both the Early Modern and contemporary rhetorical treatments of gesture as ornament. Entailing 113 hand and fifty-six finger gestures named, drawn, and

[46] Butler, *Institutes of Oratory*, X.III.21, 103.
[47] See Teresa Brennan's *The Transmission of Affect* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2004); Denise Riley's *Impersonal Passion: Language as Affect* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2005); and Roxanne Mountford's *The Gendered Pulpit: Preaching in American Protestant Spaces* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 2005).
[48] Cf., e.g., Debra Hawhee's "Language as Sensuous Action: Sir Richard Paget, Kenneth Burke, and Gesture-Speech Theory, *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 92, no. 4 (2006): 331-354; and Anthony Corbeill's *Nature Embodied: Gesture in Ancient Rome* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2003).

described in terms of shape, motion, and use, these manuals hinge on the inextricability of *inventio* from *actio*. Gesture 1, *Inventione laboro* ("I work in discovery") illustrates this dual nature of gesture. Depicting a character with tip of index finger to mouth, Bulwer explains that the gesture actually helps to facilitate, as well as to complete the unfolding utterance. In this sense, Bulwer's work neither accords with other seventeenth-century takes on delivery, nor anticipates Enlightenment rhetoric, which by many characterizations, privileges disembodied reason, widening the gulf between invention and delivery.[49]

The divorce of reason from passion, vis-à-vis "rational soul" from body, for which Descartes is usually credited, Thomas Conley says results in Enlightenment rhetoric bent on persuasion divorced from argument. This rhetoric exhibits the turn simultaneously to the inartistic proof as primary means of evidencing, and to the deployment of affectation in order to "insert," as it were, truth: "as one must hide from a mad man the fact that we are administering drugs to cure him."[50] In other words, delivery becomes slipping your point in when your audience isn't looking—not unlike a mickey. The rational soul is the locus for truth, the body a conduit for absorption. This separation results in the long-lived privileging of appeals to reason over those to emotion. Gesture is branded as the mickey.

But Bulwer does not elaborate choreographies for coercion. *Chironomia*, the first rhetorical treatise in English devoted exclusively to gestures, not only points out the body's ability to argue—powerfully argue, with or without attendant words—and thus,

[49] Bulwer's work neither accords with other seventeenth-century takes on delivery, nor anticipates Enlightenment rhetoric, which by many characterizations, privileges disembodied reason, widening the gulf between invention and delivery.
[50] Thomas Conley. *Rhetoric in the European Tradition* (Chicago University Press: 1990), 175.

the need for British rhetors to train their bodies to better issue claims. *Chirologia* and *Chironomia* also insist on the need for gestures to bring shape to an oration's content. To construct this model of animate eloquence, Bulwer leverages his background as a physician, and training in philosophy and ancient medical literature.

2 THE CURIOUS HAND

Although little has come to light on his education, and in the treatises he does not elaborate on his experience as a medical practitioner, Bulwer's orientation within the medical marketplace of mid-seventeenth century London is clear. In the clash between the theoretically trained and "empiric" practitioners of the day, where the latter were charged with treating the symptom but not the patient, Bulwer was a learned physician. Like other "physics," as well as some "chirurgions," he would have distinguished himself from empirics, quacks, and generally unlicensed professionals through humanistic, university training in classical medical works, and consequent commitment to philosophical medicine.[51] Theoretically, this means Bulwer acquires an Hippocrates- and Galen-inspired humoral view of the workings of the human system, wherein "the microcosm or little world of the body had the same qualitative foundation as the macrocosm, or world at large," and surface conditions stand not only for the state of the

[51] Wollock, who has unearthed the most on Bulwer's life to date, surmises that Bulwer attended, without matriculating, Oxford during the 1620's, and learned medicine through an apprenticeship shortly thereafter. Both Wollock and Roach elaborate the anatomical principles to which Bulwer ascribed in result of this education. See Jeffrey Wollock, "John Bulwer's (1606-1656) Place in the History of the Deaf," *Historiographica Linguistica* 23, no. 1 (1996): 1-46; Joseph R. Roach, *The Player's Passion: Studies in the Science of Acting* (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press 1993), 23-57.

body's balance with that world, but also for that of the material soul.[52] This view is especially evident in Bulwer's *Pathomyotomia, or a Dissection of the Significative Muscles of the Affectations of the Minde* (1649), which treats facial gestures. Individuals are composed of fire, earth, air and water—of heat, cold, dryness and moisture. One's mixture is "balanced" (*eucratic*) when one is healthy, "imbalanced" (*dyscratic*) otherwise. Restoring balance in this view is ultimately a question of movement—of inner shifts (the passions that traffic in humoral concentration) through outward forms (the body interacting with its environment).

What Bulwer sees as the physiology of a gesture illustrates this relationship. Bulwer's gesture is responsive, ensuing upon contact with other bodies. It unfolds in two stages. The first comprises something like inclination—a shift in the inner motions of the body, which prepares parts to move. Bulwer explains this "first act" in *Pathomyotomia* by way of a "motive faculty" that "does perpetually flow" through the body by way of the nerves.[53] That no time passes between caring to shift and shifting, and "no time of wanting to feel, but that the knife at once cuts, and we feel it," Bulwer uses as evidence against schools of psychological thought who take movement to generate far from the parts themselves. Even the toe (far from the brain), he says, re-acts instantly to another body. If a motion had to communicate through spirits dispensed by a distant soul, then it

[52] Andrew Wear, *Knowledge and Practice in English Medicine, 1550-1680* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 37.
[53] John Bulwer, *Pathomyotomia, or a Dissection of the Significative Muscles of the Affections of the Minde. Being an Essay to a new Method of Observing the most important movings of the Muscles of the Head, as they are the nearest and Immediate Organs of the Voluntarie or Impetuous motions of the Mind. With the Proposall of a new Nomenclature of the Muscles.* (London: W.W. for Henry Moseley, 1649), A2.

could only happen "in manifest time."[54] Rather, he thinks, as suddenly as we are moved, a gesture begins.

The second stage, or bloom of the gesture, is its outward course. Without laboring in the mechanics of that yet, it is important to note that Bulwer believes that manifest gesture is ultimately purposeful—an act of will. Its trajectory, "forward, backward, upward, downward, to the right hand, to the left, or in orb," as well as "figure," or pose, betrays intention as well as response.[55] *Chirologia*'s Gesture 23 offers a glimpse of this anatomy (Figure 1). Upon meeting the object of this gesture, "a fit of the invading appetite" begins the first act; the fist that then articulates by way of "imagination of the act of revenge," is the "effect of passion in the hand."[56] The gesture, a motion toward, covers the whole body. Even the cheeks may puff out. Its stroke is evident in the examples Bulwer gives of the gesture's occasions, like that of free men and bond slaves casting it at their patrons and masters, who stand back. The heating effect of this gesture on its maker as well as its object keeps Bulwer from recommending it to the rhetor. He insists that through the same physiological circuitry, though, *rhetorical* gestures (e.g. those suited to "touch and handle a matter lightly," or "explain more subtle things"[57]) condition the passions to promote good judgment.

Important here is not Bulwer's commitment to humoral "science" per se, but his insistence on the holistic nature of the body as the basis for the centrality of gesture in rational persuasion. The movement of the passions shifts judgment, as judgment shifts the

[54] Ibid., 24.
[55] Ibid.,11.
[56] John Bulwer *Chirologia: Or, the Natural Language of the Hand, and Chironomia: Or, the Art of Manual Rhetoric*, 1644, ed. James W. Cleary (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1974), 52-3.
[57] Ibid., 204.

passions. Illustrating this circuit, Burton in *The Anatomy of Melancholy* (1620) calls the idle hand "cause and symptom both" of melancholy. As outward motions increase natural heat and set the mind "aworke," Burton aims to treat melancholy with action: "the air is still tossed by the winds; the waters ebb and flow, to their conservation no doubt, to teach us that we should ever be in action."[58]

From walking to gardening, Burton lists dozens of activities available to the body to "cast" thought. This is a way to shift "stuck" passions (and thus imagination) manually. It is no coincidence that Bulwer sees action as the heart of oratory. Hands are means "to open and unfold the sense of mind."[59] That movement invigorates content is evident in Bulwer's descriptions of static hand postures. Their effect is like that of Burton's idle hand. Just as Burton describes the dulled sensitivity that comes with inactivity, such that "we look upon a thing, but see it not; hear, and observe not; which otherwise would much affect us, had we been free"[60]—bound hands for Bulwer curtail one's ability to reason and respond. Gesture 9, *Otio indulgeo*, for instance, shows both wrists protruding from a garment, the hands hidden in the folds. One who opts to constrict motion this way "neglects what his mouth requires at his hands," dismissing "the more provident extension of a thought."[61] If action is means to engage and grapple

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[58] Robert Burton, *The Anatomy of Melancholy, What It Is, With All the Kinds, Causes, Symptoms, Prognostics, and Several Cures of It*, 12th ed. (London: J. Cuthell, 1821), 403, 401. William Harvey, the physician commonly credited for demonstrating the circulation of blood, speaks to the therapeutic value of movement in this tradition in *De Motu Cordis* (1620). He offers, "motion always generates and preserves heat and spirit, while in quietness they disappear." This is the basic principle behind Bulwer's case for keeping one's gestures up amid delivery. Likewise, in "no other way can [limbs] recover heat, color, and life so completely and so quickly as by movement." *Anatomical Studies on the Motion of the Heart and Blood*, 1628, tr. Chauncey Leake (London: C. Thomas, 1970), 105.

[59] Bulwer, *Chirologia…Chironomia*, 153.

[60] Burton, *The Anatomy of Melancholy*, 132.

[61] Bulwer, *Chirologia…Chironomia*, 38. *Otio indulgeo* is "I indulge in idleness."

tactically with an issue, then inaction is tantamount to disengaging from it. Gesture 10, *Tristem animi recessum indico* shows fingers interlaced, "damping" communication for those "whose thoughts stray out of season, minding not what others do or say."[62] Quiet hands, he says, are likewise cause and symptom both of rhetorical dispassion.

Seventeenth-century diagnostic techniques also underwrite Bulwer's rhetorical theory. Action is the means by which physicians "build a bridge of empathy to the patient" during diagnosis.[63] This empathy evolves through "hands off" delivery, including talk and bedside manner (voice, posture, gesture). But empathy also forms through contact. The typical examination in Bulwer's time consists largely of palpation and of pulse taking. The hands are particularly suited to this work because as Bulwer points out, they have the sensitivity required for detecting subtle motions in another's frame: "we do more curiously and exquisitely feel in the hand than in the other parts, and more exactly where the epidermis or immediate organ of the outer touch is thinnest."[64] Through the hands, the physician explores the state of the patient's "innate heat" and passions that emanate from the heart (with melancholy, for example, the pulse is "small, slow, faint and sparse."[65] The physician should develop a "sensitive touch," or physical intuition, in addition to learning theory about the body, for only through sensation can the

[62] Bulwer, *Chirologia…Chironomia*, 39. *Tristem animi recessum indico* is "I exhibit melancholy." Because he takes the soul to manifest through gesture, Bulwer describes its absence as the "withdraw" of the soul from the body.
[63] Wear, *Knowledge and Practice in English Medicine,* 122; Susan P. Mattern, *Galen and the Rhetoric of Healing* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2008), 78.
[64] Bulwer, *Chirologia…Chironomia*, 130.
[65] Galen, *Galen on Diseases and Symptoms*, Tr. Ian Johnston (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 335.

physician move toward inference.[66] Ideally, this "fellow feeling" not only leads to the best possible diagnosis, but it can actually begin the healing process.

Bulwer argues that eloquence, likewise, emerges dynamically, through a kind of contact contingent on presence.

3 ANIMATE ELOQUENCE

To understand the body's role in shaping argument, it is important to distinguish his understanding of the rhetorical utility of gesture from Francis Bacon's (1561-1626). Bulwer's association with Bacon is perhaps most responsible for the relegation of Bulwer to the scrap heap of the rhetorical canon. Bulwer credits as the impetus for his project this section of Bacon's *The Advancement of Learning* (1605): "For Aristotle has…handled the structure of the body when at rest, but the structure of the body when in motion (that is the gestures of the body) he has omitted"; these "are equally within the observations of art, and of greater use and advantage" for "*As the tongue speaketh to the ear so the gesture speaketh to the eye.* "[67] Because Bulwer fixes on Bacon's call to gesture, it is tempting to read Bulwer as reifying Bacon's notion of rhetoric as "package." Instead, I offer, the implicit and explicit connections between Bulwer's medical understanding of expressive motion and his gestural rhetorical theory constitute an important theoretical

[66] The hand's crucial role in assessment is still evident in Thomas Apperley's admonishment to physicians in *Observations in Physick* (1731) not "to apply one's finger to the artery, as some do, while their thoughts are intent on something else." Physicians must think from their fingers. *Observations in Physick, Both Rational and Practical* (London: W. Innys, 1731), 97.

[67] The full quote: "For the lineaments of the body disclose the dispositions and inclinations of the mind in general; but the motions and gestures of the countenance and parts do not only so, but disclose likewise the seasons of access, and the present humor and state of the mind and will. For as your Majesty says most aptly and elegantly, *As the tongue speaketh to the ear so the gesture speaketh to the eye*." Francis Bacon, *Of the Dignity and Advancement of Learning*, 1605, in *The Works of Francis Bacon*, eds. James Spedding, Robert Leslie Ellis, and Douglas Denon Heath (London: Longman and Co., 1858), 376.

response to both Bacon and contemporary critics who dismiss Bulwer on the basis of that association. For example, Thomas Sloane examines the above passage in *RSQ*'s special issue on "The Most Significant Passage on Rhetoric in the Works of Francis Bacon." Sloane describes Bacon's call for the human philosopher to attend to gesture as "like [the divisions] of a professor assigning a research project that is far more detailed and far less ambitious than the one the student had in mind." For Sloane, Bulwer then takes up the project, having "sprang" by that thrust "into an even smaller pond than the one Bacon described." Sloane's reading of Bulwer is premised on the body's subsidiary role in rhetorical practice, a role refuted by Bulwer's description of the physiology of rhetorical gestures. This reading of the body as subsidiary also posits rhetoric, as well as invention, as being "*au fond* oral in nature"—that is, au fond alphabetic. Bulwer's reflection on the inseparability of *inventio* from *actio* in disputation is easily overlooked because Bulwer's appeal is forged by hand.

For Bacon, rhetoric is a strictly physical affair. The best lodged appeals "immediately and incorporeally affect most."[68] Rhetoric's domain is the flesh, but only insofar as the flesh is essentially unreasonable, and must be permeated. The need for eloquence, he offers, is physiological. If the receiving body were readily "pliant and obedient" to naked reason, there would be no need of rhetoric to ferry it through the sense; however, given "the continual mutinies and seditions of the affections," strength of impression is crucial. "Reason is commonly vanquished" without rhetoric to bring its notion "corporeal shape" such that it can "appear as present," sinking in.[69] Gestures, appealing to the eye, are one such means to cloak reason. The appeal then traffics by

[68] Ibid., 70.
[69] Ibid., 178.

flesh in order to "contract a confederacy between the reason and imagination against the affections."[70] Bacon's move to materialize the appeal thus sharply distinguishes between the provinces of reasoning and feeling, and, (as various argue), comes at the cost of rhetoric's inherence with the former. The body is at best indifferent to reason—at worst, inhospitable to it—and in any case, Bacon warns, has a certain capacity to compromise the message. The rhetor's challenge is to fashion appeals that simply "get through." Emphasizing that an argument's thrust is in some sense more important than its proof, he notes that topics serve "not only in probation, but much more in impression."[71] The activity of invention, which serves "to draw forth, or call before us" existing knowledge in order to "furnish" such appeals thus happens deeply and despite affection, not by way of it.[72]

Bulwer shares Bacon's understanding of what impression is and does. By way of this imprint, "the humors and affects of the body do alter or work upon the mind," and "the passions, or apprehensions of the mind do alter or work upon the body."[73] Impression is crucial for invention on the one hand, as Bacon says, because appeals come to sympathetic effect. Claims should be fashioned with an eye toward touch. On the other hand, where Bacon insists that reason lacks bodily presence and resists physical form—as such, words are its "footsteps and prints," but not motions[74]—Bulwer takes a different angle, based on his slightly different understanding of how the body works. This allows Bulwer to claim gesture as an asset to the activity of invention, as well. For Bulwer, a moving body is a moving mind:

[70] Ibid.
[71] Ibid., 180.
[72] Ibid., 113.
[73] Ibid., 130.
[74] Ibid., 168.

> …for that those elegant conceptions that enrich the pregnant mind, incite the mind…to find out apt and fit expressions; and while she labors to be free in pouring out her hidden treasures, she imprints upon the body the active hints of her most generous conceits, darting her rays into the body, as light hath its emanation from the sun…[75]

For Bacon, the soundest organ of delivery is speech or writing because "words are the images of cogitations," as cogitations have no form of their own.[76] Because reason is a verbal faculty, gestures cannot handle most conceits, explaining why Bacon does not bother with them much in relation to rhetorical delivery (he recommends sonorous speech), and not at all in relation to invention. For Bulwer, the soundest organ of delivery is the body because the invisible soul with which it co-extends reveals itself through the continuous stream of gestures, which happen even in the absence of speech. This "gestural language of the body," he says, "is more vocal and effectual than the explications of the tongue."[77] Emphasizing that this language does more than transplant emotion, he notes that the "logistical motions that appear in the hands of disputants" prove that the hand is an "instrument of reasonable nature."[78] Hand gestures are particularly suited to oratory for their diversity of forms, which "by themselves, do speak and show the mental springs from whence they naturally arise," as well as for their positive influence, as such, upon unfolding speech.[79]

The essential difference between Bulwer's and Bacon's take on the work of gesture in delivery is visible in the metaphors that each uses to describe action. Bulwer,

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[75] Bulwer, *Chirologia…Chironomia*, 170.
[76] Bacon, *Advancement*, 119.
[77] Bulwer, *Chirologia…Chironomia*, 131.
[78] Ibid., 156.
[79] Ibid., 165.

above, notes that actions draw form from the mind as light from sun—a notion that roots in ancient accounts of the body as little universe. Crooke, describing the human body, observes, "it may worthily be called a Little world, and the pattern and epitome of the whole universe."[80] At the center of this universe, "the sun is predominant, by whose motion, beams, and light, all things have their brightness, luster, and beauty…as it were a bright light, clears and beautifies all the parts of the body."[81] The soul governs the system, and "with all her powers and faculties be wholly in the whole, and wholly in every part" such that "if the creature live the Faculties of Sense must be present in every place where the soul is."[82] All parts of the system co-depend and lend balance to one another, and take their form from the world with which they interact. The hand is an important interface for such contact—it gathers and incorporates information ("the true office of the hand is to apprehend or to hold, and his proper action is apprehension"[83]) and expresses through the forms it takes. As to action, the following is reprised in *Chironomia* almost word for word: "Reason, is the hand of the understanding, speech the hand of reason, and the hand itself, is the hand of speech."[84] A couple of sentences later,

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[80] Helkiah Crooke, *Microcosmographia: A Description of the Body of Man. Together with the Controversies Thereto Belonging* (London: William Iaggard, 1615), 6. Later, emphasizing what he sees as the jointness of the two systems: "This Little World therefore, which we call Man, is a great miracle, and his frame and composition is more to be admired and wondered at, than the workmanship of the whole universe. For, it is a far easier thing to depaint out many things in a large and spacious table, such as is the world, then to comprehend all things in one so little and narrow, as is the compass of man's body" (ibid., 8).

[81] Ibid., 6-7. This description refers to the heart, which was seen to be responsible for "vital spirits" that facilitated the body's movements.

[82] Ibid., 659.

[83] Ibid., 731. Crooke also notes that "hand" and "hold" are cognates. The first use of the hand is holding; the second, "to be the judge and discerner of the touch. For albeit this touching virtue or tactive quality be diffused through the whole body both within and without, as being the foundation of the animal being…yet we do more curiously and exquisitely feel and discern both the first and second qualities which strike the sense in the hand then in other parts." This is rehashed almost verbatim in *Chirologia*.

[84] Ibid., 9.

Crooke clarifies what he takes "the hand of" to mean: "reason itself, is the power, force, and efficacy of the understanding"[85]; so the hand is the power, force, and efficacy of speech (as well as, to the extent of the metaphor, the rest of the system). This understanding of action is foundational to Bulwer's call to gesture in delivery. Bacon, on the other hand, concludes:

> …behavior seemeth to me as a garment of the mind, and to have the conditions of a garment. For it ought to be made in fashion; it ought not to be too curious; it ought to be shaped so as to set forth any good making of the mind and hide any deformity; and above all, it ought not to be too straight or restrained for exercise or motion.[86]

Like a good accessory, this gesture is opted, modish, and sets off the outfit by calling attention to certain features and not others. It blends in, or rather, does not ask questions. One gets the feeling here and elsewhere that the reason that Bacon does not handle gestures (as Bulwer notices, and does) is that they are not demonstrative enough to bother with—certainly, they do not serve the purpose of learning. Gesture is also a less reliable vehicle for expression than speech because the hands are further from the brain than the mouth, and rely on bodily imagination to configure. This bodily imagination, Bacon emphasizes, can be very fickle, "as in walking, if you begin to think eagerly and fixedly of something else, you immediately stand still."[87] Accordingly, Bacon recommends "figures of words" and not those of motions as means to forge and cast impression deeply.

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[85] Ibid., 10.
[86] Bacon, *Advancement*, 219.
[87] Ibid., 244.

Conversely, for Bulwer, thinking takes form: "the motions of the mind are by action unfolded."[88] The gesture is not applied to a preexisting notion so much as the idea cannot help but move. The domain of reason coextends with the body, such that the hand is "of a reasonable nature," and in its motions, "we may not only see, but as it were feel and touch the very inward motions of the mind."[89] In gesture

> …our conceptions are displayed and uttered in the very moment of a thought…before our words, which accompany or follow it, can put themselves into a vocal posture to be understood.[90]

Where Bacon's gesture, much like his model for invention is, as Cogan puts the latter, "personal and internal," Bulwer's is manifest reaction to the lived world by way of impression.[91] The hand, which Bulwer calls the "ingenuity of the outer man, and the better genius of the microcosm"[92] fashions the little universe against and by way of the larger one. The gesture extends one's thinking—conceptualizing as it forms. As Burton suggests in his cure for melancholy, to change the patterns of the hand is to adjust fixtures of thought. Bulwer extends this premise to his rhetorical model, insisting that appeal formation is a material process, inextricable from movement and, like the gesture itself, deeply ingrained in the dynamic world, including other bodies. In this model, *actio* and *inventio* concur, and the gesture at once "presents…the inward discourse of reason" and "conduces" it, such that "the hand many times seems to have conceived the thought."[93]

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[88] Bulwer, *Chirologia…Chironomia*, 179.
[89] Ibid., 156, A5.
[90] Ibid., 17.
[91] Marc Cogan, "Rhetoric and Action in Francis Bacon," *Philosophy and Rhetoric* 14 (1981): 223.
[92] Bulwer, *Pathomyotomia*, B2.
[93] Ibid., B3, 170.

4 GESTURES AND SPEECH

Chirologia's Gesture 48 is *Sollicite cogito*, "I set thoughts in motion." Its image depicts a man who has brought his hand to his head. Why should one enact "this recourse of the hand to the head, to scratch where it doth not itch?"[94] Bulwer answers,

> maybe, to rouse up our distracted intellect; or else the hand, which is the engineer of invention and wit's true palladium, having a natural procacity to be acquainted with their fancy, officiously offers itself to facilitate the dispatch of any affairs that perplex a faculty so nearly allied unto it, [since] the hand in the collateral line of nature being cousin germane to the fancy.[95]

Bulwer offers that the gesture is means to embodied discovery, and that it has a particularly stirring effect on speech. While the above offered in *Chirologia*, is catalogued as a "discoursing gesture" rather than one suited to oratory per se, it has its match in *Chironomia*'s Canon 1, *Inventione laboro* ("I work in discovery"), an "inventive meditation" in which the finger comes to the mouth, living up to the etymology for "finger," he says: "the desire to find."[96] While *Chironomia*'s leading source, Quintilian, observes in passing the benefit of such gestures for improvisation, he dismisses those that he mentions (e.g. "the occasional striking of forehead"[97]) as

[94] Bulwer, *Chirologia…Chironomia*, 72.
[95] Ibid., 72.
[96] Ibid., 121-22. He cites this "finding motion" as the reason that people often bite their fingernails in times of intense consideration. The examples he cites include Horace, who would "bite his nails to the quick"; Torrentius, who "would meditate on her tender nail," and Cleanthes as depicted "for the signification of his *earnest study* in arithmetic and geometry, with his fingers gnawn about" (ibid.)
[97] Butler, *Institutes of Oratory*, X.III.21.

indecorous to public forums. This underscores the shift of Bulwer's theory of gestures from Quintilian's: Bulwer recommends that the orator move in the manner that best facilitates not only rapport with the audience (that kinesis) but also spontaneous speech, which is heavily contingent on the motions of the body for its shape.

Quintilian's anatomy of "flow" informs Bulwer's justification of rhetorical gestures. Quintilian says that the best improvisations owe to the speaker becoming caught up in powerful emotion and imagination. To depict "flow" in delivery—that is, how one must "range far ahead and pursue the ideas which are still in front, and in proportion…[pay] out what he has in hand,"—Quintilian describes the mechanical, vaguely physiological "knack" that allows one to read several lines ahead of that which the hand pens:

> It is a similar knack which makes possible those miraculous tricks which we see jugglers and masters of sleight of hand perform upon the stage, in such a manner that the spectator can scarcely help believing that the objects which they throw into the air come to hand of their own accord, and run when they are bidden.[98]

In the writing example, the information seems to keep once read, and to animate, intentionlessly. The juggler appears downright thoughtless, illustrating that motion can trigger release from rational thought, and is at any rate itself integral to flow. The driver of rhetorical delivery, similarly, is not stopping to think, otherwise "we shall halt and stumble…like persons who can only gasp out what they have to say."[99] The knack makes possible the momentary concurrence of "invention, arrangement, and style" with "voice,

[98] Ibid., X.VII.10-11.
[99] Ibid., X.VII.10.

delivery, and gesture,"[100] where the latter set operate as a sort of lagging strand. Quintilian admits of the "irrational" aspect of this knack; he merely stipulates that use of any such ineffable, physical component of delivery "nevertheless be founded on reason."[101]

Bulwer argues that the emotion and imagination that yield Quintilian's eloquence are inextricable from the forms and rhythms that gestures take. The hands more than speak to others; more than "demand, promise, summon, dismiss, threaten, supplicate, express aversion or fear, question or deny."[102] Bulwer ties bodily motion to the propagation of flowing speech (and thus to the leading strand, above). Because they help cast argument, Bulwer calls the hands "those commonplaces and topics of nature which receive most of those extraordinary motions which appear in orations; the high excess, enthusiasms, raptures, and commanding beauty of expressions are here found."[103] He means this in a physiological sense—the hands take shape and trajectory from the swells of passion that push through the body as it processes subject matter. The hands (as well as the face and rest of body) receive expressive content—in particular, "the high excesses" that either resist being parsed to speech, or which simply have to wait for words to capture them. Gestures and speech, or "the flash and the report are twins born at the instant of the piece's going off"; that is, they share an impetus, "conceived together in the mind, yet the hand first appearing in the delivery, anticipates the tongue." Words then "comment for the fuller explication of the manual text of utterance."[104] What manifests through the hands' pathways can differ from or accord with what is spoken. "These

[100] Ibid., X.VII.9.
[101] Ibid., X.VII.12.
[102] Ibid., XI.III.86
[103] Bulwer, *Chirologia…Chironomia*, 160.
[104] Ibid., 17.

speaking organs are couplets, an active pair," he says, which each pick up portions of the unfolding utterance. "Sometimes differing words which visibly grow on one root of action go for synonyms in gesture. And we shall sometimes see contrariety…in identity of posture."[105] The hand is not only "the index and sign of inspiration," but is also a "wrestling place."[106]

Bulwer's concept of the "active pair" with "one root of action" closely resembles contemporary gesture theorist David McNeill's picture of the "growth point": "the earliest form of the utterance in deep time," or "the speaker's minimal idea unit," from which gestures and speech traverse different "channels" to expression.[107] These manifestations mutually evolve and co-configure, facilitating what McNeill calls "a dialectic of speech and gesture," whereby "the speaker's thought evolves through the course of the utterance-gesture formation and comes…into existence with it."[108] Gestures are not only constitutive of linguistic and imagistic expression, but gesture has itself an impact on thought: "if our thought is a story that we are required to keep telling in order to think about the world at all, it's *gestures* that actively influence this story and carry it forward most expressly."[109] As it is for Bulwer, the work of gesture is both expressive and generative—meaning gathers shape and transmits through the same motion. A key feature of utterance formation for McNeill is this feedback loop that forms between gesture and thought, such that the hands actually begin to inform the shape that

[105] Ibid., 16.
[106] Ibid., 197, 228.
[107] McNeill, *Hand and Mind*, 220.
[108] Ibid., 246. McNeill credits to Vygotsky the claim that thought comes into existence during the course of utterance formation. See Lev S. Vygotsky, *Thought and Language*, ed. A. Kozulin (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1986).
[109] Ibid., 12.

subsequent utterances take. Bulwer also suggests that the gesture influences not only the body's landscape of feeling, but also what the body has to say.

> And I know not how, whereas these motions of the body cannot be done unless the inward motions of the mind precede (the same thing again being made externally visible) that interior invisible which caused them is increased, and by this the affection of the heart which preceded as the cause before the effect, for so much as they are done, doth increase.[110]

Gesture affects utterance not only by capturing content ("For as the hand moves, so moves the understanding speech"[111]) but also by intensifying sentiment through its hold. In the physiology to which Bulwer ascribes, sensation is inseparable from expression, such that, as Wollock explains, "The interchange and coordination of these three phases (imagination, transmission to muscles, sensation) forms a kind of circle or feedback loop, regulated by the 'discursive power,' in which planning, guiding, executing, and checking stages occur in a rapid and constantly overlapping cycle."[112] As Bulwer says above, "the affection of the heart" causes "motions of the mind," which yield bodily motions, which of their own volition alter "that interior invisible which caused them."[113] For this reason, Bulwer admonishes the rhetor to choose gestures carefully, steering clear of those that might overheat him (the fist, above) as much as those that slow him to the point of

[110] Bulwer, *Chirologia…Chironomia*, 29.
[111] Ibid., 165.
[112] Jeffrey Wollock, *The Noblest Animate Motion: Speech, Physiology, and Medicine in Pre-Cartesian Linguistic Thought* (Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company, 1997), 135.
[113] Wollock expands upon "animate motion" as described by Peter of Averroes, "The parts of this multi-layered cycle can scarcely be distinguished by the agent; indeed it is essential that they not be distinguished in the moment of action, since this would necessarily disrupt the coordination!" (Ibid.). For more on this system, please see the chapter "Galenic Classification" (ibid 97-151).

languished speech and thought (the drooping hands, or "the hands that hang down"[114]). The gestures that are best suited to rhetorical improvisation are those that promote deliberation, reflection, and sound argument. Canon 15, in which the hand alternately clenches and unfolds, urges thinking; Canon 47 sets off antitheses (178, 189). Canon 8 (Figure 2), *Rationes profert*, is a "form accommodated to their intention who would openly *produce their reasons*"; this gesture "seems, as it were, indeed, to bring forth with it some hidden matter to make the argument in hand more rhetorically apparent."[115] This gesture (Figure 2) is more than symbolic."[116] [117] Bulwer's open hand is instead a tool by which the orator can come to terms. This point is underscored by Bulwer's insistence that the improvised gesture almost always precedes attendant speech in utterance formation. (Quintilian, on the other hand, notes that gestures that anticipate the voice are rhetorically ineffective.[118])

Speech relies on gesture for its very dynamism. The hand, synechdochic for all bodily gesture, "strengthens speech with nerves and the sinewed cords of twisted reason. Speech divided from the hand is unsound, and, brought into a poor and low condition, flags and creeps upon the ground."[119] Bulwer connects those speakers with "lively force of…wit" and "vigorous alacrity of…spirits" to "hands [that] are never out of action but

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[114] Bulwer *Chirologia…Chironomia*, 37. Gestus VIII: *Despero* (I despair) shows "abasement of mind."
[115] Ibid. 177.
[116] Zeno's open hand, contrarily, characterizes Renaissance rhetoric; as Corbett puts it, "the open hand symbolized the relaxed, expansive, ingratiating discourse of the orator," versus the closed fist, or "the tight, spare, compressed discourse of the philosopher." (Corbett, "The Rhetoric of the Open Hand, 288). Quintilian describes a gesture in which the first four fingers touch at their tips, are drawn toward the body, and then the hand opens and pushes out "so that it seems as though it were delivering our words to the audience" (Butler, *Institutes of Oratory*, XI.III.97).
[117] Butler, *Institutes of Oratory*, XI.III.97.
[118] Ibid., XI.III.106.
[119] Bulwer, *Chirologia…Chironomia*, 157.

always stirring and kept in play."[120] In this way, gestures are also means to effect pacing in speech.[121] To ensure the flow of ideas and words, Bulwer recommends keeping one's gestures going.

Speech also relies on the hand for arrangement:

> …if man were disarmed of this…organ intended for the special advancement of utterance, wanting the subtle force of his hand and fingers, the expression of his tongue would be very weak and unhewed; for the motions in the hand in pronunciation do much enrich and endear the expressions of the tongue which without them would many times appear very mean.[122]

Bulwer claims that bodily gestures directly impact the way that argument comes together—that even the tongue's own part in expression is weakened without them. In sum, the hands complement the form presented in speech (by bringing an aspect of the "root of action" that would otherwise be absent) as they interact with it, helping to "enrich" and to organize speech itself (lest it be "unhewed"). This function is clearest in *Chironomia*'s hand gestures that attend to punctuation: Canon 23, "with a gentle percussion, now greater, now less, now flat, now sharp, according to the diversity of the affections, is fitted to distinguish the commas and breathing parts of a sentence"; Canon 42 describes an orator who "developed a kind of flow of speech closing each period with the clap of the hands."[123] Several gestures are noted as touching off, sustaining, or quelling speech altogether. Most of these involve the hand coming into direct contact

[120] Ibid., 229.
[121] Ibid.
[122] Bulwer calls the hand "a most secret property to quicken speech" (ibid., 160).
[123] Ibid., 181, 189.

with the chest, whether through "vehement percussion" to testify (Canon 29), a light touch "[so] that our speech glides with a calm and gentle stream," (Canon 17), or a sudden clap, "proper in their hands who would arrest their speech" and "restrain their tongue" (Canon 27).[124]

Finally, we see examples of these interactions between gestures and speech in the finger canons, which Bulwer separates from those of the hand and arm. Cleary rightly observes that in general, Bulwer's hand gestures tend to recommend "gross emotions or thoughts," while finger gestures take on concepts that are "more refined" and "intellectual."[125] In any case, the most nuanced rhetorical gestures are here, as is the thick of Bulwer's case for the mutual inherence of action and invention. The index finger, for example, for its "demonstrative force," tends to bring direction to utterance. Depending on its shape and orientation to other fingers, Bulwer says, it can "distinguish contraries" (Finger Canon 9); "urge and instantly enforce an argument" (Canon 10); "[put] the hand into a rhetorical shape for disputation" (Canon 11); "sublimate the sense of words unto a point of greater vehemency" (Canon 12); and lend "rhetorical force in disputations" (Canon 13).[126] It serves in enthymemes to "chop" logic, and "knock it down, as with a horn."[127] Canon 21, *Colligit*, this finger pointed up from the fist, is described as a repository by which to furnish refutation: "this action can do much in gathering together, and reciting the matter to be debated and concluded by reason; to wit, when that [which]

[124] Ibid., 182, 179, 182. See Canons 30 (ibid., 182), 35 (ibid., 187); *Chirologia*'s Gestures 52, 53 (ibid., 74-5).
[125] Cleary, "Editor's Introduction," xviii, xv-xvi.
[126] Bulwer, *Chirologia…Chironomia*, 200.
[127] Ibid., 212. Bulwer borrows this one- or two-handed gesture (in which the index finger crooks) from Quintilian.

we take up from others is such as cannot be denied."[128] Canon 8's gesture also appears to play a role in arrangement (it "doth conspicuously *distribute* and *digest* the numbers, arguments, and members of an oration")[129]; as does 29 (Figure 3). This gesture is "a way of numbering and dividing arguments."[130] Like Canon 30, "rhetorical arithmetic," this gesture is suited to impress the minds of audience and orator alike. The extent to which Bulwer thinks it can aid "living reckonings" is evidenced in his observation that this gesture has been recently captured in a statue in London's new dissection theatre.[131]

These gestures' reverberation (which is briefly explored in the final section) is suggested by Bulwer's quote of Tertullian: "we…rely upon the movements of his fingers for our reckonings."[132]

5 CIVIL ACTIONS

The distinct flow of gestures in communicative acts draws direction from all bodies present. Bulwer's theory of moving bodies mutually affecting and co-configuring is in some way similar to that of Kenelm Digby (1603-1665), a founding member of the Royal Society, perhaps best known for his unusual work on sympathy. In *The Nature of Bodies*, Digby stipulates that movement proceeds from that body toward which a motion

[128] Ibid., 202.
[129] Ibid., 200.
[130] Ibid., 204.
[131] Ibid., 150, 205. (He refers to "the new Oval Theatre" in "Barber-Surgeons Hall in London.") In defense of Canon 30, and "this subtle piece of hand learning," which he notes that Quintilian proscribes, Bulwer quotes the line from an anonymous poet ("He computes what is useful with careful fingers" from which "grew the adage, [to place as on the fingers]; that is, to number in the most accurate and exact way" (ibid., 207).
[132] Ibid., 207.

is made.[133] Through succession, in which "by degrees every new [form] comes to be, all the others that were before, do vanish and cease to be," motion extends to the body toward which it reaches. Digby uses the example of a hand tapping a ball, but applies the premise to living bodies inter-acting. Each body extends a "stroke," whose "material participations" permeate and shift other bodies in kind. On "the sphere of continual motion by action and passion," Digby says:

> the motion which is most lively must have a great, full, and large stroke; like the even rolling waves of a wide and smooth sea…other motions may vary either by excess or by deficiency: the first makes the stroke become smart, violent, and thick: the other slackens it and makes it grow little, slow, weak, thin, or seldom.[134]

A body's movement manifests strokes extended to it. This includes internal motions, like heartbeat, but also "external motions," like gestures, and words. In this way, particular movements carve pathways across bodies. Digby observes, "We see daily, that if a person gape," or yawn, "those who see him gaping are excited to do the same"; if one "converse with persons that are subject to excess of laughter, one can hardly forbear laughing, although one doth not know the cause why they laugh"; and finally, suggesting that humoral excesses course the same route: "If one should enter into a house where all the world is sad, he becomes melancholy."[135] This trafficking of sympathy is useful for the

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[133] Sir Kenelm Digby, *Two Treatises, In the One of Which, the Nature of Bodies; in the Other, the Nature of Man's Soul; Is Looked Into: In Way of Discovery, of the Immortality of Reasonable Souls* (Paris: Gilles Blaizot, 1644), 79: "while one [form] is in being, the others are not yet: and as by degrees every new one comes to be, all the others that were before, do vanish and cease to be."
[134] Digby, *Bodies*, 366.
[135] Sir Kenelm Digby, *A Late Discourse Made in a Solemn Assembly of Nobles and Learned Men at Montpellier in France…Touching the Cure of Wounds by the Powder of Sympathy*, 4th ed. (London: Printed by JG, 1664), 93. Before Digby, Francis Bacon makes a similar observation

orator, who is able to propagate particular passions by way of actions alone. Digby describes it suspiciously: "[whatsoever] passion we exhibit in ourselves" comes to material effect—"a kind of contagion"— through "subtle" motions of spirits that "rise and swell in [auditors'] hearts."[136]

Bulwer's gestures likewise form along channels of contact, and likewise, he suspects, can "catch," transmitting affection. Like Digby and many before him, Bulwer observes a physiological shift that accompanies the experience of others' gestures—one might "move," "sway," "rouse up," "stir," "grasp," or "pour out," upon incident. Thus those orators who are still while speaking "as wood and stones, move no man."[137] But Bulwer diverges from Digby's account of rhetorical action on a few important counts: first, Bulwer asserts that gesture connects not just with bodily imagination, but with the understanding: "by the motion of the hand there is wrought in the mind of the beholder something that is *ex congruo*, significant unto a thought." The gesture thus can "conduct and insinuate" an "intelligible notion" by means of sensation—"it hath…efficacy to move the understanding by the sense."[138] This points to the second divergence: because for Bulwer, gesture and speech are integrally formed and bound up with one another,

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about sensations concatenating, but attaches the spark to *either* the instigating object rather or the motion per se—thus "if a man see another eat sour or acrid things which set the teeth on edge, this object tainteth the imagination," and so the observer "hath his own teeth also set on edge"; but "if a man see another turn swiftly and long, or if he look upon wheels that turn, [he] himself waxeth turnsick." *Sylva Sylvarum or A Natural History in Ten Centuries*, 1627, in *The Works of Francis Bacon: Baron of Verulam, Viscount St. Alban, and Lord High Chancellor of England*, eds. James Spedding, Robert Leslie Ellis, and Douglas Denon Heath (London: Longman and Co., 1857), 598. While both underscore the power of bodily imagination to come to manifest effect regardless of "will," this slight distinction emphasizes the difference between Bacon and Digby's understanding of how sympathy operates.

[136] Digby, *Bodies*, 381. Without going into detail, his theory postulates that particles actually move between the bodies—are emitted by one and absorbed into the other, and this, he thinks, is how these effects are caused. This is the premise for his so-called "powder of sympathy," and the sole means (affective traffic) by which he takes rhetoric to operate.

[137] Bulwer, *Chirologia…Chironomia*, 227.

[138] Ibid., 111.

Bulwer's rhetorical gesture does not allow for the possibility (as Digby's does) of words "saying" one thing, while gestures "steal insensibly" over the hearer's body, saying another. For Bulwer speech and gesture form an "active pair" in effect as much as in origin. And just as Bulwer's rhetor is to mind the relative heat a gesture generates for her own benefit, in order to observe "the ethic[al] precepts and the laws of civil conversation" her motions should promote *eucrasia* among auditors.[139] (He recommends this *actionem civilem*, not *hypocrisin*—the generation of affection for its own sake.) Third, although it takes form and impetus from the world (is "touched off"), Bulwer's manifest gesture is ultimately willed. Whereas Digby's auditor can be puppeted "even against his will" by figures of speech and motion, Bulwer's cannot.[140] *Chironomia*'s gestures expressly encourage discourse. Bulwer defends gesture's ability to occasion not just visceral reaction, but "opinion, advice, and judgment of others."[141]

Nonetheless, Bulwer builds his case for rhetorical gestures upon this phenomenon of the "little touch." The "little touch" of the stroke according to Digby is means to "drive the medium forward."[142] Its contact with other bodies does not cease at the skin, but rather will "getting in, mingle itself with the spirits it finds there."[143] This communication of inner motions through gesture is best evidenced in gestures that physically make

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[139] Ibid., 171. Canon 5, a swift arm gesture, and the most emotionally charged/heated hand gesture in *Chironomia*, may be used when "an oration begins to wax hot and prevalent, and the discoursing appetite of the hand be roused up and well heated by a rhetorical provocation"; it moves with the tongue such that "this glittering dart of speech, like lightening, or the shaking of Apollo's beams, expatiates itself into a glorious latitude of elocution; the oration…pouring out itself" (ibid., 175). Bulwer admonishes that when such gestures are used, and the oration "wax hot" the orator is well to check them, and to try to contain them only to necessary sentences.
[140] Digby, *Bodies*, 381. In *Pathomyotomia*, Bulwer goes so far with this conviction as to suggest that even dream gestures, because they are embodied, are stirrings of the soul and thus intentional.
[141] Bulwer, *Chirologia…Chironomia*, 123.
[142] Digby, *Bodies*, 342.
[143] Ibid., 357.

contact with other bodies (although it is no less present in those that don't). Gesture 57, *Reconcilio* best illustrates the benefit of such gesture to rhetorical exchange: the arm and hand extend with the shot of spirits toward the receiving body (rather than drawing back and clenching, as with the fist). The receiver returns the gesture. This "declaration," Bulwer says, befits those "who desire to incorporate, commix, or grow into one"; each hand, "moved by the same spirit…casts itself into a form"—that "works shall be common," the hands clasp.[144]

Motions concatenate bodies. There is energy here, as well as content that moves quickly and efficiently outside of the spoken arguments in which rhetors are customarily trained. Rhetors, Bulwer says, should start seeing action as fertile ground for garnering input and coming to terms.[145] In other words, he underscores what ought to be the momentary flux and fluidity of oration unfolding. The rhetor should move by impression—that is, does not perfect his performance before the mirror, and call it a day. One who does not continually adapt to the dynamic space produced between resonating bodies risks failing to move and staling the content. Forms on both sides of the equation evolve with the production of appeals, and appeals with the configuration of forms—moved rhetor moves.

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[144] Bulwer, *Chirologia…Chironomia*, 88-9. Other touch gestures recommend, restrain, confide, remind, and forgive. There are many others—more than half of *Chirologia* treats these (see *Chirologia* 56-113).

[145] Such action can take many forms. The eye, which is the part most precipitously moved while engaged, waxes "voluntary exactness of the mind" (Bulwer, *Pathomyotomia*, 176-77). Bulwer sees the physical movement of the eye, guided by gesture/image, as deepening both an impression and comprehension. Even the eyelid, he says, serves decision. To increase sensitivity, one practices noticing others' body language.

In short, Bulwer resists the project Bacon begins and some Enlightenment rhetoricians carry on to limit the scope of rhetoric to "dressing up" reason. Bacon excludes reason from rhetoric's domain for its ostensibly different substance, not only "in that the one is like a fist, and the other like the open hand (that is the one close, the other at large," but also "that logic handles reason in truth and nature, and rhetoric handles it as it is planted in the opinions of the vulgar."[147] By putting rhetoric back in the fist, Bulwer does not, as it might seem at first glance, enumerate a framework for "implanting." Rather, because of the Humanistic training he has had as physician, and the anatomy of the body that he inherited, he provides an alternative that hinges on reasoned engagement with the auditor (which is underscored in the like of Gesture 5, *Collateraliter monstro*, "I show both sides of an issue") and locates the construction of rational argument in the confluence of mind and hand.

But Bulwer's was the rhetoric not taken by seventeenth-century practitioners, or since. Bernard Lamy's (1640-1715) *The Art of Speaking* (1676), which circulated widely in English, reflects the trend. Its cordons the rhetor off from action for its immediacy and interference with judgment:

> The qualities of the mind are preferable to the qualities of the body; the eloquence of those endued with these last qualities is like a flash of gunpowder, gone in a moment; this eloquence makes a great noise, and

[146] Both Bulwer and contemporary gesture theorist Jürgen Streeck describe gestures this way. Bulwer calls gestures "corporeal conceits" (Bulwer, *Chirologia…Chironomia*, 120); Streeck, "conceptual action," in *Gesturecraft: The Manu-facture of Meaning* (Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company, 2009), 151.
[147] Bacon, *Advancement*, 457.

> flashes for a time, but 'tis quickly spent and forgot. A treatise compos'd with judgment retains its beauty…[148]

Implying that a treatise composed amid action is also "quickly spent and forgot," Lamy clarifies what action can do for the orator composing: very little. To "speak with our eyes, and our fingers…is not only imperfect, but troublesome."[149] Like a shot, it can take the listener by flesh to force meaning through. But like the spark, it is traceless. Tiring and distracting, it compromises the rhetor's ability to appeal. Overall, Lamy deepens the theoretical disconnect between physical sensation and reasoned thought, and between a rational agent and rhetorical action.

The body according to Bulwer is not that bystanding. For that reason, *Chironomia* stands as a canonical basis for the recent turn in rhetorical studies from Cartesian principle—which dissociates reason from action—toward material and body rhetoric. Establishing the body as more than a conduit for coercion is pivotal for this turn. One way to do that is to look more closely at the shared spaces of action and invention. Current work in material and body rhetoric tends to focus on the body's role in the receptivity of appeal, but less on the body's relationship to the appeal's production. Crowley, for example, in *Toward a Civil Discourse: Rhetoric and Fundamentalism* brings invention and delivery into proximity: "Words, performances, images, and other representations appeal to the gut. They trigger emotional responses that can set off a chain of ideologic that can in turn arouse additional emotional response."[150] Despite that, and recommending the rhetor attend to the body "receiving" while constructing appeals,

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[148] Lamy, Bernard, "The Art of Speaking," 1675, in *The Rhetorics of Thomas Hobbes and Bernard Lamy*, tr. and ed. John T. Harwood (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1986), 310.
[149] Ibid., 180.
[150] Crowley, *Towards a Civil Discourse*, 88.

the inventional strategy she recommends is entirely hands off; although it aims to engage the believing body through use of narrative and specific terms, it leaves the rhetor's own body out of the picture. Bulwer's *Chirologia…Chironomia* is one vehicle by which to reconsider that longstanding separation. Its steady focus on the inherence of content with physical form makes it an unrecognized but vital resource for exploring the moving body as inventional resource, as well as the quality of action-in-relation that moves between animated rhetorical subjects.

Future work in material and body rhetoric should also begin to consider how the production of reasoned argument in particular also functions as an effective counterpoint to Cartesian underpinnings in rhetorical studies. One possible vehicle for such consideration is contemporary neuroscience[151]; another is the emergent, transdisciplinary subfield of Gesture Studies, which explores how bodily motions affect and infect how people form and process ideas in dynamic relation to one another. This subfield is a rich resource for rhetorical studies not only because it considers gesture's simultaneous role in what Kendon calls "manifest, deliberate expressiveness" and in making sense of what is

[151] Gallese and Lakoff (2005) and Wilson (2002) both argue for the role of movement in the promotion of reason and language activities. Antonio Damasio (2003) similarly argues for passion's inherence with reason (and that of both with the body): "The revival of the emotional signal accomplishes a number of important tasks. Covertly or overtly, it focuses attention on certain aspects of the problem and thus enhances the quality of reasoning over it." *Looking for Spinoza: Joy, Sorrow, and the Feeling Brain* (New York: Harcourt, 2003), 147. V.S. Ramachandran says of the emotionless thought (although "it is difficult to imagine…what such a state could even mean"): "If you don't see the meaning or significance of something—if you cannot apprehend all its implications—in what sense are you really aware of it consciously?" V.S. Ramachandran and Sandra Blakeslee. *Phantoms in the Brain: Human Nature and the Architecture of the Mind* (London: Harper Perennial, 2005), 247. Regarding "the passionate self," Ramachandran describes parts of the brain that are "driven partially by sensory input not only from the skin but also from the viscera—heart, lung, liver, stomach—so that one can also speak of a 'visceral…self' or of a 'gut reaction' to something" (Ibid., 247-48). For an account of the relationship of such "gut reactions" to political decisions (including campaign advertising, voting, etc.—as well as some of the appeals-making concerns Crowley discusses in *Towards a Civil Discourse*—see Westin's *The Political Brain* (2007).

being said (via both words and body language), but also because here, one finds subtle arguments for the important influence of presence on coming to terms and mutual understanding.[152] Streeck, for example, describes "communicative action" as "not in the first place a code, a repertoire of conventional signs with fixed meanings and rules of use and combination," so much as "a form of human practice—or a family of practices" that "creatively fashions its own tools" vis-à-vis inter-bodied gestures.[153] Like Bulwer (and other current theorists of gesture[154]), Streeck sees gestures as "a bodily form of conceiving."[155] "Ceiving" action, as such, is influenced by physical space and context, co-participants, and intention; it is also means by which to stir up and share rhetorical

[152] Kendon, *Gesture*, 151.
[153] Streeck, *Gesturecraft*, 4. Streeck's view of the internalization of thought through gestures is Bulwerian. Instead of describing microcosm and macrocosm, Streeck speaks of evolution. Quoting Llinas, he notes that "the property of motoricity is being internalized—the beast is literally pulling itself up by the bootstraps! The system takes properties from the outside and pulls them…inside…The ability to think…arises from the internalization of movement" (ibid., 177).
[154] For a rich encapsulation of those on whose work he builds, see Streeck, *Gesturecraft*, 171-74. McNeill feels that gestures are "material carriers of thinking" for speech assistance (that is Streeck's description), and help to constitute thought (McNeill, *Hand and Mind*, 1992. Kita (2000) sees gestures as interfacing between the stuff of thoughts and the structuring and signifying possibilities of spoken language; Goldin-Meadow (2003) suggests that gestures take a load off of the mind, and can thus speed up problem-solving or communicative tasks that require concentration: "gesture offers a route…though which new information can be brought into the system" (Streeck, *Gesturecraft*, 171-74). See also Krauss and Morrel-Samuels (1992), who think gesture helps to spatially access particular concepts and pieces of speech from memory; Hadar and Butterworth (1997) feel the body provides "imagistic assistance" to utterance formation; and Kendon (2000) explores "visible action" as itself "utterance," and is one of the few such theorists who acknowledge and examine the extent to which gesture's communicative function extends beyond accompanying or helping to facilitate speech. Goodwin (2003) convincingly describes the "environmental coupling" of communicative gestures with other bodies and the surround. Overall, as Streeck says, there has been little examination of "how gestures organize co-presence," or what he calls (borrowing from Merleau-Ponty) "intercorporeal" gestures—those that involve physical contact with and reciprocal action from other living beings (Streeck, *Gesturecraft*, 208). In other words the category of "gesture" is oddly contained often to single speakers and to midair motions, and does not involve contact points with the world (other bodies, or tools—both of which Bulwer acknowledged in his categorizations of gestures). The importance of expanding the category of "gesture" for studies of rhetorical delivery and composition practice has been made by Prior (2010). There has also been a surprising dearth of research in Gesture Studies on gestures in the public sphere (cf. *The Politics of Gesture*, 2009).
[155] Streeck, *Gesturecraft*, 9-10.

motion bodily. Such premises underscore and inform Crowley's and others' suggestion that rhetorical studies turn its attention back toward the affective appeal, not in order to promote a coercive model for communicating, but rather to attend to the *body's presence in discursive acts*—to the relationship between passionate inclination and decision making—and of course, to meeting your audience where she stands.

CHAPTER TWO:

INFECTIOUS GESTURES, OR THOMAS SHERIDAN'S *SENSIBLE MARK*

Condillac begins his *Treatise on Sensations* (1754) with an experiment. He asks his reader to imagine with him "a statue constructed internally like ourselves," but coated in marble "to prevent the use of its senses, and we reserved to ourselves the right to open them at will to the different impressions of which they are susceptible."[156] His aim is to explore the senses as mode of knowledge production. One by one, a sense is granted, and removed, beginning with smell. This statue is capable of "attention," or the sense of the impression upon the nose, but cannot "have ideas of extension, shape or of anything outside itself, or outside its sensations."[157] The sighted statue—which might be expected to bridge that gap—likewise "is incapable of seeing space outside itself" (even that it has a body to be outside of), because it has not yet learned to *touch*.[158] Yet tactility is itself not enough for the statue to feel embodied amid a wind, a wave of heat, even the author's rapping on its head. "It will be just the same if I move it about in the air," he says, "it cannot even then learn to know that it has a body which moves."[159]

Then the statue is granted a hand, and with it the capacity to respond. "I allow the statue the use of all its members," Condillac explains, but "Nature must produce the first movements."[160] The hand "will naturally be carried to some part of its body, to the chest for example," where "distinguishing its chest from its hand, the statue will find itself in

[156] Étienne Bonnot de Condillac, *Treatise on Sensations*, tr. Geraldine Carr (Los Angeles: University of Southern California Press, 1970), 3.
[157] Ibid.
[158] Ibid., 58.
[159] Ibid., 78.
[160] Ibid., 84.

each, because it will feel itself equally in both."[161] This, the author says, might still confound the statue, in that each time it feels this resonance in a new part, it might think that part another body—that its self comprises a constellation of the things. But contiguity is established when the hand happens by another coincidence to follow along its opposing arm to chest and neck. "As it continues to touch itself, everywhere the sensation of solidity will represent two things which exclude one another," and in this gesture, "the same sentient being will reply from one to the other, *this is myself, this is still myself*!"[162]

If the statue's revelation, as much observed,[163] is a comment upon Descartes' famous epiphany, and ensuing description of human being as "moving statue," it is nevertheless interesting—and apt to the tectonic shift in then-contemporary rhetorical theory—that Condillac's statue locates its "self" as well as voice by way of its own moving hand. That self and voice appear to take shape from the gesture itself and creep into the flesh. This gesture, divined from the surround, makes contact and absorbs. It apparently responds to the world it seeks. Soon after prompting the above "*C'est moi! C'est moi, encore!*," the statue's hand encounters other bodies, and becomes the platform for what it is to see. At first, the statue is surprised "at not being all it touches."[164] Condillac's description of this confusion encapsulates his hungry, nature-drawn gesture:

> It takes hold and lets go, and takes hold again of everything round it; it seizes hold of itself, and compares itself with the objects it touches; and as

[161] Ibid., 87.
[162] Ibid., 88.
[163] See, for example, Daniel Heller-Roazen's *The Inner Touch: Archaeology of a Sensation* (New York: Zone Books, 2007), 226-27.
[164] Condillac, *Treatise on Sensations*, 89.

> it attains to more exact ideas so its body and the objects in contact with it appear to it to be forming under its hands.[165]

Ultimately, Condillac's notion of "extension," and with it relationship between bodies, is realized only through currents of gesture. Sensations, then associations and ideas form through contrast across their pathways and sequences. In this way, Condillac's hypothetical gesture is playful. The statue enjoys its motility: "Sight, hearing, taste, and smell are limited to sense-organs, but movement spreads over all parts, extending enjoyment to the whole body."[166]

In this chapter, I consider the work of Thomas Sheridan (1719-1788) as it intersects and poses against what he sees as the trend among stagecrafters (and other imitative artists) toward turning their constituents—their "talent" as well as audiences—to stone. Published around the same time as Condillac's influential *Treatise on the Sensations*, Sheridan's works on elocution likewise reflect then-current fascination with sensation, synaesthesia, and gesture-as-intermediary not only between "nature" and "self," but between intuition and understanding, such that workable motion, as well as the unit of the gesture, become increasingly noticed and sought for various ends. Having spent fifteen years acting and stage managing,[167] privy to the training practice of turning

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[165] Ibid., 89-90.
[166] Ibid., 91.
[167] Sheridan attended Trinity College in Dublin, where he received both a B.A. and M.A. in education, ostensibly intending to take up his father's vocation of schoolmaster. Sheridan defers entering the profession, Sheldon notes, by way of playwrighting, and then acting; *The Brave Irishman* is produced for the first time in 1743 at Smock Alley—one week after Sheridan first takes the stage there. [Esther K. Sheldon, *Thomas Sheridan of Smock-Alley: Recording his Life as Actor and Theatre Manager in Both Dublin and London; and Including a Smock-Alley Calendar for the Years of his Management* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1967), 20.]
Although early in his career, he was compared in terms of ability with David Garrick—with whom he performed in Dublin and to whom he seemed a friend for a very short time (Garrick asks Sheridan to spend a summer in London, which Sheridan declines, calling himself "'a well-cut pebble'" to Garrick's "'diamond'" (ibid., 38-9))—Sheridan was by some critics then as most

actors to sculpture, paintings and other staid works of art as a source for "movement," Sheridan calls for conceiving gestures not as pose points but rather as the mutable material "between"—the stuff of transitions and transformation—and thus, the need to let living gestures through. This solicitation is embedded in his proposition to restore oratory (living models of gesture) to prominence in public education, as well as in his determination of how rhetoric works. As Ulman and Goring observe, Sheridan's rhetorical theory is largely contingent on his unusual notice of "the living voice," but especially, I will argue, on the way he configures and promotes "sensible marks"—the subcategory of this voice that includes gestures, tones, and looks, for which, unlike articulation, accent, emphasis, and stops, Sheridan offers no formula, and no intricate guidelines for decorous deployment. In fact, he makes the argument to let these marks loose. Sheridan's theory of rhetoric as more than performance—as possession—is a stepping stone between the work of Bulwer in the seventh century, and the lively

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now characterized as middling in terms of acting ability. This view is especially pronounced in direct comparison with Garrick, who Sheldon says has a "wider range of reaction" than Sheridan, whose gift was "thoughtful understanding" (ibid., 304). One review of Sheridan late in his career typifies those that assess Sheridan to have unconvincing action, especially: "'If it was possible for spectators to be pleased with meaning alone, uttered through very ungracious, inadequate organs, Mr. Sheridan [as Othello] might stand in high public estimation'" (ibid., 305). Telling of Sheridan as an actor, perhaps, and of his message about the influence of presence on negotiating feeling is an anecdote that Sheldon shares about the first performance in which Sheridan's audience turned against him (it "disrupts his honeymoon with the Dublin public" (ibid., 40)). The spark is lit when Sheridan refused to appear on stage for the title role of *Cato* (FIGURE 5) because the robe that he usually wore for the part was missing, which he felt he needed to hide "'Defects, and add Gravity and Dignity'" (Sheldon quotes from Sheridan's *Address to the Town* (1743) (ibid., 41)). Theophilus Cibber, in the supporting role, refusing "'to appease a Person beside himself with Passion,'" said, "'the Play shall not stand still for you,'" and offered to read both his own role and Sheridan's, which the audience cheered for, and happened. Sheridan fled. The confrontation led to both a heated letter-writing campaign and brawl at the theatre between supporters of Sheridan and those of Cibber, which "drove Cibber off the stage" (ibid., 42).

conjectures about gestures and sympathy that gather momentum in the latter part of the eighteenth century.

In what follows, before digging into Sheridan's "social gestures," I offer a short depiction as to what would have seemed stony in the partition of theatrical arts at the time. (Sheridan does not bring his complaint expressly into his elocutionary writing for reasons one might attach to his ethos.) Afterwards, at the chapter's close, a countergesture, and glimpse of where things are headed for the progressively popular and signature rhetorical gesture is shown in the work of John Walker.

1 STONE PORTERS

Another statue—or series of statues are enlivened[168] in the work of theatre manager and playwright, Aaron Hill. Hill is known as the father of the so-called "naturalistic" school of acting for his move away from old rhetorical precepts on delivery in the training of actors. As the namesake of his twice-weekly theatre journal, the *Prompter* (1734-1736), Hill vows by catcall and whistle to root out the stage action that ruins audience's willing suspension of disbelief.[169] The title character in Hill's farce, *The*

[168] Reprising Galatea in Ovid's *Metamorphosis*, the living statue recurs in theatrical works of this time, presumably related to the fascination in natural philosophy with the senses, and the famous Molyneaux question. Roach tells us that Hill's *The Walking Statue* (1746) is published about two years before Rameau's *Pygmalion* (1748) (Roach, *The Player's Passion*, 68); both of these post-date Boureau-Deslandes' *Pygmalion, or, The Living Statue* by about five years.

[169] Toby Cole and Helen Krich Chinoy, *Actors on Acting: The Theories, Techniques, and Practices of the Great Actors of All Times as Told in Their Own Words* (New York: Crown Publishers, 1970), 116. The authors cite the *Prompter* to show what Hill means to fix (on actors): "They *relax* themselves, as soon as any Speech in their *own* Part is over, into an absent Unattentiveness to whatever is *replied* by *Another*: looking around and examining the Company of Spectators with an Ear only watchful of the *Cue*; at which, like *Soldiers*, upon the *Word of Command*, they start, suddenly, back to their *Postures*, TONE over the unanimating *Sound* of their Lesson; and, then (Like a *Caterpillar, that has erected itself* at the Touch of a *Twig*) *shrink again, to their* CRAWL*, and* their QUIET; and enjoy their full *Ease*, till *next Rowsing*" (ibid., 117).

Walking Statue (1746), aptly, is flesh before plaster, and arrives at its concrete state by way of an imitation of a painting, which imitates a statue that a knight has commissioned. A character performs this statue in order to gain access to the knight's castle, but for all his likeness to the model, the man's vitality manifests—it twitches, shifts weight, and cannot but *react*. (When the knight pulls its leg, it kicks him.) In this character and situation, Hill's comment on popular acting practice also reveals. The contemporary stage crawls with this pallor, with imitations of imitations of imitations, which reduce to the effect of this title character: the suggestion of squirmy inclination bound up by the studied posture of the cast. Its posture cannot hold. A line from the character who hauls this fleshy statue from place to place captures the criticism: "o'my conscience, my master is the first that ever went about to send a message by a stone porter!"[170]

Despite the apparent irony, by Hill's—and Sheridan's—time, the practice of drawing one's gestures, passions, and even thoughts from classical statues and paintings is firmly entrenched in the training of actors. So firmly entrenched, in fact, that actors receive accolades for *seeming* statue-like while in character. Barnett notes that "in general an actor's postures and gestures were guided by laws similar to those observed by painters and sculptors."[171] What she calls the "emphasis on pictorial interest and beauty"

[170] Aaron Hill, "The Walking Statue: Or, the Devil in the Wine Cellar," in *The Dramatic Works of Aaron Hill* (London: For T. Lownds, 1760), 61. Note that this piece was performed at Smock-Alley during Sheridan's tenure as stage manager there (March 1751); the role of the statue is played by Theophilus Cibber, "in which Character will be represented the Clock-Work Statue, in the manner it was originally performed by him…in…the Pantomime called Doctor Faustus at the Theatre Royal in Drury-Lane" (Sheldon, *Smock-Alley*, 463).

[171] Dene Barnett, "The Performance Practice of Acting: The Eighteenth Century Part III: The Arms," *Theatre Research International* 3 (1978): 84.

she sees in reviews of actors, as for opera singer Nicolini[172]: "There is scarce a beautiful Posture, in an old Statue, which he does not plant himself in, as the different Circumstances of the Story give occasion for it." While "every Limb, and Finger" play their part, "He performs the most ordinary Action…even in the giving of a Letter, or dispatching of message, etc."[173] The language of the review seems appropriate to the state of the action: the gesture is "planted." It comes over the actor so completely as to surface the "old Statue" down to the finger. It stays put, never wandering too far from its attendant plot point. It is a gesture "on call." Likewise, Barnett refers to actor Barton Booth, whose "attitudes were all picturesque. He had a good Taste for Statuary and Painting, and where he could not come at original Pictures, he spared no Pains or Expense to get the best Drawings and Prints."[174] Roach also suggests that Booth excelled at the "tableau," which "was equivalent to the cinematic stop frame," as well as all the rage.[175]

But the picturesque attitude must be tenuous, so keenly (as Hill implies) do stagecrafters attempt to pin the gesture to its decorous manifestations, as well as tableau. Charles Gildon in *The Life of Mr. Thomas Betterton* (1710) is an early proponent of this approach to action by way of the imitation of statues.[176] His audience comprises both actors and orators. Gildon is frank about his concern for what is happening on stage, as

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[172] Dene Barnett, "The Performance Practice of Acting: The Eighteenth Century Part V: Postures and Attitudes," *Theatre Research International* 6 (1980): 12. See also Roach, *The Player's Passion*, 68-9.
[173] Here, Barnett says, Cibber quotes the 115th *Tatler*, January 1710 (ibid., 4). Colley Cibber, *An Apology for the Life of Mr. Colley Cibber, Comedian, and Late Patentee of the Theatre-Royal. With an Historical View of the Stage during his Own time* (London, 1740), 346.
[174] Barnett, "Arms," 5. From Theophilus Cibber, *The Life and Character of that Excellent Actor Barton Booth, Esq.* (London: 1753), 51.
[175] Roach, *The Player's Passion*, 73.
[176] See both Barnett, *Postures*, 330, and Roach, *The Player's Passion*, 67.

well as at the bar and pulpit. Certain skittish gestures are popping up where they do not belong, interrupting tender moments, and propagating. Gildon begins with the premise that "*Action* is *Motion*, and Motion is the Support of Nature, which without it would sink into the sluggish Mass of Chaos." Recommending action, of course, "The Eye is caught by any thing in Motion, but passes over the sluggish and motionless things."[177] On stage, "the best *Speaking*, destitute of *Action* and *Gesture* (the Life of all Speaking) proves but a heavy, dull, and dead Discourse."[178] Later, however, in search of a source, he proscribes the imitation of living bodies, offering instead that the actor "ought not be a Stranger to Painting and Sculpture, imitating their Graces so masterly, as to not fall short of a *Raphael Urbin*, a *Michael Angelo*, &c."[179] It is the "nature" in these works that he wants—more specifically, their subjects' passions—as well as the subjects' abiding, postural commitment to the scene and its scope (these characters are, after all, still-lifes). Gildon shows what variance of passion may be harvested from such works by tracking subtle manifestations of grief across a scene, noting one character's grief is "mingled with Love and Tenderness," while another's is "more contracted in himself."[180] While I will say more about Gildon's strategy for gesture uptake later, for now it is enough to note that he sees passions as strict manifestations of action, and feels that passions may be steeped inward through a sort of "trying on" of the gestures of others. Thus he means this literally:

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[177] Charles Gildon, *The Life of Mr. Thomas Betterton, The Late Eminent Tragedian. Wherein The Action and Utterance of the* Stage, Bar, and Pulpit *Are Distinctly Considered* (London: Printed for Robert Gosling, 1710), 25-6.
[178] Ibid., 51.
[179] Ibid., 139.
[180] Ibid., 36-7.

> what a Player now might do by the fine Pieces of History-Painting [i.e.] carry off the beautiful Passions and Positions of the Figures, or the particular Appearance of any one Passion.[181]

Not only are these passions preserved *in medias res* by way of their gesture combinations and so ready for "carrying off," but they appear to be diffused equally among the cast. Gildon notes that all characters in LeBrun's *Tent of Darius*, for example, externalize the exigence of their situation; that is, "there is never any Person on the Cloth, who has not a Concern in the Action."[182] This synchronicity, or passion sharing, "would render the Representation extremely solemn and beautiful," whereas at present, "not only the Supernumeraries, as they call them, or Attendants mind nothing of the great Concern of the Scene, but even the Actors themselves," on stage, "shall be whispering to one another, or bowing to their Friends in the Pit, or gazing about."[183] The gestures circulating among orators, where present, he says, are not much better: "Some strike their chins, some their Thighs, and some their Foreheads in Trifles, and others, perpetually buffet the Pulpit, or Place of Action; some proceed so far, as to pull off their Hair."[184] Here Gildon makes a key distinction, which he extends to actors as well: "For tho the Passions are very beautiful in their proper *Gestures*, yet they ought never…to transport the Speaker out of himself."[185] This suggests at least three important assumptions about

[181] Ibid., 56.
[182] Ibid., 37.
[183] Ibid.
[184] Ibid., 86.
[185] Ibid. This close comparison between the work of orators and actors had fizzled somewhat by the time of Sheridan's writing, in part on the basis of lack of action. John Wilkes in 1759 notes "how faint is…the persuasion of the orator, when weighed against the strength of the stage; there we are truly animated: there we impress not on our memories barely, but on our hearts, ideas that intermixing with, become of a similar substance with the passions: those arguments which had but voice from the orator, catch from the actor existence, and glow with life." Emphasizing

what the statue brings the orator (also what is to be avoided in imitating living beings), and gesture, generally. These ideas have gained ground by the time of Sheridan's writing: first, this binding of particular, "proper" gestures to particular passions. These linkages have been taking shape, of course, for as long as has "*actio*" (since at least Quintilian's *Institutio*, which Gildon frequently cites), but now the "living" passion is cordoned off as referent, in what comes across as an effort to stop gestures themselves from mutating and getting out of hand. Second, that although you are strapped to your tableau, passionate gestures are exhibitions—personal, private things, to be summoned and ditched. As such, they should be divined, measured, and most of all, contained. Third, gestures have the capacity to transport one out of oneself.

Hill, then, does the unexpected when about midway through the century he tries to call for leaving gestures to their own devices. On the first page of *An Essay on the Art of Acting* (1753), Hill says, "To act a passion well, the actor never must attempt its imitation"—until, that is, the actor sufficiently impels "impressive springs within his mind" to unleash. These strings "form that passion when it is *undesigned and natural*." [186] Here is his recipe, in effect, for a gesture:

> *First*, The imagination must conceive a *strong idea* of the passion.
>
> *Secondly*, But that idea cannot *strongly* be conceived, without impressing its own form upon the muscles of the *face*.

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contrast with Gildon here, John Wilkes says, "Warmed by the strength of character, we [actors] almost possess it, and are transported beyond ourselves." *A General View of the Stage* (London: For J. Coote, 1759), 4.

[186] Aaron Hill, *An Essay on the Art of Acting; In which, the Dramatic Passions Are Properly Defined and Described, with Applications of the Rules Peculiar to Each, and Selected Passages for Practice* (London: For J. Dixwell, 1779), 9. Emphasis added.

> *Thirdly*, Nor *can* the look be muscularly stamped, without communicating, instantly, the same impressions to the muscles of the *body*.
>
> *Fourthly*, The muscles of the body (braced or slack, as the ideas was an active or passive one), must, in their natural, and not-to-be-avoided consequence, by impelling or retarding the flow of the animal spirits, transmit their own conceived sensation to the sound of the *voice*, and disposition of the *gesture*.[187]

It is, at least superficially, an interesting reversal—although it is hard to miss the Cartesian underpinnings (as Roach says[188]), as well as what continues to be the introverted, personal quality of the gesture formed. That gesture is allowed to be "one's own," in consultation with what is "natural" (it is drawn from living material, and robustly mutable) but it is no less consigned to its representative passion. That is, although Hill wants to release the gesture from the courses and meanings laid out for it by rhetoricians and stagecrafters, he cannot resist the siren song of prescription, limiting the quantity of available passions to exactly ten, which he then spells out in terms of what the imagination should call for when prompted. Ultimately, he draws his own sort of statue in the mirror. The actor who will summon joy will see in the glass "that his forehead appears open, and raised, his eye smiling, and sparkling, his neck will be stretched and erect, without stiffness," as well "his breast will be inflated, and majestically backened; his back-bone erect, and all the joints of his arm, wrist, fingers, hip, knee, and ankle, will

[187] Hill, *Art of Acting*, 10.
[188] Roach, *The Player's Passion*, 80.

now be high-strung and braced boldly."[189] If he does not see these things, Hill coaxes this actor to remain there, so posed, until his imagination musters the right adjustment to course the feeling through.

But even so, this precise swelling of pride's, as a pose, tires. While eighteenth-century stagecrafters after Hill remain loathe to unpin the gesture from its conscripted sense,[190] it is interesting to note that for a short time in the study of oratory, there is an abandoning of such conscriptions in the rhetorical theory of Sheridan—who had, doubtless, trained with many old gestures.

2 THE LIVING TONGUE

Historians of rhetoric tend to describe Sheridan as surfeit of something that must be skimmed off his concepts in order to get at what is useful. Bizzell and Herzberg call it, simply, an "excess of insistent overvaluation of elocution," which "led to criticism and undervaluation of his project."[191] Similarly, Spoel describes "an inspirational, if at times excessive foundational justification for the importance of Elocutionary study."[192] Oddly, this "excess" is typically associated with both why Sheridan had such an effect in his time, and why he deserves only nominal attention at present. W. Bacon says *British*

[189] Hill, *Art of Acting*, 14.
[190] Wilkes, for example, suggests that Hill's "astonishment" gesture is off; where Hill says the animal spirits retreat to the heart pulling motion inward to the point of cessation, Wilkes says that it inclines outward, "the whole body is…thrown back, with one leg set before the other, both hands elevated, the eyes larger than usual, the brows drawn up, and the mouth not quite shut" (Wilkes, *A General View*, 118). John Walker, likewise, takes issue with Hill's "pity," asking, "And how, according to this writer, can the muscles be intense and the eye languid at the same time?" He offers, rather, that pity's gesture comprises "a gentle raising and falling of the hands, and eyes, as if mourning over the unhappy object." John Walker, *Elements of Elocution. Being the Substance of a Course of Lectures on the Art of Reading; Delivered at Several Colleges in the University of Oxford* (London: Printed by S. Hamilton, 1781), 290, 301.
[191] Patricia Bizzell and Bruce Herzberg, *The Rhetorical Tradition: Readings from Classical Times to the Present*, 2nd ed. (Boston: Bedford St. Martin's, 2001), 779-80.
[192] Spoel, "Rereading," 90.

Education indicates Sheridan's "missionary zeal, which lead him frequently to absurd claims for oratory as a panacea." Sheridan's "repeated insistence that oratory would reform bar, pulpit, and senate by purifying the channels of communication both as to speech and deportment seems to us," Bacon says, "as it seemed to some of his contemporaries, to be lacking in humor."[193] In such characterizations, Sheridan is accused of superfluous language, immoderate heaping and construction of argument ("claims that are larger than life"[194]), and "no trace of self-doubt"[195] in the name of the ultimate problem: his claim about the power of delivery. That claim is overstated, if not wrong. What contemporary critics often write between the lines is captured in this review from Sheridan's time:

> he is rather too sanguine in his expectations, and lays too great a stress upon the efficacy of declamation…He has studied the subject until he is grown warm in the pursuit, and kindles into a degree of enthusiasm, which sometimes hurries him to the borders of extravagance. One would imagine, by reading these lectures, that he considers elocution as the consummation of all earthly perfection; and that even the virtues of the heart depend, in a great measure, on the utterance of the tongue, and the gesticulations of the body.[196]

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[193] Wallace A. Bacon, "The Elocutionary Career of Thomas Sheridan (1719-1788), *Speech Monographs* 31, no. 1 (1964): 12.
[194] Bacon, *Thomas Sheridan*, 2.
[195] Wilbur Samuel Howell, *Eighteenth-Century British Logic and Rhetoric* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1971), 228.
[196] Anon., *Scots Magazine* 24 (1762): 481. From Spoel, who cites this passage while discussing Sheridan's local *ethos* (Spoel, "Rereading, 69).

Spoel notes "Sheridan's assertive and hyperbolic characterization of the powers of elocution…exposed him 'to the ridicule of discerning readers.'"[197] The above review, likewise, aligns Sheridan's own ebullience, or "warm…pursuit" with what becomes the excess of his claim. That Sheridan could take elocution to be "the consummation of all earthly perfection" is roughly equated by the reviewer, in terms of faceit, with "the virtues of the heart depend…on the utterance of the tongue, and the gesticulations of the body." The last is, in fact, the warrant Sheridan uses to make his argument for enlivening delivery.

Howell suggests that this excessiveness—both in terms of delivery and of claim—is a hangover from Sheridan's own career in the theatre. With this observation Ulman, in his wonderful assessment of Sheridan's words-as-actions, agrees, noting "Sheridan's argument reveals that his exaggerated claims for the power of oratory," characteristic of Sheridan's writing on elocution, "grew out of his background as an actor and his grossly distorted views of ancient rhetoric."[198] But where Howell insists that Sheridan, as such, got the story all wrong—that he collapses the whole art of rhetoric into the "single concept" of delivery, and as such, feels he "glimpsed a peninsula through the fog of his own folly and thought he discovered a continent"[199]—Ulman argues that such spurns overlook Sheridan's contribution to rhetorical theory. Although (as above) Ulman takes

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[197] Spoel, "Rereading," 69. The reference she cites is to *Scots Magazine* 24 (1762), 481-86, 593-601 (481). Samuel Johnson, for instance, supposedly quipped of Sheridan, "Such an excess of stupidity…is not in Nature"; he likened Sheridan's project to "burning a farthing candle at Dover, to shew light at Calais" (Bacon, *Thomas Sheridan*, 47).

[198] H. Lewis Ulman, *Things, Thoughts, Words, and Actions: The Problem of Language in Late Eighteenth-Century British Rhetorical Theory* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1994), 152. The quote finishes with "and of George Berkeley's philosophical work," and refers to Howell, *Eighteenth Century*, 222-30. Howell conflates Sheridan's selective sampling of citations from Cicero and Quintilian (mostly on delivery, or the role of the body in persuasion) with Sheridan's having interpreted these sources as concerned with *nothing except* these topics (ibid).

[199] Howell, *Eighteenth Century*, 239. Howell appears to take his cue from Samuel Johnson.

Sheridan's claims for delivery to be overstated, Ulman observes that Sheridan harnessed "his uninformed notions" into what became *the* then-eminent theory of elocution, whose "chief end" was action.[200] Ulman emphasizes Sheridan's distinction, as such, from Campbell and Blair, who spotlight written discourse: "Sheridan sees words (and their 'accompaniments'—looks, tones, and gestures) primarily as *actions* intimately tied to physical presence and performance."[201] In this sense, although Campbell, Blair and Sheridan all question "the autonomy of rational thought from the passions and imagination," Sheridan "mines a very different vein of resources for rhetorical theory than do Campbell and Blair": namely, the rhetorical subject *in situ*.[202]

But even Ulman cannot resist tongue-in-cheek when it comes to the matter of Sheridan's own language. Certain claims manifest "grandiose" vision in what seems the "affected" sense of that term; others outright "grandiloquence."[203] Most of the block quotes are disclaimed by such adjectives, hedging what Ulman is willing to reap from them, including the following description of the eloquent orator, which is characterized as "hyperbolic":

> All his internal powers are at work; all his external testify their energies. Within, the memory, the fancy, the judgment, the passions are all busy; without, every muscle, every nerve is exerted; not a feature, not a limb, but speaks.

[200] Ulman, *Things*, 152, 148.
[201] Ibid., 148.
[202] Ibid., 175.
[203] Ibid., 169, 172, e.g.

Ulman offers this quote as evidence of Sheridan's view of language "not only as reference but also as performance."[204] But I suspect that Sheridan means what he says here—and that this description of what the body brings to argument warrants inspection for something more than dramatic effect. That is, I think that it is worth considering the stuff of the much-noted excess—the speakable twitch, for example—as its own kind of rhetorical resource. Thus while Howell closes his assessment of Sheridan's rhetoric by calling it "foredoomed to become a leading influence in reducing rhetoric to…a condition in which it began…to mean merely declamatory rather than fully persuasive utterance," we will ask what of Sheridan's notion of action-as-oratory argues for the inverse of that claim.[205]

In fact, there is disagreement about the extent to which Sheridan's theatre and Elocution careers overlapped, as well as what brings Sheridan to Elocution in the first place.[206] Sheridan's own account, issued in his *An Oration…at the Musick-Hall in Fishamble-Street* (1757), attests that he had been interested in education reform for some time, but is driven most precipitously to the career shift by a riot. Having cited both his father's vocation of schoolmaster and a pivotal conversation with Sheridan's godfather, Jonathan Swift (who, Sheridan says, quipped to him of universities not teaching speaking, "Then they teach you *nothing*")[207], Sheridan offers that his thirteen odd years involved with theatre were but necessary practical training for this end. This speech,

[204] Ibid., 174.
[205] Howell, *Eighteenth Century*, 243.
[206] Bacon, for example, strongly suggests that Sheridan is driven from his career as stage manager by bad luck and business decisions following "his exile in London" after his theatre was ransacked. As he puts it, "Everything began to go wrong. Sheridan had hired star performers at salaries greater than he could really manage; receipts at the box office did not indicate that Sheridan himself was in favor as an actor now," and casting the heaviest blow, a rival theatre opened to Sheridan's *Smock-Alley* opened in Dublin (Bacon, *Thomas Sheridan*, 15).
[207] Sheridan, *Oration*, 19-20.

offered in Dublin to potential benefactors, calls for infusing the public school system in Ireland with the study of oratory (as well as establishing an Irish academy to compete with England's Westminster and Eaton) in order that "our *whole* System of Education should be rendere'd more complete."[208] Having restated the thrust of *British Education* (1756)—that "there never could be any Settlement of the *English* Language, nor could it possibly be reduced to Rule, unless the Art of Speaking were first revived,"[209] he describes his passage from the stage, to that purpose, this way:

> In my first Motions towards it, I was only groping my Way in the Dark, and my Journey ended in a Chaos, where there could not be said to be Light, but, as *Milton* expresses it, rather darkness visible.
>
> At length I found that *Theory* alone would never bring me far on my Way; and that continual *Practice* must be added to furnish me with Lights to conduct me to my Journey's end. To obtain this, there was but one Way open, which was the *Stage*. A Way so thorny, so dangerous, so full of Precipices, that nothing but my eager Pursuit of the Point in View, could have made me venture into it.[210]

This excerpt, as well as its ensuing caveat demonstrate the rhetorical canny that Spoel calls attention to throughout her essay. Sheridan carefully distances himself for this audience from the theatre ("come at that precious Ore, I scrupled not to dig myself in the Mine"[211]), even as he locates his expertise through it. But this is also as close as Sheridan gets to describing from where the thick of his language theory comes—as well as what he

[208] Ibid., 11.
[209] Ibid., 20.
[210] Ibid., 20-1. This passage is cited in part or at more length in Bacon, Howell, and Ulman.
[211] Ibid., *Oration* 21.

takes to make him expert in the subject's exigence. (Where the journey ends in chaos is the riot.)

Only in this Elocutionary writing does Sheridan expressly link himself to the theatre, implying that this explanation is designed for apology, or to justify the transition, rather than as an actual claim to theory practiced. But this lecture suggests rather that at this point, Sheridan does feel that theatre per se has something to offer oratory, and namely, the delivery problem. Elaborating the above passage, Sheridan explains that he had two goals for the interim: first, "establishing a regular Stage, upon a solid and lasting Foundation"; second, "that the Theatre would become an admirable Assistant to the School of Oratory, by furnishing to the young Students constant good Models and Examples in all the different species of Eloquence."[212] Of course, Sheridan is not the first to suggest that oratory might be served by players' action. Gildon, most immediately, offers "Tho' the Pulpit must be allow'd to be the more sacred Place," because "the Gospel consists of…Practice as well as Belief, and since the Practice is so forcibly recommended from the Stage by a purifying our Passions," that "the Stage may properly be esteem'd the Handmaid of the Pulpit."[213] Both Gildon and Sheridan in some sense qualify playing—certainly, action—as the practice of oratory. Sheridan signals his understanding of rhetoric as performance by noting that it was "giving what Assistance and Instructions I could to some young Performers" as stage manager that "became the Means of first laying open…some of the fundamental Principles of the Art," which led him "thro' Time and Application to trace the whole System."[214] Here, as above, Sheridan

[212] Ibid., *Oration* 23-4.
[213] Gildon, *The Life of Mr. Thomas Betterton*, 19.
[214] Sheridan, *Oration*, 21-2.

also insinuates his basic stance on imitation: that it works as a means to share insight, and moves inevitably among the living.

The idea that the theatre could be at the center of such an academic reformation is swiftly hacked to pieces. There is enthusiasm at first—"the Hibernian Society for the Improvement of Education" emerges to back the enterprise; the Hibernian Academy is all but built—for Sheridan's cause: "to encourage the liberal arts," and "to inspire those, for whose use and delight, these arts are encouraged" (whether striving for "the Pulpit, the Senate-house, or the Bar…Glory in the field, or…the Quiet of a rural life").[215] The Hibernian Society, which according to Sheldon "reads like a *Who's Who* of Ireland in the mid-eighteenth century" forms not only to subsidize the would-be Academy (given Sheridan's claim of losing his fortune when "an Earth-quake Came, and in one night reduced the long labored Pile"—/foundation of the theatre-based academy—"to an heap of ruins"[216]), but also to forge curriculum, whose core would comprise oratory and the English language.[217] Quashing that momentum is tasteful censure of the notion that theatre could play a role (let alone the lead) in any such curriculum.[218] Sheldon samples

[215] Ibid., 30, 25. See Sheldon, *Smock-Alley*, 236-41 and Bacon, *Thomas Sheridan*, 13-21 for more on the short-lived Hiberian Society/ Project.
[216] Sheridan, *Oration*, 24.
[217] Sheldon, *Smock-Alley*, 237. The 200+ constituents of this group include "'Lords, both Spiritual and Temporal, Privy-Counsellors, Members of Parliament, Doctors of Divinity, Fellows of the College, and Gentlemen of Fortune'" (From *Dublin Journal*, January 14-17, 1758). Sheldon thinks that the proposed curriculum, which attended to diet and exercise, and banned corporal punishment, was ahead of its time (237).
[218] Both Sheldon (*Smock-Alley*, 238) and Bacon (*Thomas Sheridan*, 21) observe that it is the theatre-related aspect of the plan, in particular, which gave Sheridan's opponents the necessary ammunition to kill it. Bacon notes that on January 8, 1759, the Hibernian Academy "opened on King-street, Oxmantown, under the supervision of another man. Sheridan had been talked out of the superintendancy…because '…letters upon letters were sent him, to shew that an Actor, at the head of such a Seminary, would be an insurmountable obstacle to its success"; and that "'After a few years, the principles of the founder were forgotten, the Academy withered, and finally fell'" (ibid., 21. Here he quotes Samuel Whyte's *Miscellany*). Bacon adds that Whyte himself, friend of

some of the quick-cutting gibes: "Sheridan himself, rumor has it, will teach the dancing by delineating figures on the floor with chalk"; "Signor G—, who imitates an organ with his voice, will instruct in church music."[219] One particularly acrimonious pamphlet disclaims Sheridan's own eloquence, and the need of public action, generally. This author observes "We are apt to…lump our Ideas where they ought to be most separated"; "*Eloquence* and *Rhetoric* pass for the same thing…and yet one consists in giving Rules, the other in practicing them" (Quintilian was a rhetorician).[220] Because they are merely eloquent, and not rhetorical, the author sees no need of dealing with gestures. Thus,

> I propose reviving, along with *Elocution*, the *Roman* Practice of one *secretly* placed, reading his Composition to the Assembly, and another, in view, going along with the Reader in the *elocution* Part, with proper Gestures, and then, I think, fifty Masters of *Elocution* may do for the whole Kingdom; ten for *Dublin*, and forty for the rest of it…these Gentlemen may be sent for, on Occasion, to accompany the Reader.[221]

This partition between eloquence and rhetoric (and action and interpretation)—and the association between performance and fakery—is not uniquely conceived by this writer. It is the popular sentiment that Sheridan and later Elocutionists strive against. In Sheridan's

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Sheridan, opened the English Grammar School that adhered largely to Sheridan's principles, and this thrived (Sheridans' sons were among its first students) until the turn of the century (ibid., 21).

[219] Sheldon, *Smock-Alley*, 238-39. Both summarized from Shea, P. *A Full Vindication of Thomas Sheridan, Esq; being an Answer To a Scurrilous Pamphlet*. Dublin, 1758 (13-16). "Writing seriously," Sheldon notes, "they protested that young gentlemen would be seduced and debauched by the 'ladies' of the theater, or at least lead into idleness and folly by the men; that the stage was the worst school of oratory extant, its pompous diction and ridiculous delivery justly known by the name of 'theatrical'" (ibid., 238).

[220] Anon., *A Letter to a School-Master in the Country, from His Friend in Town, Relative to Mr. Sheridan's Scheme of Education* (Dublin: 1758), 19-20. Bacon notes the passage in which this author reflects that "every Preacher and Pleader" must have "both *Sense* and *Elocution*; whereas, on our present Footing, God be thanked, we do pretty well without either" (Bacon, *Thomas Sheridan*, 20, and Anon., *Letter*, 20-1).

[221] Anon., *Letter*, 21.

work after *Oration*, one does not see this explicit union of theatre and education again. Sheridan, weathering feedback, got the picture: the public might cede to reviving oratory, but not by way of *actors*. It must have seemed that Gildon had it righter, referring both actors and orators to the inert representations of ancients instead of each other for direction (i.e. the stuff of action is that of oratory by much subtler implication). Although the vision Sheridan professes in *Oration* would appear summarily dissolved, it is no less evident in the mortar of Sheridan's ensuing language theory, and in the case he gradually, more sneakily builds for rhetorical action.

To clarify what the anonymous pamphlet writer misses with his caricature of the gesturing rhetor, it is necessary to first explore how Sheridan figures body language.

3 THE LEGIBLE HAND

Sheridan's *A Course of Lectures on Elocution* (1762) and *A Discourse Delivered in the Theatre at Oxford, in the Senate-House at Cambridge, and at Spring-Garden in London* (1759) illustrate his professional trajectory as well as change of pitch. The former comprises a seven-part treatise that advocates for "the noble ends which might be answered in a free state, by a clear, lively, and affecting public elocution, [which] are in a great measure lost,"[222] reprising content from lectures delivered at sites spanning Bath, Belfast, Bristol, Cambridge, Edinburgh, London, and Oxford.[223] The latter, subtitled an

[222] Thomas Sheridan, *A Course of Lectures on Elocution: Together with Two Dissertations on Language; and Some Other Tracts Relative to Those Subjects* (London: Printed by W. Strahan, 1762), 111.

[223] To this treatise is appended two dissertations, "On the State of Language in Old Greece and the Means by which it was brought to Perfection," and "On the State of Language in Other Countries, But More Particularly in Our Own, and Its Consequences." The former was appended to the seven parts of the lecture series as it was delivered on site, in which he claims that ancient Greeks "never were so vainly employed as to search for [the human heart] in books, in the

introduction to the *Lectures*, is published about three years after the *Lectures* begin (1759 also marks the year after Sheridan steps down as Dublin stage manager, and the first he has gone without appearing on stage since 1743[224]).[225] Both aim to expand the conception of language to include that of the "living tongue" by way of the study of elocution. Together, they paint a picture of language, in toto, as material participation that suffuses through and negotiates between forms as well as bodies, which even as it mutates, vectored by "custom," communicates, incorporates, and thrives on the irresistibility of imitation. To emphasize this fugitive, inter-bodied quality, he qualifies language as "any way or method whatsoever" by which "our thoughts may be communicated."[226] Book VI in *Lectures* marks the place where Sheridan draws the line between what of the living tongue he has already discussed—articulation, accent, emphasis, and stops, which are all very much bound up with words—and what he feels is the stroke of language, as such:

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artificial characters of human invention, which have no affinity or natural connection with their archetypes, have no stamp of truth, wearing the same form in selfhood as in truth, and utterly incapable of representing or communicating emotions, by any power in themselves." (Sheridan, *Lectures*, 148.) The latter is appended for publication, and centers on a side-by-side comparison of Greek-versus-English languages treatments. For example, the Greeks "Employed their chief care and attention about their *living tongue*," while the English, "about their written language." (ibid., 163.)

[224] Sheldon, *Smock-Alley*, 250, 259-60.

[225] Audiences overlap and vary widely, evidenced by the list of subscribers, which include "Hon. Lord Kaims." Spoel notes that in 1761 and 1764, "Sheridan lectured in Edinburgh at the invitation of the Scottish Select Society," whose members "included Allan Ramsay, David Hume, Adam Smith, Alexander Wedderburn, James Burnett, Alexander Carlyle, William Robertson, Hugh Blair, and Lord Kames, among many others" (Spoel, "Rereading," 59). For discussion of who likely filled out Sheridan's audiences, please see Spoel, here, and Ulman, *Things*, 25-36, and 153. Ulman notes that the audiences comprised a mixture between those interested in theories of language, and those looking for practical tips and guidelines for manner (ibid., 34). Paul Goring specifies that Sheridan's audiences "consisted predominately of gentlemen, but there were also numerous clergy, and several military men and members of parliament; about 10 per cent of the subscribers were women." *The Rhetoric of Sensibility in Eighteenth-Century Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press: 2005), 99.

[226] Sheridan, *Lectures*, 94-5.

"tones, looks, and gestures."[227] These reach around and through, and in the absence of words to convey what Sheridan calls "sensible marks," through which an "infinite variety of emotions"—some which have been named, most of which have not—spread, and disappear on incident.[228] These marks are not thinking things, but rather "are understood, by being felt."[229] He offers the sensible mark as a kind of companion to the word, a kind of contrast to it—in effect, a unit of a sentence of the body.

Had Locke acknowledged this language stratum in *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, Sheridan thinks, "We might then have had, as accurate a knowledge, of the whole of language" as for words; but Locke focused solely on that of "human understanding; his only object was, to examine the nature of words, as symbols of our ideas: Whilst the nobler branch of language, which consists of the signs of internal emotions," or body language, "was untouched."[230] This apparent hole he proposes to fill. Were man "like the Houynhms of Swift," he adds, "always directed by a cool, invariable, and as I may say instinctive reason," this could be sufficient.[231] "But as there are other things which pass in the mind of man, beside ideas," as "the passions, and the fancy, compose great part of his complicated frame," a way must be found "of manifesting those emotions" to communicate them.[232] The sensible marks must then inhabit the bodies that perceive them:

> Now, in order to know what another knows, and in the same manner that he knows it, an exact transcript of the ideas which pass in the mind of one

[227] Ibid., 100.
[228] Ibid., 99-100.
[229] Ibid., 106.
[230] Ibid., 97. Line finishes: "…by him as foreign to his purpose." For further examination of Sheridan's debt to and criticism of Locke, see Ulman 184-89.
[231] Ibid., 98-9.
[232] Ibid., 99.

> man, must be made by sensible marks, in the mind of another; so in order to feel what another feels, the emotions which are in the mind of one man, must also be communicated to that of another, by sensible marks.[233]

Quick to qualify that the sensible mark is "entirely different from words, and independent of them,"[234] Sheridan emphasizes that it connects bodies in real time sensationally. It cannot be captured because it subsists on movement (touches); nor can it be choreographed, because it arises through and in response to "the legible hand of nature" (is touched-off). This detail is particularly important, because it makes the sensible mark so persuasive. Sheridan offers, "But tho' it be not necessary to society, that all men should know much; it is necessary that they should feel much, and have a mutual sympathy, in whatsoever affects their fellow creatures." This "language of the passions…is not only understood," but "it excites also similar emotions, or corresponding effects in all minds alike.[235] More specifically, from *Spring-Garden*:

> In proportion to the exertion of the powers of the intellect, or the imagination, the various emotions of the mind, the different degrees of sensibility, and all the feelings of the heart; *they* will find, upon searching for them, that in the human frame there are tones, looks, and gestures of such efficacy, as to not only make all these obvious, but to transfuse all those operations, energies, and emotions into others…[236]

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[233] Ibid.
[234] Ibid., 100.
[235] Ibid., 101.
[236] Thomas Sheridan, *A Discourse Delivered in the Theatre at Oxford, in the Senate-House at Cambridge, and at Spring-Garden in London* (London: For A. Millar, 1759), 16. Line finishes: "without which, indeed, the mere communication of ideas would be attended with but little delight." Emphasis added.

To speak in sensible marks is to enact and exact motion from those in sensing distance. Ideally, this resonance draws people into community by involving them bodily in the story. This justification brings to mind Quintilian's description of a primary mover (by hand or by foot) emanating conviction through action, as well as, nearer to Sheridan, Weaver's observation in *The History of the Mimes and Pantomimes* that "Every spectator must behold himself acted."[237] But here one nonetheless begins to make out Sheridan's distinctive rendering of action (if contradictory attitude)—namely, that the marks themselves are both contained by and uncontainable to the body; although natural, gather momentum, shape, and meaning across use and uptakes; may be encouraged, but not summoned (he emphasizes that thinking stops them cold[238]); and infect—seemingly with a volition their own, yet are suited to rhetorical purpose, because they play an important logistical role in "social being."[239] This role is perhaps best characterized through contrast with what Sheridan deems to be the mark's antithesis: writing.

Sheridan's assessment of written language reads as though it could have come from an acting manual: "The eye can have no pleasure in viewing a succession of crooked characters, however accurately formed."[240] The case against the written word is not totally dissimilar to that against acting by "freeze frame," or tableau. Elaboration in *Spring-Garden* comes from *British Education* (he quotes himself): "Its use is to give stability to sound, and permanence to thought; to preserve words that otherwise might

[237] John Weaver, *The History of the Mimes and Pantomimes, with An Historical Account of Several Performers in Dancing, Living in the Times of the Roman Emperors* (London: For J. Roberts, 1728), 25.
[238] Sheridan, *Lectures*, 12.
[239] Ibid., ix.
[240] Sheridan, *Spring-Garden*, 19.

perish as they are spoke, and to arrest ideas that might vanish as they rise in the mind."[241] Elsewhere, writing is merely "a repository." Its absorption cannot be shared among participants, encouraging isolation. But especially, "it contains no visible marks" to do what embodiment does for words through expression, or to guide the body that would deliver the written words: "And as [tones, accent, emphases, and gesture] must…contain in them, all the powers of strongly impressing the mind, captivating the fancy, rousing the passions, and delighting the ear," Sheridan concludes the letter on the page is "dead."[242] To become fully persuasive, it needs a life form. This dependence, he says, is evident in the listlessness of sight-readers, who must soak it in through many repetitions before they begin to feel it move. An example of such an ignition is that of comedians, who must recite "the sentiments of others," but deliver them as if "their own immediate feeling."[243] Sheridan notes "it is not at the first, second, third, or even twentieth reading of their parts" that these actors "hit upon" the just delivery; "it is only by repeated trials, and constant practice" that "the just tones, looks, and gestures, that ought naturally to accompany them" once "associated," settle in.[244] The sensible marks, as such, might not appear for several iterations; "yet he can by no means command [tones, e.g.] at his pleasure; and he must be obliged to own, that to conceive, and to execute, are two different things."[245]

Sheridan's sense of having to accept what sensible marks come to the written word absorbed holds for rhetorical delivery. That these marks, as well as the whole

[241] Ibid., 18-19.
[242] Sheridan, *Lectures*, 10-11.
[243] Ibid., 13.
[244] Ibid.
[245] Ibid.

"living voice"[246] (including articulation, accents, emphasis and stops) are somehow natural, and "found" when welcomed, is one of Sheridan's key selling points to the suasion, as well as virtue of elocution:

> It has pleased the All-wise Creator to annex to elocution, when in its perfect state, powers almost miraculous! and an energy nearly divine! He has given to it tones to charm the ear, and penetrate the heart: he has joined to it actions, and looks, to move the inmost soul. By that, attention is kept up without pain, and conviction is carried to the mind with delight. Persuasion is ever its attendant, and the passions own it for a master. Great as is the force of its powers, so unbounded is their extent. All mankind are capable of its impressions…[247]

Describing "words-as-actions," Ulman notes that Sheridan describes words as signs of ideas, while this living voice "naturally [accompanies] articulate sounds and [helps] to *enact* their meaning through appeals to the passions and imagination."[248] As he puts it later, by virtue of these effects, "oral knowledge carries *more* knowledge than written language."[249] Yet the above quote makes clear that Sheridan is doing more than knowledge sharing with his elocution. He is making the case for the effects themselves—which yield "energy," "charm," "attention," "conviction," and "delight." Sheridan advertises that such "living speech" (whether recited or extemporized), transforms the

[246] Ibid., xii. "In short…some of our greatest men have been trying to do that with the pen, which can only be performed by the tongue; to produce effects by the dead letter, which can never be produced but by the living voice, with its accompaniments." Ulman offers a chart that compares the two, noting that the application of spoken language, for Sheridan, is "Action 'useful to society'"; that of writing, "speculative philosophy" (Ulman, *Things*, 156).
[247] Sheridan, *Spring-Garden*, 17. Line finishes: "the ignorant as well as the wise, the illiterate as well as the learned" (he quotes from *British Education*).
[248] Ulman, *Things*, 155.
[249] Ibid., 160.

body through which it acts. This transformation resembles that which Gildon promises to the orator as well as actor who would, similarly, give the full extent of his body over to the word: "when any Discourse receives Force and Life," not only from speaking, "but from a proper *Action* and *Gesture* for it, it is truly touching, penetrating, and transporting; it has a Soul, it has Life, it has Vigour and Energy not to be resisted."[250] The tactile quality of this transformation is not to be missed. Gildon would have "Discourse" begin at the skin (with a touch) and, as with Sheridan's sensible mark, penetrate and exact movement. At the core of both pitches is that full-bodied delivery is pleasureful and catchy. The nation, Sheridan says, that advances elocution is

> opening a source of one of the highest delights, which the nature of man is capable of feeling in this life, but also by the extraordinary benefits and advantages thence resulting to society, which cannot possibly be procured in any other way.[251]

Here, in effect, is Sheridan's call to action. Delivery turns people outside of themselves through concatenating motion, and brings about a fuller form of "social communication."[252] One last point is to be made about this turning outside of oneself, or the stakes of not learning to deliver. Sheridan on multiple occasions reissues this quote of Bishop Berkeley's, which asks, "whether half the Learning and Study of these Kingdoms is not useless, for want of a proper Delivery and Pronunciation being taught in our

[250] Gildon, *The Life of Mr. Thomas Betterton*, 52.
[251] Sheridan, *Spring-Garden*, 17. This is an interesting repurposing of an excerpt from Cicero, which Sheridan includes in this speech: "That neither the fruits nor glory which he derived from eloquence, gave him so much delight as the study and practice of the art itself." (Dicendi autem me non tam fructus & Gloria, quam studium ipsum exercitatioque delectat.)
[252] Sheridan, *Lectures*, 98. Sheridan qualifies this, saying, "of which words are a very small part."

Schools and Colleges?"[253] Sheridan, taking this literally, adopts this charge as a focal point for his exigence. The neglect of delivery is a national issue on multiple levels. In addition to the above (propagating social action), it attracts people to, and is means to manifest and communicate "Learning and Study"; and would allow those with "most ardent inclination to serve their country," who have thus far "sat still in silent indignation, where her interests were nearly concerned, for want of a practiced tongue to disclose what passed in their minds."[254] Because "living speech" is the best means by which "all the faculties of mind, are brought forward, moulded, polished, and exerted,"[255] the study of elocution becomes means by which to stir up "funds of knowledge…shut up in [peoples' own] breasts."[256] This appeal—which speaks greatly to the creature of the sensible mark—reads like a question of health:

> And how many others, after a few attempts, have closed their lips for ever, from self-disappointment, in not finding their utterance correspond to their conceptions? The experience of what they have suffered on such occasions, will teach them to feel, and as far in them lies, to prevent the sufferings of others in like circumstances.[257]

I am particularly taken with this point, not only because it captures the sensible mark's role in communication, as well as the stricture of tendency. To that point, we see the

[253] Originally posted in *The Querist*. Howell suggests that Berkeley was actually being fecetious, and that Sheridan would not have had his support. In this series in *The Querist*, Berkeley "had posed a series of rhetorical questions concerning economic, financial, political, sociological, and moral subjects, and had plainly intended the questions not only to provoke enquiry and debate…but also on occasion to call satirical attention to human foolishness and perversity" (Howell, *Eighteenth Century*, 229).
[254] Sheridan, *Spring-Garden*, 52.
[255] Sheridan, *Lectures*, xiii.
[256] Sheridan, *Spring-Garden*, 52.
[257] Ibid., 52-3.

action itself play a role in "finding," above, and in giving tangible shape to the utterance. But as much as the movements, associations, and attractions forged with living speech may be a pleasure, and by suggestion, discoveries themselves, to clip the extent of one's motions is to suffer. (It is no less sensational.) This is a very clever appeal, of course, because it underscores that feeling, essentially the driver of good delivery, "far in" even in the speechless "lies," ready for tapping. As with the actor, it needs only exercise, circumstance, and so many repetitions to manifest. The marks, he seems to promise, they will come.

4 THE ANIMAL TONE

Key to this notion of acquisition is Sheridan's understanding of nature's role in shaping and distributing motion. This can be encapsulated in the life cycle of the sensible mark, which I explicate first through the example of tones.

The "natural" and "artificial" tones are two of a species. In *Lectures on the Art of Reading* (1775), Sheridan describes what he calls "the corruption of delivery," characterized by "artificial tones" that are catching like bugs and overriding "natural action"—or that to which "nature has affixed a power indicative of the passions."[258] In part, he blames reading teachers for "introducing" these tones by way of parsing the technical accuracy of what is being said. Emphasis on "stops" has "annexed to them

[258] Thomas Sheridan, *British Education: Or, The Source of the Disorders of Great Britain. Being an Essay Towards Proving, that the Immorality, Ignorance, and False Taste, which so Generally Prevail, are the Natural and Necessary Consequences of the Present Defective System of Education. With an Attempt to Show, that a Revival of the Art of Speaking, and the Study of Our Own Language, Might Contribute, in a Great Measure, to the Cure of Those Evils* (Dublin: By George Faulkner 1756), 318.

different notes of the voice, as well as different portions of time."[259] He illustrates the yoking of tones to punctuation marks this way (a sentence which, read aloud, still illustrates his point): "Those which marked an incomplete sense, had an elevated note of the voice joined to them; those which marked a complete sense, a depressed, or low note."[260] Sheridan's ensuing description of these tones suggests their protean quality and parasitic lifestyle:

> This uniform elevation and depression of the voice, in all sentences alike, produced a new kind of tone…with which all who learned to read, even such as were free from every other kind, became infected.[261]

Through institutional propagation, this tone acquires longevity. Its lurking is revealed in an experiment, the results of which, Sheridan boasts, he has replicated unexceptionally. Sheridan "found a person of vivacity, delivering his sentiments with energy, and of course with all that variety of tones which nature furnishes"; and "put something into his hand to read."[262] To close one's eyes, he suggests, is to not recognize the reader. He notes "an immediate change," and describes the surge of the above-described tone: "A different pitch of voice took place," with "a tedious uniformity of cadence."[263] Emphasis is on the deference of the natural to the so-called artificial mark, and the latter being no less material and quick than the former. The artificial tone cleaves to certain circumstances, occasions, and even objects (the book); and, recognizing one of these, suffuses across sentences, paragraphs, and *readers*. "Thus has this…spread itself in the

[259] Thomas Sheridan, *Lectures on the Art of Reading. In Two Parts* (London: Printed for C. Dilly: 1781), 107.
[260] Ibid.
[261] Ibid.
[262] Ibid., 107-08.
[263] Ibid., 108.

senate-house, the pulpit, the bar, the stage, and every place where public declamation is used."[264]

In short, these artificial tones are damming the emotional excesses that usually "manifest and communicate by their own virtue."[265] By stripping the speaker of her affective power, Sheridan says that these tones strip the utterance (vis-à-vis body) not only of much of its meaning, but also of much of its energy, which he says "lies in the tones themselves."[266]

This stuff of tones—or sound—"contains in itself a natural power over the human frame, in rousing the faculties of man, and exciting the affections."[267] This power is evident not only in how readily members of the same species can instigate and react to one another wordlessly, but also in the ability of a member of one species to communicate motion through tones to the body of one of another. To illustrate, Sheridan says, "The neighing of the steed, calls up all the attention of the horse-kind; they gaze towards the place from whence the sound comes, and answer it, or run that way, if the steed be not in view."[268] This description says much about the work and the anatomy of the tone—which is, above all, material means to drive bodies together or apart. It draws gaze (even if the steed is not in view); it elicits tonal response (through "answer"); and it manifests inclination, or "motion toward" (both by its trajectory, and the second horse setting off). By the same principle, "the howlings of the wolf, alarm the flock."[269] Emphasizing the tone's rub through sheer perception, and the affinity of sensation and

[264] Ibid. Line continues, "insomuch that the instances of a just and natural elocution, are very rare…"
[265] Sheridan, *Lectures*, 106.
[266] Ibid., 101-02.
[267] Sheridan, *Spring-Garden*, 22.
[268] Sheridan, *Lectures*, 102-03.
[269] Ibid., 103.

disposition, or stance, he notes, "Those [sounds] which excite sympathy, may be supposed to be all in concord; those which rouze antipathy, to be discords; which by creating an uneasy sensation, immediately dispose them to flight, to avoid the enemy."[270] Similarly, in human-to-human contact, "the very tones…independent of words" activate stance. In their particular intensities, so fervidly do tones call for reciprocal motion that they appear to swallow the word up:

> ...yet that the whole energy, or power of exciting analogous emotions in others, lies in the tones themselves, may be known from this; that whenever the force of these passions is extreme, words give place to inarticulate sounds: sighs, murmurings, in love; sobs, groans, and cries in grief; half choaked sounds in rage; and shrieks in terror, are then the only language heard. And the experience of mankind may be appealed to, whether these have no more power in exciting sympathy, than any thing that can be done by mere words.[271]

Sheridan's tones appear to issue trajectory with their entreat—one knows, for example, that a sob might draw another body toward it. Subtly, Sheridan suggests that the tone not only allows the receiver to absorb the sense of the utterance, but also shows her something of what to do about it. Because tones incite that inadvertent push and pull between bodies, "the communication of our internal feelings [by way of tones], was a matter of much more consequence in our social intercourse, than the mere conveying of ideas."[272] This motive force is at the core of Sheridan's argument for *presence* as rhetorical strategy; for a particular, unaffected kind of presence, at that. As with the

[270] Ibid.
[271] Ibid., 101-02.
[272] Sheridan, *Art of Reading*, 88.

whinny of the steed, the tone stirs as it instructs. Sheridan offers this explanation as exigence for accepting and protecting natural tones, since these are the ones that can draw this motion-toward most effectively. "We are moved" by their resonance (seemingly, propelled): "the tones of all domestic animals," for example, "expressive of their wants or distresses, have a wonderful power over the human heart, and mechanically rouse us to their relief."[273] Or, the dog walks sullenly away from its owner when a certain tone is used, because its certain feeling has happened between them.

Reading tones, "tho' they excite feeling, as it is in the nature of all tones to do so, it is only of a vague and indeterminate nature"[274] (compared to shrieks, etc.). These tones draw upon words for material, taking shape and gaining association over the courses of sentences. Sheridan's depiction of the sounds facilitated by words underscores his notion of "the legible hand of nature" in speech; specifically, of man's debt to other animals and objects in bringing notes to his own "nobler passions." "Thus among the vowels the a(3) was borrowed from the crow, the a(1) from the goat, the a(2) from the sheep, the o(3) from the dove, the o(2) from the ox, the ow from the dog, & c."[275] Consonants are adopted from sheep, crows, ox, dogs, serpents, geese. "F is like the sound of winds blowing through certain chinks. V is the noise made by some spinning wheels when rapidly moved," and "S by the flight of darts."[276] Other sounds draw form from "the collision of bodies," or like "squeel, squall, scream, shrill, shrivel, hiss, jar, hurl, whirl…burst," and "patter," collect their shape, he says, from their stuff.[277] When Sheridan emphasizes "This expressiveness of words is every where to be found in our

[273] Sheridan, *Lectures*, 104.
[274] Ibid., 107-08.
[275] Sheridan, *Art of Reading*, 52-3.
[276] Ibid., 53.
[277] Ibid., 53, 57.

tongue,"[278] he means, of course, both the language, and the organ; that the use of words owes to feeling that circulates with sounds.

While explaining such tones, Sheridan notes a problem with Henry Home, Lord Kames' distinction between emotion and passion in *Elements of Criticism* (1762). Kames calls an emotion "an internal motion or agitation of the mind, when it passes away without raising *desire*"—or the "impulse which makes us proceed to action." Emotions, for Kames, most often derive from stationary objects ("a smooth extended plain…a barren heath"), are either "pleasant" or "painful," and like the objects from which they come, "continue long stationary."[279] Sheridan continues: "and when desire is raised, the motion or agitation is denominated a passion." In order to exert an action, Kames emphasizes, "that desire must have an object."[280] Kames is in this conundrum:

> Is passion in its nature or feeling distinguishable from emotion? I am apt to think there must be a distinction, when the emotion seems in all cases to precede the passion, and to be the cause or occasion of it. But after the strictest examination, I cannot perceive any such distinction between emotion and passion.[281]

In other words, inaction feels disconcertingly similar to action. Sheridan reorganizes Kames' categories so as to explain the sensate (and no better pinned by the inspecting thought) work of sound itself upon the body, which substantiates his depiction of the appeal of tones. Namely, he offers that Kames is "laboring to oppose the generic, to the specific term," rather than two of a species. Sheridan proposes that "emotion" express

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[278] Ibid., 57.
[279] Henry Home, Lord Kames, *Elements of Criticism*, 1785, 6th ed. (New York: Garland, 1972), 32, 37.
[280] Sheridan, *Art of Reading,* 307. Emphasis added.
[281] Ibid., 307-08.

"all sorts of agitations of mind," and that this "genus" is subdivided into at least two categories: "passions," which "implies a consequential desire of action"; and "affections," which "have their end in the agitation itself, and are afterward quiescent" (or dormant).[282] Affections are "those finer feelings of the soul, which seem too delicate for the inspection of our mental anatomists," in that they cannot be tethered to "manifestation," or signs—and in this sense, they resist not only being mulled over, but also an identifiable utility. While Kames' "emotions" are categorically similar to that of Sheridan's "affections," note the important distinction between affections, which "have their end in the agitation itself, and are afterward quiescent"; and Kames' "emotions," which are merely "quiescent, because not productive of desire." [283] It is a subtle difference, but in "have their end," Sheridan suggests a sense of purpose.

Sheridan asserts that the affections play a key role in the impulsions of tones (and tones in those of affections). In Part II of *Art of Reading*, which centers on verse, Sheridan offers an example of affection produced through "poetic numbers," which "keep the mind in a constant state of gentle agitation, by a continued series of emotions, resulting from *their mechanical part*, independent of thought."[284] ("Their" here refers to the numbers.) Suggesting that the sound's effect is self-activating, he admonishes rationalists beware: "it may seem a strange paradox, to talk of emotions raised in the mind, independent of thought"; but instrumental music, likewise, "conveys no ideas, nor operates by thought, but excites feeling by its own immediate energy."[285] Music and numbers "have one common matter, which is sound; and one common modification of

[282] Ibid., 308.
[283] Kames, *Elements of Criticism*, 37.
[284] Sheridan, *Art of Reading*, 309. Emphasis added.
[285] Ibid.

matter, which is measure or proportion of sound."[286] That is, the sound of the lines—the rhythms and stops, materialized and maneuvered through tones—comes to effect alongside, but not by way of the words:

> we are acquainted with nothing external, which has so great a power of stirring the mind, and consequently of exciting emotions, as sound; and the produced emotions correspond always to the nature of the sounds that produce them. Rough, boisterous, and irregular sounds, trouble, agitate, and disorder the mind, and cause disagreeable emotions. Those which are smooth, gentle, and proportioned, excite emotions of an agreeable kind.[287]

Kames asserts a thicker distinction between the material object and its incorporation. So on seeing a garden, for example, "I perceive it to be beautiful or agreeable as…one of its qualities. When I turn my attention from the garden…I am conscious of a pleasant emotion."[288] Even a "rotten carcass," letting off a smell that is sniffed in, "is disagreeable…the disagreeableness is a quality of the object, the pain the quality of the emotion…the former [categorically] belongs to the objects, the latter exists within us." But Sheridan's affection does not discriminate. Whether "artificial" or "natural," subtle tones subsistent on words circulate by this principle, "such that the hearer both feels and understands…insomuch, that were those expressions to be uttered, without those tones, they would not convey their full meaning."[289] He summarizes:

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[286] Ibid., 310.
[287] Ibid.
[288] Kames, *Elements of Criticism*, 31.
[289] Sheridan, *Lectures*, 107.

> not only…every thing which is forcible and affecting in utterance, but also the most material points necessary to a full and distinct comprehension, even the sense of what is uttered, depends on tones.

The long shot of Sheridan's tones is best captured by tacking it to the trajectory of then-popular stagecraft (against which Sheridan reacts). The twin impetus for Hill's tones, in *An Essay on the Art of Acting* (1753) is the "strong idea" conceived in the imagination spurned by the words on the script. To illustrate a tone that would convey astonishment, Hill first quotes lines that could produce it:

> 'I feel my blood
> Cool and grow thick; as melted lead flows heavy,
> And hardens in its motion.—A little longer,
> And I, who have a heart already marble—
> Shall petrify throughout—and be—a statue.'[290]

The word collects its particular tone through reflection.

> It would be impossible, after an actor had conceived an idea correspondent to the picture, in the words of this, not to impress every lineament of the passion upon his look, and every attitude of it upon his gesture; and then, the tone of his voice, concurring, cannot fail to sound the slow, conflicting struggle of *astonishment*.[291]

[290] Hill, *Art of Acting*, 37.
[291] Ibid., 38.

There is little discussion of transition or variation between such pictures, and what becomes of other bodies in relationship to them—it is what Sheridan might consider "successive landscapes shown by a camera obscura."[292]

Gildon's tones, in *The Life of Mr. Thomas Betterton* (1710)[293], are very much tied to the tongues that produce them, but are effectively caught, pinned and catalogued like so many butterflies for the user's selection. Noted and named for textures, colors, sounds, manners and effects, the "brown" tone is far from brightness; the "alluring…abounds in…harmonious Warblings."[294] Gildon painstakingly tries to outline how the tongue can attain "flexible" tone, which "obeys the Modulation, as Wax does the Fingers."[295] His tones are procured through formulation and measurement, memorization and planning. For orators, he recommends

> after the Confutation, [the speaker, to summarize] ought to make a little Pause, and begin it again with a lower Tone, and a different Accent from the last Cadence of his Voice; then raising himself, he should break out into a louder Voice, and carry it on to the End with more Gaiety, Magnificence, and Triumph of Pronunciation, which would *seem* born of his Assurance in the Justice of his Cause…[296]

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[292] Sheridan, *Lectures*, 182. In its context, this refers to "the shadowy arts" that leave little impression because they are blanched from imitations of imitations.
[293] Howell notes that Sheridan was almost certainly familiar with this work (as well as with Curll's *The History of the English Stage*) (Howell, *Eighteenth Century*, 228).
[294] Gildon, *The Life of Mr. Thomas Betterton*, 89, 92. Wilkes, similarly, compares tones to instruments, and then connects instruments with their motivating passions: "the mellow warblings of a German flute have finer effect in moving the tender passions, than the rougher tones of a bassoon; and certainly an Actor, with an articulate melodious voice, is more proper for love scenes, than he whose voice has all the roughness of a base-viol." (Wilkes, *A General View*, 111).
[295] Gildon, *The Life of Mr. Thomas Betterton*, 92.
[296] Ibid., 126. Emphasis added.

Gildon goes so far with his defense of this method as to mock the notion of leaving tones to themselves. Nature, he surmises, needs interpreters to pinpoint which tones should be affixed to which chunks of discourse. Noting "all sides agree, that Nature is the sovereign Guide and Scope; but then they are not so agreed in what *Nature* is," he moves swiftly to affirming his own position:

> The skillful lay down those Signs, Marks, and Lineaments of *Nature*, that you may know when she is truly drawn, when not; the Unskillful, which is the greater and more noisy part, leave it so at large, that it amounts to no more, than every one's Fancy, which would make Contradictions Nature; for what pleases one, he calls Nature; what pleases another, that he calls Nature; and I once heard a Man of the Stage, say *Nonsense* was natural…[297]

Indeed he spends several pages categorizing subjects of discourse, and pairing those subjects to combinations of tones. "If your Discourse be on the Actions of Men," for instance, the tones adjust to the "quality" of depictions, "the Just and Honest" one renders "with a full, lofty, and noble Accent, with a Tone of Satisfaction…but the *unjust*…with a strong, violent, and passionate Voice, and a Tone of Anger."[298] Of course, Sheridan would argue that the tones described here elide Gildon despite his effort, since their stuff cannot be captured in written words.[299] But Sheridan takes quite a different tack, generally, arguing against further binding the tone (or any sensible mark) to signification

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[297] Ibid., 88.
[298] Ibid., 111.
[299] Commenting on "The variety of treatises which have lately been published on the passions," Sheridan describes, "the vanity of ingenious men [who] think, that they can do that by writing, which is beyond the power of writing to accomplish…Nor are the writers of such treatises employed about a work less absurd, than would be that of endeavoring to communicate new simple ideas by definitions; or that of attempting to paint sounds" (Sheridan, *Lectures*, x).

because a) he thinks there are no such interpreters (or models) living; b) such prescriptions and judgments facilitate the spread of "artificial" tones (which, again, have the same infectiousness as the "natural"); and c) most importantly, planning, or thinking, which comes with wanting to get the tone "right" hampers the body's drift, which, taking the long shot, restricts the "social passions" that can move with discourse. Thus, he says that the tones will find better signs by which to manifest than he could find for them—at once emphasizing that such tones do not come from formulation, but rather excess of other tones (or sound); and their governance, or sudden, "come over" quality, which brings about the appeal that allows them to "catch." Sheridan's tones, all in all, are less like words (as Gildon suggests) and more like fickle, but prolific hangers-about. This language of the passions, Sheridan says, "bursts," and "breaks out," and like laughter (also a tone) "can be modified into an infinity of shapes."[300]

Tones are conceived as gestures accompanied with sound. What of the soundless sensible mark?

5 SUGGESTIBLE GESTURES

The opening of *British Education* (1756) reckons with the "enormity of our times," which Sheridan characterizes as a "torrent" that is "still too strong to be resisted" by the "weak dams" of penal law.[301] In short, "the law is trampled under foot" by way of "an universal corruption of manners."[302] Sheridan calls for "materia medica" in the form of better public education.[303] More precisely, he argues for putting the moving body (vis-

[300] Ibid., 109.
[301] Sheridan, *British Education*, 1.
[302] Ibid., 3.
[303] Ibid., 2.

à-vis oratory) at the center of the system, due to its role in facilitating the acquisition and enactment of *virtue* ("a painful renunciation of all selfish passions"[304]). "What instruction can be of such advantage," he asks, "as that which improves [one] in the knowledge of human nature, the use whereof he must daily and hourly experience in every action of his life?"[305] The gesture's suggestibility is the warrant for this argument. Integrally bound up with which passions persist, the shape and course of gestures themselves are enmeshed with those of social formations, and should be national concerns. This claim has many tentacles. Most important to the current inquiry, the state of the gesture—its nature, habits, concatenations, trajectory, measure is everyone's problem, and the possibility of reform as seemingly instant and possible as gestures' own inevitable mutations. Apparently at a loss for where to turn for the particular gestures required, Sheridan makes a kind of blanket call to all concerned (but most exigently, public speakers) to let their gestures loose, in order to find and reclaim those most stirring. Although he is well known for this call to "naturalistic action"—to drawing upon one's own inclination for how best to move others—it is worth noting that Sheridan longs to stay and systematize such "social gestures," but he claims to be impeded in this pursuit by their absence at large.

This suggestibility of gestures (and thus the distance of those most popular from "natural action") is evident in orators and audiences in public spaces, in those motions that accompany speech as well as those that speak alone. The overarching trajectory of "artificial action" ("that which like the language has no natural congruity with the

[304] Ibid., 35.
[305] Ibid., 299.

passions"—i.e. has become codified[306]) has trended toward the "shrinking" of most manifest gesture, some to the point of apparent stillness. Frequent are Sheridan's quips about what such gestures could do if it weren't in such good taste to restrain them: "With respect to the power of the hands," he notes, following Quintilian, Bulwer, and so forth, that many gestures already have "doing" functions (demand, promise, threaten, ask, etc.); "But how much farther their powers might be carried, thro' our neglect of using them, we little know."[307] The principle behind this trajectory is a kind of trussing, or "binding of motions," which Sheridan likens to that of body parts, and blames upon fashion.[308] "Natural" action, he avers, comes out mostly in private, and, rarely, in the course of extemporaneous public speaking. Such narrow public gestures reflect (and materially reinforce) what the country is asking of its constituents: to hold still, keep any necessary outreach close and conservative, and in general, to mind one's own business. Noting that ironically, this curtailment is a consequence of "good breeding," and that perhaps the only place where natural action happens publicly is among those who have not spent time in the school system, he laments that restoring such action more broadly requires making it popular, and would take "revolution."[309] The popularity of print, especially, has taken its toll on what is seen to be the communicative necessity of presence.[310]

As such, he admits the outlook for revolution is bleak. In *British Education*, he leads a hypothetical artist (e.g., a painter or sculptor) who is in search of "impassioned

[306] Ibid., 318.
[307] Sheridan, *Lectures*, 116.
[308] Ibid., 3.
[309] Ibid., 123: Artificial action, and with it disaffecting affection are so prevalent that "restoring a natural manner of delivery, would be bringing about an entire revolution, in its most essential parts."
[310] See e.g. Sheridan, *Lectures* 139, 148.

looks, forcible gesture, and graceful attitudes"[311] that are "warm from life,"[312] through public spaces where he might hope to find them. In the senate house, she might find "excellent discourse…delivered with [the speaker's] hands in his bosom, or if decorated with action…playing with his hat, fumbling in his pockets, settling his periwig." If she goes to the bar, it is to witness "an eloquent piece of pleading with an unmoved composure," the orator "twirling a piece of pack-thread round his fingers" or managing a "snuff-box." Most urgently, for Sheridan draws heavily on the stagnancy of religious discourse to make his case: "As to the pulpit, I believe I need hardly mention that [the artist] would find little or no assistance there, unless it were for pieces of still life."[313]

Tucked away in this small corner of *British Education* is a distinction that Sheridan makes expressly only once in his elocutionary texts, which he marshals as support for the central claim in Book III: that rhetoric is the "common fountain" from which all "liberal arts sprang," and, if restored, would reinvigorate these arts. This distinction sheds light on Sheridan's unusual definition of rhetoric (instantiating what of this part of *British Education* Howell views as a gross misinterpretation of ancient rhetorical principles[314]), as well as what is at stake in the social gesture's survival:

> All arts are accomplished and ended either in a work, or an energy. A work is that whose parts are co-existent, and the perfection of whose essence depends upon their remaining in the same state. An energy is that whose parts exist only in succession, and which hath its very being in transition. Thus a statue and a picture are works…as their parts in that case

[311] Sheridan, *British Education*, 321.
[312] Ibid., 314.
[313] Ibid., 321-22.
[314] See, e.g., Howell, *Eighteenth Century*, 243.

> become co-existent and fixed. But dancing, playing on any instrument, and speaking or reciting, are only energies.[315]

The distinctiveness of action-oratory against the backdrop of the eighteenth-century Neo-Ciceronian trend is pronounced by a quick comparison with Joseph Campbell's "eloquence" in *The Philosophy of Rhetoric* (1776): "In speaking there is always some end proposed, or some effect which the speaker intends to produce on the hearer. The word *eloquence*…denotes 'That art or talent by which the discourse is adapted to its end.'"[316] Campbell's description of the mechanics of eloquence similarly entails calculation and periodic ends, taking leave of the passions as necessary: "a discourse addressed to the understanding," will not "admit an address to the passions, which, as it never fails to disturb the operation of the intellectual faculty, must be regarded by every intelligent hearer as foreign at least."[317] Sheridan says that the movement of one's body and passions is inseparable from others moved in any case. This eloquence is one of middles and ineluctable "delicate touches"[318] contingent on proximity. It "can be known only to [one's] immediate spectators and hearers; and, except such part of them as is impressed…must necessarily perish with himself."[319] Of course, for Campbell, excitement is born of the semantic content—of the bolder figures like prosopopoeia, as opposed to the tones and gestures that form along their pathways; and appeals to passion

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[315] Sheridan, *British Education*, 294.
[316] Joseph Campbell, *The Philosophy of Rhetoric* (London: For W. Strahan, 1776), 23. Note Campbell's footnote for the definition, and the rather curious translation and justification: "'Dicere secundum virtutem orationis. Scientia bene dicendi.' Quintilian. The word *eloquence*, in common conversation, is seldom used in such a comprehensive sense. I have, however, made choice of this definition on a double account: 1st. It exactly corresponds to Tully's idea of a perfect orator; 'Optimus est orator qui dicendo animos audientium et docet, et delectat, et permovet.' 2nd. It is best adapted to the subject of these papers. [Au.]"
[317] Ibid., 24. Line finishes "…if not insidious."
[318] Sheridan, *British Education* 293.
[319] Ibid., 294-95. Note that impressions "sink deeper at every new stroke."

must be deemed and directed, whereas Sheridan emphasizes that the best "distinguishing faculty" for action is "a sensation, not a reflection; a perception, not a judgment."[320] Just as the best artists receive the most strokes fresh from life, presence makes for better arguments because the audience is caught up in the forms that gestures take.[321] Campbell's eloquence, in which body submits to successions of directive, is, by comparison, one of tableaus, of passions hunted and pecked.[322]

To better understand what is at stake in the survival of social gestures, we return to the opportunistic nature of the sensible mark. This opportunism is evident in observable currents of particular public gestures, like those that Sheridan points out among localized groups who spend a lot of time in one another's presence—lawyers and judges and senators (as above), players, religious sects, etc. Among the last, especially, he notes common "species of action," characterized by "certain modes of looks and deportment…which run thro' the different bodies, and make them appear as distinct from the rest of their countrymen."[323] Observing "the countenance, gait, and gesture…one would think that they were all cast in the same mould."[324] Even when some sects "give way" to "wild gestures, proceeding from the fancied operations of the spirit," individuals "generally resemble each other," and are "moved by the spirit in the same manner."[325] In

[320] Sheridan, *Lectures*, 147.
[321] Sheridan, *British Education*, 301.
[322] Sheridan, *Lectures*, 177. Used to describe the process of trying to capture originals from statues, as means to characterize what is happening to imitative arts without orators to furnish imitable, "natural" expressions: "once alive and substantial, now phantoms that have appeared in their similitude amongst us; those chimaras which modern invention has produced…[amount to] shadowy arts, which…leave no impression more than successive landscapes shown by the camera obscura."
[323] Sheridan, *British Education*, 319.
[324] Ibid.
[325] Ibid., 319-20.

a word, this is the infection of action, which even among individuals outside of such collectives, is pervasively described in the manner of bacteriophage:

> Those are generally taken up by chance, and confirmed by habit, and become in time so much a part of man's self, that he uses them involuntarily, and applies them indiscriminately to all sorts of subjects, only with more or less vehemence, according as he himself is more or less actuated.[326]

It is less that you choose your mark (e.g. gesture) than that your mark (e.g. gesture) chooses you. Among the most critical exigencies Sheridan cites for his purpose in the *Lectures* is "the contagion of example," which is "regularly transmitted" between generations and individuals, "and leads us ever after into…the guidance of a false rule."[327] Of propagating strains, Sheridan says, "most public speakers are unknowingly infected. I mean certain peculiarities which prevail, in each of the three different species of delivery, in the pulpit, the senate-house, and the bar, both in phraseology and manner."[328] Each bears "motions, equally unimportant, and insignificant," owing "to imitation of the faults (for faults are easily imitated)" of other group members: "They have been adopted into such general use by each society, that it is hard for any member of those bodies, to avoid catching them."[329]

These vectors spread by simple means: exposure. Simply, as Kames had worried on noting the missing difference of sensation between an "emotion" and a "passion," or the lack of felt impetus to move and the ensuing movement, the gesture "takes" just by

[326] Ibid., 320.
[327] Sheridan, *Lectures*, 14-15. Here he again speaks to artificial reading tones, specifically.
[328] Ibid., 130.
[329] Ibid. "Member" and "bodies" here function in two apt senses.

being perceived enough in real time.[330] This makes the occurrent gesture more dynamic, but also more fragile than Gildon's, which, borrowed by actors from statues "that [actors] would not only have other Thoughts themselves, but raise others in the Audience," requires putting oneself into position for the sensation to take hold (and, of course, "History-Pieces" from which to draw "Figure and Lineaments").[331] That the occasion of presence promotes the spread of certain actions and not others is a frustration to Sheridan—in that the "artificial action, tho' directly opposite to the natural, is established in its room, so that no traces of the latter remain"[332]—but it is also the key selling point of his venture.

6 THE CONTAGION OF EXAMPLE

A Vindication of the Conduct of the Late Manager of the Theatre-Royal (1754), delivered two years before the publication of *British Education* and first traveling *Lectures*, is Sheridan's attempt to exculpate himself from the second of two riots that brought down his theatre (the first was in 1747, and not nearly so thorough). Despite having gone to great lengths to keep audience members at bay—off of the stage and out of the script—it seems that on March 2, 1754, the audience rose against a gesture of sorts made by Sheridan. Months before, *Mahomet* opened the day that newspapers announced that the king dismissed the Irish Parliament amid popular unrest over a money bill.[333] A

[330] From "percipere" or to "seize" / "grasp."
[331] Gildon, *The Life of Mr. Thomas Betterton*, 63. Sheridan says "Every succession taken from an impression must be weaker than the former [that is also Hume]; and the performance of a copier taken from one who was himself a copyist, must be considered as a reflection from a reflection, or an echo from an echo; every successive repetition of which must grow fainter and fainter." (Sheridan, *British Education*, 324)
[332] Sheridan, *British Education*,318.
[333] Sheldon, *Smock-Alley*, 199.

particular character in *Mahomet* had a speech that resonated with popular, "Country Party" sentiment, and the actor, getting raucous applause upon delivery, repeated that speech.[334] A supporter of the "Court Party" (whether or not that detail pertains is disputed among biographers), Sheridan revived this play only once, by popular demand, the night in question, and prompted actors before curtain to be prudent about encoring.[335] When that actor received his raucous applause once more, he fell out of character, and declined, citing "his Compliance would be greatly injurious to him."[336] The audience called for Sheridan. The rest may be surmised from Sheridan's own *Vindication*: "the Gentlemen in the Pit desir'd the Ladies to withdraw, and then proceeded to tear up the Benches, pull down the Wainscoat, and destroy every Thing in the Audience Part of the Theatre. They then mounted the Stage," whereon the curtain was set on fire and extinguished, then shredded, and "All the Scenes within reach were entirely demolish'd."[337] From there the mob went to wardrobe and set production, and then razed the house.[338] Sheridan's

[334] Sheridan charges this actor, Digges, as being "the first Tragedian I ever heard of, who repeated a Speech upon the Encore of an Audience. I am in Hopes it was the Suddenness of the Thing, and want of Time to reflect upon the ill Consequences which might attend it, that led you into it." *A Vindication of the Conduct of the Late Manager of the Theatre-Royal Humbly Address'd to the Publick* (Dublin: 1754), 9.

[335] In *Vindication*, he shares his reasoning: "I know not why new Claims may not be made every Night; I know not why [the audience] may not insist upon Performers doing whatever they please…" (Sheridan, *Vindication*, 8).

[336] Sheldon, *Smock-Alley*, 204. Dates, order of events as well as this quote taken from Benjamin Victor's *The History of the Theatres of London and Dublin, From the Year 1730 to the Present Time* (London:1761), 167.

[337] Sheridan, *Vindication*, 10.

[338] Ibid. "…others drew the large Grate in the Box-room from its Place into the Floor, and heaping the Benches and Wainscot upon the Fire, would soon have consumed the House, and probably that whole quarter of the Town, as the Building stand so close there, had not this…rouz'd fix of the Servants belonging to the Theatre, to a desperate Courage…[they] extinguish'd the Flames, barricaded the doors, and afterwards dispers'd the Mob, by firing out of the Windows upon them. During this whole Transaction, which lasted from Eight at Night, till two in the Morning, there was no Peace Officer to be found in the City of *Dublin*, tho' Numbers were in Quest of them, and tho' the Town Major was several Hours traversing the whole town in search of one" (ibid).

Vindication blames the incident on a "Party Stroke." Such a stroke occurs where "in order to Please Part of that Publick, [an actor] should by any unusual Emphasis, Gesture, or significant Look, mark out a Passage in his Part (which at another Juncture he would have passed by lightly)" for the party.[339] This, he suggests, happened explicitly on *Mahomet*'s opening night, but also when the actor fell out of his part to apologize, implicating Sheridan. In both cases, the stroke reaches around the words to effect the wink, and thus, rest. One who casts such a stroke, Sheridan calls "an Incendiary" (literally, he thinks), "one who throws the Brand of Discord amongst [the Publick]."[340] Note "brand" here suggests both an identifying mark and a torch.

An Appeal to the Public: Containing Account of the Rise, Progress, and Establishment of the First Regular Theatre, in Dublin: With the Causes of its Decline and Ruin (1758) is delivered two years after the publication of *British Education*, and four years after the incident it revisits. Ostensibly a last remonstrance, angled at acquiring support for his floundering theatre (in the wake of both the riot and competition across town), here, Sheridan attaches to the party stroke not only impetus for his impending departure from the stage[341], but also passion-at-large, which of course plays a role in any stroke's effect, but also contributes to its formation. This gives us one last window to

[339] Ibid., 4.
[340] Ibid.
[341] Note: this is quite a different explanation of his transition than he gives to audiences at his lectures on elocution: "As the Date of Mr. *Sheridan*'s Theatrical Life, in his Capacity of an Actor, is drawing towards a Period, before he makes his final Exit…he humbly begs leave to return the Public his sincere Thanks for their constant kind Acceptance of his poor Endeavors to please, but more particularly for their uncommon Humanity shewn to him…overloaded with Business, surrounded with Difficulties, persecuted by the most unrelenting Malice, and struggling with a most dispiriting Disorder. Under these weighty Pressures was he often obliged to appear before them in Characters that required a vacant and unruffled Mind, a perfect State of Health, and an even flow of Spirits. They saw him exerting himself as much as it was possible for a Man so circumstanced to do…" Thomas Sheridan, *An Appeal to the Public: Containing an Account of the Rise, Progress, and Establishment of the First Regular Theatre in Dublin: With the Causes of its Decline and Ruin*, 6th ed. (Dublin: by J. Hoey, 1771), 61-2.

what Sheridan drives at with his call to "social passions." Regarding letter writing campaigns and the local vibe after the *first* riot (touched off by a similar spark), he notes "many who were then swayed by Passion, Prejudice, and Party Zeal," were "thus blinded" from hearing any side of the story but their own. In his written replies, Sheridan "[had] studiously avoided even touching upon Points that might inflame Minds already but too warm"; worried his account would "blow up the Fire of Discord, which already rages but too violently in this unhappy Country."[342] But once "Times of Party" died down, the "Gentlemen" came around: "They have since been more calm, their Eyes have been opened. They have tried by every…Act to make him Amends."[343]

Sheridan's notion of "social passions" bears substance of seventeenth- and early-eighteenth-century natural philosophy, to be sure. Hume in *A Treatise of Human Nature* (1739) famously describes communicable passions, saying, "The passions are so contagious, that they pass with the greatest facility from one person to another, and produce correspondent movements in all human breasts"[344]—such that, as Gross surmises, one's passions (and reasons) are never quite at one's disposal.[345] In *An Essay on the Nature and Conduct of the Passions and Affections* (1728), Francis Hutcheson calls for nourishing "*publick Affections*" by building up a resistance to unproductive passions.[346] He contravenes the assumption that "*kind generous Affections*" cannot be cultivated, "that there are no such Affections in Nature, and that all Pretence to them was only *Dissimulation*"; in fact, he notes, our *"moral Actions* and *Affections* may be in good

[342] Sheridan, *Appeal*, 27. That is a quote from *Vindication*.
[343] Ibid., 28.
[344] David Hume, *A Treatise of Human Nature*, 1740, ed. L.A. Selby-Bigge (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1888), 605.
[345] Gross, *The Secret History of Emotion,* 113-156.
[346] Francis Hutchison, *An Essay on the Nature and Conduct of the Passions and Affections*. *With Illustrations on the Moral Sense* (London: Printed by J. Darby and T. Browne, 1727), 53.

order, when our Opinions are quite wrong about them."[347] Through a strict regimen of Nature and will, we can discern "that just *Balance* and *Oeconomy*" of passions (e.g. anger and joy) "which would constitute the most happy State of each Person, and promote the greatest Good in the whole."[348] Where Sheridan extends these particulars is, of course, to identify body language (or specific sensible marks) with the vectors along which social passions compete and traverse, and these marks' suggestibility as an opportunity to run interference in that contest. (He also identifies a particular market for social passions.) The operative principle here suggests Hume's notion of the relationship between social passions and gestures, wherein "When I see the *effects* of passion in the voice and gesture of any person, my mind immediately passes…into their causes, and forms such a lively idea of the passion, as is presently converted into the passion itself."[349] Although Hume's "idea" is "the faint images of [sensations, passions and emotions] in thinking and reasoning,"[350] compassion no less appears to transmit gesturally, upon example: the passion evoked by imagining a floundering ship, Hume compares to seeing that ship flounder on the horizon, to seeing the terror in the faces of those aboard. In the last, "No man…[can] withstand the motions of the tenderest compassion."[351] Hutcheson skirts the particulars of passionate motion, but observes that motions affect temperaments, which "either make Men prone to any Passion, or are brought upon us by the long Continuance, or frequent Returns of it"; for example,

> after strong *friendly Passions*…some considerable *Injuries* or *Losses*, which at other times would have affected us very much, shall be

[347] Hutcheson, *Nature and Conduct*, iii, vii, viii.
[348] Ibid., 56.
[349] Hume, *Treatise*, 576.
[350] Ibid., 1.
[351] Ibid., 594.

> overlooked, or meekly received, or at most but slightly resented; perhaps because our Bodies are not fit easily to receive these *Motions* which are constituted the Occasion of the uneasy Sensations of Anger.[352]

He implies that "the Occasion…of these *Dispositions*" are the motions, themselves.[353]

According to Sheridan, the state of social passions (and passions of the state) is observable in landscapes of sensible marks. As such, it may be pronounced, tinkered with, and redirected. This is Sheridan's intervention as well as business plan. In Book III of *British Education*, he makes clear that by a) restoring oratory to the core of public education, he means to b) identify and provide imitable actions in order to c) motivate certain social passions to gain strongholds among populations through which the actions thread. (Reinvigorating the "imitative arts" happens somewhere between b) and c), and is in any case a side effect to gestures flourishing among living bodies.) In emphasizing the asocial consequence of artificial action—which pervades public expression—Sheridan not only tantalizes the product (the "right" natural action), and implicates *everyone* (including "gentlemen") as potential clientele, but he also appeals to potential beneficiaries.[354] Sheridan notes that while other countries supplant their natural actions

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[352] Hutcheson, *Nature and Conduct*, 56, 57.

[353] Ibid., 57. Sheridan suggests buy-in to this particular idea by emphasizing that his fitness (both his health and ability to run the theatre) has suffered in the course of having to perform such diverse characters night after night (Sheridan, *Appeal*, 62, e.g.).

[354] *British Education* opens with an address to the Earl of Chesterfield (who "first made me think [this] scheme possible" and "convinced me that the design was right") by way of "throwing an opportunity in [Chesterfield's] way of doing a great public good" through patronage (Sheridan, *British Education*, xii, xviii). Bacon notes Hitchcock's account in *An Historical View of the Irish Stage*, Volume I (Dublin, 1788 [163]), which says Chesterfield told Sheridan before he left Dublin, "'Never let the thoughts of your oratorical institution go out of your mind.' Yet, a few years afterwards when Mr. Sheridan waited upon him in London to fulfill his promise, that celebrated patron…bountifully presented him with a *guinea*, as his contribution." The revised edition (1769) omits this dedication in favor of the generic but hopeful: "If there be in England one man of consequence who has understanding enough to comprehend the following Work, and who has virtue and spirit enough to exert his best endeavors to carry into execution the Plan of

increasingly, among the English, "who have more liberty than any other people," all is not lost: one finds—when gestures are not truncated, as is the fashion—"almost as many species of action as there are individuals in the country."[355] Saying plainly in the subtext, here and elsewhere, that he who holds the public gestures (/dictates toward what custom trends) is powerful indeed, Sheridan's surface claim is simply that constructive ("virtuous") actions have only to be recovered and cultivated in order that the many act as one: "Such an intercourse, frequently repeated, tends to eradicate all selfish passions, and to bring forward and invigorate all the fine emotions of benevolence" as well as "duty."[356] Here is his promise of that:

> To effect [eloquence] must be the utmost effort, of the most improved state of human nature…every muscle, every nerve is exerted; not a feature, not a limb, but speaks. The organs of the body, attuned to the energies of the mind, thro' the kindred organs of the hearers, instantaneously, and as it were with an electrical spirit, vibrate those energies from soul to soul! Notwithstanding the diversity of minds in such a multitude, by the lightening of eloquence, they are melted into one mass; the whole assembly actuated in one and the same way, become as it were one man, have but one voice.[357]

This passage gets picked up with some frequency as demonstrative of Sheridan's outlandish claims for delivery (or of the Elocutionary Movement's overarching witchcraft). But the baseline principle is not unlike some of the things coming out

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Education founded upon this Work…the author will esteem himself happy to have an opportunity of prefixing such a name to a future edition" (Bacon, *Thomas Sheridan*, 8-9).

[355] Sheridan, *British Education*, 319.

[356] Sheridan, *Lectures*, 183.

[357] Ibid., 188.

contemporarily about mirror neurons and kinesthesia, or what makes e.g. dance, theatre, and other performing arts so viscerally stirring. Sheridan thinks that there is something possessive in the experience of witness (both for the dancer and audience, speaker and auditors). That in the orator, "not a feature, not a limb, but speaks" is less hyperbolic here than Ulman suggests; elsewhere, Sheridan notes that it is "when [the orator's] *silence* permits them to give way to the fullness of their hearts" that delight is "reflected from eye to eye" and "poured out from breast to breast," emphasizing the touch of action, and that the sensation of another's action is communicable.[358]

Emboldening his case, he emphasizes that there is no single living paragon of gesture to imitate.[359] He seems, at times, almost to call for a savior by way of calling all gestures to rise up and try (and by way of that, to implicate himself as savior of these particular gestures). If properly trained, rhetors could resuscitate the imitative arts and facilitate social reform simply by hosting those most profitable, and affording them to others through public performance. Theorists of delivery before him, he suggests, have been operating by the wrong metaphors regarding such rhetorical gestures (this is important, because the ground these metaphors gain affects the way the gestures themselves are treated)—stocks, collections, deployments, signification, prescriptions,

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[358] E.g. Sandra and Matthew Blakeslee's *The Body Has a Mind of Its Own: How Body Maps in Your Brain Help you Do (Almost) Everything Better* (New York: Random House, 2008). Following others, they claim "your brain annexes this space [around your body] to your limbs and body, clothing you in it like an extended, ghostly skin…Your self does not end where your flesh ends, but suffuses and blends with the world, including other bodies" (ibid 3).

[359] The closest Sheridan comes to proffering a model is that of the Vice Chancellor at Oxford ("a man of a speculative turn…of that awkward bashfulness, which is usually the attendant of those, who have much commerce with books, and little with the world") who had to give a speech on behalf of the new Chancellor. Sheridan notes that those who knew this man "did not expect that he would acquit himself well"; but "His tones were such, as result from a glad heart; his eyes sparkled with pleasure, and his whole countenance and gesture were in exact union…it was just, it was forcible, it moved everyone." Thus he "excited bursts of universal applause…from hearts, that felt themselves agitated, by a participation of kindred feelings, resulting from his manner, independent of his matter" (Sheridan, *Lectures*, 128-29).

etc. Sheridan's gesture is less about the body of one man (containment) than the motions themselves (contaminant)—less about the landing points than the flux: subsistence, competition, and lifespan.

7 WALKER'S EXERCISE OF ARMS

Even some of Sheridan's critics say it was a shame that subsequent elocutionists reverted to prescribing body language for delivery, admitting the merit of Sheridan's recommendation that people move with inclination, rather than intention.[360] But this return to the fixed gesture comes quickly—albeit a gesture often more full-bodied, and sometimes less tethered to denotation than had been some of Bulwer's, e.g. (which is probably an effect that Sheridan has on subsequent elocutionists). One such returner, formerly an actor both at Drury Lane in London and Crow Street in Dublin,[361] is John Walker (1732-1807), whose *Elements of Elocution* (1781) answers what was surely clamor for formulae as to how to acquire the power of elocution. That Walker takes issue with Sheridan's course for loosing the sensible mark, as well as the utility of this for the English, is evident at the beginning of the "Gesture" chapter: "The common feelings of nature, with the signs that express them, undergo a kind of modification, which is suitable

[360] Howell, for example, offers Sheridan this compromised praise; noting those elocutionists who followed him "did not value Sheridan's notion that perfection could be achieved without teachers if a person followed his own manner and like Betterton sought only to be in earnest. They valued instead his idea that rules could be devised to enable ordained teachers to instruct other teachers in the art of arousing passions by a system of fixed tones and gestures…Systems of fixed tones and gestures became the bane of the elocutionary movement, and, as they were often accompanied by mysticism and quackery, they increasingly attracted the poseurs and the charlatans into the ranks of the teachers of oratorical delivery." (Howell, *Eighteenth Century*, 242-43).

[361] At Drury Lane, David Garrick was then-stage manager; at Crow Street—which had been established as the rival theatre to Sheridan's at Smock Alley—Spranger Barry (Howell, *Eighteenth Century*, 248; Sheldon, *Smock-Alley*, 255-283).

to the taste and genius of every nation."[362] Whether the local action is "too scanty" is not the question; "those who would succeed as English orators must speak to English taste."[363] The operative metaphor for Walker's gesture (as well as to whom these gestures are entitled) is here, in the justification: "as a general must learn the modern exercise of arms to command modern armies, and not the discipline and weapons of the ancients."[364]

The arms are drawn:

> The right hand, when in action, ought to rise extending from the side, that is, in a direction from left to right; and then be propelled forwards, with the fingers open, and easily and differently curved: the arm should move chiefly from the elbow, the hand seldom be raised higher than the shoulder, and when it has described its object, or enforced its emphasis, ought to drop lifeless down to the side, ready to commence action afresh.[365]

Through sample sentences, he links this motion to "the emphatical word" in so-called "beating time to the emphasis" (this can be contrasted with Sheridan's observation that the tongue's own emphasis improves when an actor gets caught in the passion of a dramatic scene[366]). Likewise, the diagram in Figure 4 colors Sheridan's critique of the artificial tone.

As Sheridan aims to keep the correspondence between sentences and tones slippery in order to preserve their gut feeling, Walker means to make them stick in the

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[362] Walker, *Elements*, 278.
[363] Ibid., 278.
[364] Ibid.
[365] Ibid., 280.
[366] Ibid., Sheridan *Lectures* 73: "… the passion which they represented took full possession of them…"

name of his eloquence, which is correctness—that is, to "have recourse to principles more permanent and systematical."[367] (For this, too, is good business.) Finally, both *Elements* and *The Academic Speaker* (1797) refutes Sheridan's admonishments against taming gestures. Apparently remembering his audience in *Elements*—which is distinctly more English than British, more tasteful than ubiquitous[368]—Walker offers the caveat that this regimen works especially well for youth; to those whose habits are firmly entrenched, "it may be proposed to make use of *no more action than they can help*."[369] This is the contradiction in Walker's depiction of the work of action. He needs to affirm strictures on gesture to enfold what is English with his audience (i.e. because it is tasteful, very little gesture works quite well), but nevertheless to create the demand for his own system (but more "right" gestures is better).

Meanwhile, in a precipitous reversal, citing Edmund Burke, Aaron Hill, and James Burgh (all English), Walker throws down his chips on seeming to feel something (that is, enacting a posture or a tone) precisely in order to feel it. Burke, he cites, connects "the internal feeling of a passion, and the external expression of it," such that "we cannot put ourselves in the posture or attitude of any passion, without communicating a certain degree of the passion itself to the mind."[370] With Sheridan, he offers that "certain sounds naturally produce certain bodily agitations," but then that upon adopting a prescribed

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[367] Ibid., 3.
[368] Walker's *Elements* is dedicated "To Dr. Samuel Johnson, in acknowledgment of the assistance gained from his labours, the pleasure and improvement derived from his conversation, and the obligation conferred by his friendship and attention." (Walker, *Elements*, v). Johnson was an explicit critic ("rival" is Bacon's word) of Sheridan's. Boswell recounts Johnson saying, "'I ask [Sheridan] a plain question, "What do you mean to teach?" Besides, Sir, what influence can Mr. Sheridan have upon the language of this great country, by his narrow exertions? Sir, it is burning a farthing candle at Dover, to shew light at Calais'" (Bacon, *Thomas Sheridan*, 47).
[369] Walker, *Elements*, 281. Emphasis added.
[370] Ibid., 286.

tone, the speaker "is wrought upon by the sound he creates; and, though active at the beginning, at length becomes passive, by the sound of his own voice on himself."[371] (Walker devotes to this possibility *The Melody of Speaking* (1787), in which he calls for "singing tones" and speech scores).[372] Ultimately, he observes "the necessity of studying and imitating these tones, looks and gestures…for by the imitation of the passion, we meet it, as it were, half way."[373]

Rather than from statues, Walker calls for borrowing postures from living forms. First, most immediately, those of teachers: "The Teacher, after placing the Pupil in the position, Plate I.," is "to stand at some distance exactly opposite to him in the same position," and then "while the pupil is speaking, to show him, by example, the action he is to make use of." The student "will soon catch the method."[374] Second, as Sheridan suggested in *Oration*, Walker encourages teachers to use *actors* as living models for delivery in certain respects,[375] for most pupils "must be roused by something strong and excessive, or they will never rise even to mediocrity."[376] He recommends staging plays (in addition to orations, etc.) in schools, not only because it trains one to summon certain

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[371] Ibid.
[372] John Walker, *The Melody of Speaking Delineated; Or, Elocution Taught Like Music, By Visible Signs, Adapted to the Tones, Inflexions, and Variations of the Voice in Reading and Speaking; with Directions for Modulation, and Expressing the Passions* (London: Printed for author, and sold by G. G. J. et al., 1787), 8.
[373] Walker, *Elements*, 286.
[374] John Walker, *The Academic Speaker; Or, a Selection of Parliamentary Debates, Orations, Odes, Scenes, and Speeches, From the Best Writers, Proper to Be Read and Recited by Youth at School. To Which are Prefixed, Elements of Gesture; or, Plain and Easy Directions for Keeping the Body in a Graceful Position, and Acquiring a Simple and Unaffected Style of Action* (London: for JW, sold by G. G. et al., 1797), vii.
[375] However, Sheridan was being more literal when he proposed an Academy centered on the theatre that would use actual actors to model motions and scenes; Walker recommends playing, but notes that it is not the stuff of actors that he seeks: "It is a plain, open, distinct, and forcible pronunciation, which school boys should aim at; and not that quick transition from one passion to another, that archness of look and that *jeu de theatre*…at which actors themselves can scarcely arrive at" (Ibid., ix).
[376] Ibid., x.

passions, but also because it teaches students to accord their postures and gestures with those of other players and the audience, as well as with the overarching scene. While this is remarkable especially in the sense that most elocutionists who recommend habituating particular gestures depict the practitioner solely in isolation, one cannot miss the emergence of Gildon's freeze frame: "the two personages who speak should form a sort of picture," and, "supposing the stage or platform where they stand to be a quadrangle, each speaker should respectively face that corner of it next to the audience," as these postures are "absolutely necessary to form any thing like a picturesque grouping of objects."[377]

In this sense, the variable that Walker's formula lacks is that for the quality of transition in the ideal that Sheridan describes (indeed, an ideal), or of flow, which did become spoken for with the resurgence of interest in the full-bodied/statue imitation that came with certain threads of 19th-century Delsartism. Genevieve Stebbins, for example, taught "statue posing" and "tableaux drills" in her course on expression. Stebbins, who trained with Delsarte, says that when she learned Delsarte "had devoted many years to the study of antique statuary," she then spent months at the Louvre, "making notes."[378] Ruyter explains that Stebbins' ensuing posing work was distinctive for two reasons: "a focus on the general rather than particular qualities in the choice of subjects to be depicted and the use of designed, motional transitions between poses."[379] Her performance of these transitions, Ruyter says, leads one reviewer to remark "[I]t is

[377] Ibid., xi.
[378] Nancy Lee Chalfa Ruyter, *The Cultivation of Body and Mind in Nineteenth-Century American Delsartism* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1999), 49.
[379] Ibid., 116.

impossible to tell where one line ends or the next one begins."[380] The instruction in Stebbins' *Delsarte System of Expression* (1885) hones in on the centrality of transition to acquiring any "pose":

> the motion must be magnetic, i.e., slow, rhythmic, and as unaffected as the subtle evolution of a serpent…one form must gradually melt into the other by the following rules: a) Regarding each statue as an attitude expression an impression, the rules of transition of attitude and gesture should be carefully observed, such as the arm moving in an opposite direction to the pointing of the hand; (b) harmonious balancing of arm to arm; (c) prepatory movement in opposite direction to intended attitude; (d) and, finally, rhythm of movement in harmony with character of statue or emotion depicted.[381]

To gain such fluidity, Stebbins notes, "Excitement or passion tends to expand gesture" while "Thought or reflection tends to contract gesture"; and with all exercise, "much of your practice will cling to you, without conscious thought."[382] Student postures that reflect "the tendency of thought to contract the body" call for intervention—an expanded vocabulary—lest "Inspiration may be yours without bodily power to express."[383] This is Sheridinian sentiment, its relevance to orators-in-training perhaps best captured by Stebbins' lead-in to "decomposing exercises":

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[380] Ibid., 118.
[381] Ibid.
[382] Genevieve Stebbins, *Delsarte System of Dramatic Expression* (New York: Edgar S. Werner, 1886), 168, 79.
[383] Ibid., 169, 79. Also: "trying to suppress the passion, contracts the form gradually. Those thermometers of passion, the nostrils and the upper lids, will indicate the passion. The mouth will contract, so will the hands and whole body. This will go on until…the sudden and vehement expansion of the gesture" (ibid 169).

I withdraw my will-power from fingers, then hand. Touch it. Do not shudder. Do you feel as if a dead thing had struck your living palm? Now I will show you the same phenomenon with forearm, entire arm, waist, spine, hips, knees, ankles, toes, jaw, eyelids. Now I fall. Give me your hand and help me to rise. I did not mean to startle you so…I simply withdrew my vital force into the reservoir at the base of my brain.[384]

[384] Ibid., 11.

CHAPTER THREE:

COMMUNICATION BY ELECTRIFICATION (JOSEPH PRIESTLEY'S RHETORICAL AFFINITY)

1 THE HANGING BOY

In 1706, through a concatenation of accidents, Francis Haukesbee (1660-1713) stumbles from a variation on Boyle's air pump, to what would become for electricians in mid-18th century Britain[385] means by which to replicate "the operations…of God of nature himself"[386] through friction: the electric machine.[387] To a basic air pump, Haukesbee appends a wooden fixture, comprising a horizontal wheel crank and stepladder.[388] The crank turns a stopcock plugging the pump's glass globe, producing eerie light and friction enough to summon small objects and cause them to behave strangely. An electrified feather, for example, Haukesbee describes as "ascending and descending," "repell'd," "thrown," "return'd," and "suspended" by confounding

[385] Late eighteenth century marks the leap to quantifying electricity rather than approaching its phenomena qualitatively (Heilbron, *Electricity*, 1-8); also Patricia Fara, *An Entertainment for Angels: Electricity in the Englightenment* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002), 133-170. The shift happens about the same time that Priestley publishes the second edition of *The History and Present State of Electricity* (1775).

[386] Joseph Priestley, *The History and Present State of Electricity, with Original Experiments*, 2nd ed. (London: Printed for J. Dodsley in Pall-Mall, 1779), x.

[387] Haukesbee's electric machine stems from and shares operative principle with the modest version developed by Otto Von Guericke in 1670's Germany. Guericke mounted a small glass globe filled with sulpher onto a wooden rod, which gathered friction from a baseboard when turned. Guericke is typically credited with discovering the "electric light" produced by static electricity (Heilbron, *Electricity*, 213-218; see also Priestley, *History*, 8-11).

[388] The "prototype" later developed by Haukesbee streamlines the version described here. [Image of prototype here.] The figures at left depict configurations of the threads, which lead to Haukesbee's conjectures about effluvium (Heilbron, *Electricity*, 232).

"effluvia."[389] To better understand this efflux that caused electrics (as Priestley put it) to "attract all kinds of bodies promiscuously, whether electric or not"—Haukesbee designs a wooden U that suspends several pieces of thread at regular intervals.[390] When the U is brought near "an excited globe or cylinder," the threads point together at the center of the globe, and hold their poses for about four minutes after the globe ceased rotating.[391] No matter if the U is held above or below the globe, horizontally or vertically. Haukesbee next observes "that the threads pointing towards the center of the globe were attracted and repelled by a finger presented to them"; and "if the finger, or any other body, was brought very near the threads, they would be attracted; but that if it were brought to the distance of about an inch, they would be repelled."[392]

Effluvia, as Priestley narrates it, emulate rhetoric in a particular sense: it describes force between bodies, succeeds and fails, is manipulable, and *bodily but not essential or fixed to particular bodies*. Understanding effluvia—the electricity's "reach"—was critical for piecing together the puzzle of why some bodies connect, and others do not.[393] Before Haukesbee, electricity was an unpredictable, innate property contained in certain bodies. Transmittance, occasioned by the body's own inclination, happened by blow. Effluvia were one-way affairs, tantamount to tentacles wrangling other bodies in.[394] What Haukesbee finds, rather, is that the effluvia emanating from the machine are more

[389] Francis Haukesbee, *Course of Mechanical, Optical and Pneumatical Experiments, to Be Performed by F.H., and the Explanatory Lectures Read by William Whiston* (London: 1714), 54-5, 67, 74-5, 143, 154-5. See also Heilbron, *Electricity*, 237.
[390] Priestley, *History*, 6.
[391] Ibid., 16.
[392] Ibid.
[393] This question, according to Priestley, should interest doctors, theologians, judges and laypeople as much as natural philosophers.
[394] William Gilbert (1544-160) says effluvia "lay hold of the bodies with which they unite, enfold them, as it were, in their arms, and bring them into union with the electrics." Duane Henry Du Bose Roller, *The De Magnete of William Gilbert* (Amsterdam: 1959), 95.

complex than that picture suggests—effluvia that "stand in continuous, stiff, glass-piercing chains," unbroken by prodding fingers and blown breath.[395] The threads' behavior disrupts the going understanding of electrical matter and its relationship to bodies, and sets the stage for the explosion of experiments that follow Haukesbee's, to and including Priestley's own. Sir Isaac Newton (1642-1727), a fan of Haukesbee's, describes the force between bodies in Haukesbee's effluvial terms in this query for the revised *Opticks* (1717): "Do not all bodies therefore abound with a very subtile, but active, potent, electric spirit by which light is emitted, refracted, and reflected, electric attractions and fugations are performed, and the small particles of bodies cohere when contiguous, agitate one another at small distances, and regulate almost all their motions amongst themselves?"[396] Not surprisingly given his devotion to associationism, Joseph Priestley (1733-1804) lingers on "queries annexed to [Newton's] treatise on optics" that connect "electric bodies" with "elastic fluid," whose "emission was performed by the vibratory motions of the parts of the excited bodies."[397]

Priestley's theories of electric communication, commutation, and attraction—which he lays out through this narrative of the history of electricity, his own electrical experiments, and later, *Heads of Lectures on Experimental Philosophy* (1794)—more than inform Priestley's rhetorical theory; I argue that they comprise it. The move to connect electricity with forces of the human body sparks the conspicuous experiments of Stephen Gray (1666-1736), and is thus of particular interest to Priestley. Gray's notice of effluvial paths to and through the human body ground Priestley's theoretical

[395] Heilbron, *Electricity*, 233, Priestley, *History*, 16-7.
[396] J.E. McGuire, "Force, Active Principles and Newton's Invisible Realm," *Ambix* 15 (1968): 154-208. See also Heilbron, *Electricity*, 239-41. Fara suggests that Newton is responsible for Haukesbee's bid for fellowship in the Royal Society (*Angels*, 38-41).
[397] Priestley, *History*, 14.

interventions in both a history of electricity (which is disputed) and of rhetoric (which is not).

Briefly, Gray's insight begins with a feather. Tethered to a stick and dangled by the machine's glass tube, then fetched back, the feather acquires cling, "as if there had been some electricity communicated to the stick, or to the feather."[398] Wondering whether this cling would come over the feather simply by running it through his fingers, Gray finds "the small downy fibres of the feather being attracted by his finger, when held near it; and sometimes the upper part of the feather with its stems would be attracted also."[399] The clingy feather sheds light on the electric property of human bodies, but it also says something new about the incentive by which electricity moves. The electric tube touches off a flow of effluvia from the feather, Gray says, "as if there had been some Electricity communicated"—not awakened, as had been thought—"to the Stick or Feather," allowing it to float to and cling to other bodies.[400] The feather commuted an "attractive virtue."[401] To test, Gray electrifies a cork, and then fishes it around; he electrifies small objects via pieces of packwire (at one point he "actually conveyed the electric virtue seven hundred and sixty five feet"[402]); he electrifies maps and table cloths, seeing "how large surfaces might be impregnated with the electric effluvia"; finally, he

[398] Ibid., 26.
[399] Ibid.
[400] Stephen Gray, "Experiments and Observations Upon the Light that is Produced By Communicating Electrical Attraction to Animate or Inanimate Bodies," *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society*, 39 (1735-6): 104.
[401] Priestley, *History*, 53. Gray suspects that "as a tube communicated its light to various bodies when it was rubbed in the dark, it might possibly, at the same time, communicate an electricity to them" (ibid., 27).
[402] Ibid., 31.

makes the "electric virtue" jump between surfaces without contact—being "near" the excited tube becomes "sufficient."[403]

In each experiment where the virtue has to jump, Grey "always observed, that the attraction was strongest at the place which was most remote from the tube."[404] A hand rubs the globe of an electric machine. Gray notices that the string of light appears to be cone-shaped, "with its vertex at the finger"—and not the tube—suggesting that the light and thus the charge follow from the hand and not the machine.[405] The feather-tube's point of pull is the feather. Complement matters (Gray): "As all bodies emit so they receive part of the effluvia of all other bodies that environ them…the attraction [being] made according to the current of these effluvia."[406] Coursing yards of thread and feet of air, effluvia do not lead the charge so much as follow the pathway by which the electric communicates. These conclusions are particularly stirring in view of Gray's infamous, latter experiments on "hanging" boys.

> April the 8th. 1730, Mr. Grey suspended a boy on hair lines in a horizontal position, just as all electricians had, before, been used to suspend their hempen lines of communication, and their wooden rods; then, bringing the excited tube near his feet, he found that the leaf brass was attracted by his

[403] Ibid., 26-32.
[404] Ibid., 32. Some of these experiments are co-facilitated by Gray's colleague, Granville Wheeler (1703-1770).
[405] Heilbron, *Electricity* 235.
[406] Edmund Taylor Whittaker, *A History of the Theories of Aether and Electricity: From the Age of Descartes to the Close of the Nineteenth Century*, 1910 (London: Longmans, 1951), 279-80.

> head with much vigor, so as to rise to the height of eight, and sometimes ten inches.[407]

These experiments—which eventually include multiple subjects connected by thread, or touch, and elaborate configurations of held rods—ask how "*animal bodies*" propagate, diminish, or communicate electric virtue across distances (a line of inquiry that began at the feather winding through Gray's fingers).[408] Gray becomes fascinated and perplexed by body parts whose virtue seems more communicable than others—hands, head, feet—and the trajectory through the body that effluvia take. Gray's best gander, with Priestley's paraphrase: "By [these experiments], says he, we see, that animals receive a greater quantity of electric fluid than the other bodies; and that it may be conveyed from them several ways at the same time, to considerable distances."[409] Priestley dismisses Grey as mistaking moisture for animal per se, but acknowledges nonetheless the animal propensity to conduct—a propensity connected with the latent persuasive potential inherent in all bodies.

2 THE FALLING MAN

In Priestley's *A Course of Lectures on Oratory and Criticism*, the canons of memory and delivery are termed "elocution," but have been pared out of the treatise in favor of invention, arrangement, and—consuming a full half of the treatise—style. Priestley acknowledges this lack, which occurs in part because at Warrington Academy, where he instructs, elocution is taught as a performing art in a distinct set of lectures

[407] Priestley, *History*, 34. Continues, "When the leaf brass was put under his feet, and the tube brought near his head, the attraction was small; and when the leaf brass was brought under his head, and the tube held just over it, there was no attraction at all" (ibid.).
[408] Ibid., 34-42.
[409] Ibid., 35.

wherein "great pains were taken to form the pupils to a habit of just and graceful delivery."[410] Anticipating critics, Priestley also suggests that a fair amount of this content does not (of course) lend itself well to transcription.[411] The obvious snippets of Priestley's view on elocution that do exist make way for interpretations like those of Bevilacqua and Murphy (editors to the 1965 edition), and Schofield, Gibbs, and other biographers—that is, Priestley has a dim concern about it, but offers nothing new, nor anything to set him apart from predecessors and late eighteenth-century rhetoricians. Priestley acknowledges, for example, that delivery matters—that "both our minds and bodies are equally impatient in a state of rest and inactivity. Hence we are constantly impelled to exert ourselves with vigor in the station in which we are placed; and we can never be happy, and enjoy our being, unless we fulfill the great ends of it."[412] Priestley's delivery is imitation-centric. He calls for "*graceful earnestness*" in preaching, and for "words and gestures…unmixed with any appearance of *art*"—even if that means wittingly stopping mid-sentence, retracting one's gesture, and doing something abruptly different for the sake of "attracting" and "engaging" attention.[413] Bevilacqua and Murphy call Priestley a "naturalist," his treatment of delivery "incidental."[414] Schofield observes that Priestley's elocution is mostly derivative of John Ward's.[415]

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[410] Joseph Priestley, *A Course of Lectures on Oratory and Criticism*, 1777, eds. Vincent M. Bevilacqua and Richard Murphy (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1965), iv.
[411] Priestley might also have neglected this discussion because he was a notoriously poor public speaker; biographers suggest that Priestley could not find a regular preaching gig early in his career as a result of possible stuttering and otherwise lackluster delivery.
[412] Ibid., 138.
[413] Ibid., 267, 111, 85.
[414] Ibid., xlix. See also E. W. Gibbs, *Joseph Priestley: Revolutions of the Eighteenth Century* (New York: Doubleday & Company, Inc. 1967), 100-01.
[415] Robert E. Schofield, *The Enlightenment of Joseph Priestley: A Study of His Life and Work from 1733 to 1773* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1997), 108-09.

Priestley's rhetorical gesture, I argue, is captured in less obvious places. One such place is an odd speculation in Lecture 17, "Of the Pleasures of Imagination in General," in the context of a discussion on storytelling. Priestley argues that elocutionary address is particularly effective for persuasion because of its ability to not only transmit to but *transmute* a rhetor's arguments within his audience. This Lecture follows that on "the stronger *passions* and emotions" (described in the next section) that are useful for "those *forms of address* which are peculiarly adapted to gain *assent*"[416] The "finer feelings" here are more like Kames' category of emotion (see Chapter 2) that loosely correspond to raw sensation, or possibly, to affect. They require "inlets" to the body, and "no sensible interventions of the corporeal organs by which they are transmitted."[417] This notion of transmittance is critical, and distinguishes Priestley's views from those of Kames, "whose proliferation of innate causes for rhetorical effects is pre-eminent" even among the Scottish common-sense school.[418] Upon such transmittance, rather,

> the mind perceives, and is conscious of thing, but the ideas that are present to it, it must, as it were, *conform* [sic] itself to them; and even the idea it hath of its own extent, (if we may use that expression) must enlarge or contract with its field of view. By this means also, a person, for the time, enters into, adopts, and is actuated by, the sentiments that are presented to his mind.[419]

Priestley then transcribes a couple of gestural transactions. These gestures are not the Bulwerian "call to attention" or ironic wink of Ward's. These gestures look more like

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[416] Priestley, *Course*, 125.
[417] Ibid.
[418] Ibid., xxvi-vii. Bevilaqua and Murphy argue that Priestley "drew the major portion of rhetorical and critical theory" from Kames and Gerard, "whose basic view of man if not of rhetoric was repugnant to him" (ibid.).
[419] Ibid., 126-27.

those of Nollet's electrified courtesans. In the first, a person startles backward, adopting the posture of a near fall, while stood firmly on the ground. In the second, a person takes on the would-be trajectory of a bowling ball, "writhing…into every possible attitude." Priestley calls this drawn-off gesture "conversing." [420] One might converse with "mean and low objects," like the bowling ball, with "large and grand objects" of the sublime, and of course, with human bodies, especially those close by.[421] The reception of gesture is the stamp of persuasion.

One sees in Priestley's "instantaneous," "mechanical," "useless and ridiculous" gesture trace of the spectator in Abbé DuBos' tightrope walker, and before that, Francis Bacon's shared pucker when one person sees another eat a lemon. But Priestley does two things with his ugly gestures that are distinctive to those. One, he deploys them for rhetorical effect (notes the extension of such effects—that they bounce back and forth between bodies, i.e. do not "start" at one and get absorbed by another; collateral damage); and two, he uses them to construct a physicalist model of rhetorical transmission that centers on the two phenomena he sees operating there: Newtonian mechanics and bodily electricity. (Three, he ties them to God, but only indirectly.) These ugly gestures reflect a kind of bonding between bodies, and what of Priestley's rhetoric graduates from theories of motion put forward by Digby, Bulwer, and Sheridan. Gesture is part extension, part retraction; part attraction, part repulsion; part artifact, part antefact (as any such gesture often imparts intention). Priestley's rhetorical gesture follows the laws of human action and attraction; it can grant as it takes away a charge.

[420] Ibid., 127.
[421] Ibid., 127-29.

In this chapter, I consider the subtle connections between Priestley's discourses on electricity, religion (vis-à-vis spiritual matter) and oratory in terms of method, application, and rhetorical implication. I pay special attention to the use of the term/concept "attraction" both in Priestley's rhetoric and in scientific discourse. While rhetorical sympathy most commonly connotes pathos, or even a move to agreement or shared opinion, here I will consider as alternative "affinity," a strictly motive sense of correspondence with another's action. This alternative to traditional depictions of rhetorical sympathy links minds, bodies, and world by way of motions that conduct, attract, and flow. It challenges traditional notions of the rhetor's agency and underscores the dynamic, relational interplay between bodies in proximity. This affinity in Priestley's work beckons language, exigence, and especially phenomenal principles from the popular science of electricity.

To tease out what Priestley's picture of delivery might look like—and how that presents an *alternative* to sympathetic gestures, the physiology of associations is held up to that of electricity on animal bodies, as induced both by some of the electrical experiments that Priestley reports, and some he conducts himself.[422] To begin, I briefly sketch out the traditional notion of rhetorical sympathy from which Priestley departs.

[422] Note proximity of Priestley's publishing dates: *History of Electricity* 2nd ed. (1775), *Hartley's Observations on Man* (1775), *Disquisitions Relating to Matter and Spirit* (1777), and *Course of Lectures* (1777).

By the time of Haukesbee's threads, theories of electric sympathy[423] began to fail as an explanation for certain phenomena—a tangle shared by mid-eighteenth century theories of rhetorical transmission. Gaspar Schott (1608-1666) offers that sympathetic electricity "arise[s] from a friendly affection, or coordination and innate relation, of one thing to another…so that if one is acting, or reacting, or only just present, the other also acts or is acted upon." Sympathy "originates directly from the particular temperament of a thing, being nothing but a certain natural inclination of one thing towards another."[424] Heilbron summarizes, "electrics excite their prey to self-motion."[425] Digby's (1603-1665) electric effluvia, for example, like "steams" that "issueth from sweating men on horses," pour out, and then, upon contact with another body, either absorb it or withdraw like "the little tender horns of snails used to shrink back if anything touched them, till they settle in little lumps upon their heads."[426] "The reason hereof," Digby explains, "is the resemblance, and sympathy."[427] Bodies are fountains; electric reach flows from "each…attached to its font."[428]

Sympathetic bodies in the mid-eighteenth century are understood to operate upon one another by the same principle, and in the case of some theorists, literally the same

[423] Priestley also notes the contribution of William Gilbert (1544-1603), who before and contra Schott and Digby, suggests that friction—or direct contact—is requisite to "excite the virtue" in electrics (Priestley, *History*, 3).
[424] Heilbron, *Electricity*, 26. From Gaspar Schott, *Thaumaturgus Physicus Sive magiae Universalis naturae et Artis Pars IV* (Wurzburg, 1659), 368-70.
[425] Heilbron, *Electricity*, 211.
[426] Digby, *Bodies*, xix.
[427] Digby, *Discourse*, 110.
[428] Emanuel Maignan, *Cursus Philosophicus*, (Lyon: 1673), 360. Heilbron offers this summary of Maignan's viewpoint: "B's spirit stimulates A to emit a vapor that in turn increases B's productivity. The greater the 'friendliness' (amicitia) of the bodies, the faster their spirits flow and the sooner their self-moving principles actuate" (Heilbron, *Electricity*, 211).

process of sympathetic transition of electrical charge. So much so that some physicians and philosophers speak of "cognate effluvia," which pass "to and fro" such that actions befalling one person can affect another at great distances.[429] Electric and animal sympathy are at least similar enough to share terminology, operating principle, and manifest effect. At most, they overlap in terms of territory and substance. By "electricity," Priestley means "only those effects which will be called electrical, or the unknown cause of those effects, using the term, as we use the letters x and y in algebra."[430] The effects of electricity are glimpsed above—floating feathers, sparks jumping between fingertips, crackling sounds. Recall that David Hume's (1711-1776) contagious bodily *passion* is "known only by its effects and by those external signs in the countenance and conversation which convey an idea of it."[431] Passion's effects include all manner of action, including words. Where electric sympathy ignites its own virtue in kindred bodies, Hume's sympathy is ignited when "this idea is presently converted [back] into an impression and acquires such a degree of force and vivacity as to become the very passion itself."[432] The greater the similarity—and proximity—between two individuals, the stronger the bond (as with electrics): "we must be assisted by the relations of resemblance and contiguity in order to feel the sympathy in its full perfection."[433] This "resemblance and contiguity" occurs between animate bodies, inanimate bodies, spiritual bodies, or any combination thereof.[434] In a nutshell: "Sympathy is often an imitative

[429] Abraham Tucker, *Light of Nature Pursu'd*, 1765, 3rd ed. (Cambridge: 1831), 227.
[430] Priestley, *History*, 434.
[431] Hume, *Treatise*, 317.
[432] Ibid.
[433] Ibid., 320.
[434] In *Observations on Man*, e.g., David Hartley follows his chapter on "Of the Pleasures and Pains of Sympathy" with "Of the Pleasures and Pains of Theopathy."

faculty, sometimes involuntary, often without consciousness."[435] The transmission of passion occurs through the sympathetic transfer of mimetic response; a body receiving it serves as further conduit for the charge of emotion.

The pathology of animal sympathy suggests the utility of this physiological mechanism of transmission for models of communication as well as ethics. Adam Smith's (1723-1790) sympathy in *The Theory of Moral Sentiments* (1759) picks up where Hume's leaves off in terms of resemblances, but more than Hume, grounds sympathy in physiology, both in terms of cause and effect. "How selfish soever man may be supposed," Smith says, "there are evidently some principles in his nature, which interest him in the fortune of others, and render their happiness necessary to him, though he derives nothing from it except the pleasure of seeing it."[436] One has "no immediate experience of what other men feel," and so can only get a sense of "the manner in which they are affected…by conceiving what we ourselves should feel in the like situation."[437] Through imagination,

> we enter as it were into his body and become in some measure him, and thence form some idea of his sensations, and even feel something which, though weaker in degree, is not altogether unlike them. His agonies, when they are thus brought home to ourselves, when we have thus adopted and

[435] Seguin Henry Jackson, *A Treatise on Sympathy in Two Parts, I. On the Nature of Sympathy in General; that of Antipathy; and the Force of Imagination…II. On Febrile Sympathy and Consent; and on the Balance and Connection of Extreme Vessels* (London: Printed by J. Murray, 1781), 13.
[436] Adam Smith, *The Theory of Moral Sentiments, or, An Essay Towards an Analysis of the Principles by Which Men Naturally Judge Concerning the Conduct and Character, First of Their Neighbors, and Afterwards of Themselves* (London: For W. Strahan et al. 1774), 1.
[437] Ibid., 2.

> made them our own, begin at last to affect us, and we then tremble and shudder at the thought of what he feels.[438]

Identification jumps between bodies through expression. But one's quality of feeling and of health (in the moment, and longer term) is born of such trembles and shudders. Robert Whytt (1714-1766) calls this the "wonderful sympathy between the nervous systems of different persons," by which "various motions and morbid symptoms are often transferred from one to another, without any corporeal contact."[439] According to Smith, for example,

> Persons of delicate fibres and a weak constitution of body complain, that in looking on the sores and ulcers which are exposed by beggars in the streets, they are apt to feel an itching or uneasy sensation in the corresponding part of their own bodies. The horror which they conceive at the misery of those wretches affects that particular part in themselves more than any other; because that horror arises from conceiving what they themselves would suffer, if they really were the wretches whom they are looking upon, and if that particular part in themselves was actually affected in the same miserable manner.

These bodies' grasps begin to resemble that of the electric machine. Calling to mind Gray's electrified feather, the sympathizer takes away a charge, and so is fleetingly imprinted with the feeling of the other (Smith): "He not only feels a sorrow of the same

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[438] Ibid., 2-3.

[439] Robert Whytt, *An Essay on the Vital and Other Involuntary Motions of Animals* (Edinburgh: For John Balfour, 1763), 583. For in-depth treatments of medicalized sympathy in this context, see Joanna Bourke, "Pain, Sympathy and the Medical Encounter Between the Mid-Eighteenth and the Mid-Twentieth Centuries," *Historical Research* 10, no. 11 (2011): 1-23; and Chapter Three, "Sympathy and Persons," in Jonathan Lamb, *The Evolution of Sympathy in the Long Eighteenth Century* (London: Pickering and Chatto, 2009).

kind with that which they feel, but as if he had divided a part of it to himself, what he feels seems to alleviate the weight of what they feel."[440] Smith emphasizes the importance of *seeing* to such acquisitions of others' passions, noting that even "men of the most robust make," when "looking upon sore eyes they often feel a very sensible soreness in their own…that organ being in the strongest men more delicate than any other part of the body is in the weakest."[441]

Another way to put this is that the manifest effect of "invisible agent[s]" electricity and passion "looks like" something—an imitation, an approach, a gesture. Gesture is the signature of sympathetic persuasion. Although in general, Smith's sympathy is less infectious than Hume's—it "does not arise so much from the view of the passion, as from the situation which excites it"[442]—Smith acknowledges that sympathy "may seem to arise merely from the view":

> The passions, upon some occasions, may seem to be transfused from one man to another, instantaneously, and antecedent to any knowledge of what excited them in the person principally concerned. Grief and joy, for example, strongly expressed in the look and gestures of any one, at once affect the spectator with some degree of a like painful or agreeable emotion.[443]

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[440] Smith, *Theory*, 13.
[441] Ibid., 4.
[442] Ibid., 7. The counter example to the subsequent block quote, e.g., describes situational sympathy—"some passions of which the expressions excite no sort of sympathy, but before we are acquainted with what gave occasion to them, serve rather to disgust and provoke us against them." We are angrier at an angry man than at his provocateurs until "we plainly see what is the situation of those with whom he is angry, and to what violence they may be exposed from so enraged an adversary" (ibid., 6).
[443] Ibid., 5.

It is the motional resonance ("the look and gestures") that makes sympathy visible, identifiable—and interruptible. Thus motions are where natural philosophers and physicians begin in trying to mediate sympathy for particular ends. Seguin Jackson's (1750-1816) *A Treatise on Sympathy in Two Parts* (1781) reflects the trend among physicians, connecting "interruptible" sympathetic actions to conditions of the body (like gout). One goal for engaging sympathy this way, he says, is "restoring animation, or the vital principle, when apparently lost."[444] It is no different among certain rhetoricians, who connect to the identification-through-sympathetic-motion principle, especially as relates to delivery. (Smith's rendering of situational identification, which—contra Hume—leaves room for an intentional component in any identifying action, is particularly useful for theorizing gesture.) James Burgh (1714-1775), for example, in *The Art of Speaking* (1768) says of "true eloquence":

> It ought to *hurry* us out of ourselves, to *engage* and *swallow* up our whole *attention*; to *drive* everything out of our *minds*, besides the *subject* it would hold forth, and the *point*, it wants to *carry*. The hearer finds himself as *unable* to resist it, as to blow out a *conflagration* with the *breath* of his *mouth*, or to *stop* the stream of a river with his *hand*.[445]

The sympathetic mechanism has been widely criticized for its claim to containment—for the innate capacity to communicate and respond (see Smith, above: "Persons of delicate fibres and a weak constitution of body"); for differentiating between individuals and groups along this line (e.g. how to gesture for vulgar versus learned

[444] Jackson, *Treatise on Sympathy*, 4. Contrary to Whytt, Jackson contends, "Sympathy does not belong more particularly to the nervous system, than to other solids in the body" (ibid.).
[445] James Burgh, *The Art of Speaking*, 1761, ed. Carol Poster (Bristol, England: Thoemmes Press, 2003), 29.

audiences); and for propagating communication by capitulation (Burgh: "His *passions* are no longer *his own*. The *orator* has taken *possession* of them; and with superior power, *works* them to whatever he *pleases*"[446]).[447] As a model for communication, and for rhetorical gestures in particular, sympathy (I gesture, you feel) also tires.

David Hartley's (1705-1757) sympathy differs slightly.[448] For Hartley, sympathetic transmission and reception is mediated by gesture; through physical and verbal rhetorical articulation, bodies negotiate the conditions of the transmission of meaning. Like Hume and Smith, Hartley describes a bodily disposition—certain places wherein "flare ups" of other peoples' feeling are contained. But for Hartley, these flare ups are not entirely discrete from the motions that provoke them. Sympathy is born when "in the intercourses of life the pleasures and pains of one are, in various ways, intermixed with, and dependent upon, those of others, so as to have clusters of their miniatures excited."[449] These miniatures forecast the natural, manifest variety of Smith's, in that "persons whose nerves are easily irritable" and "those who have experienced great trials" have more robust clusters.[450] Standing apart in Hartley's model is the clusters' location—the sympathetic nervous system—and the mechanics of the connection between the flare up and its foments: "countenances, gestures, words, and actions."[451] As with objects (the

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[446] Ibid.
[447] See, for example, Lawrence Grossburg, *We Gotta Get Out of This Place: Popular Conservatism and Postmodern Culture* (New York: Routledge, 1992), and Gross' *Secret History of Emotion*.
[448] Hartley draws heavily from Locke, whose sympathy provides means only to account for those reactions that somehow do not correspond with, or "mismatch" a trigger—"unnatural" things. Joseph Priestley, *Disquisitions Relating to Matter and Spirit. To Which is Added the History of the Philosophisophical Doctrine Concerning the Origin of the Soul, and the Nature of Matter,* 2nd ed. (Birmingham: Pearson and Rollason, 1797), 367.
[449] Joseph Priestley, *Hartley's Theory of the Human Mind, On the Principle of the Association of Ideas*, 2nd ed. (London: J. Johnson, 1790), 305.
[450] Priestley, *History*, 309.
[451] Ibid., 306.

feathers, etc.), it is both the innate nature of bodies in rhetorical interaction, and the manner in which they are assembled, deployed, and manipulated that set the conditions for sympathetic transmission and reception of persuasive meaning.

4 THIS ELECTRIC AND ELASTIC SPIRIT

These persuasive interconnections between bodies are nowhere better exhibited than in experiments with static electricity.[452] The rhetor/audience as bodily agents set the conditions of possibility for rhetorical transmission, but their agency does not entail total control over the agency of the charge itself. The "operations [power]d...of the God of nature himself" manifest here—in the visible effects of this "invisible power"—in both what is explicable and patterned in an acting body, as well as what is "occult."[453] "Here," Priestley says in *The History and Present State of Electricity*, aiming to hook would-be electricians, "we see a piece of cold metal, or even water, or ice, emitting strong sparks of fire, so as to kindle many inflammable substances; and in *vacua* its light is prodigiously diffused, and copious."[454] Throughout *The History*, Priestley cannot help but linger on the electric gesture, per se: "contrary to the principles of gravitation, we see bodies attracted, repelled, and held suspended by others, which are seen to have acquired that power by nothing but a very slight friction; while another body, with the very same friction, reverses all its effects."[455] Priestley hones in on the "agency" of electricity in relation to bodies, all of which are susceptible to its transit: "The electric fluid is no local, or occasional agent in the theatre of the world. Late discoveries show that its presence and

[452] Ibid., ii, xi.
[453] Ibid., x, 519.
[454] Ibid.
[455] Ibid.

effects are every where."[456] Conductivity is a property "as essential and important as any [bodies] are possessed of, and can hardly fail to show [itself] wherever the bodies are concerned."[457]

Sometimes this electric gesture is more obvious than others. Priestley is intrigued by Abbé Nollet (1700-1770) and Pierre Le Monnier's (1715-1799) respective courtier electrifications. In *The History*'s chapter "Experiments on Animal, and Other Organized Bodies in this Period; And Other Experiments Connected with Them," Priestley pokes fun at the pair, who are unafraid to conduct their experiments on humans—calling Nollet, "the ingenious philosopher," referencing "his darling theory of affluences and effluences," which Priestley deems wrong.[458] Indignantly, Priestley: "The English philosophers, who led the way in almost every other application of electricity, were among the last to try its effects upon animals, and other organized bodies."[459] Priestley has, however, apparently dropped the irony by the chapter's close, on reflecting that Nollet opened up "a new and noble field" with his experiments on living subjects, and that he deserves merit for pursuing them with "attention, perseverance, and respect."[460]

In these famous electrifications, long strings of connected people pass around a shock. Priestley reports that Daniel Gralath (1708-1767) in Germany "first found, that the same shock could be communicated to a number of persons, who took hold of one another's hands," given that someone at one extremity holds the Leyden jar, and the one

[456] Ibid., xi.
[457] Ibid.
[458] Ibid., 108.
[459] Ibid., 131. The only article Priestley can find on the subject (among the English) that predates Nollet's is from one Mr. Trembley, "who says that several persons had observed, that while they were electrified, their pulse beat a little faster than before"; and that upon remaining electrified for "a long time" himself, he "felt an odd sensation all over his body." There is some suggestion that the electrification of people is particularly uncivilized (ibid.).
[460] Ibid., 140.

at the other touches a conductor: Gralath "gave a shock to twenty persons; and he says, he did not doubt, but it might have been given to a thousand."[461] The Abbé Nollet then

> gave it to one hundred and eighty of the guards, in the King's presence; and at the grand convent of the Carthusians in Paris, the whole community formed a line of nine hundred *toises*, by means of iron wires between every two persons (which far exceeded the line of one hundred and eighty of the guards) and the whole company, upon the discharge of the phial, gave a sudden spring, at the same instant of time, and all felt the shock equally.[462]

One can see the shock itself by electrifying a chain of bodies connected by water-filled glass tubes. As the shock passes, the water flashes, as would our bodies, Nollet says, "were we as transparent as glass and water."[463]

By his description of these experiments, Priestley, suggests that our bodies do flash, but in a different way—and in a way that is pertinent to orators. He fascinates on movements communicated through electricity across animal bodies—by twitch, by shudder, by extended motions—as well as peoples' inclination to experience this seemingly involuntary movement. The above description is one of many in which Priestley tries to render both the "look" and the "feel" of electricity—and most importantly for the present concern, the line between one's "own" agency, and the electricity's. Here, the company give "a sudden spring." Nollet and Le Monnier, who take the phial shock themselves, report "commotion" in their bodies, Priestley says, which "instantly spread through the court and the city, from whence all ranks of men

[461] Ibid., 86.
[462] Ibid., 98.
[463] Heilbron, *Electricity*, 322.

crowded to see…and to experience the effect of it."[464] Effects include "striking" of the "arms, shoulders, and breast"; ankles shaking; "an odd sensation upon the face, as if a spider's web were drawn over it"[465]; and "great convulsions" across the body.[466] The hand clutches—another hand, a rod, a glass—without one intending it to.[467] Le Monnier comments, Priestley explains, on the absurd strings of gestures that pop up across these bodies passing shocks: "It is singular to see the multitude of different gestures, and to hear the instantaneous exclamation of those surprised by the shock." Priestley reflects

> It was this astonishing experiment that gave éclat to electricity. From this time it became the subject of general conversation. Everybody was eager to see, and, notwithstanding the terrible accident that was reported of it, to *feel* the experiment; and in the same year in which it was discovered, numbers of persons, in almost every country in Europe, got a livelihood by going about and showing it.[468]

The "pleasure" of the experiment, he says, "bears considerable resemblance to that of the sublime," usually traversing electrical machine, experimenter, and audience along vectors that annex "crowds of pleasing sensations to…contemplation."[469] This annexation makes electricity not only an important subject for civil history and vehicle for experimental philosophy, but also means by which to explore the different ways that bodies tangle with one another through motion. Here is Priestley's pitch to would-be rhetoricians: engage involuntary motions. No experiment in "the compass of philosophy" is so tactile, or so

[464] Priestley, *History*, 97.
[465] Ibid., 121.
[466] Ibid., 83-4.
[467] Ibid., 83.
[468] Ibid., 85.
[469] Ibid., i-ii.

plainly tangles sensation with intellect, "mixing something of action with speculation, and giving some employment to the hands and arms, as well as to the head."[470]

In his segment of "Original Experiments" that follow *The History* proper, Priestley admits executing a miniature version of the human chain experiment. Here, and in related observations, Priestley corrects Nollet's work in at least two senses, both of which inform Priestley's notion of communicable motion between animal bodies. The first pertains to Nollet's "darling theory of affluences and effluences."[471] (It is a quasi-sympathetic notion of electric transmissions.) Observing "a sensible blast from the hand of a person *not* electrified," as well as "the appearance of flame…and almost every other appearance and effect of electricity" when a hand approaches a charged globe, Nollet concludes that the fire "had been carried by the affluent electricity from his own body to the globe."[472] In other words, when the spark passes from the hand to globe, or hand to hand, Nollet sees that as an emission of internal fire, rather than the exchange of "two different and opposite electricities."[473] Priestley, on the other hand, asks, "Does not the electric matter pass chiefly on the surface of bodies?"[474] And then, "Do these experiments likewise favor the hypothesis…that there is no electrical attraction without a

[470] Ibid., ix.
[471] According to this theory, "A person holding an electrified jar is the host of a slow double flux, an affluent from the bottle's exterior through himself to the ground, and a counter current from himself into the jar." Upon touching a conductor, or the charged hand of someone who does, the person is mobbed with affluents from from the jar and conductor, which press against his body's effluents, "painfully compressing the electrical matter naturally present in the arms and breast" (Heilbron, *Electricity*, 332).
[472] Priestley, *History*, 118. Emphasis added.
[473] Ibid., 119. Thus Nollet's insistence on weighing animal bodies before and after they had been shocked for extended periods of time: "All that he had then observed upon that head was, that a young man or woman, between the ages of twenty and thirty, from being electrified five hours together, had lost several ounces of their weight, more than they were wont to lose when they were not electrified" (ibid., 137).
[474] Ibid., 464.

communication of electricity?"[475] Priestley first describes experiencing the shock for himself.

> I made a torrecellian vacuum in a tube about a yard in length and holding one end of it in my hand, I presented a part near the other end to the prime conductor; and observed that, while the electric fire was pouring along the whole length of it, I felt some peculiarly smart twitches every now and then in my hand…On removing the tube from the prime conductor, it threw out spontaneous sparks from the place where it had touched the conductor…Then, bringing my other hand near the place where the tube had touched the conductor, I received a very considerable shock in both my arms and breast.[476]

Priestley then notes that when "three persons besides myself joined hands," the latter shock "shook all our arms greatly," discharging "a very dense spark of electric fire" into the tube. The superficial communication of electricity across bodies, Priestley says, explains why "electricity was often observed to be peculiarly strong, when the room was full of company, and more particularly, when numbers of them drew near together, to see the experiments"—the company, "constituting a large surface, when any of them took a spark…would feel it more sensibly than if he had stood single."[477]

Priestley pays particular attention, however, to the odd, ambient twitches, and what of the electric gesture they suggest. At the outset of *The History*, Priestley says, "Hitherto philosophy has been chiefly conversant about the more sensible properties of bodies; electricity, together with chemistry, and the doctrine of light and colors, seems to

[475] Ibid., 711. Beccaria's hypothesis.
[476] Ibid., 596.
[477] Ibid., 243.

be giving us an inlet into their internal structure, on which all their sensible properties depend."[478] Later, citing the "at present occult properties of bodies," he observes "chymistry and electricity are both conversant about the latent and less obvious properties of bodies; and yet their relation to one another has been little considered."[479] A bigger observation than it sounds like—Priestley proposes to bring Newtonian mechanics, and considerations of gravity, into conversation with bodily electricity—subjecting electricity and bodies to the same rules *and motions.* This sets up Priestley's most-acknowledged contribution to a history of electricity[480], and which allows him to fully develop his electrical theory of rhetorical agency.

Following up on the twitches, Priestley notices that when Leyden jars discharge, a subtle shock would run through him, although his body was not a key part of the circuit. This occasions Priestley's "lateral force" experiments, in which Priestley identifies the "side-flash," or wayward force from the electric discharge. At first drawn to the colored rings that the flashes left on a metal plate, Priestley notices that he "could laterally disperse objects from near the path of an electrical discharge through air or even through an imperfectly conducting wire"[481]—that is, that charges passing through circuits indeed transmit to and move neighboring bodies.[482] Second, *electric discharges follow all available paths*, and that "the whole fire of an explosion does not pass in the shortest and

[478] Ibid., xi.
[479] Ibid., 519.
[480] See Gibbs, *Joseph Priestley*, 47-50. Gibbs also suggests "This seems to have been the first observation and recognition of an oscillatory discharge" (ibid., 47). See also Schofield, *The Enlightenment of Joseph Priestley*, 232-35.
[481] Schofield, *The Enlightenment of Joseph Priestley*, 233.
[482] Priestley observes: "Willing to feel what kind of an impulse it was that acted upon bodies, when they were driven away by this lateral force of electricity, I held my finger near the path of an explosion of the battery, passing over the surface of a green leaf, when I felt a stroke, as of something pushing my finger. Several corks…were driven to a considerable distance by the same explosion" (Priestley, *History*, 685).

best circuit; but that, if inferior circuits be open, part will pass in them at the same time."[483] Third, Priestley finds "If the electric circuit be interrupted, the electric matter, during the discharge, will pass to any other body that lies near its path, and instantly return."[484] Shortly after this determination, Shofield notes that Priestley admits in a letter to Canton that such experiments "make me inclined to think, there is no electric fluid at all, and that electrification is only some [new?] modification of the matter of which any body consisted before that operation."[485]

By supplanting the notion of a body's stagnant, electric "atmosphere" with that of its "sphere of action," Priestley carves a space out of the sympathizing self for the phenomenal rhetorical gesture. The "occult" properties of bodies that these experiments (and this passing hypothesis, to Canton) suggest and manifest—that is, bodies' conductivity, penetrability, attraction, repulsion, and nerve—are vital for the durability, effectiveness, and range of suasive motion. Correcting Nollet's shock-expulsion hypothesis a second time, Priestley says, "In this case, the motion is *communicated* in a real succession, like a *vibration*, which must therefore take up time, and be measurable."[486] In the next section, I turn to Priestley's use of the physiology of vibrations and Newtonian mechanics as general precepts to the communicative properties of rhetorical bodies.

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[483] Ibid., 69.
[484] Joseph Priestley, *Heads of Lectures on a Course of Experimental Philosophy, Particularly Including Chemistry, Delivered at the New College in Hackney* (London: J. Johnson, 1794), 175.
[485] Schofield, *The Enlightenment of Joseph Priestley*, 234. From Priestley to Canton, 12 November 1767.
[486] Priestley, *History*, 119.

In Hartley's theory of electrical transmission, bodies do not exert persuasive effect on other bodies; rather, electricity is conducted through sympathetic vibration across the ether according to the presence of essential properties of electrical conduction. For Hartley, if communication is electrical, than his empirical observations of electric transmission suggest that rhetoric is based on conquest rather than skilled persuasion: rather like the interaction between one person with a taser and one without. In his own edition of *Hartley's Theory*, Priestley posits drops some of the physiology of vibrations, focusing rather on "association" as the mode of conduction and transmission. This, I argue, makes space for his incorporation of Newtonian mechanistic principles (covered in more depth in the next section). Priestley's theory of electric communication derives from Hartley—Priestley is, of course, one of Hartley's great champions—but he does not succumb to the temptation, when making his own rhetorical claims from the study of electricity, to view electrical communication as a form of deterministic control. Because Priestley has a highly differentiated notion of how sympathy works vis-à-vis electricity, he argues against the idea of innate bodily capacity, or the essential property of being more or less susceptible to persuasion.

Hartley submits that Robert Hooke's experiment wherein "the life of a dog was sustained by a continued stream of air through the lungs without any alternate respiratory motion)" proves "that one principal use of air, which is among the electric bodies *per se*, is to restore…the electric virtue" that circulates with blood.[487] The body's electric

[487] David Hartley, *Conjecturae Quaedam de Sensu, Moto, et Idearum Generatione,* 1746, "Various Conjectures on the Perception, Motion, and Generation of Ideas," tr. Robert E. A.

property is for Hartley encompassed in its inner systems, reaching only so far as the aether hovering nearest the body is able to project. The *vis inertiae* is preserved. One can see how the like of Haukesbee's experiment—the threads lean toward the fingers, but do not touch—might lead Hartley to contend that discrete bodies are buffered by this aether, which sensation can ford only through vibration. Thus he calls attention to fingertips (and other "extreme and pointed parts") not for their tendency to conduct a shock, but for their "exquisite sensibility" due to "an ether of a greater density which, according to the Newtonian hypothesis, surrounds the extreme parts on all sides" and so "ought to be agitated by stronger vibrations."[488]

In his version of sympathy, Hartley does not contend that all bodies have equal access to feeling: rather, bodies are more or less conditioned for the sympathetic reception of particular electrical messages through the repetitive development of "clusters." Clusters are the precipitate of all such actions to which a body has been exposed. It is an assemblage of "miniature vibrations"—"vestiges, types, and or images" that sensations left behind, which pattern "muscular exertions" from observation and imitation.[489] The inciting gesture's vibrations wriggle into place. The sympathizer's response options are precisely one: "Any sensation A, or idea B, or muscular motion C, if associated for a sufficient number of times with any other sensation D, idea E, or muscular motion F, will at last excite the sensation D, the idea d, the very idea E, or the muscular motion F." For "every action, or bodily motion, arises from previous circumstances, or bodily motions, already existing in the brain, i.e. from vibrations,

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Palmer, *The Augustan Reprint Society* 77-8 (1959): 38. With Stephen Hales, Hartley assumes that this electric virtue accesses the nervous system through "blood globules" (ibid., 34).

[488] Ibid., 17.

[489] Ibid., 31, 22; Priestley, *Hartley,* 309.

which are either the immediate effect of impressions then made, or the compound effect of former impressions, or both."[490] The observer "will find his mind so formed already by association" that he cannot brook his reaction. "Pure disinterested benevolence," Hartley feels, proves that people are plugged in to one another's actions—and the truth of the doctrine of vibrations.

Hartley's fomenting gesture has a melding effect: "Any vibrations A, B, C, etc., by being associated together a sufficient number of times get such a power over a, b, c, etc., the corresponding miniature vibrations, that any of the vibrations A, when excited alone, shall be able to excite b, c, etc."[491] Priestley's rhetoric is deeply grounded in Hartley's theories. But, for Priestley, Hartley's deterministic association is belied by the medium he assumes for rhetorical transmission: there is always a communication potential between bodies that cannot be fixed by a particular utterance. Hartley's medium for transmission is Newton's aether, which Hartley takes to both suffuse the nervous system and to linger about the body's outer periphery. The aether is necessary for Hartley because he views bodies as solid and impassible; sympathetic movement is communication's *only* feature. Vibrations emerge by means of "the mutual actions interceding between these three: the objects, nerves, and aether."[492] The limbs of animals, Hartley says, are moved "by the power and actions of a certain very subtle spirit," which references this description from Newton's *Principia*[493]:

> And now we might add something concerning a certain most subtle spirit which pervades and lies hid in all gross bodies, by the force and action of

[490] Priestley, *Hartley*, 335.
[491] Hartley, *Conjectures*, 27.
[492] Ibid., 7.
[493] Ibid., 49.

> which spirit the particles of bodies attract one another at near distances, and cohere, if contiguous; and electric bodies operate to greater distances, as well repelling as attracting the neighboring corpuscles; and light is emitted, reflected, refracted, inflected and heats bodies; and all sensation is excited, and the members of animal bodies move at the command of the will, namely, by the vibrations of this spirit.[494]

Hartley applies this principle to muscle contraction in *Various Conjectures on the Perception, Motion, and Generation of Ideas* (1746). He reasons that "the phenomena of electricity and elasticity, each in its own manner and degree, seemingly argue that certain reciprocal motions have a share in other natural phenomena," like association; "So in exactly the same way, the obvious attractions of gravitation, cohesion, electricity and magnetism" probably "obtain in descending orders of particles composing bodies."[495] In other words, "vibrations descend along the nerves, just as along so many royal roads, towards the muscular fibers" as "an electrical virtue along hempen strings."[496] These vibrations "put into action that attractive virtue, perhaps of the electrical kind, which lies concealed in the particles of the [muscular] fibers."[497] And much like the hearts of frogs, which go on beating once excised from their bodies via "heat, pressure, and punctures," the muscle pulls, the observer acts, and a new association (between this precise foment and one's reaction, or "occasions" and "expressions") forms.[498]

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[494] Isaac Newton, *Principia*, 1647, *Newton's* Principia; *The Mathematical Principles of Natural Philosophy*, tr. Andrew Motte (New York: Daniel Adee, 1848), 547.
[495] Hartley, *Conjectures*, 10.
[496] Ibid., 34.
[497] Ibid.
[498] Ibid., 33, Priestley, *Hartley*, 309.

It sounds deterministic. Indeed, "A man may speak, handle, love, fear, &c. entirely by mechanism."[499] To read Hartley requires a questioning of the "will" that Newton mentions at the end of *Principia*, and that Hartley flags increasingly by the time he publishes *Observations on Man, His Frame, His Duty, and His Expectations* (1749). Newtonian "will" provides a wrinkle for Hartley, a wrinkle which provides the opening for Priestley's important development on the relationship between association and communication. Hartley engages will at the close of *Conjectures*: "matter and motion, however subtly divided, or reasoned upon, yield nothing more than matter and motion still."[500] Matter, "if it could be endued with the most simple kinds of sensation, might also arrive at the highest peak of the human intellect," thus toppling "all those arguments which are brought for the immateriality of the soul from the subtlety of the internal senses and of the rational faculty."[501] But as "the theory no-ways determines whether matter can be endued with sensation," that conjecture is disposed as "foreign to the purpose."[502] Hartley follows Newton, who also hedges his aether similarly, noting that the "mobile spirit which pervades and lies hid in all gross bodies," above, "cannot be explained in few words, nor are we furnished with that sufficiency of experiments" to determine "the laws by which this electric and elastic spirit operates."[503] Hartley via Newton does not so much refute the agency of rhetor and audience so much as he sidesteps the question.

The heart of the question is what commutes impulse ("sensation A, or idea B, or muscular motion C," above) to volition ("sensation D, the idea d, the very idea E, or the

[499] Priestley, *Hartley*, 341.
[500] Hartley, *Observations,* 512.
[501] Hartley, *Conjectures*, 56.
[502] Ibid.
[503] Newton, *Principia*, 547.

muscular motion F") in Hartley's Newtonian paradigm: is agency in the rhetor or the rhetoric? Building on Hobbes' materialism, Priestley's answer is matter, itself. As he says in the introduction to *Hartley's Theory of the Human Mind on the Principle of the Association of Ideas* (1775, same year as the second edition of his *History and Present State of Electricity* [1767]), "I am rather inclined to think that…man does not consist of two principles, so essentially different from one another as matter and spirit…by means of which they can affect or act upon each other; the one occupying space, and the other not…insomuch that…my mind is no more, *in my body*, than it is in the moon."[504] In other words, Priestley adopts Hartley's notion of communication via the sympathetic transfer of electrical impulses, but for him, the bodily and affective (pre-cognitive) nature of much of this transmission does not preclude the role of conscious manipulation of transmission for particular rhetorical ends. The conditions of possibility for transmission are (in a Newtonian sense) *physical*, but these are also the conditions of possibility for agentic manipulation of transmission, and the agentic framing of received content.

To make his claim for the transmittance and sediment of vibrations between bodies, Hartley relies on the aether—the "electric and elastic spirit" that suffuses space, including "interstices" between particles of matter—rather than the matter, itself. Priestley identifies this as the limit of the Hartleian body; he offers association rather than sympathy as the dominant mode of rhetorical transmission: "upon feeling motions and figures, and passing over distances, the differences of vibrations from pressure and muscular contraction, i.e. from the *vis inertiae* of our own bodies, or of foreign matter, suggest to us the words expressing these…by association."[505] Priestley later characterizes

[504] Priestley, *Hartley,* 23.
[505] Ibid., 51.

vis inertiae in terms of matter's "supposed necessary property of *solidity*, *inertness*, or *sluggishness*."[506] Hartley uses inertia to demarcate what, in an affective transaction, is one's "own"—resulting in a sympathetic understanding of communication that can be explained entirely through essential bodily properties. Priestley pokes fun at this position: for him, inertia suggests the opposite of material sluggishness. Inertia instead is the physical law that allows excited and interactive communication between bodies, moving in association with one another. Inertia is the rhetorical situational constraint inherent to physical law that, rather than pointing to the rock-like nature of all matter, is instead the reason why bodies can successfully act to move one another.

This move to incorporate associationism is more than what Priestley's biographers and editors make of it—a move strictly to bridge cognition with rhetoric (although it is that). Priestley's associationism also provides means to capture the inter-penetrability of physical and spiritual realms, notions of free will and mechanistic determinism, and of association and electricity—as Priestley, like Hartley, uses electricity "as a clue and guide" to "other reciprocal motions and vibrations…in the production of natural phenomena."[507] The question of the penetrability of matter is central to Priestley's revision of Hartley.

6 ELECTRIFICATION BY COMMUNICATION

In the section of *Oratory* that addresses "the Tendency of Strong Emotions to Produce Belief, and the Transferring of Passions from One Object to Another," the reader glimpses the "conduct" of appeal by way of sensation:

[506] Priestley, *Disquisitions Relating to Matter and Spirit,* 22.
[507] Hartley, *Conjectures*, 10.

> all strong passions and emotions are liable to be transferred to indifferent objects, either related to the proper object, or those whose ideas are actually present to the mind, at the time that it is under the influence of such emotion or passion…Brute creatures, and even inanimate things, are not exempted from being, in this indirect manner, the objects of such human passions…[508]

In such "seeming irregular sallies of passion," a sudden charge, a sortie leaps in effect from one referent to another, carrying with it expression, at times "in the same indiscriminate manner."[509] For this reason, it is strategic for the rhetor to afford as many sensational and associational pathways as possible, and simultaneously, when aiming to install belief, leaving as much to the vivid imagination as possible.

> Such forms as these are most natural in great agitation of the mind, when the succession of ideas is uncommonly rapid, and when, consequently, it may be expected that some thoughts should interfere with others, and occasion frequent breaks in sentences, and interruptions in a chain of reasoning.[510]

Yet, at the same time, "When an orator expresses himself in such a manner as to make his hearers believe he could say more, and when his known situation makes it probable that he might have sufficient reason for pushing his argument no further than he doth…in this case, the imagination of the hearer will never suggest too little."[511] The listener fills in the gaps, meeting the rhetor with what charges and concerns she already brings.

[508] Priestley, *Oratory*, 94.
[509] Ibid., 96.
[510] Ibid., 112.
[511] Ibid., 122.

"Interruptions," and digressions in one's "chain of reasoning" work to the advantage of both communicators.

Belief is bound up with the body's substance. Immaterialism is a mistake that Priestley finds hard to forgive in the philosopher (even Hartley supposed an "*infinitesimal elementary body*" as "something of an intermediate between the soul and the gross body"), but harder to forgive of a devine.[512] Scottish theologian Andrew Baxter offers dreams and inattention as evidence that the soul can detach from the body in living time. The following from his *Enquiry into the Nature of the Human Soul* (1733) describes the mechanics of that detachment:

> Resistance is fundamental in the nature of matter, and this itself is the power of the immaterial cause, indefinitely impressed upon, and exerted in, every possible part of matter. And since without this, these least parts could not cohere at all, or make a solid, making resistance, it appears that the power of this cause thus incessantly put forth, through all its possible parts, is that which *constitutes* the solidity and resistance of matter…Without this *foreign influence* to effect cohesion, and solidity in it, we could not conceive it to be at all a substance.[513]

In *Disquisitions Relating to Matter and Spirit* (1777), Priestley deems Baxter "ablest defender of the strict immaterial system."[514] Like the system's many proponents, Baxter's argument hinges on two closely related suppositions abut matter; one, its "solidity and resistance" and two, the "*foreign influence*" requisite to afford that resistance, as well as

[512] Priestley, *Disquisitions Relating to Matter and Spirit*, 108.
[513] Andrew Baxter, *An Enquiry into the Nature of the Human Soul, Vol. II* (London: A. Millar, 1745), 345.
[514] Priestley, *Disquisitions Relating to Matter and Spirit*, 14.

to spirit matter about. Priestley can see how the former supposition comes to pass: "I press my hand against the table on which I am writing, and finding that I cannot penetrate it, and that I cannot push my hand into the place which it occupies, without first pushing it out of its place, I conclude that this table, and by analogy, *all matter, is impenetrable to other matter*."[515] But Priestley draws a different conclusion from this evidence of basic experience: he argues that "the cause of *all* resistance is *repulsive power*, and in no case whatever the thing that we have hitherto improperly termed *solid*, or *impenetrable matter*"[516]—a conclusion that Priestley posits is not only intuitive, but also mechanically necessary to all manner of bodies coming into apparent contact. Rhetorical transmission is not the sympathetic vibration of mutually impenetrable bodies enacting brief changes to the ether; rather, it is the associated and interconnected movement of bodies connected through the physical laws of attraction and repulsion.

Baxter, Hartley, and others argue that the "*foreign influence*" thought to supplant the missing source of motion from bodies is ascribed to "the effect of the immediate action of God," comprising "an immense spring which is in continual action."[517] Priestley probes the "fallacy" of this "doctrine of the *contagion of matter*" by bringing religious and philosophical tenets into line.[518] His argument goes something like this: the "*foreign property*" of matter is "in reality absolutely essential to its very *nature* and *being*"; once endued with "proper *moving powers*," matter is not "incapable of intelligence, thought, or action"; thus self-propelling matter comprises both the finite and infinite mind.[519] The rhetoric itself has its own agency—its own potential for movement and effectivity, after it

[515] Ibid., 9.
[516] Ibid., 16.
[517] Ibid., 14.
[518] Ibid., 64.
[519] Ibid., 11, 126, 144.

has left the rhetor, just like electricity moving between bodies. At the point of impact of the charge on a body, the originating point of the charge no longer has it—but because electricity/rhetoric is a circuit, effective persuasion occurs when the connection remains and the charge moves through rhetor and audience.

Sans foreign property, Priestley argues, there must be a mechanical power in matter without which, even granting this quality of resistance, "every particle would fall from each other, and be dispersed."[520] This holds for both atoms and composite bodies: "some *power*, internal or external," brings about organization, lest "the parts of which they are composed would…be resolved into smaller parts, and consequently (the smallest parts being resolved in the same manner) the whole substance must absolutely disappear, nothing at all being left for the imagination to fix upon."[521]

> It will readily be allowed, that every body, as *solid* and *impenetrable*, must necessarily have some particular *form* and *shape*; but it is no less obvious, that no such *figured thing* can exist, unless the parts of which it consists have a *mutual attraction*, so as either to keep contiguous to, or preserve a certain distance from each other. This power of attraction, therefore, must be essential to the *actual existence* of all matter; since no substance can retain any *form* without it.[522]

This relationship between matter's "*mutual attraction*" and form figures richly into both Priestley's work on electricity and on elocution. The latter I take up in more detail in the next section, but electrical experiment comes into play within *Disquisitions*, and bears relation to his notion of agency (or volition) amid "mutual action." Priestley poses such

[520] Ibid., 12.
[521] Ibid., 13.
[522] Ibid., 11.

questions through electrical and light experiment because "chemistry and electricity are both conversant about the latent and less obvious"—elsewhere in *The History and Present State of Electricity, With Original Experiments*, he calls them "occult"—"properties of bodies."[523]

In the preface to *Principia*, considering the motion of the planets, Newton observes that attraction can operate between bodies at great distance from one another: "I am induced by many reasons to suspect that [this and like phenomena] may all depend upon certain forces by which the particles of bodies…are either mutually impelled towards one another and cohere in regular figures, or are repelled and recede from one another" (Newton *MPNP* 1947 xviii). Priestley sets up the relationship between attraction and form a little differently, here:

> For that matter is not that *inert* substance that it has supposed to be; that *powers of attraction* or *repulsion* are necessary to its very being, and that no part of it appears to be *impenetrable* to other parts. I, therefore, define it to be the substance possessed of the property of *extension*, and the *powers of attraction or repulsion*.[524]

"I naturally imagine that the obstacle to its going through the table is the *solid matter* of which it consists," but in fact "it generally requires a much greater power of pressure than I can exert to bring my fingers into actual contact with the table."[525] The hand and table are separated by powers of repulsion inherent in each. Finally, "Electrical appearances show," Priestley says, "that a considerable weight is requisite to bring into contact, even links of a chain hanging freely in the air; they being kept asunder by a repulsive power

[523] Priestley, *History*, 474.
[524] Priestley, *Disquisitions Relating to Matter and Spirit*, 2.
[525] Ibid., 17.

belonging to a very small surface, so that they do not actually touch, though they are supported by each other."[526] He means to debunk first, the phenomenal "*place of contact*" that would imply material impenetrability, and second, the inconstancy of "mutual action between two bodies taking place at any given distance from their surfaces."[527] He concludes that all matter "is possessed of powers of attraction and repulsion, and of several spheres of them, one within another."[528] This argument "equally affects the smallest atoms, as the largest bodies that are composed of them."[529] The principle of attraction grounds *Priestley's* turn from bodies acting in particulate forms to applying Newtonian mechanics to peoples' bodies interacting (see rhetoric) in political systems.

Most recently, Priestley inherits this notion of the spheres through Hartley, who notes the "close connection" of the properties of bodies depends upon "mutual actions of the small parts," and through Hartley's citation of (another clergyman) Stephen Hales' work. In *Statistical Essays: Containing Vegetable Staticks* (1727), Hales explores the transubstantiation of sap particles. Of particular use is Hales' focus on particles that move between sap ("their fluid vehicle") and air ("a fine elastic fluid, with particles of very different natures floating in it"[530])—moreso, on the active quality of that air in the transmutation."[531] Hales takes his cue from Newton's *Optics* (1706): "Dense bodies by fermentation rarefy into several sorts of air; and this air by fermentation, and sometimes

[526] Ibid.
[527] Ibid., 54.
[528] Ibid., 21.
[529] Ibid., 11.
[530] Stephen Hales, *Statistical Essays: Containing Vegetable Staticks; Or, an Account of Some Statistical Experiments on the Sap in Vegetables…Also A Specimen of an Attempt to Analyze the Air, By a Great Variety of Chymio-Statical Experiments* (London: W. Innys and R. Manby, 1738), 153, 155.
[531] He also describes this phenomenon in relation to animal bodies, such as "particles of new air" detach from "blood and horn" (Hales, *Staticks*, 174).

without it, returns into dense bodies."[532] But Hales, odd though his conclusion is, focuses on the agentic property of *air*: "If all the parts of matter were only endued with a strongly attracting power, whole nature would then immediately become one unactive cohering lump" but for air, "a due proportion of strongly repelling elastick particles, which might enliven the whole mass, by the incessant action between them and the attracting particles."[533] The insinuation that particles of air can permeate bodies, oscillate between spheres of attraction and repulsion, and (as in the case of evaporating sap), disrupt the form that the body itself takes again recalls Newton: "God in the beginning form'd matter in solid, massy, hard impenetrable, moveable particles, of such sizes and figures, and in such proportion to space" such that "the changes of corporeal things are to be placed only in the various separations and new associations and motions of these permanent particles."[534] Rhetorical agency is to be found in what small capacity humans have for manipulating the conditions of the ongoing and often tiny and imperceptible series of changes that occur between mutually associated, attractive, and repulsive bodies.

Priestley, by 1767, is a devoted Franklinian. Although Priestley suggests in the introduction to his *The History and Present State of Electricity* not to go beyond the visible in describing experiments and outcomes—that is, not to speculate on competing theories of invisible "how's"—Priestley gives several chapters of *The History* to Franklin's new experiments. (It is also well known that they were friends.) Of particular interest is an experiment that Franklin adapts from the work of his teacher, Albrecht van Haller. Haller observes, "Whosoever shall approach his finger to the body of the person

[532] Ibid., 172.
[533] Ibid., 314.
[534] Isaac Newton, *Opticks: Or, a Treatise of the Reflections, Refractions, Inflections and Colours of Light*, 2nd ed. (London: For W. and J. Innys, 1718), 375.

thus electrised will cause a spark to issue from the surface, accompanied with a crackling noise and a sudden pain of which both parties are but too sensible." [535] In Franklin's rendition, 1) two people (A and B) stand on wax, one "rubbing a tube," and the other "drawing the fire"; C, standing on the floor, approaching either "will perceive a spark on approaching each of them with his knuckle." 2) If A and B touch while rubbing and drawing, there is no spark. 3) If they touch afterward, "there will be a stronger spark between them than there was between either of them and the person on the floor." 4) Post-spark, none of the people are charged.[536]

What Franklin supposes is that C, "receives a spark upon approaching B, who has an over quantity, but gives one to A, who has an under quantity"; between A and B "the spark is stronger; because the difference between them is greater. After such touch, there is no spark…because the electrical fire in all is reduced to the original quality."[537] Franklin reflects, "It is now discovered and demonstrated…that the electrical fire is a…species of matter, not created by the friction, but collected only."[538] For a spark to form, one body need have "an over quality" of this "matter." This excess, "lies without upon the surface" of the body, "and forms what we call an electrical atmosphere."[539] Atmosphere—would-be "halo of electrical matter-in-motion"—draws shape from the body enclosed, and, arbitrating attraction and repulsion, can be "drawn off."[540] Priestley's

[535] Heilbron, *Electricity*, 326.
[536] William Watson, "An Account of the Experiments Made to Discover Whether the Electrical Power, When the Conductors of It Were Not Supported By Electrics Per Se, Would Be Sensible at Great Distances," *The Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society of London*, eds. Charles Hutton, George Shaw, and Richard Pearson (London: C. and R. Baldwin, 1809), 453.
[537] Ibid.
[538] Heilbron, *Electricity*, 330.
[539] Ibid., 335.
[540] Ibid., 283, 336.

phrasing suggests both what he finds compelling about Franklin's conclusion, and with what he takes issue:

> If a conductor…be brought within the *atmosphere*, that is, the sphere of action, of any electrified body, it acquires the electricity opposite to that of the electrified body; and the nearer it is brought, the stronger opposite electricity doth it acquire; till the one receive a spark from the other, and then the electricity of both will be discharged.[541]

Priestley offers, as to the particular current of "electric fluid," "According to Dr. Franklin, it goes from my hand to the charged wire."[542] Priestley agrees with this—this phenomenon undergirds his theory of communication by electrification. But "atmosphere" is Franklin's term, and concept—"sphere of action" is Priestley's subtle, but pointed disagreement.

7 THE BODY OF THE FISH

In *Heads of Lectures on a Course of Experimental Philosophy* (1794), Priestley describes a "voluntary power" of shock, which insinuates Henry Cavendish's (1731-1810) electric torpedo, which Priestley visited, and touched:

> At least two kinds of fishes, the *torpedo* and the *electrical eel*, have a voluntary power of giving so strong a shock to the water in which they swim, as to affect fishes and other animals which come near them; and by a conducting communication between different parts of these fishes, an electric shock may be given exactly like that of the Leyden phial, which

[541] Priestley, *History*, 414.
[542] Ibid., 559.

will be described hereafter; and if the communication be interrupted, a flash of electric light will be perceived.[543]

Cavendish had constructed an artificial torpedo "based on the anatomy and electricity of the fish," in order to answer critics who claimed that no animal was electric "enough" to administer a tangible electrical shock.[544] The artificial torpedo comprised "shaped pieces of thick leather like the 'soles of shoes' to represent the body," and "thin plates of pewter to each side to imitate the electric organs."[545] On discharging Leyden phials through the torpedo, and drawing his hand to it, Cavendish found the shock

very slight in fingers.

only in hands, there seemed to be something wrong.

brisk in elbows.

brackish in elbows.

Under water it was

just sensible in hands.

stronger.

pretty strong Do.[546]

Jungnickel and McCormach explain that Cavendish thought it likely "that the electric fish contained something 'analogous' to the Leyden-jar battery," but "he also considered that there might be no such thing," and in that possibility, "that the electric fluid is not stored

[543] Christa Jungnickel and Russell McCormmach, *Cavendish* (Philadelphia: The American Philosophical Society, 1996), 190; Priestley, *Heads*, 169.
[544] Jungnickel and McCormmach, *Cavendish*, 188. One doubter was William Henly, who had constructed his own artificial electric eel, but could not make it shock.
[545] Ibid., 189: "With glass-insulated wires he connected the pewter plates to a battery, and he encased the whole in sheep's skin soaked in salt solution, the stand-in for the skin of the torpedo."
[546] Ibid., 190. From Henry Cavendish, "Experiments with the Artificial Torpedo," Cavendish MSS I:20 (a) in *Electrical Researches of the Honourable Henry Cavendish*, 312-13.

but gradually transferred by a small 'force' through the substance and all over the surface of the body of the fish."[547]

The authors credit Cavendish with "anticipating" the Voltaic battery and the associated concept of electromotive force[548]—the agent that impels electric current through a circuit. Cavendish marks the far reach of the era of static electricity. As Jungnickel and McCormach suggest, his methods belong to 18th-century practitioners:

> Cavendish came to his conclusion about the torpedo entirely from scientific reasoning…The question of the nature of the torpedo was tantamount to a series of related, fundamental questions: what is electricity, how is it produced, how is it stored, how is it conducted, how is it manifested, and how is it conceived, manipulated, and measured?[549]

By the time of *Heads*, Priestley has backed away from his electrical work in favor of his famous chemical experiments on fixed air and religious and theological writing. Here, Priestley is able to reflect on the far reach of static electricity and the animal body—on Cavendish, as well as Luigi Galvani and Alessandro Volta. He concludes with more certainty than Hartley could that "the influence of the brain and nerves upon the muscles seems to be of an electric nature."[550] Priestley recounts the then-big picture for the electric gesture: Galvani's discovery that an animal limb may be stimulated through electric shocks, and that electricity can restore life."[551]

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[547] Jungnickel and McCormmach, *Cavendish*, 190.
[548] Ibid.
[549] Ibid., 190.
[550] Priestley, *Heads*, 164.
[551] Only one of many, many medical, religious, psychophysical applications of static electricity and/or the electric machine (which Priestley markets and sells) during this time. Apropos of oratory, Priestley has heard of a case in which "a capacity of speech was seen restored by

But in *Heads*, Priestley retains his focus on the motions that communicate with an electric charge ("No electric can be excited without producing electric appearances in the body with which it is excited"[552]), and the line between so-called voluntary and involuntary motions. Rhetors, like the torpedo—as well as the reaching hands—are both agitators and vessels for communication, with bodily resources and constraints on their ability to control the building flow of persuasion. As with Franklin's conclusion in the shock experiments, communication is never figurative: "Nothing enters if nothing can leave; nothing leaves if nothing cannot enter."[553] It is a return to slippery notions of affect and effect, "those *forms of address* which are peculiarly adapted to gain *assent*." Priestley's electric theory of rhetoric centers gesture in persuasion through first, establishing that the interactive perception of gesture is a pre-requisite to effective persuasion—to gain assent—and second, that pre-cognitive passions and emotions are vital for the durability, effectiveness, and range of rhetorical persuasion, meaning third, rhetorical agency is the subtle and controlled manipulation both of gesture and the mode of perceiving gesture.

Finally, I return Priestley's discovery regarding the force between charges relative to the distance between them; to notions of motive and agency in communication—of appeal forged in complement with the "receiving" body. Rhetors do not "excite prey to self-motion" so much as provide incentive that prompts them to continue to move themselves[554]—i.e. do not awaken hidden electricity so much as *release* it. Priestley's rhetorical gesture is more centrifugal than Bulwer's or Sheridan's. It hinges on the

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electricity," and recommends this treatment to a friend. Joseph Priestley to Rev. R. Robins (Birmingham: Birmingham Library, January 7 1781).
[552] Priestley, *Heads*, 170.
[553] Heilbron, *Electricity* 331.
[554] Ibid., 313.

persuasive potential latent in the conductive possibility between particular bodies. Rhetorical gesture at once creates conditions of possibility, recognizes their existence, and fosters/guides them into particular forms.

CHAPTER FOUR:

THE RHETOR IN THE SPHERE: GESTURE AND CLIMATE IN GILBERT AUSTIN'S *CHIRONOMIA*

1 THE LITTLE ICE AGE

In *The Art of Speaking* (1768), James Burgh (1714-1775) points out a problem at the pulpit. Clergy, he says, complain of constituents "*dozing*," or even falling into "profound *sleep*."[555] Burgh: "I happened lately to hear the tenth chapter of Joshua read in a church in the country," he begins.[556] It is a chapter wrought with miracles and conquest. "Particularly I shall never forget [the preacher's] manner of expressing the twenty-second verse": "'*Open the mouth of the cave, and bring out those five kings*'" (the excitement begins) "which he uttered in the very manner, he would have expressed himself, as if he had said to his boy, '*Open my chamber door, and bring me my slippers from under the bed*.'"[557] The constituency, as much as the preacher lately appears "*wood* or *stone*," "cold and dead"—hands "*pocketed up*"; arms "*hang* by his sides as lank as if they were both *withered*"; head "*fixed*, as if the speaker had a perpetual crick in his neck"; eyes "cast *down* upon the ground, as if…receiving sentence of death."[558] Burgh attributes the sluggishness to "a total want of *energy*" in the delivery.[559] Part of the culprit is the pulpit itself, big and stocky, which obscures the body, presenting something of a talking head, "as Milton describes the Sun upon the orient wave."[560] The bigger problem is the speaker's temperament—less as it is seen than as it is felt—with "coolness and

[555] Burgh, *The Art of Speaking*, 34.
[556] Ibid., 11.
[557] Ibid.
[558] Ibid., 35, 44, 31.
[559] Ibid., 11.
[560] Ibid., 32.

indifference."[561] One *Spectator* writer captures this temperament, describing "speaking statues" that haunt churches: "Our *preachers* stand *stock-still* in the pulpit, and will not so much as move a *finger*…We can talk of life and death in *cold* blood, and keep our *temper* in a discourse, which turns upon everything that is *dear* to us."[562]

Parishioners are lulled on their velvet cushions by this "murder" of "elegant discourse"—which Burgh (like Sheridan and others) considers to be a particularly *national* interaction.[563] Even Burgh does not assert that the pulpit is a place for gesture, per se, so much as for "appropriate attitude."[564] The notion that gesture does not befit British orators (most especially those at the pulpit) in part owes to assumptions about climate-born temperament, as described by Galen in terms of humoral mixture, and propagated by DuBos (1670-1742), Montesquieu (1689-1755) and others. I contend that in larger part, the temerity about gesture owes to dated notions of energy, and the means to preserve bodily heat.[565] The ground for the assumptive relationship between climate and the appropriateness and effectiveness of physically animated oratory pre-dates thermometry, as Hasler, for example, in *De Logistica Medica* (1578) argues that body temperature accords with latitude, such that "Dwellers of the tropics were warm to the 4th degree while the Eskimos were cold to the 4th degree."[566] But even after thermometry

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[561] Ibid., 34.
[562] Anon., "Pronuntiatio est Vocis et Vultus et Gestus moderatio cum Venustate," *Spectator*, ed. Steele, Joshua (18 August 1711).
[563] Burgh, *The Art of Speaking*, 33.
[564] Although Burgh does suggest that "the sagacious Roman Catholics" keep up their numbers as well as *"please, entertain,* and *strike*" through copious use of gesture (ibid., 46).
[565] The term "energy" not coined by Thomas Young until 1807 (one year after *Chironomia*'s publication).
[566] Ingo Müller, *A History of Thermodynamics: The Doctrine of Energy and Empathy* (New York: Springer Publishing, 2010), 2. As Müller notes, the development and intervention of the thermometer in this sort of assumption are well documented in W. E. Knowles Middleton's *A History of the Thermometer and Its Uses in Meteorology* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1966). Müller keys in on the etymology for "temperature"—and thus, it seems, the operative principle

proves the contrary, DuBos maintains in *Critical Reflections* (1719) that "the character of our minds and inclinations depends very much on the quality of our blood," while "the quality of our blood depends vastly on the air we breathe," such that "people who dwell in different climates differ so much in sprit and inclinations."[567] According to this variance, "some countries have, generally speaking, a greater variation in their tone of voice, employ acuter and more frequent accents in their pronunciation, and are more active in their gesture than others."[568] The bias toward "temperate" climes and thus actions is perhaps plainest in Montesquieu's *The Spirit of the Laws* (1748): "The heat of the climate can be so excessive that the body there will be absolutely without strength. So, prostration will pass even to the spirit; no curiosity, no noble enterprise, no generous sentiment; inclinations will all be passive there."[569]

Fagan observes that "environmental determinism" is still a dirty word among historians—"You certainly cannot argue that climate drove history in a direct and causative way"—and that the stigma attached to such determinism keeps scholars from assessing aspects of human being and climate that in fact seem to respond to and shape

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for climatically-determined gestures—noting that "Temperature—also *temperament*" comes from "*temperare*—to mix. It was mostly used when liquids are mixed which cannot afterwards be separated, like wine and water. The passive voice is employed—the '—*tur*' of the present tense, third person singular—which indicates that some liquid *is being mixed* with another one" (Müller, *Thermodynamics* 1).

[567] Abbé DuBos, *Critical Reflections on Poetry, Painting and Music. With an Inquiry into the Rise and Progress of the Theatrical Entertainments of the Ancients Vol. 1*, 1719, 5th ed. (London: John Nurse, 1768), 177-78.

[568] Abbé DuBos, *Critical Reflections on Poetry, Painting and Music. With an Inquiry into the Rise and Progress of the Theatrical Entertainments of the Ancients Vol. 2*, 1719, 5th ed. (London: John Nurse, 1768), 348. Following this logic, and the apparent chill in English blood, DuBos says "An Englishman, against whom sentence of death is pronounced, appears with less agitation than an Italian condemned to a small pecuniary fine" (ibid).

[569] Montesquieu, *The Spirit of the Laws*, 1748, eds. Anne M. Cohler, Basia Carolyn Miller, and Harold Samuel Stone (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 234.

one another.[570] Fagan, rather, asserts that human relationships to the environment "have always been in a complex state of flux. To ignore them is to neglect one of the dynamic backdrops of the human experience."[571] In this spirit, I would like to return to the question of the British gesture at the turn of the nineteenth century, not as an in-born quality of blood but as purveyor of a different kind of rhetorical heat. As we have seen (Chapter 2), Hume moves away from the climatically-formed action by claiming that gestures infect "knots of companions" through proximity, not place—"sympathy or contagion of manners, none of the influence of air or climate."[572] Several Elocutionists follow suit. But the buy-in to temperature-derived action outlives its supposed scientific veracity through what Burgh and others call "custom."[573] Burgh, Walker, and many others advise that the decorous, phlegmatic gesture is enough for England—and not only effective enough, but also most appropriate for demure and rational British audiences "where there are so *many* so *capable* of judging."[574]

Against conventional wisdom on the imprudence of inflammatory public gesture—especially at the pulpit—Gilbert Austin (1753-1847), who is also a clergyman, makes an argument for gesture as means to energy transfer. Austin's "acclimatizing" system of gesture is contingent on the dynamic inter-relationships of heat, motion, and bodies as reconceived in the late eighteenth-century, a model that posits a "kinetic" rather

[570] Brian Fagan, *Little Ice Age: How Climate Made History, 1300 to 1850* (New York: Perseus Publishing, 2000), xiv.
[571] Ibid., xv.
[572] David Hume, "Of National Characters," 1748, in *Essays and Treatises on Several Subjects Vol. 1*. (Basil: J. J. Tourneisen, 1793), 218, 220. Resonances of manner are imitation-based: "the human mind is of a very imitative nature; nor is it possible for any set of men to converse often together, without acquiring a similitude of manners, and communicating to each other their vices as well as their virtues" (ibid., 218).
[573] Burgh, *The Art of Speaking*, 46.
[574] Ibid.

than effluvial model of heat. I argue that examining this system not only re-captures the use of British rhetorical gesture in Austin's time, but also provides occasion to consider the absence of talk of work, energy, and entropy in current models of gesture.

Austin's gesture is timely given its coincidence with the coldest period of the "Little Ice Age."[575] The Little Ice Age extended from roughly the sixteenth through nineteenth centuries, through what Fagan calls "a zigzag of climate shifts, few lasting more than a quarter century," characterized by "cycles of intensely cold winters and easterly winds, then switched abruptly to years of heavy spring and early summer rains, mild winters, and frequent Atlantic storms."[576] 1805 to 1820 marked the coldest years of the period for most Europeans, but the roughly the first half of the eighteenth century was a close second.[577] This phase was particularly acute in Ireland, where Austin wrote and published *Chironomia* in 1806.

2 THE RHETOR IN THE SPHERE

Chironomia is perhaps best remembered for Austin's Figure 18: the rhetor in the sphere (Figure 5). Stood on a couple of steps, right foot a little before the left, the rhetor's right arm extends and fingers spread. His left arm hangs near his side at a forty-five degree angle from the straight of his waistcoat. Palms face us. The sphere is about twice the rhetor's height and resembles a globe, boasting equator, two approximate tropics and several longitudinal lines. Austin even borrows for it topographic vocabulary, referring in

[575] Fagan, *The Little Ice Age*, 170. The term "Little Ice Age" is coined by Francois Matthes in *Transactions of the American Geophysical Union* (1939); the date parameters are much disputed, but last roughly three to five centuries, characterized by cycles of intense cooling and heating due to "glacial advancing" (see "Climatic and Natural Events" figure in Fagan's front matter for rough temperature fluctuations).
[576] Ibid., xiii.
[577] Ibid., 132, 170.

his chapter on arm positions to hemispheres, horizons, elevations, and latitude. "The human figure being supposed to be so placed within this sphere," Austin explains, "that the centre of the breast shall coincide with its centre, and that the diameter of the horizontal circle perpendicular to a radius drawn to the projecting point, shall pass through the shoulders, the positions and motions of the arms are referred to, and determined by these circles and their intersections."[578] The rhetor seems sufficiently immured. One might suppose (as would become the popular criticism leveled at Austin) that he is being overly meticulous, and determining. One might also suspect Austin is nervous about something—that he has, in effect, put the rhetor in there for his own good.

For all that Austin would stay the rhetor, he also means to unleash her. Like rhetoricians before him, Austin links gesture to the arousal of passion in audience, and the arousal of audience passion to belief. But rhetorical strategy, for Austin, becomes a matter of distributing rhetorical heat through gesture. The British rhetor and auditor are cool to the point of being disengaged. If Austin can heat them up, he thinks, he can rivet them (or precisely un-rivet them). But, as a preacher especially, he has to be careful. Passion unleashed is notoriously devious, and hard to call back. If a reasonable soul is "a calm sea, with sweet, pleasant, and rippling streams," the passionate one is "the raging gulf, swelling with waves, surging by tempests, mining the stony rocks, and endeavoring to overthrow the mountains."[579] No one wants to lose a rhetor, or a parishioner, to the storm.

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[578] Gilbert Austin, *Chironomia: Or, a Treatise for Rhetorical Delivery*, 1806, eds. Mary Margaret Robb and Lester Thonssen (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press 1966), 310.
[579] Thomas Wright, *The Passions of the Minde* (London: Printed by Valentine Simmers for Walter Burre, 1601), 59.

Austin's stated objectives for *Chironomia* are 1) to describe a system of delivery that ensures orderly, reasonable communication between subjects; and 2) in a world without video, to "capture" action in order to replicate it. Just under the surface, however, *Chironomia* gives us an extensive theoretical account of gesture's weathering effect on bodies. For Austin, the effect is more than metaphor. His theory has much to do with Britain's climate, and what by the late-seventeenth century was a national fascination not with its measurement and predictability—both possibilities made by the development and circulation of thermometers and barometers—but also with its ultimate uncontrollability, and the effects of its extremes as the Little Ice Age drew near its end. Below, I explore aspects of Austin's rhetoric in relation to Britain's then climate, and popular perceptions of it. The first segment looks at Austin's depiction of a cold country with potential energy for eloquence. The second section takes up the relationship of gesture to energy, and the final section addresses Austin's notational system as means to capture the warmth of motion, and to increase popular participation in that conservation effort.

3 RHETORICAL CLIMATE

The holy gesture is particularly taboo for reasons that John Henley (1692-1756) elaborates in *An Essay Upon Pronunciation and Gesture* (1750). This gesture betrays "a fantastical humour"—madness; labor; "fanatical superstition"; and impurity.[580] Gesture opposed clergy declare "*Action* is unworthy of their *Ministry*…a scandalous Thing for those *God* hath honored with so serious and sublime a Function, to be studying, in the very Exercise of it, how to *frame their Voice* and *move their Body*, when they should

[580] John Henley, *An Essay Upon Pronunciation and Gesture, Founded Upon the Best Rules and Authorities of the Ancients, Ecclesiastical and Civil, and Adorned With the Finest Rules of Elocution* (London: C. Hitch, 1750): 10-11.

think of nothing but his Glory."[581] To win souls by gesture—"all the little Fopperies of *Motion*"—is "to sink *Religion* into *Sense*, and to make that which is *spiritual* depend upon *carnal Worship, human Intervention,* and *external Fluorish*."[582] Henley counters that good delivery reveals natural or supernatural grace: "*God Almighty* having made the *Body* of such a *movable Mein,* and of such *Members* as dispose it for *Motion*, that it ought to *move* sometimes, either as the *Soul directs*, or as the *Body* itself requires."[583] As such, gesture taps the auditor's intellect: "when a man is hearing a sermon, he desires mightily to see the *Face* of the *Preacher*; and if his *Pew* deprives him of that Happiness, he goes Home with less Satisfaction."[584] It is also means by which to suffuse "*passionate Rapture*" across hearers.[585]

But Henley's own argument suggests another objection to the divine gesture: it promotes enthusiasm—a certain temperamental susceptibility. This susceptibility (or the fear, at large, of promoting irrationality through gesture) is evident not only in the many approbations to preachers to contain their gestures, but in descriptions of the contamination of imagination through *heat*. Such bodily contamination is evident in John Phelps' (dates) *The Human Barometer* (1743), the subject of which "is the Influence of the Atmosphere upon the Human Frame, according to the Differences of its Gravity or

[581] Ibid., 11.
[582] Ibid., 12.
[583] Ibid., 143. The argument for increasing gesture in the face of national temperament is little precedented before Austin. In Henley's case, the call is not exceptionally well received given Henley's reputation for Methodism, showmanship and spectacle; as Pope addressed him, "good old Stage Preacher at once and Zany of thy age." Alexander Pope, "The Dunciad," in *The Poems of Alexander Pope, Vol. V.*, ed. James Sutherland (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1943), 175.
[584] Henley, *Pronunciation and Gesture*, 137.
[585] Ibid., 152. E.g. A famous preacher speaking on "the growing *Vices* of his *Parish*…fell *a-weeping* bitterly," and called out "with a most *feeling* and *pitiful Voice*, *And if thou forsake us,* Good God! *What will become of us?*" which "brought all his *Hearers* to the same…*Tenderness* and *Tears*, if not also to a better Sense of their Duty; so mightily were they mov'd with the *Tone* and the *Gesture* that accompanied *those languishing expressions*."

Lightness, heat or Cold, Dryness or Moisture, as these Effects are produced by various Seasons" or "the various Accidental Alterations that occur" by way of human interference. Phelps lands on another spectacular preacher to make his case for the propagation of too much heat with gesture:

> There mounted on his Tripod *Whitfield* stands,
> Silence and Awe canonick Garb commands,
> With Arms extended see he apes *Saint Paul*,
> And counts his own an Apostolick call,
> Gesture and Voice betray the heated Brain
> In Groans his Converts echo back again,
> And Souls impress'd with Thoughts of Grace, or Sin,
> Expectorate their Sense in solemn Din.
> These of enthusiastick Tranports boast,
> But are to Argument and Reason lost. [586]

Phelps lingers on the reverberation—and crescendo—of this heat-via-gesture between orator and auditor. "Enthusiastick transports" capitulate sense to frenzy. Even more revealing of this bodily susceptibility is Phelps' footnote here, which qualifies "Solemn Din": "whenever this notable Divine thinks fit to put a more than ordinary Emphasis upon a Sentence, or to express himself with a greater Degree of *Warmth or Pathos* than usual, one or other of the more Zealous Kind of Auditors, as a Sign of being uncommonly

[586] John Phelps, *The Human Barometer: Or, Living Weather-Glass* (London: M. Cooper, 1743), 7.

affected, vents his inward Emotion in a deep hollow groaning Sound, which spreads itself immediately amongst the Crowd, and produces an universal Hum."[587]

Rhetorical heat is depicted as conflagrable "thing." *The Human Barometer* illustrates some of the assumptions that Austin contravenes in favor of his theory and practice of rhetorical transmission and conservation via and in terms of heat, like the contiguity between air and blood: "Fermented Air too much our Blood exhales / Clogs Natures Wheels, its usual Vigour fails / Just in Proportion fares it with the Mind / Invention low, and Judgment weak we find."[588] Here we see the internal flame that was doused or fueled by that interaction; and the risk to the rhetor of engaging the body's "senseless Matter": "To kindle in the Veins a feverish Fire / Convulsive Nerves unhinge the inward Frame / Disturb the Judgment and the mind inflame / Capricious Fancy seizes Reason's Throne / And holds the Province due to that alone."[589] Bodily inclinations, including gestures, are like a flame's. Thomas Willis (1621-1675) describes these inclinations as "continually renewed almost every moment," as certain parts "are consumed by burning, and fly away."[590] Hermann Boerhaave (1688-1738) calls fire the instrument of all motion, noting that if man were "entirely destitute of heat he would immediately freeze into a statue."[591] Fire is described in chemical terms: a heap of subtle contiguous particles, existing in a swift motion, with continued generation of some,

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[587] Ibid., 21, emphasis added. I am tempted to add a footnote about academic conferences here.
[588] Ibid., 19.
[589] Ibid., 15, 19. On the soul being fiery in both act and substance, before Pierre Gassendi (1592-1655), Democritus, Epicurus, Lucritius, Hippocrates, Plato, Pythagoras, Aristotle, and Galen "shook hands." Thomas Willis, *Two Discourses Concerning the Soul of Brutes,* tr. Samuel Portage (London: JBT Dring, 1681), 45.
[590] Willis, *Brutes*, 29. Willis follows Gassendi in conceiving of heat as distinct, particulate matter.
[591] Hermann Boerhaave, *The Elements of Chemistry,* 1724, tr. Philip Miller for *The Gardeners Dictionary* (London: John and Francis Rivington, 1768).

renewed by the falling off of others. This fiery body continually seeks, incorporates, sloughs off, then again "inspires" nutrient.

The consumptive aspect of this fire applied to rhetorical delivery is illustrated not only in cautionary tales like *The Human Barometer*, but also in elocution's proponents, like Burgh, who says that true eloquence "*ravishes*" those "who are within its reach": "The hearer finds himself as *unable* to resist, as to blow out a *conflagration* with the *breath* of his *mouth*, or to *stop* the stream of a river with his *hand*."[592] Austin represents a shift in the depiction of rhetorical heat from containable matter to heat as rhetorical process—one which might be practiced, cultivated, and interrupted. This shift introduces into theories of rhetorical delivery concepts like atmosphere, temperature, conservation, and work. I argue that Austin's theory of gestural effect posits persuasion metaphorically and literally as a function of rhetorical climate. Austin depicted Britain as a cold country, in desperate need of infusing its oratory with heat. Like Priestley, Austin understands rhetorical persuasion to be an inertial process of influence transferred across and through bodies. I examine what Austin takes to be the logistics of the infusion of rhetorical effect between rhetors. If rhetoric is a process of energy transfer, then ethical and effective rhetorical practice should conserve heat.

4 CONSERVATIVE PERSUASIONS

"The paucity of orators in the fertile and magnificent field of religious discourses, particularly in Great Britain and Ireland," Austin says owes to "the beaten path"—that is, "the custom of reading the sermons, which has obtained exclusively in the church of

[592] Burgh, *The Art of Speaking*, 29.

England."[593] Preachers are still. "Fashion has bound up in chains of ice, the warmth and the eloquence of our country."[594]

Joseph Black's (1728-1799) "discovery" of latent heat marks an important step away from the transmission of rhetorical fire described by Willis, Burgh, and others, which is consumptive and concrete. In Glasgow, a student of William Cullen's, Black experiments on melting snow, describing Boerhaave's "heat in matter" as "a demand which I cannot satisfy entirely."[595] For example, he says, "if we take 1000, or more, different kinds of matter, such as metals, stones, salts, woods, cork, feathers, wool, water and variety of other fluids, although they be all at first of different heats, let them be place together in the same room without a fire, and into which the sun does not shine, the heat will be communicated from the hotter of these bodies to the colder, during some hours perhaps…at the end of which time, if we apply a thermometer to them all in succession, it will point to exactly the same degree."[596] Similarly, Black observes that at the turn of spring, "the masses of ice or snow melt with a very slow progress, and require a long time."[597] The "vulgar opinion," Black says, is that hot bodies "lose something" when communicating heat.[598] But Black concludes that "the quantity of heat" and "its general strength or intensity" are different things. The latter is measurable by

[593] Austin, *Chironomia*, 232. Quoting Sheridan: "And this [total suppression of tones, looks, and gestures], it is to be feared, is too much the state of pulpit elocution in general in the church of England...To be pleased, we must feel, and we are pleased with feeling. The Presbyterians are moved, the Methodists are moved…The very Quakers are moved" (ibid.,7).
[594] Ibid., 233.
[595] John Robison, *Lectures on the Elements of Chemistry, Delivered in the University of Edinburgh by the Late Joseph Black, M.D., Vol. I* (Philadelphia: Mathew Carey, 1807), 29; Jennifer Coopersmith, *Energy, the Subtle Concept* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 78-82.
[596] Ibid., 74.
[597] Ibid., 115.
[598] Ibid., 24.

temperature; the former he calls "latent" heat: "If, for example, we have one pound of water in one vessel, and two pounds in another, and these two quantities of water are equally hot…the two pounds must contain twice the *quantity* of heat that is contained in one pound."[599] Black holds that bodies in contact will reach the same heat intensity, and that heat is not "produced" and does not disappear in such interaction.

Like Priestley, Austin views the rhetorical transfer of ideas and passions as a bodily process that yields in part to agentic control and manipulation. Austin, in a sense, sees gestures as "state changes." The British will have to work hard to gesture, in part because subtle movements and keeping extremities near the body's core conserves heat (one can imagine how that physiological necessity might quick morph into decorum), which would have been critical to everyday life in the Little Ice Age. Austin encourages the British to grow their gestures, in part, because the warmth the rhetor generates will come back to her, understood both as individual and representative of the body politic.

While Austin's warrant essentialists along familiar lines, it is less about rhetorical capacity as a determinative function of certain bodies, and much more about the relationship between rhetorical capacity and rhetorical constraints (to "weatherize" Bitzer) that inhere differently in different rhetorical climates. The British, Austin says, "require only attention to the single point of delivery to place their talents upon equal terms with all the excellence of antiquity. The want of this attention chills the ardour, and weakens the splendour of their compositions; whereas, the very purpose of animated delivery would warm and excite them."[600] At stake is the sphere of one's influence, the loss of one's listener (and her potential conviction) to the cold. Britain's rhetor keeps her

[599] Ibid., 75.
[600] Austin, *Chironomia*, 18.

gestures tighter and smaller, or leaves them off altogether, Austin suggests, his rhetoric suffers the same shorter reach. That is, a smaller sphere of effect and shallower impression on those touched. The British will "continue to be mere reasoners, or generally something less" if people do not commit to moving one another.[601]

The connection that Austin makes between heat and gesture is vindicated in the experiments Count Graf Van Rumford (née Benjamin Thompson, 1753-1814), who makes the decisive break from the caloric (fluid) model of heat and is credited for the kinetic theory of heat that gains ground in the late eighteenth century.[602] The bearing of this experiment on a theory of gestural heat will become quickly clear. Superintending "the boring of cannon" in Munich, Rumford notes "I was struck with the very considerable degree of heat which a bras gun acquires, in a short time, in being bored; and with the still more intense heat…of the metallic chips separated from it by the borer."[603] To explore this phenomenon, Rumford devised a contraption comprising a cannon, a boring cylinder, and "for the express purpose of generating heat by *friction*" a force of horses.[604] When the horses moved, the borer was shoved against the cylinder. Rumford found that after 960 revolutions around its axis, the temperature of the cylinder had risen from 60°F (air temperature) to 130°F. He then amassed an audience, submerged the cylinder and bore in a massive tub of water, and as the horses walked their revolutions around the contraption, brought the water to a boil: "at 2 hours 30 minutes,"

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[601] Austin, *Chironomia*, 26.
[602] For more on Rumford (Massachusetts-born, asylum seeker in Germany and France; spy for America, England, Bavaria, and France; knight in England; count in Bavaria; cursory husband of Lavoisier's widow; founder of the Royal Institution in 1800; mentor to Humphrey Davy and Thomas Young, and much more), see Nicholas Delbanco's *The Count of Concord* (Champaign, IL: Dalkey Archive Press 2008).
[603] Benjamin Rumford, *Count of Concord*, "An Inquiry Concerning the Source of the Heat Which is Excited by Friction," *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society*, 88 (1798): 81.
[604] Ibid., 83-4.

Rumford writes in his report to the Royal Society, "it [the water] ACTUALLY BOILED! It would be difficult to describe the surprise and astonishment expressed in the countenances of the by-standers, on seeing so large a quantity of cold water heated, and actually made to boil, without any fire."[605] "What is heat?—Is there any such thing as an *igneous fluid*?"[606] Rumford asks. "The source of the heat generated by friction, in these experiments, appeared evidently to be *inexhaustible*":

> It is hardly necessary to add, that any thing which any *insulated* body, or system of bodies, can continue to furnish *without limitation*, cannot possibly be a *material substance*: and it appears to me to be extremely difficult, if not quite impossible, to form any distinct idea of any thing, capable of being excited, and communicated, in the manner the heat was excited and communicated, in these experiments, except it be MOTION.[607]

Austin recommends the incorporation, or embodiment of appeals in such as way as to infuse them through motion. May there not be "some kind of gesture suited to the gravity of our manners, and the nature of our habits, that shall not shock by affectation, nor yet suffer admirable compositions"?[608] He elaborates: "the cool, the solid, and the cultivated understanding of the British speaker, under the direction of rational principles, and roused into energy on great and interesting occasions, is capable, as well in action as

[605] Ibid., 92.
[606] Ibid., 98.
[607] Ibid., 99.
[608] Austin, *Chironomia*, 140.

in composition, of all that is graceful and persuasive, and even on all the energetic and irresistible powers of delivery."[609]

> A slight movement of the head, a look of the eye, a turn of the hand, a judicious pause or interruption of gesture, or a change of position in the feet often illuminates the meaning of a passage, and sends it full of light and warmth into the understanding…the whole powers of the man must be wrought up to their highest energy, or they become…frigid.[610]

The sole answer "the reproach of frigid indifference which is charged against our public speakers," Austin theorizes, is literally to heat up the local atmosphere through motion.[611]

5 DEAD WATER AND THE RAGING SEA

An English diarist in 1703 describes rain as "a soothing Anodyne to my perplexing vexations, and strikes unison to my constitution and falls in pat with my humour."[612] The diarist goes on to call it "weather as chiefly settles the fibres of the brain and ideas even."[613] This description is consonant with eighteenth century accounts that depict the climate and human body as existing in a kind of symbiosis.[614] Rain is not only seen as a health benefit in terms of vapors and humors by physicians and others at the time, but it is also associated with fertilization and fecundity, with agricultural

[609] Ibid., xi.
[610] Ibid., 497.
[611] Ibid., xi.
[612] Jan Golinski, *British Weather in the Climate of Enlightenment* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press 2007), 33.
[613] Ibid.
[614] Ibid.

productivity, and economic stability.[615] With this connotation, Austin says that if rhetor's delivery be "dry"—characterized by "mean gestures, constrained motions, rigidity of the joints, and stiffness of the body with short steps and doubtful or timid movements"—not only will his message probably fail to take hold, but he will come up bereft of subsequent inspiration, as well. "If his manner of speaking be confined to mere dry dissertation, he will proceed coldly and uniformly throughout; but if his argument be maintained by rhetorical ornament and illustration; and if he appeal to the passions of his audience, he will himself be excited, and the interest he feels, however rapidly he may proceed, will discover itself in each different period in the following order"[616]: eyes, then gesture, then utterance. The opposite of varied gesture, Austin says, and quick physical adaptation to context, is "barrenness."[617] Thus his is a very specific and localized charge to the inhabitants of the British islands: "Eloquence of the highest character ought, therefore, it should seem, to be the abundant produce of such a soil."[618]

Physical and mental health and the material environment through which the individual moved were taken at this time to be very much bound up. The same diarist speaks of rain discomposing him, the summer humidity that "made me feint and almost swoon and even wasted me to [failure of spirit]," and of rainy October giving him a melancholy genius. He goes on to say that the weather "chiefly settles the fibres of the brain and ideas even" and that the atmosphere quite literally descends into his soul. While Austin does not, of course, make the argument that one can by her gestures invoke weather patterns—like you shake a fist and the clouds change—he does seem to suggest

[615] Ibid., 58.
[616] Austin, *Chironomia*, 380.
[617] Ibid., 455.
[618] Ibid., 18.

that you transform the air by how you move, and that rhetorical energy communicates between bodies through that transformation—not unlike Priestley's theory of extra-sympathetic transmission. As noted with Hawse, Austin takes rhetorical energy to change the constitution of bodies on both sides of a rhetorical exchange. Sentiments, he says, are conveyed "warm" from the rhetor's body to the body of the listener, such that both the heat and engagement with subject at hand are preserved. But again, Austin emphasizes, the hand has to be positioned just so, the angle just right if one is to keep oneself and one's auditor in the narrow between dead water and raging sea. That exigence—the body's own barometer-like sensitivity to rhetorical climate—is shown in Phelps' *The Human Barometer*. While "The pois'd *Barometer* will sink or rise / In Mode proportion'd to the changing Skies,"

> Th' incumbent Air is Circulation's Spring,
> And changes various as its Weight will bring;
> The Air serene, from Clouds and Vapours clear,
> Not burnt with Heat, nor chill'd with Cold severe;
> Adjusts the Motion of the circling Blood,
> The Pulse beats right, the Circulation's good;
> Vapours and Storms aerial Weight abate,
> Our Blood runs low, and languid is our State,
> If Cold or Heat prevail to great Excess,
> More than we ought, we then perspire less,
> Our passive Body Alterations finds,

And with our Bodies sympathize our Minds.[619]

Austin wants to help his reader navigate this narrow between dead water and the sea of "excess."[620] Bodies will respond to and condition rhetorical climes: "All the strong passions of the mind do indeed communicate themselves so suddenly and irresistibly to the body, that vehement gesticulations can hardly be avoided…Thus anger threatens, affright starts, joy laughs and dances."[621] Again, the language of infection: "And if a public speaker, conscious of his own deficiency, should be contented to relinquish the honour of aspiring to the name of an orator, he must carefully guard himself against manifesting any emotion of the mind, and limit his efforts to dry expositions and frigid reasonings" (138). Otherwise, Austin's rhetorical gesture sweeps whole bodies—that is, it is not restricted to distant corners (as Bulwer's sometimes is): "The parts of the human figure which are brought into action in gesture, cannot, in truth, be considered separate: for every muscle, every nerve, over which men can exercise voluntary action, contributes in some measure to the perfection of gesture. [The most distinguished parts of the body which effect the principal gestures] are: 1. The head. 2. The shoulders. 3. The trunk or

[619] Phelps, *The Human Barometer*, 14-15.
[620] *Chironomia*, thus, is divided into twenty-three chapters. Austin speaks to all of what he considers to be the manipulable elements of delivery in three subsections: "Of the Voice," "Of the Countenance," and "Of Gesture in General." Then he works through a few of the different vocations that mandate rhetorical delivery in "Of Recitation and Declamation" (preaching), "Of Oratory," "Of Acting," and "Of the Ancient Pantomimes." The second half of the book focuses on gesture specifically (which he suggests is especially neglected in rhetorical studies), beginning with "Of Notation of Gesture," moving through "Of the Position of the Feet and Lower Limbs" and "Of the Positions and Motions of the Hands," and "Of the Head, the Eyes, the Shoulders, and Body" (and several others), to the timing of gesture, the classification of gesture, transitions between gestures, intermissions between gestures, and ending finally with "Of Grace" (which is on deftness and intuition).
[621] Austin, *Chironomia*, 138.

body. 4. The arms. 5. The hands and fingers. 6. The lower limbs and knees. 7. The feet."[622]

Austin advocates that heat is learnable—processual—pointing to plants that best climate-imposed limitations to growth as advertisement for British gesture. "There may possibly be nations whose livelier feeling incline them to more gesticulation than is common among us."[623] "There are also countries," he says, "in which plants of excellent use to man grow spontaneously."[624] Gestures also grow: "these [plants that grow spontaneously in southern climes], by care and culture, are found to thrive also in colder countries."[625]

6 ATMOSPHERE

Ludovicus Cresollius tells the story of Demosthenes' gift of tears. The most celebrated orators, Cresollius says, and Austin recounts (he draws frequently on the ancients to elaborate his theory), "used formerly to shed tears in their pleadings."[626] But Demosthenes, "the light of Greece," perfected it. He "made this such an established and regular custom, that he seemed by it alone to gain his causes, and to raise the trophies of his victorious eloquence in the theatre of Athens."[627] To explore how it is that emotion manifest, like tears, so readily moves between rhetor and audience—and so toward answering the larger question, as to how it is that energy can communicate between bodies during rhetorical exchange—Austin consults Pliny the Elder, who says eyes are

[622] Ibid., 294.
[623] Ibid., 11.
[624] Ibid.
[625] Ibid.
[626] Ibid., 113.
[627] Ibid.

"savage, fierce, flaming," and "burn."[628] "Whence is drawn that moisture, in grief so abundant, and so quickly furnished, or where at other times does it remain?" Then, "the eyes, like appropriate vessels, receive and transmit to [the mind] the visible particles."[629] Austin extrapolates that *eyes feel*. That is, they seem to receive affectations outwardly and in-fold them: "The whole person seems to be in some measure affected by this influence of another's eyes," Austin says, "but the eyes themselves feel it with the most lively sensibility."[630]

Austin suggests that eyes can affect co-directionally as speech acts progress—a kind of feedback loop between speaker and hearer that generates kinesis, in this example, at both ends (as opposed to a dissemination model, which would read more like the speaker projecting his or her sentiment, which the audience unilaterally absorbs). The notion of rhetorical climates thus circles back to the question of *capacity* explored in Chapters 1 and 3. What I argue should be thought of as a rhetorical microclimate is thus ultimately co-produced and circulated with the seer, rooted in the motions of both rather than solely the rhetor's mind (Figure 6). "We seem to have the power, as it were," Austin says, "of touching each other by the sense of sight."[631] Then, returning for a moment to the rhetor's sphere of practice, "The line of the direction of the axis of the eye, however invisible and imaginary, seems as if in effect it could be seen, and that in every instance throughout a great assembly, crossing and radiating in a thousand directions from the centre of every orb of sight."[632]

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[628] Ibid., 117.
[629] Ibid.
[630] Ibid., 101.
[631] Ibid., 102.
[632] Ibid.

"Of the Countenance" chapter illustrates the susceptibility of the body to the motions of others. Here Austin addresses the face, and what the eyes, brow, lips and cheeks indelibly express. Quintilian he quotes on the matter: "upon the countenance the hearers depend, and into it they examine before the speaker opens his lips, the countenance is the object of approbation or dislike, it gives a deeper knowledge of the speaker's sentiments than his words, and often says more than the language can express."[633] Austin piggybacks on this, drawing our attention to the importance of backing words with visible sentiment to ensure harmony of language and action ("ionic" vectors): "Hence it appears that the orator who would move others, must appear to be moved himself: that is, he must express his emotions in his countenance and by his manner, otherwise his language will be contradicted by his looks; and his audience will be more inclined to believe them, which are natural and sure indications of the inward mind, than his words, which may be easily feigned, and may differ much from his real sentiments."[634] Note first, that bodily action can actually trump language in terms of net rhetorical effect; second, that manner can be decisively "read"; and third, that even as Austin plugs this system for deliberately motivating sentiment, he can't help but acknowledge the indomitable push of concurrent inclination (and that it will always shape motion to some extent).

To explore the logistics of "reading" bodies, Austin turns to Darwin, who says that there are two ways by which this happens. "First by having observed the effects of [the passions], as of fear or anger on our own bodies, we know at sight when others are

[633] Ibid., 86.
[634] Ibid., 88.

under the influence of these affections."[635] Secondly, and importantly for Austin's theorization of gesture's warming effects: "When we put ourselves into the attitude that any passion naturally occasions, we soon in some degree acquire the passion; hence when those that scold indulge themselves in loud oaths and violent actions of the arms, they increase their anger by the mode of expressing themselves: and on the contrary, the counterfeited smile of pleasure in disagreeable company soon brings along with it a portion of the reality, as is well illustrated by Mr. Burke."[636] It is *Burke* in *Essay on the Sublime and Beautiful* who rounds out the case. He puts the body temporally *before* the mind in terms of the experience of passion—so "when the body is disposed by any means whatsoever, to such emotions as it would acquire by the means of a certain passion, it will of itself excite something very like that passion in the mind."[637] Here is the crux of Austin's case, too—the bodily register of persuasion happens first.

"In high passion," Austin puts it, "the order is. 1. The eyes. 2. The countenance in general. 3. The gestures. 4. Language."[638] Note, predictably, that language is the last place into which the warmth suffuses, what is left from the first three having taken warmth to manifest expression. What of an impetus gets into the language is only the remainder, which is why Austin says the rhetor does well to capitalize on the first three, as well as why she well to be as convicted as possible. The more passion with which you start, and the more efficiently (by way of practice) you can embody that, the more heat makes it through to your word: "A public speaker sometimes delivers his sentiments from the impression of the moment; when these are ardent and generous, nothing further is to

[635] Ibid., 181.
[636] Ibid.
[637] Ibid., 182.
[638] Ibid., 381-82.

be wished, than that he may have been well practiced and instructed beforehand in all the powers of language, as well as in all the external arts of eloquence. Words of fire will then be supplied, and lightnings will flash as splendid as irresistible; and voice, countenance, and gesture will be such as expression, force, and gracefulness demand."[639] Austin suggests that you can train your body to acclimatize through motion. One "conserves heat" as the sentiment moves through the parts to language. It is this store that makes possible the "words of fire" and "lightnings" that will translate to sensation in your hearer.

The storm language here is not accidental: "Even in the 'tempest and whirlwind of his passion,' he shall be still in possession of himself, and never abandon himself to undue extravagance. All that energy, brilliancy, or pathos can require, may, in the pulpit, in parliament, and at the bar be kept within such bounds, as shall better produce the intended effect, than the most licentious indulgence."[640] Austin is careful to present "high passion" as a cautionary tale—as storms worth preparing for, but not necessarily seeking out. Rhetorical agency is more atmospheric than individual. Heat conservation is a critical part of appeal.

7 CALIBRATING RHETORICAL CONDITIONS

The article beside Austin's "A Method of Cutting Very Fine Screws, and Screws of Two or More Threads, & c." in *Transactions of the Royal Irish Academy* in 1803 (one of his side avocations was philosophical chemistry) is the Reverend Arthur McGwire's "Description of a Self-Registering Barometer." The barometer he describes consists of

[639] Ibid., 443.
[640] Ibid., 444-45.

mainly household items like a piece of paper "upon which are hours and minutes marked by perpendicular lines,"[641] a fixed scale, a pencil, "a circular piece of light wood, cemented to the tube of the barometer, of a size sufficient to make the barometer float at its proper height,"[642] and a wooden cover (you would also need a certain amount of mercury, and a reservoir for it). The article comprises a kind of "do-it-yourself" description of how to make a portable barometer, beginning with, "The paper AAAA moves horizontally and presses against the pencil D. The pencil would trace an horizontal line upon the paper if the mercury remained stationary; but suppose the mercury descends in the cylinder of the barometer one inch, it will rise in the tube of the reservoir one inch from N to O."[643] The height of the mercury, he explains, would be ticked on the paper by the pencil about every hour and one minute.

The "personal barometer" emphasizes the extent to which meteorological instruments seem to have been popularized in the course of the eighteenth century—and with the instruments, of course, weather monitoring and prediction. Along this line, Golinski shares in *British Weather* the story of how in the 1720s, James Jurin—secretary of the Royal Society—began an effort to coordinate weather recording in Britain and in many of its colonies: "Dozens of weather recorders were inspired," he reports, "with a sense of public-spiritedness to contribute to this project. Journals were received from many places in Britain, continental Europe, and North America."[644] Most of those then just laid about in the Society archive. But by 1774—about twenty years before Austin publishes *Chironomia*—the Society "was beginning to compile and publish its own

[641] Arthur McGwire, "Description of a Self-Registering Barometer," *Transactions of the Royal Irish Society* (1803), 141.
[642] Austin, *Chironomia*, 142.
[643] Ibid., 143.
[644] Golinski, *British Weather*, 55.

weather record, using instruments kept at its London premises. The next decade saw the publication of journals from Bristol, Edinburgh, Somerset, Montreal, the Coast of Coromandel in India, and the Coast of Labrador in North America."[645]

Austin was known among his contemporaries for developing a system for the written transcription of gesture as a part of language, a system that allowed, for example, a speech transcriber to indicate precisely the gestures accompanying the verbal arguments. This notational system is often held up by his contemporaries (as well as later historians of rhetoric) as an example of Austin's own chilliness—of his desire to, following the sense of the time, contain the energetic unruliness of gesture. Hawhee and I engage Austin's notational system as a means not to minimize, but rather to capture the warmth of argument. It is also means to increase popular participation, in parallel to a contemporary popular uptake of meteorological research, in that conservation effort. As the Royal Society enlists transcribers of weather, Austin means to put the recording instrument in the hands of the people, both as means to garner data, and for divining trends to inform elocutionary practice:

> Every man has to begin for himself; and hence few are willing to venture upon the labor of contriving a system, and choose rather to trust to the gesture suggested by the moment, than hazard the more dangerous exhibition of gestures imperfectly conceived, and which will consequently be imperfectly executed. Each public speaker therefore falls into a manner of his own, as it is called, which is pardoned as being *his way*, and which is in general most unimpressive and most ungraceful. If these gestures contribute in the warmer parts of an oration to give any force to the

[645] Ibid., 55.

> expression, nothing more can arise from them; they deduct from it amply by their wearisome sameness and iterated monotony. Some speakers, aware of this, do not venture upon any gesture of the limbs at all, but nod with their head, and labour with their body through the whole discourse."[646]

Like the eager weather diarists' motivation for participating in the national effort to track patterns in weather—spurned to record "by a sense of participating in a collective enterprise that was building up a picture of the climate of Britain and its overseas territories"[647]—Austin also wants his system to tap inclinations for national identity.

Austin likens the notations to music. The system in practice happens a bit like music too, in the sense that there are "notes" on a line across the tops of words, which require an intimate familiarity with the system (routine practice) to read ("see") and reenact ("feel"). The idea is twofold: first, it will allow students to be able to enact the delivery of speeches in a highly specific and repeatable way. Second, in an era where recording equipment was yet a long way off, it allowed—if you could write fast enough—gesture accompanying a speech to be preserved for posterity. Austin renders notations in incredible detail through explication in chapters and a series of tables and charts, which break minutiae of gestures into "bite-sized pieces" to ease translation, and later, notation. For example, regarding the "letters written above the line on which the gesture is noted, relating to the hands, the fingers, and arms," we have the first lower case letter, which denotes the manner of the palm, which may be: (p.) prone, (s.) supine, (n.) inwards or natural, (o.) outwards, (f.) forwards, (b.) backwards, or (v.) vertical; as well as

[646] Austin, *Chironomia*, 5-6.
[647] Golinski, *British Weather*, 55-6.

the position of the fingers, which may be (c.) clinched, (g.) grasping, (x.) extended, (h.) holding, (m.) thumb, (l.) collected, or (w.) hollow.[648]

Following in the line comes the second lower case letter, denoting "elevation of the arms"; the third small letter, "position of the arms in the transverse direction"; the fourth and fifth small letters, "for motions of the hands and arms, and force of gesture,"; capitals to be placed at the sentence's end, "head and eyes"; and last, letters *below* the line for feet (see (a.) advance, (r.) retire, (tr.) traverse, (c.) cross, (st.) start, (sp.) stamp, and (sk.) shock).[649] In the final column of the table, and rendered last in his system of charts, we find a nod to "significant gestures and expressions of countenance which may be noted in the margin, after the manner of Mr. Sheridan," which seems of particular interest for this investigation.[650] Here, on the periphery of the tightly cinched notational clusters, in the white between staffs where you might scribble conductor's notes on a score, is a place for that mischievous vector that permutes and swells as a course of the affective circuit, and throughout the rhetorical exchange. But these signatures are limited because Austin wants to keep them out of the limelight (as attending to less "effables" in too nuanced a way could underscore seepages in his system). To the margin, he relegates: (Ap.) appealing, (At.) attention, (Vn.) veneration, (Ls.) listening, (Lm.) lamentation, (Dp.) deprecation, (Pr.) pride, (Sh.) shame, (Av.) aversion, (Cm.) commanding, (Ad.) admiration, (Hr.) horror, (Gr.) grief, (Fr.) fear, and (En.) encouraging, "and many others at pleasure."

This exactingness belies Austin's apprehension about more *entropic* aspects of delivery, the variables that fall outside the boxes of his master table, or which he cannot

[648] Austin, *Chironomia*, 363.
[649] Ibid., 364-365.
[650] Ibid., 365.

calculate. But it is no accident that room exists within the system to try to capture the entropic combinations that *work*—rousing an audience to physical effect. He wants to catch patterns for posterity, but moreso to calibrate the gesture.

8 SPHERE OF PRACTICE

Austin depicts the compass of gesture with scientific precision. Looking closely at Austin's Figure 18, one can make out small letters around the periphery. Two other figures on Plate 2 include such markings, one capturing the frontal view, and one the aerial view: "Let a sphere be described according to the stereographic projection, consisting of the primitive circle (Z h R h), the right circle (A R), and two oblique circles (Z q R and Z C R), in an angle of 45 degrees at each side…All these circles are intersected by three others."[651] These letters partition the sphere into latitudes and longitudes, by which Austin plots the coordinates of the rhetor's body: "The circles [in Austin's Figure 18] which are strongly marked, relate to the right hand, the faint circles to the left. The right circle and the oblique circles at each side of it serve for both hands…That marked (q) for the right becomes (c) for the left, and the contrary."[652] The trajectory of gesture is then charted as one might a road trip, by map.

Chapter 7, "Of Positions, Motions, and Elevations of the Arms" best captures Austin's topography of the body. It is clear from these descriptions and figures that Austin means for his gestural system to work, mechanically, just like his air pump—which bears similar markings in Austin's diagram, and is similarly described in terms of

[651] Ibid., 309-10.
[652] Ibid., 311.

work and energy produced by each component (Figure 7).[653] Austin enumerates rhetorical gestures like fixtures on his apparatus. Combining 3 vertical with 5 transverse positions yields 15 "fundamental" arm positions, which can happen at one of three elevations (downwards, horizontal, elevated across), and can be performed by right, left or both hands, yielding 135 permutations of arm gesture. Austin then relates permutation—degree of arm position—to

> the degree of energy proceeding from the sentiment of desire or aversion with which a passage is delivered [which] influences much the character of the gesture, in the same manner as it does the tones and expression of the voice…It will be observed that the hand is always directed accurately to the proper point, and that the variation arising from the force or energy of the action relates to the arm principally.[654]

But like weather, the compass of rhetorical gesture is difficult to apprehend, often exceeding record, prediction, and control.[655] Austin acknowledges that there are probably "infinite" rather than 135 arm gestures; and "in speaking of angles and elevations determined by degrees, mathematical precision is not intended, and is not necessary."[656]

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653 Gilbert Austin, "On a New Construction of a Condenser and Air-Pump," *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society of London*, 103 (1813): 138-145.
654 Austin, *Chironomia*, 314-15.
655 The inclemency of the system's early stages is rehearsed in the following anecdote, excerpted from Mary Margaret Robb and Lester Thonssen's introduction to the 1966 edition: "Dr. Jonathan Barber's *Practical Treatise on Gesture*, 1831, gave full credit to Austin, stating at the beginning that it was chiefly abstracted from *Chironomia* and designed for the students at Harvard College. Dr. Barber, English physician turned elocutionist, served as Dr. Edward T. Channing's assistant from 1829 to 1835. Channing, a very successful teacher of rhetoric, asked for an assistant who would work with individual students to polish their delivery for declamations, and to give some lectures. Evidently Barber was not wholly successful. One morning he found his bamboo sphere on the top of a barber's pole (the sphere was undoubtedly used in teaching Austin's system). Soon Barber resigned. The students found his teaching too mechanistic and demanding" (ibid., xvii-xviii).
656 Austin 316, 310.

In the rhetorical sphere, a body is always moved to stance, which forms, melts, and reforms across occasions and practice.

Just as Priestley's theories of rhetorical transmission were, in a sense, extensions of recent insights into the chemical and physical properties of matter, Austin's call for a gestural rhetorical practice of heat conservation is grounded in contemporary meteorological scholarship. Rather than what would much later be called the "rhetorical situation," Austin offers, I argue, a way to think about the context of persuasive utterance in terms of rhetorical energy: a model that is more useful for thinking through the relationships between rhetor, exigence, and audience in material terms.

EPILOGUE:

SOLICITATIONS

Gesture's work, Austin suggests, lies as much in its entropy as energy. Gesture "may be varied almost to infinity."[657] It is at once shaping us, penetrating other bodies, wily as errant thoughts, and as convincing. Elocutionist accounts amply describe the rhetorical gesture's provocation, and ability to exceed the individual will. Austin, for example, mentions a preacher whose delivery pulls parishioners off their pews.[658] Bulwer notices gestures that pull the rhetor off-topic. On graver notes, Sheridan and Priestley are both run out of town by riots, described in various accounts as having been touched off by "party gestures." The gesture's thread of cause and effect is well expressed through Liebniz' (1646-1716) potential energy: "I call the infinitely small efforts or *conatus*, by which the body is so to speak solicited or invited to motion, solicitations."[659] The solicitations are to the motion "as a point to a line."[660] In this way, the rhetorical gesture becomes difficult to parse. It becomes part of what Burke calls in *The Philosophy of Literary Form* "the unending conversation" of history. Although Burke does not speak to the body per se in this much-quoted passion, the body and its gesture are implicit resources for the situated symbolic action he describes:

> Imagine that you enter a parlor. You come late. When you arrive, others have long preceded you, and they are engaged in a heated discussion, a discussion too heated for them to pause and tell you exactly what it is

[657] Austin, *Chironomia*, 136.
[658] Ibid.,228.
[659] Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz, "New System of the Nature and Communication of Substances, as Well as of the Union Existing Between the Soul and the Body," 1695, in *Leibniz: Philosophical Writings*, tr. Mary Morris (New York: Dutton, 1965), 136.
[660] Leibniz, *Philosophical Writings*, 140.

about. In fact, the discussion had already begun long before any of them got there, so that no one present is qualified to retrace for you all the steps that had gone on before. You listen for a while, until you decide that you have caught the tenor of the argument; then you put in your oar. Someone answers; you answer him; another comes to your defense; another aligns himself against you, to either the embarrassment or gratification of your opponent, depending on the quality of your ally's assistance. However, the discussion is interminable. The hour grows late, you must depart. And you do depart, with the discussion still vigorously in progress.[661]

The power of gesture looms large in the dismissal of the elocutionary period in prominent rhetorical histories. Wilbur Samuel Howell says in *Eighteenth-Century British Logic and Rhetoric* that "The elocutionists made rhetoric appear to be the art of declaiming a speech by rote, without regard to whether the thought uttered were trivial or false or dangerous; and under auspices like these, rhetoric became anathema to the scholarly community, and sacred only to the anti-intellectuals within and outside the academic system."[662] The elocutionists are rejected—in a manner for which Austin is a particularly good example—for being at once too dangerous and excessive, and too hidebound to the famously conservative mores of the British national culture in and through which they lived and worked. A synthesis of Bizzell and Herzberg's treatment of "Elocution" in *The Rhetorical Tradition*, and Thomas Conley's of seventeenth century rhetoric and the subsequent elocutionary period in *Rhetoric and the European Tradition*

[661] Kenneth Burke, "The Philosophy of Literary Form," *The Philosophy of Literary Form: Studies in Symbolic Action,* 3rd ed. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1973), 110-11.
[662] Wilbur Samuel Howell, *Logic and Rhetoric in England, 1500-1700* (New York: Russell & Russell, Inc., 1961), 213.

suggests a rhetorical practice and pedagogy that is excessive and anti-rational—"appeal by drug"—precisely in its overly determined attention to rote physical form over and against creative and informed invention.[663] In "The Rhetoric of the Open Hand and the Rhetoric of the Closed Fist," Edward P. J. Corbett says "muscular rhetoric": "The older rhetoricians, who devoted most of their attention in the classroom and in their texts to instruction in the strategies of the logical appeal, would be appalled at this development in contemporary rhetoric."[664]

Common to all of these dismissals is the re-affirmation of gesture's significance: the Elocutionists cannot be simply consigned to a marginal canonical moment obsessed with comportment, because their charts, notations, and manuals traffic in rhetorical form that is at once central to reasoned delivery and excessive of it. The fire and pull of Priestley's rhetorical transmission is implicit even in Austin's chilly notations. As Paul Carter observes about Linnaeus's taxonomy of dance choreography, "In this process [of capture], it [the dance form] loses all power to signify beyond itself, to suggest lines of development or the subtler influences of climate, ground and aspect. In short, its ecology, its existence in a given, living space is lost in the moment of scientific discovery."[665]

It is an important time to return to the elocutionists, and to consider especially the warrant for their claim to centralize delivery in rhetorical training: energy moves bodies outside of meaning. Contemporary theorists of material rhetoric have begun to return to

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[663] Bizzell and Herzberg, *The Rhetorical Tradition*, 52. "Elocution offered instruction in correct pronunciation in an era obsessed with correctness. Moreover, elocution found support in psychology, for it analyzed the hitherto neglected area of nonverbal appeals to the emotions, an avenue of persuasion newly restored to legitimacy" (ibid., 792).
[664] Corbett, "The Rhetoric of the Open Hand," 294.
[665] Susan Leigh Foster, *Choreographing Empathy: Kinaesthesia in Performance* (New York: Routledge, 2011). See Paul Carter, *The Road to Botany Bay: An Exploration of Landscape and History* (New York: Knopf, 1988), 22.

gesture as central to an adequate understanding of political discourse. Their studies beg a question to which I respond in this dissertation: given the affective excess of gesture in speech, what is the role of gesture in rhetorical invention and educational practice? Is a material rhetoric even rhetorical, or is it something before and beyond? Jenny Rice argues, "[George W.] Bush's rhetoric…creates an intensity that can move others. Bush's ineptness contains something affective that turns out to be more than its symbolic or meaningful form. In other words, before we can *talk about* gridded position (ings) either for or against Bush, something intensive occurs in the interstices between our various bodies."[666] Drew Westin, in *The Political Brain* uses Howard Dean's "scream" during the 2004 Democratic primaries as an "interesting example" of tectonic ethos shifts by gesture.[667] In *Toward a Civil Discourse* (2006) Sharon Crowley calls the political left, but also our discipline more generally to pay better attention to the body in rhetorical exchange.

In short, I argue with Crowley, rhetorical theory, practice, and criticism should be approached from the assumption of the physicality of invention—"you put in your oar,"

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[666] Rice, "Executive Overspill," 1, 3.

[667] Drew Westin, *The Political Brain: The Role of Emotion in Deciding the Fate of the Nation* (New York: PublicAffairs, 2007), 298. Along this line, Paul Ekman, and Wallace V. Friesen, co-authors of *Masking the Face* (Cambridge, MA: Malor Books, 2003) compiled what they called the Facial Action Coding System, or FACS, a 500-page compendium on the subject. And Ekman has done all kinds of interesting things with his knowledge, like help President Clinton iron out an eyeroll that Ekman claims suggested 'I'm a bad boy' [See interview account in Malcolm Gladwell's *Blink* (New York: Back Bay Books, 2005), 206]. Ekman connects realizes, after days of practicing faces and the like with Friesen, that in his words, "'Say you do A.U. one, raising the inner eyebrows, and six, raising the cheeks, and fifteen, the lowering of the corner of the lips,' Ekman said, and then did all three. 'What we discovered is that that expression alone is sufficient to create marked changes in the autonomic nervous system. When this first occurred, we were stunned. We weren't expecting this at all. And it happened to both of us. We felt terrible. What we were generating were sadness, anguish. And when I lower my brows, which is four, and raise the upper eyelid, which is five, and narrow the eyelids, which is seven, and press the lips together, which is twenty-four, I'm generating anger. My heartbeat will go up ten to twelve beats. My hands will get hot. As I do it, I can't disconnect from the system. It's very unpleasant, very unpleasant" (Gladwell, *Blink*, 207).

as Burke says. G. H. Mead describes the collective, affinitive nature of cognition "as a result of the interaction of three elements: actions or gestures, resulting interpretations of gestures; and responses of the self and others to gestures."[668] In *The Body in Pain*, Elaine Scarry describes the write-ability of the dynamic human form: "Not only is there no form of sentience specific to 'imagining,' but it does not, unlike other forms of sensation, even seem to be anchored in a specific part of the body…it is almost as easy to make an imagined blue flower arise in the interior of the calf of the leg as it is to make it arise in the head; just as the picture of a foot race can occur along the interior path on the forearm, with its starting point at the elbow and its finishing point at the wrist."[669] The bodies at Burke's party, likewise, are pliant, absorbing then refashioning components of the conversation in ways that are slightly different each time. Speaking of "poetic gestures," Burke observes that "The body is an actor; as an actor, it participates in the movements of the mind, posturing correspondingly; in styles of thought and expression we embody those correlations—and the recognition of this is, as you prefer, either 'scientific' or 'poetic.'"[670] In *The Life of S.T. Coleridge*, Lawrence Hanson recounts the following lines of William Hazlitt's concerning Coleridge:

> I observed that he continually crossed me on the way by shifting from one side of the foot-path to the other. This struck me as an odd movement; but I did not at that time connect it with any instability of purpose or involuntary change of principle, as I have done since…

[668] Karen Burke LeFevre, *Invention as a Social Act* (Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois University Press, 1987), 50.
[669] Elaine Scarry, *The Body in Pain: The Making and Unmaking of the World* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985).
[670] Burke, *Philosophy*, 130.

> There is a *chaunt* in the recitation both of Coleridge and Wordsworth, which acts as a spell upon the hearer, and disarms the judgment. Perhaps they have deceived themselves by making habitual use of this ambiguous accompaniment. Coleridge's manner is more full, animated, and varied; Wordsworth's more equable, sustained, and internal. The one might be termed more *dramatic*, the other more *lyrical*. Coleridge has told me that he himself liked to compose walking over uneven ground, or breaking through the straggling branches of a copse-wood; whereas Wordsworth always wrote (if he could) walking up and down a straight gravel-walk, or in some spot where the continuity of his verse met with no collateral interruption.[671]

Burke uses this example to illustrate the *attitudinizing of the poem*, by which the whole body enacts idea—"*dances* a corresponding state of mind, reordering the glandular and neural behavior of the organism in obedience to mind-body correspondences, quite as the formal dancer reorders his externally observable gesturing to match his attitude."[672] To omit the body from accounts of invention is to ignore our solicitations—other bodies, the road we walk. Like Merleau-Ponty's identification, forming rhetorical stance (like opposition, assent, or embarrassment, above) "can only happen if my hand, which is felt from within, is also accessible from without, itself intangible, for my other hand, for example, if it takes place among the things it touches, is in a sense one of them, opens finally upon a tangible being of which it is also a part."[673] Although the body and its

[671] Ibid., 10.
[672] Ibid., 11.
[673] Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *The Visible and the Invisible*, tr. Alphonso Lingus (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press), 133.

gestures (/non-alphabetic vocabularies and concepts) have been largely omitted from accounts of rhetorical invention, gesture is inevitably improvisational: "its own movements incorporate themselves into the universe they interrogate."[674]

This project especially commends gesture to inventional activity for its entropic, irrational possibility. Brian Massumi in *Parables for the Virtual* shares a scientific study to advance his claim on sensible bodies. He tells us that there were patients implanted with cortical electrodes ("for medical purposes"). Mild electric shocks were administered onto patients' skin. The pulse at each place was perceived only if it lasted more than 0.5 seconds. "The researcher speculated that sensation involves a 'backward referral in time'—in other words, that sensation is organized recursively before being linearized, before it is redirected outwardly to take its part in a conscious chain of actions and reactions. Brain and skin form a resonating vessel. Stimulation turns inward, is folded into the body, except that there is no inside for it to be in, because the body is radically open, absorbing impulses quicker than they can be perceived, and because the entire vibratory event is unconscious, out of mind."[675] The body, Massumi says, "infolds volitions and cognitions that are nothing if not situated"—he recommends "using inattention as a writing tool. You have to let yourself get so caught up in the flow of your writing that it ceases at moments to be recognizable as your own."[676] With Prior, I address the unreasonable separation of "gesture" from "writing" in composition studies. "Writing" is continually defined and prescribed in a traditional, pen-to-paper, artifact- and text-centric way. Writing is, of course, an embodied practice. As Haas and Witte

[674] Ibid.
[675] Brian Massumi, *Parables for the Virtual: Movement, Affect, Sensation*. (Durham: Duke Univesity Press 2002), 29.
[676] Ibid., 30, 18.

argue, it is "intimately linked with technologies and with knowledge," that are "enacted in part through bodily and sensory means."[677] Prior and I argue not only that gesture influences writing (which was not lost on Quintilian, for instance, who noted certain gestures could keep writing "warm") but that gestures write, and writing gestures.

Finally, this project is a call to reconsider what gesture is and does for rhetorical and writing studies, as well as what rhetorical and writing studies can do for studies of gesture. This capacity of the hands (and body as a whole) to express concepts independent of or alongside—and even to assist—spoken language has been a central tenet of the recent resurgence of interest in studies of gesture.[678] For example, Goldin-Meadow, in *Hearing Gesture: How Our Hands Help Us Think* suggests that the body aids in carrying or holding cognitive effort during speaking: "gesturing may not only reflect a speaker's cognitive state but may, by reducing cognitive load, also play a role in shaping that state."[679] This *capacity* is central to Kendon's encapsulation of what gesture is: "a label for actions that have the features of manifest deliberate expressiveness."[680] While this definition has operated as a popular definition for gesture within Gesture Studies for some time, it restricts the qualification of gestures to those "being done for the purpose of expression rather than in the service of some practical claim."[681] "Capacity," as such, is also a central feature gesture research—which, tending toward psychological and anthropological studies, tends to focus either on how individual gestures happen (inner physiology), or what gestures mean (taxonomically, semantically). Rhetorical and

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[677] Christina Haas and Stephen P. Witte, "Writing as Embodied Practice: The Case of Engineering Standards," *Journal of Business and Technical Communication*, 15 (2001): 419.
[678] See Kendon (2004); McNeill (1996); and David McNeill's *Gesture and Thought* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2000).
[679] Goldin-Meadow. *Hearing Gesture,* 157.
[680] Kendon, *Gesture*, 15.
[681] Ibid.

writing studies underscore the importance of thinking about how gestures *communicate*, attitudinize, forge pathways to mutual acknowledgment and identification. Rather than limiting "gesture" to "manifest, deliberate expressiveness," I wonder about expanding that qualification to "manifest, accidental practicality," and even, as Leibniz might assert, to the "non-manifest, accidental practicality" of solicitations.[682]

Kendon identifies questions central to the emerging, interdisciplinary field of gesture studies, and which I would call, in one way or another, exigencies for thinking about developing the relationship between gesture and writing studies: a) on the nature of interrelationship between speech and gesture: "these two activities are so intimately connected that they appear to be governed by a single process," he says, "although…the way in which gesture and speech serve as modes of expression is quite different"[683]; b) that of the extent to which "visible bodily action, including gesture, can play a crucial role in the processes of interaction and communication"[684]; c) the tension between gestures seeming both natural and/or universal and "shown to be regulated and subject to social convention"[685]; and d) "the question of the evolutionary origins of language," much debated in the eighteenth century, in which gesture is implicated.[686] Rhetorical and writing studies suggest both answers and additional questions for Kendon's rubric. With Sheridan, I wonder about extending the root of the gesture to bodies-in-proximity. With

[682] Leibniz' law of continuity stipulates "one always passes from the small to the large and back [by passing] through the intermediary, in degrees as in parts, and that a movement is never immediately born from rest, nor can be reduced to it, unless it is by a lesser movement, just as one has never finished tracing a line until one has finished tracing a shorter one, despite the fact that until now those who have stated the laws of movement have failed to notice this law, believing that, in a single moment, one body can receive a movement that is contrary to its preceding one" (Leibniz, *Philosophical Writings*, 218).
[683] Kendon, *Gesture*, 2.
[684] Ibid., 3.
[685] Ibid.
[686] Ibid., 4.

Austin, I wonder about conceiving gesture in terms of a less-grammatical unit, like work, or heat. With Priestley, I wonder about those moments of hard-to-pin-down agency present in our human manipulations of the physical movement of energy throughout our environment.

Here is what I hope the elocutionists bring to us: not dated projects of revitalizing and standardizing English oratory, but rather a demand to consider argument, in theory, criticism, practice, and pedagogy, as physical form from physical form, galvanized through infinitesimal *conatus*.

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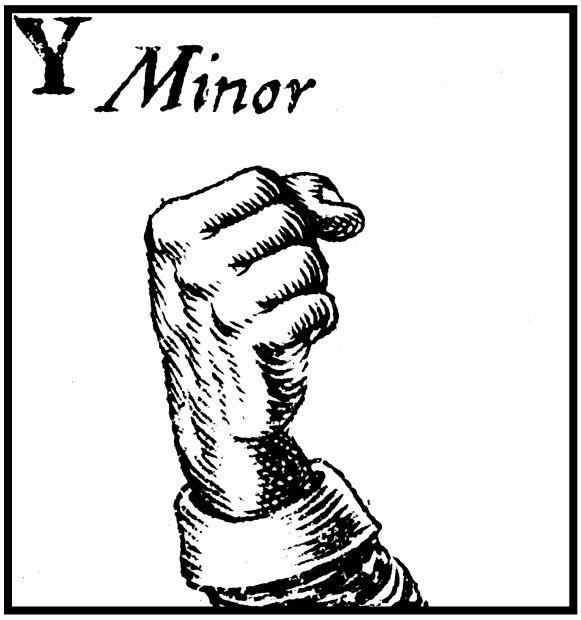

FIGURE 1: GESTUS 23 (*Chirologia…Chironomia*, 188).

FIGURE 2: CANON 8 (*Chirologia…Chironomia*, 218).

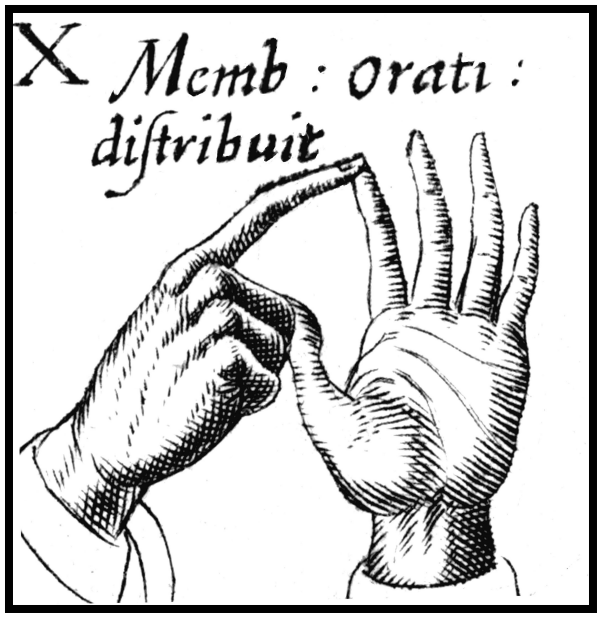

FIGURE 3: FINGER CANON 29 (Bulwer, *Chirologia…Chironomia*, 223).

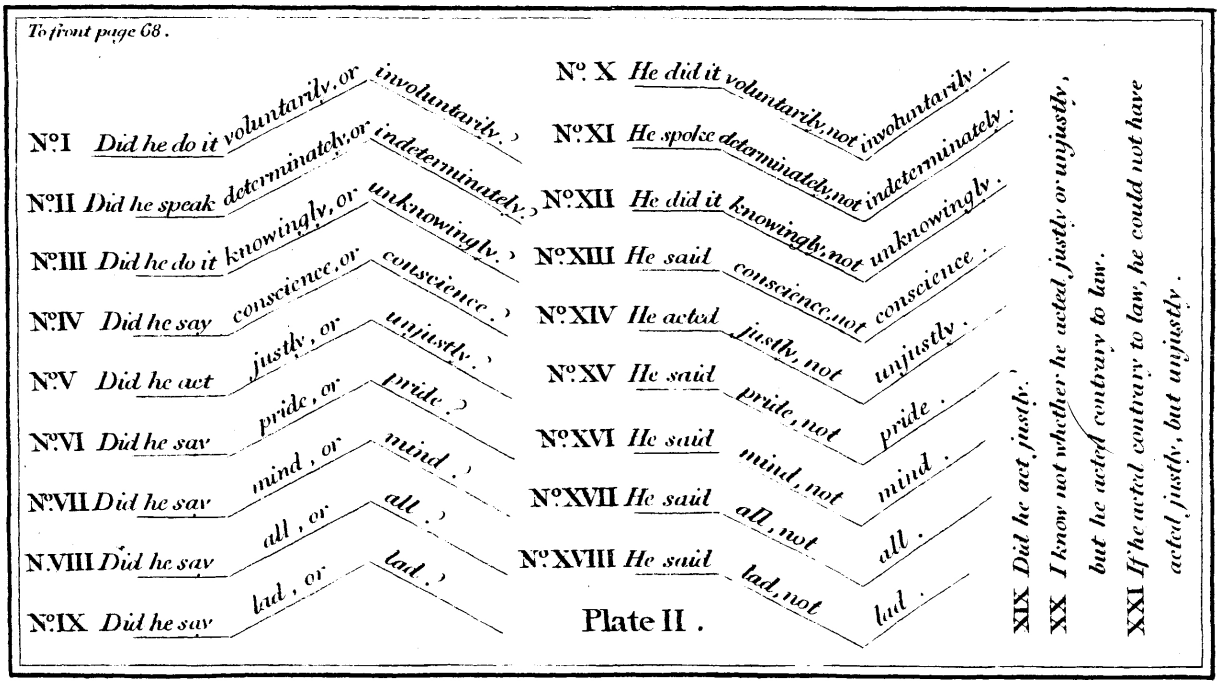

FIGURE 4: Tone Chart (Walker, *Elements*, 137).

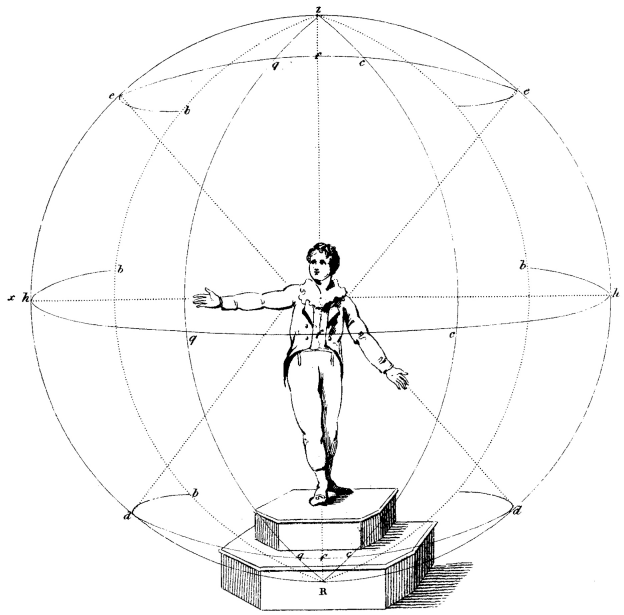

FIGURE 5: Figure 18 (Austin, *Chironomia*, 12).

FIGURE 6: Figure 39 (Austin, *Chironomia*, 15).

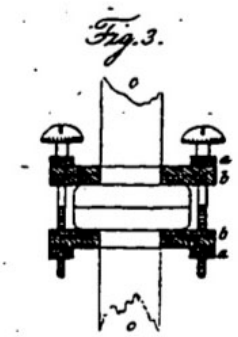

FIGURE 7: Air Pump FIGURE 3 (Austin, “On a New Construction,” 144).