

INTRODUCTION: A GATHERING OF RHETORICS

I say that even later someone will remember us.
—Sappho

Sappho's prediction came true; fragments of work by the earliest woman writer in Western literate history have in fact survived into the twenty-first century, but not without peril. Sappho's writing remains only in fragments, partly due to the passage of time, but mostly as a result of systematic efforts to silence women's voices and prevent women's speaking and writing. Although Sappho does not appear in this anthology, her hopeful boast captures the impetus behind our efforts here: gathering women's rhetorics together in order to remember that the rhetorical tradition indeed includes women. Yet, making that simple statement was not so easy even five years ago. Teaching courses in the history of rhetoric since the 1980s, we had learned to anticipate our students' question: "Where are the women?" But until very recently, including women in historical overviews of the rhetorical tradition required making what often seemed like arbitrary and isolated choices. Should we read Aspasia alongside Plato? Virginia Woolf with I. A. Richards? Could Toni Morrison replace Bakhtin? Mary Wollstonecraft supersede George Campbell? When we began teaching courses in women's rhetoric six years ago, making even some of the primary texts of women's rhetorics accessible to students required a great deal of effort, and we still worried that our selections were haphazard, our choices arbitrary. In other words, we wished for a collection of rhetorics by women, gathered together in one place.

Inspired by groundbreaking recovery of and commentary on women's rhetorics from Andrea Lunsford, Shirley Wilson Logan, Cheryl Glenn, Jacqueline Jones Royster, and Krista Ratcliffe, we realized that we needed this anthology, especially in teaching rhetoric. Instead of scrambling to copy parts of Margaret Fuller or snippets of Ida B. Wells for our students, or preparing bibliographies so that students could read these excerpts in the context of other women rhetoricians, we conceived of a collection that would put the spiritual rhetorics of Julian of Norwich and Paula Gunn Allen between the same covers, that would put the political rhetoric of Hortensia in the same volume as the "Declaration of Sentiments" and the "Combahee River Collective Statement." Therefore, our main impulse in gathering this material together is to make a diverse collection available to scholars and students. We are inspired and indebted to other collections of women's rhetorics, particularly Shirley Wilson Logan's *With Pen and Voice: A Critical Anthology of Nineteenth Century African American Women*, Karlyn Kohrs Campbell's *Man Cannot Speak for Her*, and Miriam Schneir's two-volume anthology of feminist writing. A few of the texts from those collections appear

here, but *Available Means* aims for a larger, longer view of women's rhetorics, not limited to a particular moment in history or a particular political/rhetorical purpose. Although many of the texts here may be familiar to readers, these pieces have not been gathered together before under the name of rhetoric. More importantly, we believe this anthology documents and demonstrates an emerging tradition of women's rhetorics—a long-standing tradition, yet one so "new" that its primary texts have not until now been collected; a tradition that has existed only in the shadows for centuries because women's writing and speaking have not been gathered together as "rhetoric." Without this gathering, women's rhetorical means, what Shirley Wilson Logan calls "recurrences" (xiv) or Jacqueline Jones Royster calls "traces of a stream," have not been available for study. We realize that gathering these primary texts in one place raises important questions. For example, how does the collection define women's rhetorics? What principles of selection led to including some writers and not others? We attempt to answer those questions below. But we begin first by offering seventy women rhetoricians in a room of their own, not out of our desire to name or fix a women's canon of rhetoric but in order to gather a richer, more available means for remembering and studying women's rhetorics and for changing rhetorical theories and practices.

Of course this gathering participates in multiple communities of women rhetors, and we would like to explore for a moment the metaphors that have led us to think of our work as a "gathering." In the last five years, "Rhetorica" has been "reclaimed." In putting together the first collection of scholarly commentary on women in the rhetorical tradition, Andrea Lunsford says that the essays there:

do not attempt to redefine a "new" rhetoric, but rather to interrupt the seamless narrative usually told about the rhetorical tradition and to open up possibilities for multiple rhetorics, rhetorics that would not name and valorize one, traditional, competitive, agonistic and linear mode of rhetorical discourse but would rather incorporate other, often dangerous moves: breaking the silence, naming in personal terms, employing dialogics, recognizing and using the power of conversation, moving centripetally toward connections and valuing—indeed insisting upon—collaboration. (6)

Part of our desire in compiling this anthology was to document the interruptions to the rhetorical tradition that women's rhetorics offer, but Lunsford's provisional language here—"interrupt," "open up," "multiple"—helped us to keep our readings of women's rhetorics fluid rather than fixed.

Another metaphor we kept firmly in our minds was that rhetoric has also been "retold" and "regendered." Cheryl Glenn's study of women rhetors from antiquity through the Renaissance demonstrates that "women's rhetorical lives have always existed, among the innumerable, interminable, clear examples of public, political, agonistic, masculine discourse" (175). She argues that "a regen-

dered, retold tradition opens up—not closes down—investigation into rhetorical practices” (173). This anthology continues this work by gathering—always a woman’s metaphor—primary works that both illustrate and, we hope, extend the work of reclamation, recovery, and reconceptualization.

Our decision to title this collection with Aristotle’s famous definition of rhetoric as the “discovery of the available means of persuasion” reflects our desire to locate women squarely within rhetoric but also to acknowledge that their presence demands that rhetoric be reconceived. The discovery of the available means was for Aristotle an act of invention that always assumed the right to speak in the first place and, even prior to that, assumed the right to personhood and self-representation, rights that have not long been available to women. For centuries, even the means of basic literacy were denied to women. Rhetorical education was designed by and for upper-class males well into the twentieth century. Throughout the years covered in this anthology (the fifth century B.C.E.–1999), women must repeatedly argue for the right to speak in public at all. Over and over again, they must claim the right to name themselves rather than to be named. Many of these texts, from the fourteenth to the twentieth century, read as if a particular woman is writing or claiming the right to speak for the first time, without a history of writing behind her; too often it feels eerily as if she is writing alone. The act of invention for women, then, begins in a different place from Aristotle’s conception of invention: women must first invent a way to speak in the context of being silenced and rendered invisible as persons. This is doubly true for poor women and women of color. We think this realization is fundamental, particularly for many students who may not know that women were historically prohibited from public speech, denied access to literacy, education, and the power of language. This anthology, we hope, documents the means women used to claim their rights as rhetors and seeks to ensure that those means will, indeed, remain available and visible for women.

We want to reclaim Aristotle’s words, then, to mark the ways in which women have discovered various means by which to make their voices heard. But we also intend by our title to point to the ways that women have discovered different means of persuasion, often based in contexts other than those Aristotle might have imagined: the kitchen, parlor, and nursery; the garden; the church; the body. Further, women have redefined and subverted traditional means and ends of argument and in the process have reinvented rhetoric based in epistemologies more varied than Aristotle’s. Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz, for example, suggests in writing about the philosophies of the kitchen that “had Aristotle prepared victuals he would have written more.” So we use the term “available means” both to connect with and depart from the rhetorical tradition. Some women writers were well schooled in the traditional methods of persuasion of their day: appeals to logic and emotion, evidence from historical or religious authority, or conventions of style or structure. Margaret Fell’s

Womens Speaking Justified is one clear example of a woman using the available means for unexpected ends—citing scripture to prove women’s equality. Ida B. Wells’s use of statistical evidence and her restrained use of logic to argue against lynching in the Jim Crow South provide another.

But we also include in this anthology women’s writing that may not meet and that may even defy traditional rhetorical criteria and categories—especially concerning *ethos*, or the appeal of the speaker’s “character.” Some of the selections here may seem less than eloquent. Others may seem to fail to take into account the sensibilities of an audience or readership because they blur traditional gender boundaries or raise issues of women’s sexuality, or because the speaker is confrontational, angry, and resistant to decorum, institutions, and hegemonic discourses. Here we think of Heloise’s subversive comments about marriage, Zora Neale Hurston’s ironic parody of democracy, and Dorothy Allison’s risky discussion of sexual power and violence. Although we use the simple plural “rhetorics” in this introduction for ease of reading, we title this collection with the parenthetical plural “rhetoric(s)” to highlight not only these tensions between accommodation and resistance but also to point to differences within an emerging rhetorical tradition.

We hope that the diversity of texts in this anthology will not only highlight these tensions but will also resist the almost inevitable fixing or solidifying tendencies that any gathering of work into an anthology suggests. *Women’s Rhetorics* should not suggest an absolute internal coherence to any tradition, even, as Shirley Wilson Logan points out, in the rather homogeneous examples of African American women’s public discourse that she gathers in her anthology *With Pen and Voice*, or, we should add, the clearly masculinist tradition of rhetoric with a capital *R*. Nor do we want to diminish the importance or erase the uniqueness of the “traces of a stream” that Royster and Logan have recovered. We know that the very act of gathering and using any category—gender, race, class—can limit one’s perception. But we also recognize that just as literary criticism has sometimes arbitrarily created a separate feminine tradition of literature, we may seem to be following a similar pattern. On the other hand, we think the risk is worth the rewards; any group that has been absent or silent must first demarcate and identify its own terrain to establish a presence where one has not existed.

After all, there has been little sense of a tradition of women using or creating rhetorical means for themselves and their causes, except in the tradition of late-nineteenth-century African American women that Shirley Wilson Logan and Jacqueline Jones Royster have recently delineated or in the strategies used by turn-of-the-century African American and European American club women that Anne Ruggles Gere describes. In the absence of any sense of “recurrences”—common practices, themes, and *topoi* in women’s rhetoric—students and scholars need to posit a tentative tradition if only to begin to have a fruitful and generative conversation about it. Otherwise we have no collective memory

of our rhetorical past, and that absence only reproduces invisibility, silence, and misrepresentation. As Paula Gunn Allen says: “the roots of oppression are to be found in the loss of memory” (210).

Gerda Lerner reminds us that the “absence of a tradition” has historically kept women from developing what she calls “group consciousness”: “Women had no history—so they were told; so they believed. Thus, ultimately, it was men’s hegemony over the symbol system which most decisively disadvantaged women” (219). Histories of rhetoric follow the pattern of women’s absence that Lerner describes; when a woman does appear, she is often described in heroic terms, alone and rising above her natural capabilities. Much recent work in women’s rhetorics tends to valorize exceptional women writers. Glenn, for example, describes Aspasia as an “exceptional hero in a new rhetorical narrative” (44), and she casts Julian of Norwich and Margery Kempe’s rhetoric as an “extraordinary kind of transcendent inclusiveness, theological and linguistic inclusiveness” (116). Certainly these descriptions accurately describe the accomplishments of these women, and Glenn’s bringing them into the canon of rhetoric, analyzing their influence on rereading that canon, has been invaluable work, work that has made this anthology possible. However, we worry that the method of “recovering” women’s rhetoric by describing isolated incidents of one or two brilliant, brave (and often white and privileged) women somehow gaining a platform through sheer will or inspiration keeps the “recurrences” or the “traces” of the emerging tradition invisible. This recovery practice also isolates various communities of women from each other and prevents us from asking such questions as: What rhetorical means have white women borrowed from women of color? What rhetorical strategies does the public rhetoric of late-nineteenth-century African American women have in common with white women’s public discourse? This form of recovery also isolates women’s rhetorics from the masculinist rhetorical tradition, distorting our understanding of women’s use of the various means on which they called to speak and write.

For example, when Patricia Bizzell and Bruce Herzberg include Margaret Fell in *The Rhetorical Tradition*, theirs is most certainly an act of recovering and reclaiming women’s rhetorics. But Fell’s words read very differently between Francis Bacon and John Locke in *The Rhetorical Tradition* than they do between Rachel Speght and Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz, where Fell appears in *Available Means*. One way of recovering Fell is to read her in terms of Enlightenment values of reason, appeals to authority, and logical argument, as Bizzell and Herzberg seem to do. We argue that another method of recovery, one that makes Fell’s tract more powerful and gives it much more historical weight, is to read her before and after other women writers who are also attempting to justify women’s speaking. Alongside Rachel Speght, Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz, Sojourner Truth, Virginia Woolf, and June Jordan, Fell is no longer an oddity. Instead, her writing highlights one of the fundamental goals of women rhetors: discovering the means to speak or write in the first place. So although we real-

ize that this anthology runs the risk of “canonizing” the writers we have chosen to include, we also hope that in conversation and context the study of women’s rhetorical practice across differences of race, class, sexual orientation, and historical and physical locations will unsettle homogenizing tendencies that recreate traditional, exclusive rhetorical frameworks.

Principles of Gathering

We realize that we must try to answer the questions: Why these works? Why not others? Our overall goal in selecting texts for inclusion here has been two-fold. We do want to make available the texts that have been the subject of so much exciting recovery and retelling of women’s rhetorical history. But we also want to continue to unsettle this emerging canon with other works that have surprised us as readers and that have caused us to examine our assumptions about women’s rhetorics. First, then, we include the primary works that seem to be emerging as central to scholarship in women’s rhetoric: Aspasia, Margery Kempe, Margaret Fuller, and Ida B. Wells, for example. We also chose many of the “famous” works by women writers on what it means to write as a woman: Virginia Woolf (but not “A Room of One’s Own”), Adrienne Rich, Nancy Mairs, Alice Walker, and Hélène Cixous. It is important, we think, to expand definitions of women’s rhetorics to include some of the arguments about how women’s writing might constitute its own genre, what women need in order to write, what women’s writing can accomplish. We also picked some of the writers who have advanced the cause of women’s rights to public participation, to education, and to civil and human rights: Hortensia, Mary Astell, Maria Stewart, Sarah and Angelina Grimké, Anna Julia Cooper, Margaret Sanger, and Audre Lorde. Many of the works gathered here could be titled “manifestos,” and we believe that women’s public arguments must be part of any emerging canon of rhetoric by women. Finally, we chose works that have inspired us and our students; that stretch our understanding of rhetoric; that challenge and redefine traditional notions of invention, arrangement, style, memory, and delivery. For example, women have often written in unprivileged or devalued forms such as letters, journals, and speeches to other women. Saint Catherine of Siena’s and Sarah Grimké’s *letters*; Alice Dunbar Nelson’s *newspaper columns*; Patricia Williams’s critical legal essays, which are pointedly labeled as “the *diary* of a law professor”; Dorothy Day’s *meditations* on public events; and Rachel Carson’s *fable* that introduces her argument about chemical degradation of the environment provide some of the examples of an expanded definition of rhetorical form.

Not only have women rhetors used transgressive forms, but the subjects about which they have written have also often transgressed or, sometimes more problematically, blurred the boundaries between public and private discourse. Because for most of Western history women were excluded from political, ecclesiastical, or intellectual forums, women writers and speakers often draw on

the exigencies that surround them. They write of the necessity of an education, the perils of marriage, the catastrophe of abuse, the conditions of women's poverty, or the pleasures of women's sexualities. Besides their unruly form or content, many of the works here appear because of the context/location of the writer. In other words, we also wanted to gather writers who have not been heard in any tradition. We emphasize in our selections that discussions of women's rhetorics often overlook the specific influences of women's embodiment, physicality, and location. Audre Lorde's rhetoric arises from her experience of breast cancer; Nancy Mairs connects voice, style, and her physical disability; Sarah Winnemucca's location as "translator" of the white man's governmental mandates shapes her rhetoric. This anthology, then, extends the study of women's rhetoric to include writing that has emerged from contexts other than those normally sanctioned as rhetoric.

Sappho is not here because she wrote poetry, and excluding any form of "literary" text was our conscious choice. There are many excellent collections of women's literary writing, most notably *The Norton Anthology of Women's Literature*, and we did not want to reproduce that work here. We do not mean to suggest that we can draw a clear line between literature and rhetoric; in fact, we think that many of the selections here could easily appear in a collection of literary writing. Some do. But our focus remains the gathering of rhetorics, and we rather arbitrarily define rhetoric by form, excluding poetry and story and concentrating on nonfiction prose. Our tentative definition of rhetorics here also involves the writer's purpose—most often to persuade or inform—although many works blur the boundaries between "teaching" and "delighting." We also tried to make selections according to the writer's sense of audience—often of a live group of listeners or a real reader but always of an urgent need to communicate. Finally, and perhaps most importantly, *Available Means* is intended for use in the classroom, as an anthology for students, and our selections are guided always by that awareness. We also want to use this collection as a site to help us and our students discover more available means, either as models for practice or tenets from which to construct our own practices of speaking and writing.

We are no doubt making the selection process sound much easier than it actually was. Sometimes we were unable to obtain permission to reprint texts that we would have liked to include. We were also constrained by length, yet we attempted to include selections that colleagues and students recommended. We relied on other people, particularly in areas outside our own expertise, which is the Western male rhetorical tradition and European/American women writers. We sometimes deliberately excluded pieces that are widely available elsewhere. We also tried to avoid narrowly professional work in composition. We are still nervous about the selections here, concerned that this table of contents might not represent a broad enough range of women's perspectives, that we have overlooked women writers because of our own disciplinary and histor-

ical blinders. We also have attempted to consider how the texts we have selected and our readings of them may reflect our whiteness, the extent to which we are “playing in the dark,” to use Toni Morrison’s term, using the experience of women of color to figure our own experience as we read these texts.

We realize also that some of the selections might seem to essentialize women’s rhetoric or conflate women’s rhetoric with feminism. As Campbell points out, there is an inevitable link between any rhetorical effort and the struggle for women’s rights because before women could argue any other issues, they often had to claim the right to speak in the first place (19). It is difficult to separate the history of women’s rhetorics from the history of the struggle for women’s rights because the desire/demand for rights so often becomes the impetus for writing. Finally, we worry that in our introductions to these women, we have constructed resemblances that may overlook crucial distinctions or, on the other hand, that we have failed to see connections across time and space.

At first, we constructed a grand scheme of organization that in many ways drove our selection process; for example, we had sections on “writing the body,” on “women writing to women,” on “women’s manifestos,” and on “private writing.” In fact we had twelve such categories. But the more we gathered material, the more sense it made to get out of these women’s way and just let them speak to each other across centuries. So although we provide an alternative, thematic table of contents to help subvert the linear thinking that may follow from chronology, we present these women rhetors first in simple chronological order.

A Gathering of Means

Despite our concerns about “fixing” or “essentializing” a definition of women’s rhetorics, we nevertheless do see emerging in this gathering of women rhetors a recurring set of rhetorical strategies and exigencies that speak to one another across continents and generations. Some writers, like Mary Wollstonecraft and Anna Julia Cooper, used traditional forms and methods of proof to challenge and resist the ways in which the rhetorical tradition kept women from participating in public debate. Other women writers consciously developed alternative means of persuasion. Virginia Woolf, Margaret Fuller, Leslie Marmon Silko, and Sojourner Truth rely less on traditional logical and ethical appeals than on appeals to experience, to irony, and on the constant assertion of their own *ethos*, since ethical appeal, by definition, has been historically denied to women. Still other women writers find alternative means of persuasion in the creation of a “women’s language.” Toni Morrison, Minnie Bruce Pratt, and Patricia Williams, for example, consciously create new styles and generic forms in order to break out of the confines of a rhetorical tradition that they believe reinscribes women in powerless and silent positions.

But these are obvious examples. It is easy enough to show how Angelina Grimké Weld uses traditional arguments from the Bible and turns them on

their head or to credit Cixous with naming the body as a new rhetorical *topoi*. But we have found ourselves looking for rhetorical theory in less obvious places and wanting our students to have more means available to them, more possibilities for inspiration, imitation, and their own rhetorical action. We are expecting that studying women's rhetorics should make a difference, that it should change practice—our own and our students'—and that it seeks to change the practices that govern our lives in more tangible ways. Isn't this, then, another mark of women's rhetoric? That it works toward, inspires, calls for change? And moreover that it engages in changed practice and offers strategies to readers for enacting change themselves? We believe that readers will see, for example, how women writers have added to the canon of rhetoric new *topoi*, new topics/places from which arguments can be made. We have already suggested that different *topoi*—the kitchen, the garden, the conversation between women—offer new strategies for inventing arguments, mounting evidence, and persuading audiences. In other words, women's rhetorics expand the locus of rhetoric for all speakers and writers. Further, we hope readers will see that what Lunsford calls the "often dangerous moves" (6) by women rhetors can be read as the "available means" of writing for the women's rhetorics in this book. Some of these strategies, moves, and means are worth pointing to in the beginning of this collection. We explore the following means, or *topoi*, as suggestive rather than exhaustive.

One of the poignant and telling arguments for this anthology in the first place is the recurring theme across two millennia of women's yearning and determination to acquire the right to literacy and education. One of the first women rhetors in this emerging canon, Margery Kempe, did not write at all. She was illiterate, and we only have her story as narrated to a male scribe, yet the irrepressible impulse to write and to be heard still comes across in her book. Even highly educated women sometimes speak to us only through male translations. Aspasia, the centerpiece of much current historiography, comes to us ventriloquized through the pens of men authorized to write history and philosophy. There has been much recent discussion about how to treat rhetors like Aspasia or Hortensia, since their works survive only in the context of Plato and Plutarch. However, we are less interested in arguments about historiography than we are in pointing out the obvious: women have been silenced throughout history, and time and again women have had to argue for the right to speak and the right to an education. This theme does not end with mass literacy or permission to speak in public. From Mary Astell in 1694 through Anna Julia Cooper in 1892, Virginia Woolf in 1942, and Ruth Bader Ginsburg in 1996, readers will hear the same argument for basic rights to education and participation in the public sphere. Each context demands different appeals, form, evidence, and rhetorical *ethos*, but this central argument becomes one of the major *topoi* of women's rhetorics.

Susan Jarratt suggests that women have understood that their rhetoric has a

double role as “both figurative and political act” (9). One of the touchstones of women’s rhetorics has been this political and figurative act: asserting the right to speak, an act that challenges established power relations. And this act challenges the very definition of women’s subjectivity. For men, the right to speak, traditionally assumed, is located in the power of personhood. When women make this assertion, they are not simply asserting the right to be heard in public; they are claiming to be full persons in opposition to accepted defective identities. In making this claim they threaten to destabilize the social order. We can hear the momentous world-shaking claims in women’s writing from Christine de Pizan and Sojourner Truth to Gloria Anzaldúa and Dorothy Allison, even when these writers use conventional rhetorical strategies. Many women rhetors appropriated whatever rhetorical means they knew in order to argue for the right to speak, and they also subverted conventional rhetoric by using traditional means to argue for radical goals. One of the basic *topoi* of women’s rhetorics, then, might be said to include accommodation and subversion working together in very important ways.

Because of the complex political and figurative function of women’s writing and speaking, we think it is important to recognize that women’s rhetorical situations demand different means or new means for using traditional strategies. From Aristotle to contemporary rhetoricians like Lloyd Bitzer, definitions of rhetorical context have been posed as complex but nonetheless “universal.” The selections here should assist in the work of expanding and complicating definitions of rhetorical context because they address one of the glaring omissions from traditional analyses: the exigency of gender in any given discourse. Since male rhetorical contexts have come to stand for Rhetoric itself, it is especially necessary now to consider the multiple, varied contexts and identities of women writers and the gendered nature of rhetorical contexts, communicative strategies, and epistemology. But the selections here also highlight differences in contexts and exigencies among women. White women’s arguments for education and for the franchise are marked by the social class and white privilege of their writers. Likewise, while women like Virginia Woolf argued that women must be free to write about their bodies and their sexuality to throw off the constraints of purity and nineteenth-century womanhood, African American women like Fannie Barrier Williams were attempting to reclaim their bodies from the sexualized stigma that slavery had placed on their bodies.

One of the most basic tools of rhetorical analysis is to ask of any discourse the question, “Who is speaking?” Denied the right to speak, women have had to redefine traditional notions of speaker and writer. Women have taken great risks to assert an “I” that disrupts the accepted identity of woman writer and that in doing so counters the limited identities—“virgin,” “true woman,” “whore,” or “martyr”—in which women have typically been defined. As Jarratt suggests, women’s attempts to write and speak publicly have a “figurative” function; they work as a means of taking hold of and controlling the tools of

representation. So another overarching strategy evident in this collection is women finding the means to represent themselves rather than to be represented by others. Rachel Speght and Jane Anger re-present women in opposition to the popular tracts of their time denigrating women. Fannie Barrier Williams attempts to reconstruct the debased representation of African American women in postslavery nineteenth-century America. Audre Lorde, some eighty years later, also recognized that “if we do not define ourselves for ourselves, we will be defined by others—for their use and to our detriment” (45). And Nomy Lamm attempts to overturn representations of women that focus on fat and body image. One of the most important exigencies for women has been to refute, correct, and revise depictions of womanhood that have placed women in inferior, vilified, stigmatized positions.

Beyond redefinition and reconstruction of representations of women, another common *topoi* among many of the selections here is that the term “woman” becomes a problematized, expanded, and diversified category, multiple rather than unified and ennobled rather than debased. As they claim the means of representing themselves, many women rhetors construct an alternative subjectivity for women and in the process claim what minority women writers have helped us identify as oppositional identities, providing a new set of discourses, making available a new set of “means” on which women can draw in order to continue to define women’s subjectivity. Sojourner Truth’s pointing to her own body to expand the definition of “woman,” Emma Goldman’s radical redefinition of “woman” outside of marriage, and Paula Gunn Allen’s reclaiming the ancient epistemology of the grandmothers are some examples of these new means. These rhetorical means, then, become a form of rhetorical action, seeking to change the underlying cultural ideologies that shape women’s place in the society but also providing an alternative discourse to confront the deficient internalized views of women perpetuated by the culture.

Susan Jarratt argues that women’s rhetorics also address what is unspecified in much rhetorical theory: “the specificity and materiality of difference.” She goes on to point out how feminists have staged “a double session of rhetoric” (a term she attributes to Gayatri Spivak), “simultaneously naming and reconstructing difference . . . [giving] names to language that articulates difference while exposing the power relations at work in acts of naming” (9). As so many feminist theorists point out, “woman” is a multiple location, and the emerging tradition of women’s rhetorics represented here asserts the differences among women, the differential privileges those differences entail, as well as the dangers of erasing or ignoring those differences. Thus, we hope that reading the variety of women’s rhetorics here will help readers explore the ethical dimensions of women’s relationships with “others,” including other women. Some of the most important assertions of difference come as nonwhite and postcolonial women attempt to unsettle and disrupt the thinking of white Western women to show how dominant definitions of womanhood, including those held by

white feminists, often erase the experience of other women. For example, while we are drawn to the writing of white women reformers included here, we recognize that they do not often challenge the use of the term “women,” which may exclude women of color or minimize vast differences in privilege between women. As bell hooks says,

For them it served two purposes. First, it allowed them to proclaim white men the oppressors while making it appear linguistically that no alliances existed between white women and white men based on shared racial imperialism. Second, it made possible for white women to act as if alliances did exist between themselves and non-white women in our society, and by doing so they could deflect attention away from their classism and racism. (140)

Sojourner Truth, Fannie Barrier Williams, Alice Dunbar Nelson, and the writers of the “Combahee River Collective Statement” make such demands of white women and white feminists. Other assertions of difference, like that of Minnie Bruce Pratt, occur as women attempt to demonstrate the cultural construction of gender itself and to break up the male/female binary and assert the existence of multiple gender positions. Therefore, another recurring strategy, or *topoi*, in this anthology is finding the means to enact and “compose” the fluid, fragmented subjectivity of women. Many times those means include innovative nonlinear style, the use of women’s experience as evidence, and a mixture of genres and languages. In their rhetorical practices, many writers also acknowledge that gender identities are not “natural” or “given” but that women’s subjectivities are socially constructed within the ideologies of cultural, racial, and economic situations, as Frances Watkins Harper, Charlotte Perkins Gilman, and Simone de Beauvoir argue. In making this assertion, women rhetors break down the monolithic assertion of white, male (or female), “universal” experience and foreground especially the identities of women of color, poor women, women with disabilities, colonized women and/or those dislocated in a postcolonial world, lesbian women, and transsexuals.

Finally, we would like to point to the fact that many of the writers gathered here use physicality as a *topoi* from which to write. Virginia Woolf argued in 1942 that women writers must “tell the truth about their own experiences as a body,” and many selections here, from both before and after her challenge, include women exploring not only their relationship to their own physical embodiment but also their integral connection to the wider bodies and spaces of the natural and public world in which women reside. Margery Kempe may be one of the first women to do so in her use of bodily expressions of groaning and sobbing to express her controversial religious experiences. Some women rhetors in this collection cross boundaries of propriety by exposing and exploring the subterranean parts of women’s lives. In the process the traditional notion of rhetorical propriety is stood on its head. “Writing the body” allows women

to circumvent the linguistic, rhetorical, and epistemological constraints that would deny women a location from which to speak. Embodied rhetoric, as Hélène Cixous, Nancy Mairs, and Gloria Anzaldúa pointedly remind us in selections here, defines another alternative space from which women claim authority and evidence.

These means, “recurrences,” and *topoi* we highlight here—claiming the right to speak; asserting new locations from which to write and speak; re-representing and validating the diversity of women speakers/writers; redefining what counts as evidence—emerge from our own reading and collaborative work with these texts. We want readers to find their own connections, to see what means become available, to gather these rhetorics together in their own view and use them to create and to reimagine rhetorical history and their own rhetorical practices.

Gathering Practice and Theory Together

In the absence of a body of rhetorical theory by women, we also believe these essays, speeches, and letters have important implications for rhetorical theory and the teaching of writing. We have gathered here a number of pieces that are overtly theoretical, offering advice to women on how to persuade and how to communicate effectively, such as those by Gertrude Buck, Mary Augusta Jordan, Virginia Woolf, and Hélène Cixous. But most of the selections in this anthology are acts of rhetoric, not rhetorical theory. Perhaps that is one of the reasons why a tradition of women’s rhetoric has not been written—or seen. Women’s rhetorical acts cannot be neatly separated from women’s rhetorical theory despite the existence of these categories in the masculinist rhetorical tradition, where rhetorical theory arises from practices within specific contexts and communities—traditionally the male contexts of law, politics, and the church. Rhetorical theory begins as a description of practice, then becomes a prescription for practice, often separated from the context out of which it grew in the first place. The very exigency of women’s rhetorical situations has left little room for leisurely or abstract theorizing, unconnected to practical action. But more to the point, women have purposefully sought to keep the context, the immediacy of experience, attached to theorizing rather than creating an abstract set of prescriptions disconnected from the contexts or stripped of the exigencies of everyday life. We believe many of the texts here substantiate Minnie Bruce Pratt’s claim that “we can not move theory into action unless we can find it in the eccentric and wandering ways of our daily life. I have written the stories that follow to give theory flesh and breath.”

We hope that this anthology invites its readers to reconceptualize definitions of rhetorical theory to include women’s writing practice and to read women’s rhetorics *as theory*. In other words, our work with this range of women’s rhetorics suggests to us that praxis—the intersection of theory and

practice—is a central feature of women’s rhetorical stances. Many writers here demonstrate the immediate connection between theory and action, between reflection on practice and practice itself. We think this connection between theory and practice is the ground for the very newest and perhaps most important work in women’s rhetorics. Some of this work has already begun. Krista Ratcliffe, in *Anglo American Feminist Challenges to the Rhetorical Traditions*, overtly seeks to “extrapolate” theories of rhetoric from “women’s and/or feminist critiques of language as well as from the textual strategies of such critiques” (4). Ratcliffe reads Virginia Woolf, Mary Daly, and Adrienne Rich in order to “contribute to the continuing conversation about feminisms and the rhetorical tradition by inviting teachers not only to question how Woman, women, and feminists have been located as part of, and apart from, these [canonical, rhetorical] traditions but also to explore the implication of such locations for rhetorical history, theory, and pedagogy” (6). Reading these three twentieth-century women writers both within and against such categories as location, material conditions, invention, style, arrangement, memory, and audience, Ratcliffe also offers models for some of the principles of selection and arrangement in *Available Means*. This anthology surely partakes of Ratcliffe’s goal—“not only to locate gender gaps but also to imagine new texts of rhetorical history, theory and pedagogy” (28)—and extends that goal by gathering together texts by women situated much farther from the center of that history and theory than the three Anglo American feminists Ratcliffe reads in her book.

Andrea Lunsford reminds us that we have to “listen hard” in order to see rhetorical theory “because the tradition has never recognized the forms, strategies, and goals used by many women as ‘rhetorical’” (6). As we have put this anthology together, we have tried to be the kind of readers who listen hard for theory within texts that often seem largely personal, practical, or occasional. For example, we include here Minnie Bruce Pratt writing about her history as a lesbian and about the inadequacy of binary categories of male and female, the heterosexism they represent and their inability to accurately name human experience. We believe that in so writing she “theorizes”—she explicates the entanglements of identity and language, the power of naming as it constructs human identities, and also the inadequacy of language to represent the multiplicity and fluidity of potential identities available beyond the male/female binary. Through her discussion of transgendered experience, Pratt presents a theory about the relationships of power embedded in the discourses of gender and sexuality and about the way in which rhetoric can control difference, can keep it within bounds or allow resistance. We also include selections from Dorothy Allison’s *Two or Three Things I Know for Sure*, a narrative that began as a performance piece and that we believe presents an alternative rhetorical theory, as Allison tells the story of reclaiming her life from its abusive beginnings. In this “story,” she is exploring epistemology—always a foundation for rhetorical theory—arguing that truth is constructed in language, invented and arranged in

order to survive. In doing so she suggests the provisionality of reality but also the necessity of rhetorical action to change one's reality.

As we have attempted to "listen hard" to women writers and speakers in order to hear rhetorical theory enacted, we have recognized that many of the writers who collapse theory and practice are women of color: bell hooks, Toni Morrison, Leslie Marmon Silko, Gloria Anzaldúa. We believe this is because they—more than white, privileged women—have had to theorize a way first of getting heard; they have had to create the rhetorical means to re-present themselves as persons who can speak, who are not invisible. Those on the unequal side of power must always be more theoretical, more rhetorically analytical. The homeplace, as bell hooks conceives of it, is a site of refuge, but it is also a site of theory. The borderland and the margin, as Anzaldúa demonstrates, are places that demand theorizing if one is to survive. Storytelling becomes theory as Toni Morrison uses an old folktale to articulate a theory of responsible language use, and bell hooks shows us that rhetorical theory often arises from the material reality of women's lives. With her stories of Yellow Woman, Silko highlights the differences between white culture and the aesthetic, moral, and rhetorical values of her Laguna Pueblo people. Although white European American women are also often disenfranchised and alienated from power, for them the rhetorical situation is sometimes more naturalized, invisible, and thus not as available for reflection, problematizing, or analysis. For this reason we can see in the texts gathered here, particularly in those from the twentieth century, the ways in which white women learned from African American, Native American, Asian American, and Latina/Chicana women and lesbians of color to question and to place in an economic, historical, and political perspective issues of gender, race, class, and sexuality.

Gathering Rhetorics for the Future

We see *Available Means* as a next step in what Louise Phelps and Janet Emig call "a uniquely transitional moment when everything is yet to be decided" (408). We are at an important but ironic moment as feminists, as rhetoricians, and as teachers. Women have long been outside the canon of rhetoric; now, we are at the beginning of a moment of canon and theory formation, as Lunsford's, Logan's, Royster's, and Ratcliffe's work clearly shows. And as these scholars continually insist, questions remain at the heart of this work: What is women's rhetoric? What is the difference between reading women's writing rhetorically (analyzing their rhetorical methods, the use of their available means) and claiming that a given work by a woman *is* rhetorical theory? Who belongs in the emerging canon of women's/feminist rhetoric? And how can this recovery work and this reconfiguring of rhetorical theory be useful to students of writing and rhetoric and women's studies? Rhetoric and composition, argue Phelps and Emig, have a "heritage of an indigenous though subterranean feminism that awaits critical articulation and elaboration" (418). In *Available Means* we

hope to provide some of that elaboration by gathering for students and teachers a body of women's writing that can be usefully investigated in order to subvert and enlarge conceptions of both rhetorical theory and practice.

In this moment of defining women's rhetorics we hope that this anthology will spark questions like these: What do we have available to us in the body of women's writing that we might consider as rhetorical theory? What qualities might a work of women's writing need to possess in order for us to consider it as rhetorical theory? And finally, what blinders are preventing us from reading more of women's rhetoric as theory? We strongly believe that these questions are even more important than their answers. We can't wait for the answers, however, because it is important, too, for students to begin to study a body of women's writing as rhetorical theory in order for them to move towards changed rhetorical practice in their own lives.

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Available Means

Aspasia

C. 410 B.C.E.

The selection below was written by a man, reporting the words of another man, who is reporting yet another man's words but claiming that the words were written by a woman—Aspasia of Miletus. Although filtered through the mouths of three male rhetors, Aspasia belongs in this collection of women's rhetorics because hers is one of the first—if not the very first—woman's voice in the history of the Western rhetorical tradition. We do not have any of Aspasia's writing firsthand, but Plato names her as his "excellent mistress in the art of rhetoric" (*Menexenus* 235e). Cheryl Glenn describes Aspasia as "an exceptional hero in a new rhetorical narrative" (*Rhetoric Retold* 44).

Born in Miletus (now Turkey) in the fifth century B.C.E., Aspasia was well educated, politically astute, and outspoken at a time when Athenian women were confined almost exclusively to the home and rarely permitted a public voice or education. Almost everything about her life and her rhetoric is remarkable, starting with the fact that we know of her at all. The accomplishments of Aspasia are recorded by Plato, Cicero, and Plutarch, who all praised her as both rhetorician and political philosopher. Described most fully in Plato's *Menexenus* (excerpted below) and in Plutarch's *Lives of the Noble Grecians and Romans*, the Aspasia these men depict is a powerful woman indeed at a time when almost all of the references to women relate only to their roles as wives, mothers, or daughters. Plutarch reports that many Athenians, including Pericles, consulted Aspasia for "instruction in the art of speaking" (201).

In the following excerpt from Plato's dialogue *Menexenus*, Plato suggests that Aspasia herself, not Pericles, wrote the famous funeral oration for those killed in the Peloponnesian Wars in 431 B.C.E. Pericles ruled Athens for over thirty years as a distinguished soldier, statesman, and orator ostensibly without equal. Yet in this dialogue, Plato puts Pericles' famous oration into the mouth of Aspasia, claiming that while "Pericles spoke . . . she composed." Pericles and Aspasia were lovers; and although she was at the center of the political and rhetorical debates of her day, Aspasia herself could not have delivered any oration, much less the public ritual of healing and celebration that a funeral oration accomplished. Yet Socrates attributes its ideas of public good and of the connection of place and people, as well as the oration's rhetorical effect of creating a community among all who heard it and mourned the dead, to Aspasia, equating her skill with what he would later call a true art of rhetoric. Aspasia's speech follows the conventions of a classical funeral oration, drawing on rhetorical "topics" familiar to her audience, such as the heroic deeds of ancestors and the

source of all goodness in Athenian soil. Some scholars read Aspasia's oration as Plato's ironic parody of the excesses of rhetoric in Athens, particularly as practiced and taught by non-Athenians. But as part of the history of women's rhetoric, it may be more important to note that Socrates describes Aspasia's rhetorical genius as having "made" many other good speakers; in other words, Socrates treats her as a teacher of men in Athens. Despite the fact that we cannot read her rhetoric directly but only through the words of men, we can remember Aspasia as the only woman we know of who dared to compose and teach among men in Athens, the place where our rhetorical tradition began, a tradition that has since excluded so many women.

"Pericles' Funeral Oration" from Plato's *Menexenus*

c. 387–367 B.C.E.

Socrates: But why, my friend, should he not have plenty to say? Every rhetorician has speeches ready-made, nor is there any difficulty in improvising that sort of stuff. Had the orator to praise Athenians among Peloponnesians, or Peloponnesians among Athenians, he must be a good rhetorician who could succeed and gain credit. But there is no difficulty in a man's winning applause when he is contending for fame among the persons whom he is praising.

Menexenus: Do you think not, Socrates?

Socrates: Certainly not.

Menexenus: Do you think that you could speak yourself if there should be a necessity, and if the Council were to choose you?

Socrates: That I should be able to speak is no great wonder, Menexenus, considering that I have an excellent mistress in the art of rhetoric—she who has made so many good speakers, and one who was the best among all the Hellenes, Pericles, the son of Xanthippus.

Menexenus: And who is she? I suppose that you mean Aspasia.

Socrates: Yes, I do, and besides her I had Connus, the son of Metrobius, as a master, and he was my master in music, as she was in rhetoric. No wonder that a man who has received such an education should be a finished speaker. Even the pupil of very inferior masters—say, for example, one who had learned music of Lamprus and rhetoric of Antiphon the Rhamnusian—might make a figure if he were to praise the Athenians among the Athenians.

Menexenus: And what would you be able to say if you had to speak?

Reprinted from Plato. *Menexenus*. In *The Dialogues of Plato*, vol. 2, translated by Benjamin Jowett, 516–33. London: Oxford University Press, 1892.

Socrates: Of my own wit, most likely nothing, but yesterday I heard Aspasia composing a funeral oration about these very dead. For she had been told, as you were saying, that the Athenians were going to choose a speaker, and she repeated to me the sort of speech which he should deliver—partly improvising and partly from previous thought, putting together fragments of the funeral oration which Pericles spoke, but which, as I believe, she composed.

Menexenus: And can you remember what Aspasia said?

Socrates: I ought to be able, for she taught me, and she was ready to strike me because I was always forgetting.

Menexenus: Then why will you not rehearse what she said?

Socrates: Because I am afraid that my mistress may be angry with me if I publish her speech.

Menexenus: Nay, Socrates, let us have the speech, whether Aspasia's or anyone else's, no matter. I hope that you will oblige me.

Socrates: But I am afraid that you will laugh at me if I continue the games of youth in old age.

Menexenus: Far otherwise, Socrates. Let us by all means have the speech.

Socrates: Truly I have such a disposition to oblige you that if you bid me dance naked I should not like to refuse, since we are alone. Listen then. If I remember rightly, she began as follows, with the mention of the dead.

There is a tribute of deeds and of words. The departed have already had the first, when going forth on their destined journey they were attended on their way by the state and by their friends; the tribute of words remains to be given to them, as is meet and by law ordained. For noble words are a memorial and a crown of noble actions, which are given to the doers of them by the hearers. A word is needed which will duly praise the dead and gently admonish the living, exhorting the brethren and descendants of the departed to imitate their virtue, and consoling their fathers and mothers and the survivors, if any, who may chance to be alive of the previous generation. What sort of a word will this be, and how shall we rightly begin the praises of these brave men? In their life they rejoiced their own friends with their valor, and their death they gave in exchange for the salvation of the living. And I think that we should praise them in the order in which nature made them good, for they were good because they were sprung from good fathers. Wherefore let us first of all praise the goodness of their birth, secondly, their nurture and education, and then let us set forth how noble their actions were, and how worthy of the education which they had received.

And first as to their birth. Their ancestors were not strangers, nor are these their descendants sojourners only, whose fathers have come from another country, but they are the children of the soil, dwelling and living in their own land. And the country which brought them up is not like other countries, a stepmother to her children, but their own true mother; she bore them and

nourished them and received them, and in her bosom they now repose. It is meet and right, therefore, that we should begin by praising the land which is their mother, and that will be a way of praising their noble birth.

The country is worthy to be praised, not only by us, but by all mankind—first, and above all, as being dear to the gods. This is proved by the strife and contention of the gods respecting her. And ought not the country which the gods praise to be praised by all mankind? The second praise which may be fairly claimed by her is that at the time when the whole earth was sending forth and creating diverse animals, tame and wild, she our mother was free and pure from savage monsters, and out of all animals selected and brought forth man, who is superior to the rest in understanding, and alone has justice and religion. And a great proof that she brought forth the common ancestors of us and of the departed is that she provided the means of support for her offspring. For as a woman proves her motherhood by giving milk to her young ones—and she who has no fountain of milk is not a mother—so did this our land prove that she was the mother of men, for in those days she alone and first of all brought forth wheat and barley for human food, which is the best and noblest sustenance for man, whom she regarded as her true offspring. And these are truer proofs of motherhood in a country than in a woman, for the woman in her conception and generation is but the imitation of the earth, and not the earth of the woman. And of the fruit of the earth she gave a plenteous supply, not only to her own, but to others also, and afterward she made the olive to spring up to be a boon to her children, and to help them in their toils. And when she had herself nursed them and brought them up to manhood, she gave them gods to be their rulers and teachers, whose names are well known, and need not now be repeated. They are the gods who ordered our lives, and instructed us, first of all men, in the arts for the supply of our daily needs, and taught us the acquisition and use of arms for the defense of the country.

Thus born into the world and thus educated, the ancestors of the departed lived and made themselves a government, which I ought briefly to commemorate. For government is the nurture of man, and the government of good men is good, and of bad men bad. And I must show that our ancestors were trained under a good government, and for this reason they were good, and our contemporaries are also good, among whom our departed friends are to be reckoned. Then as now, and indeed always, from that time to this, speaking generally, our government was an aristocracy—a form of government which receives various names, according to the fancies of men, and is sometimes called democracy, but is really an aristocracy or government of the best which has the approval of the many. For kings we have always had, first hereditary and then elected, and authority is mostly in the hands of the people, who dispense offices and power to those who appear to be most deserving of them. Neither is a man rejected from weakness or poverty or obscurity of origin, nor honored by reason of the opposite, as in other states, but there is one principle—he who appears to be wise

and good is a governor and ruler. The basis of this our government is equality of birth, for other states are made up of all sorts and unequal conditions of men, and therefore their governments are unequal—there are tyrannies and there are oligarchies, in which the one party are slaves and the others masters. But we and our citizens are brethren, the children all of one mother, and we do not think it right to be one another's masters or servants, but the natural equality of birth compels us to seek for legal equality, and to recognize no superiority except in the reputation of virtue and wisdom.

And so their and our fathers, and these, too, our brethren, being nobly born and having been brought up in all freedom, did both in their public and private capacity many noble deeds famous over the whole world. They were the deeds of men who thought that they ought to fight both against Hellenes for the sake of Hellenes on behalf of freedom, and against barbarians in the common interest of Hellas. Time would fail me to tell of their defense of their country against the invasion of Eumolpus and the Amazons, or of their defense of the Argives against the Cadmeans, or of the Heraclidae against the Argives. Besides, the poets have already declared in song to all mankind their glory, and therefore any commemoration of their deeds in prose which we might attempt would hold a second place. They already have their reward, and I say no more of them, but there are other worthy deeds of which no poet has worthily sung, and which are still wooing the poet's Muse. Of these I am bound to make honorable mention, and shall invoke others to sing of them also in lyric and other strains, in a manner becoming the actors. . . .

Such were the actions of the men who are here interred, and of others who have died on behalf of their country; many and glorious things I have spoken of them, and there are yet many more, and more glorious, things remaining to be told—many days and nights would not suffice to tell of them. Let them not be forgotten, and let every man remind their descendants that they also are soldiers who must not desert the ranks of their ancestors, or from cowardice fall behind. Even so I exhort you this day, and in all future time, whenever I meet with any of you, shall continue to remind and exhort you, O ye sons of heroes, that you strive to be the bravest of men. And I think that I ought now to repeat what your fathers desired to have said to you who are their survivors, when they went out to battle, in case anything happened to them. I will tell you what I heard them say, and what, if they had only speech, they would fain be saying, judging from what they then said. And you must imagine that you hear them saying what I now repeat to you.

Sons, the event proves that your fathers were brave men, for we might have lived dishonorably, but have preferred to die honorably rather than bring you and your children into disgrace, and rather than dishonor our own fathers and forefathers—considering that life is not life to one who is a dishonor to his race, and that to such a one neither men nor gods are friendly, either while he is on the earth or after death in the world below. Remember our words, then, and

whatever is your aim let virtue be the condition of the attainment of your aim, and know that without this all possessions and pursuits are dishonorable and evil. For neither does wealth bring honor to the owner, if he be a coward; of such a one the wealth belongs to another, and not to himself. Nor do beauty and strength of body, when dwelling in a base and cowardly man, appear comely, but the reverse of comely, making the possessor more conspicuous, and manifesting forth his cowardice. And all knowledge, when separated from justice and virtue, is seen to be cunning and not wisdom; wherefore make this your first and last and constant and all-absorbing aim—to exceed, if possible, not only us but all your ancestors in virtue, and know that to excel you in virtue only brings us shame, but that to be excelled by you is a source of happiness to us. And we shall most likely be defeated, and you will most likely be victors in the contest, if you learn so to order your lives as not to abuse or waste the reputation of your ancestors, knowing that to a man who has any self-respect, nothing is more dishonorable than to be honored, not for his own sake, but on account of the reputation of his ancestors. The honor of parents is a fair and noble treasure to their posterity, but to have the use of a treasure of wealth and honor, and to leave none to your successors, because you have neither money nor reputation of your own, is alike base and dishonorable. And if you follow our precepts you will be received by us as friends, when the hour of destiny brings you hither, but if you neglect our words and are disgraced in your lives, no one will welcome or receive you. This is the message which is to be delivered to our children.

Some of us have fathers and mothers still living, and we would urge them, if, as is likely, we shall die, to bear the calamity as lightly as possible, and not to condole with one another, for they have sorrows enough, and will not need anyone to stir them up. While we gently heal their wounds, let us remind them that the gods have heard the chief part of their prayers, for they prayed, not that their children might live forever, but that they might be brave and renowned. And this, which is the greatest good, they have attained. A mortal man cannot expect to have everything in his own life turning out according to his will, and they, if they bear their misfortunes bravely, will be truly deemed brave fathers of the brave. But if they give way to their sorrows, either they will be suspected of not being our parents, or we of not being such as our panegyrists declare. Let not either of the two alternatives happen, but rather let them be our chief and true panegyrists, who show in their lives that they are true men, and had men for their sons. Of old the saying, ‘Nothing too much,’ appeared to be, and really was, well said. For he whose happiness rests with himself, if possible, wholly, and if not, as far as possible, who is not hanging in suspense on other men, or changing with the vicissitude of their fortune, has his life ordered for the best. He is the temperate and valiant and wise, and when his riches come and go, when his children are given and taken away, he will remember the proverb, ‘Neither rejoicing overmuch nor grieving overmuch,’ for he relies upon him-

self. And such we would have our parents to be—that is our word and wish, and as such we now offer ourselves, neither lamenting overmuch, nor fearing overmuch, if we are to die at this time. And we entreat our fathers and mothers to retain these feelings throughout their future life, and to be assured that they will not please us by sorrowing and lamenting over us. But, if the dead have any knowledge of the living, they will displease us most by making themselves miserable and by taking their misfortunes too much to heart, and they will please us best if they bear their loss lightly and temperately. For our life will have the noblest end which is vouchsafed to man, and should be glorified rather than lamented. And if they will direct their minds to the care and nurture of our wives and children, they will soonest forget their misfortunes, and live in a better and nobler way, and be dearer to us.

This is all that we have to say to our families, and to the state we would say, Take care of our parents and of our sons—let her worthily cherish the old age of our parents, and bring up our sons in the right way. But we know that she will of her own accord take care of them, and does not need any exhortation of ours.

This, O ye children and parents of the dead, is the message which they bid us deliver to you, and which I do deliver with the utmost seriousness. And in their name I beseech you, the children, to imitate your fathers, and you, parents, to be of good cheer about yourselves, for we will nourish your age, and take care of you both publicly and privately in any place in which one of us may meet one of you who are the parents of the dead. And the care of you which the city shows, you know yourselves, for she has made provision by law concerning the parents and children of those who die in war; the highest authority is specially entrusted with the duty of watching over them above all other citizens, and they will see that the fathers and mothers have no wrong done to them. The city herself shares in the education of the children, desiring as far as it is possible that their orphanhood may not be felt by them. While they are children she is a parent to them, and when they have arrived at man's estate she sends them to their several duties, in full armor clad; and bringing freshly to their minds the ways of their fathers, she places in their hands the instruments of their fathers' virtues. For the sake of the omen, she would have them from the first begin to rule over their own houses arrayed in the strength and arms of their fathers. And as for the dead, she never ceases honoring them, celebrating, in common for all, rites which become the property of each, and in addition to this, holding gymnastic and equestrian contests, and musical festivals of every sort. She is to the dead in the place of a son and heir, and to their sons in the place of a father, and to their parents and elder kindred in the place of a guardian—ever and always caring for them. Considering this, you ought to bear your calamity the more gently, for thus you will be most endeared to the dead and to the living, and your sorrows will heal and be healed. And now do you and all, having lamented the dead in common according to the law, go your ways.

You have heard, Menexenus, the oration of Aspasia the Milesian.

Menexenus: Truly, Socrates, I marvel that Aspasia, who is only a woman, should be able to compose such a speech—she must be a rare one.

Socrates: Well, if you are incredulous, you may come with me and hear her.

Menexenus: I have often met Aspasia, Socrates, and know what she is like.

Socrates: Well, and do you not admire her, and are you not grateful for her speech?

Menexenus: Yes, Socrates, I am very grateful to her or to him who told you, and still more to you who have told me.

Socrates: Very good. But you must take care not to tell of me, and then at some future time I will repeat to you many other excellent political speeches of hers.

Menexenus: Fear not. Only let me hear them, and I will keep the secret.

Socrates: Then I will keep my promise.

FOR FURTHER READING

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