BODIES TO THINK WITH:
RECASTING RHETORICAL INVENTION AS PUBLIC BODILY-THINKING

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Kyle P. Vealey, B.A.

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Kyle P. Vealey, B.A.

Thesis Advisor: Nathaniel A. Rivers, Ph.D.

ABSTRACT

In light of what has been termed “the material turn” in rhetorical theory, this work argues for a model of invention that acknowledges both its bodily and public dimension as inextricably linked. As Don Ihde claims, “we are our body in the sense in which phenomenology understands our motile, perceptual, and emotive being-in-the-world,” and as such, our inventive practices should rightly reflect that embodied rootedness (xi). Yet, histo-cultural theories of invention have often designated it as either an objective discovery or subjective creation. Affirmatively oscillating between these two options (and thus negating neither), this work gestures towards a model of invention that takes as its basis the materiality of language; that is, a view of language as already and always spoken, written or read by a body, to a body, or with a body. Opening up invention as a somatic process predicates itself upon a discussion of the inherently public and social dimension of bodily life. To support this assertion, I read invention and inventional practices in light of contemporary cognitive science, specifically Andy Clark’s model of extended-mind and Edwin Hutchins’ claims for distributed cognition.
For my family.

This and whatever work the future may hold
would be impossible without you.
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In a thesis that takes as its subject the bodily-clustering occurring in the act of composition, it rightly follows that I acknowledge all of the important bodies “around me,” near and far.

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“Speech is in fact a gift of language, and language is not immaterial. It is a subtle body, but body it is”

—Jacques Lacan
Écrits (1966).

"We put a second brain to the brain,
We put second eyes to the eyes and second ears to the ears"

—Walt Whitman
Notes and Fragments (1899).
INTRODUCTION

AN APOLOGY FOR PRESENCE:
PLAYING OUT LANGUAGE’S MATERIALITY

In his curious work, *Becoming Beside Ourselves: The Alphabet, Ghosts and Distributed Human Being* (2008), Brian Rotman argues that the most distinctive feature of writing, its so-called “virtuality,” emerges in its “ability to signify across space and time in the absence of a real or embodied speaker” (8). In writing’s long history, this distinctive virtuality has taken on an almost axiological primacy. Institutionally, writing has been introduced, taught, fostered and perpetuated as a disembodied act—one that occurs in the enclosed moments of isolation; publically presented later as a disembodied product, hermeneutically available to a readership.\(^1\) Central to this view of writing, then, is a concurrent and implicit two-pronged view of rhetorical invention; one that perpetuates inventional practices as private and disembodied acts—mental processes enacted alone, the production of which is later presented as finalized or (in an oddly material metaphor) “polished.”

Responding to this disembodied and autonomous view in what has been termed the “material turn” in rhetorical theory, recent scholarship has sought a return to the material and bodily basis of language. In one such effort, Debra Hawhee suggests that “as rhetorical critics we would all do well to remember the lesson [Kenneth] Burke learned from [Richard] Paget: communication is difficult to separate from language’s materiality, which is never far from communing, communicative bodies” (*Moving Bodies* 124). That is, thinking of language as material(ity) opens up a view of language as continually

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\(^1\) Central to this view is Roland Barthes’ “death of the author.” Words, in this case, never harken back to the body that put them to page.
acknowledging its bodily contours. In this way, language emerges and manifests itself as already and always learned, performed, felt, read, written or spoken by a body, to a body, with a body. The mundane and thoroughly ordinariness of bodily life—or the day-to-day invisible workings of our/other bodies in how we (inter)act with language—has obscured how intimately enmeshed language and bodies are. The goal of such a reorientation in rhetorical theory seeks to expand and open up the postmodern linguistic subject to a consideration of the linguistic body and, conversely so, what might be called bodily linguistics. But what might we expect from this corporeal acknowledgement of language’s bodily rootedness? What kind of rhetorical energy might be latent in our embodiment language? I find a tenable answer to these questions in an unlikely form; namely, that of thinking, albeit a bodily and public thinking.

As Hawhee and Cory Holding note in their recent “Case Studies in Material Rhetoric: Joseph Priestley and Gilbert Austin” (2010), “recent efforts to consider the role of bodies and materiality in rhetorical theory have encouraged rhetorical scholars to bracket the privileged place granted to reason, rationality, and their locus—the mind—by neo-Aristotelian and Enlightenment thinkers” (261). Doing so does not, so to speak, tip the scales in favor of a complete somatic turn, wherein the body replaces, and thus negates outright, the mind. Rather, it is a theoretical move that positions the body as an

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2 Kelly Pender, affirmatively responding to critiques of instrumental rhetoric in “Negation and the Contradictory Technics of Rhetoric” (2008), suggests that, for theorists such as Maurice Blanchot, Lynn Worsham, Diane Davis, Victor Vitanza and Geoffrey Sirc, the materiality of language becomes apparent when language is “no longer experienced as transparent, communicative medium but rather as [a] opaque thing: sound, rhythm, weight, and shape….Once this material is revealed […] writing ceases to be only a means of representation, becoming also an experience of ‘a powerful universe of words, where relations, configurations, forces are affirmed through sound, figure, rhythmic mobility’” (Pender 17).
indistinguishable and concurrent force of influence in inventive practices; as a possible and productive site for the expression of language’s materiality. It opens up space to consider the body as a thinking thing, as something more than a machine operated by some elusive specter. This innovative and inventive form of thinking allows us to bypass any kind of constructed binary between mind/body, thinking/doing, internal/external and, instead, permits a view of rhetorical invention as a bodily acting; a linguistic and cognitive doing in/with/to the world.

Like Richard Lanham in “The ‘Q’ Question” (1995), I view this “doing” of language’s materiality as a public and social arrangement. As Lanham’s Strong Defense of Rhetoric assumes that “truth is determined by social dramas, some more formal than others but all man-made” (Lanham 156). Implicit in these social dramas is a necessary bodily economy. That is, social dramas are never disembodied—they perpetuate as bodily clusterings; of bodies coming together, expressing attitudes, and persuading each other of whatever truth might be needed. Significantly, then, inventive claims are bound up, enmeshed in and continually tethered to notions of the body and its public and social emplacement.

Language, in this view, calls forth a certain kind of presence. This presence, however, does not resemble the epistemologically felt-immediacy that Plato purports and that Derrida subsequently calls into question. It is the presence of a body (it does not matter whether physically or temporally “present”), one that has spoken language and has,

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3 See “The ‘Q’ Question,” wherein Lanham writes, “In [the Strong Defense’s] world, there is as much truth as we need, maybe more, but argument is open-ended, more like kiting checks than balancing books” (156).
in an Heideggerian sense, had language speak through it. As the rhetoric surrounding such a presence becomes muddled, I refer to this interaction between body and language as, simply, “play.” Play, at once, implies both a controlled and exerted effort at enacting an activity of swift, irregular and lively movements but also a release and acquiescence to forces and energy out of one’s control (“Play”). It also implies a kind of bodily pleasure, one that involves not just a singular body, but many bodies (“Play”). Viewing language in these terms fruitfully positions invention as inextricably linked and embedded in notions of both the physical body and a public playing out of language’s materiality.

In what follows, then, I gesture toward the possibility of recasting rhetorical invention (traditionally designated as either objective discovery or subjective creation) as not only a singular event of knowledge production enacted by a singular agent, but rather as a distribution of cognition occurring across and between multiple cooperating and coordinating bodies. In this way, I argue from the basis of language’s materiality that rhetorical invention is a thoroughly public and bodily process of thinking, a collective expression of the asignifying, attitudinal and ambient-hood mode of somatic life. To support this assertion, I position rhetorical theorists, working through and with rhetoric and bodies, into affirmative conversation with theorists from the fields of cognitive science and sociology.

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4 The best example of this is thinking of “play” in terms of angling, in which the word refers to allowing a “fish to exhaust itself by pulling against the line” (OED “Play” 4c). One can readily imagine one’s self giving into, after complete exhaustion, to the sway and pull of language.
CHAPTER ONE
THE LOGIC OF RECASTING:
A METHODOLOGY OF SOFTENING BOUNDARIES

Rhetorical invention has had (and is, in fact, still having) a complex, if not equally complicated, history. The term invention originally derives from the Greek verb heuriskó, an active form of verb meaning to discover or to find (Atwill 17). As one of the five rhetorical canons, Aristotle originally positioned invention as the method by which a speaker or writer determined or negotiated differing ways to write (of/in) a situation. Usurped by emerging experimental sciences and a complete rationalization of philosophy, invention lost its legitimacy as a method of inquiry early in the English Renaissance. Interest in invention as a mode of inquiry has, however, resurfaced in the twentieth-century, specifically with the rise and proliferation of postmodernism. Yet, even with invention’s revival, we have constant and binaristic contestation. On one hand you have notable theorists such as James Berlin who argue for an instrumental, social episteme perspective of invention; while, in the other corner, Geoffrey Sirc stands admonishing his occupational status as an “academic gatekeeper” and instead purports an expressivist view of invention as an emotive enactment of “passional possibilities” (Sirc 267, 269).

As Janice Lauer and many others have cited, invention’s significance for rhetorical theory can be best summarized in Richard Young and Alton Becker’s comment, “the strength and worth of rhetoric seem […] to be tied to the art of invention; rhetoric tends to become a superficial and marginal concern when it is separated from systematic methods of inquiry and problems of content” (Qtd. in Invention in Rhetoric and Composition 1).

The best and most comprehensive work on this simple, binaristic matter might be Richard E. Miller’s “The Nervous System” (1996) where he offers a compelling and tenable “resolution” by folding the academic (or professional “objectivity”) in with the personal (and thereby “subjective”)
its empirical etymology and its cultural alignment with expressivist manifestations, invention is still an on-going and controversial site of grueling semantic contestation.

As John Muckelbauer notes in *The Future of Invention* (2008), “The National Development Project’s Committee on the Nature of Rhetorical Invention” suggested that “most conventional treatments of rhetorical invention...[have] to do with the making of arguments by a speaker for an audience for the purpose of gaining assent to a predetermined proposition” (Qtd in Muckelbauer 16 emphasis mine). Invention, in this instance, takes on a subservient, instrumental role in conveying pre-established truths. This perspective not only subjugates invention to some a priori and non-contingent truth but also marks inventive practices as merely cosmetic and ornamental. Over and above, usurping invention, then, are other modes of inquiry—whether it be scientific, rational and/or faith-based. In this regard, invention reduces to a science of choice; the art of deciding the most effective mode in which to convey such truths for the end purpose of persuasion.

Though invention has traditionally been designated as either objective-discovery or subjective-creation, I hold that invention would benefit greatly from an affirmative “recasting.” From this perspective, I contend that rhetorical invention should be recasted as a generative, cognitive practice—as thinking, broadly speaking (though, this cognition will be qualified and augmented in terms of a somatic dimension later in Chapter 2). My analysis will involve directing attention to the inventive methodology that is employed in this work and how the “project of recasting” might embody that methodology. I will

by re-interpreting and re-articulating an almost-axiomatic principle of postmodernism, namely the complete discursivization of bodies.
conclude with a discussion of invention as not merely a type or mode of delivery (as Lanham’s weak defense might insinuate) but that invention has already and always been a kind of thinking, albeit a very material kind. This recasting will lay the foundations for the bodily and extra-bodily extension to which invention will be furthered and recasted.

THE LOGIC OF RECASTING:
AFFIRMATIVE STYLES OF ENGAGEMENT

In his 2008 work, John Muckelbauer suggests that the postmodern project of deconstructing “foundational thinking,” and its subsequent structural binaries, has become commonplace in academic scholarship (Muckelbauer 3). For postmodern critics, binaries, such as reason/emotion, mind/body, objectivism/subjectivism, external/internal, presence/absence, are exclusionary and limited in their descriptive power. By constituting the whole in terms of two polarized positions, binaries often fail to take into consideration anything but the extremes, negating any middle ground present. This postmodern critique, beneficial as it may be, never turns a critical eye to the foundational principles through which it operates. Muckelbauer terms this underlying principle of operation “the problem of change:”

If one focuses on the movement of change [itself], it quickly becomes apparent that the myriad different approaches to contemporary scholarship actually have a great deal more in common than is usually presumed. While the many polarized positions certainly differ on a number of important matters, the one thing they generally share is a fundamental commitment to a dialectical image of change (4).
This unacknowledged commitment to a static conception of change operates through a dialectical binary composed of “the same’ and the ‘different’” (3). The persistence of this binary forces all postmodern critiques to proceed through a dialectical movement of negation, wherein one side of a binary (the tradition/same) is always denied for the other (the innovative/difference) (4, 5). A postmodern critique, therefore, offers a style of engagement in which “negation is the generative principle of transformation” (4). That is, in all instances of change (conceived of as a dialectical image), to progress or move toward difference, some tradition, social structure or proposition must be fundamentally negated. Such a theoretical move employs the very foundational thinking that postmodern critique attempts to avoid.

As a way of negotiating this dilemma, Muckelbauer offers “an affirmative style of engagement”—an alternative methodology that readily and steadily avoids basing inventional practices on foundational discounting and exclusion. Yet, just as soon as Muckelbauer develops this affirmative engagement, he complicates the issue at hand by claiming it impossible to move fully beyond the Hegelian dialectic of change (for even here, “moving fully beyond” implies a basic negation). Regardless of orientation, one is seemingly always moved to endorse a position either through advocacy (wherein one emphasizes a traditionally privileged position); through a critique (in supporting a traditionally unprivileged position); or through a synthesis (wherein one contends for a

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7 Kenneth Burke offers insight here in thinking of binaries not as things themselves but as a logical principle. He suggests that in act of naming or labeling something “A,” it necessarily follows that A is, simply, not “Not-A” (Language as Symbolic Action 425). In other words, binaries have no real referent, but are only constructed on the basis of a logic law of identity and non-contradiction. Given this view, the Hegelian dialectic will never, in any real, legitimate sense, be “overcome.”
“middle” route, thereby acknowledging and thereby re-inscribing the idea of binary polarity) (Muckelbauer 8-9). Departing productively from these options (but, in steadfast consistency, not rejecting them), the affirmative style of engagement operates as a “simpler kind of affirmative repetition that circulates within the dialectic’s recognizably complex repetition” (12). In conceiving of this affirmative engagement in terms of Deleuzian and Derridean “singular rhythms,” Muckelbauer holds that if the dialectic change of negation cannot be overcome (for in the very act of overcoming we are negating) then we must orient ourselves differently in this complex process of production. He writes, “in any particular encounter, everything depends on one’s orientation within repetition: an orientation toward negation itself or an orientation toward the singular rhythms within negation” (13). That is, the singular rhythm allows for us to “[respond] differently in our actual encounters with the world, the possibility, for instance, of engaging in everyday practices such as reading, writing, and thinking through something other than the negation of otherness” (13). It comes down to, then, a decidedly rhetorical project to begin to cultivate how we orient ourselves within this complex relation of repetitive logic.

It is my methodological intention, then, to assume an affirmative style of engagement in and through the term “recasting;” a verb that, I hold, embodies a thoroughly material form of Muckelbauer’s affirmative engagement. Recasting intimates at once, three distinct but interconnecting themes. First, the term connotes the casting and recasting process of metallurgy in which one alters the form and dimensions of various metals by adding a certain amount of heat. Central here is the freedom and possibility in
the formal outcomes of casting and recasting\(^8\)—wherein the specific context of heat allows for an almost endless multitude of results. As such, there is no difference besides the arbitrary chronological designations between casting and a secondary recasting. Both processes begin with a certain amount of raw material with the outcome depending on the way in which we position or orientation ourselves to the act of formation. Second, and likely the most colloquial form, (re)casting implies a throwing or a thrown-ness from a body or vessel—a projection, that may have some deliberate purpose or aim (“Cast,” “Recast”). Third, and inherently connected to the more colloquial perspective, (re)casting suggest an active alteration to the course or movement of a ship in the process of navigation—a calculated and cooperative effort at navigating toward a futural space (“Cast,” “Recast”).

Exploring and departing from these intimations, I suggest a common thread running through these definitions is a deliberate connection between an active dynamism and a mutable futurity. The dynamism of metallurgy, the deliberate act of throwing and the cooperative coordination of navigation, allows for a futural alteration to take place without any effort at negation. If rhetorical invention is reconceived in this way, then the futurity of its inevitable re-conception (which will perpetually take place by scholars as long as the concept exists) will remain open, poised for continual modification. That is, I view

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\(^8\) As I will discuss more explicitly later in chapter two, Michelle Ballif’s article “Writing the Third-Sophistic Cyborg” (1996) proves invaluable in a discussion of metallurgical metaphors. As she writes of a cybernetic forging of a rhetoric of our future anterior, forging intimates a “[forming] metal by heating and hammering; or to form or bring into being especially by the expenditure of effort” (65). Ballif designates this forging, or here “recasting” as the work of métis. As the concept of métis in terms of the cyborg makes up a large majority of chapter two, further elaboration can wait until then.
recasting (in terms of a methodological principle) as operating through a proleptic
dynamism that continually makes room to account for that which it is thoroughly not.
Such a methodology is reminiscent of Jamesian pragmatism, wherein the act of
philosophizing is recasted as “an attitude of orientation…[an] attitude of looking away
from first things, principles, ‘categories,’ suppose necessities; and of looking toward last
things, fruits, [and] consequences” (Menand 98). Thus, to recast rhetorical invention itself
is to reformulate (and to continually reformulate again and again) it in terms of what works
effectively. It positions invention not only in a signifying, communicative role, but also in
an asignifying role of (a perpetual) “doing;” a productive action of continual becoming and
transformation.

THINGS TO THINK WITH:
RECASTING THE “GREAT HEURISTIC”

My methodology, a distinct blending of both Muckelbauer’s affirmative style of
engagement with American pragmatism speaks directly with and bleeds into the subject of
rhetorical invention. As we will see throughout this work, rhetorical invention is both a
bodily and public process, one that constantly calls for and is directed by a proleptic
dynamism of alternatives.

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9 I deliberately amend this quote (by cutting it off at “consequences” rather than its traditional end
of “facts”) due to the enormous amount of contestation that has erupted in pragmatic scholarship
over James’ intention in connecting the constitutive fruits of pragmatism with “facts.” In my
reading, James’ use of “facts” is an allusionary variation of David Hume’s “matters of fact,” or
those realities that are knowable through simple experience (see David Hume’s . An Enquiry Concerning
Human Understanding (1748). To avoid the implications of James’ allusion, I whittle the quote in
order to direct it toward the proleptic leanings of pragmatism in general.
As we have seen, rhetorical invention’s etymology suggests its traditional and historical designation as an empirical tool, conceived of as a discovery and manageable means of conveying an *a priori* truth. This configuration is most evident in a heuristical approach to invention. In her entry on heuristics in the *Encyclopedia of Rhetoric and Composition* (1996), however, Janice Lauer suggests that heuristics are the historically established tactics of effective rhetors, appropriated from their rhetorical context and codified as methods of strategic thinking. That is, invention resembles a problem-solving method, composed of general techniques, strategies and generic processes. Introduced into the composition classroom of the 1960’s, heuristics were employed to prompt, guide and sustain student’s inventional practices. Lauer, drawing from David Perkins’ *The Mind’s Best Work* (1981), attempts to argue that heuristics are not merely a reductive form of invention—one that relies on pre-established tactics and processes—but are instead instruments employed to re-direct our thought processes to unseen alternatives and interpretations. Lauer’s definitional approach is generous in depicting the term’s historical and practical breadth. She is careful not to render “heuristics” as always reductive and therefore always limiting: “varying in generality, some writing heuristics can be used in a large number of situations and are typically taught in generic writing courses at any level of education...In either case, heuristic procedures need to be adapted to each writing situation” (Enos 320). In other words, a generous (or affirmative) approach to enacting a heuristic method will always acknowledge the fact that each rhetorical situation (however conceived) will require varying methods. In addition, a heuristic method offers inventional opportunities of constraints. That is, heuristics provide guidance and direction, often
pushing the inventor to think of innovative ways in which he or she may accommodate these constraints.

Reading general heuristics in an affirmative manner allows us to forego the wealth of scholarship that categorizes it as reductive and limiting in their inventional scope. In fact, I suggest that to critique in that manner is to overlook the point of Lauer’s thorough explication. As this chapter seeks to expand invention and inventional practices to the level of thinking in general, there appears no need or reason for us to deny heuristics its productive import. As Lauer’s use of Perkins implies, heuristics can be harnessed to guide and redirect our thinking in innovative ways. Such a conception, though, may appear to place the role of heuristics outside of the act of thinking, positioning the effective methods as a supplemental or ornamental role. But as our definition of thinking and cognition (albeit invention) emerges, heuristics no longer need to be viewed as merely instrumental methods that spur and turn our thinking in new directions (yet, one can imagine even in this instance, heuristics are redeemable by way of aligning them to the navigational intimation of “recasting” cited above) but can be fully integrated into realm of invention as an already and always at work component of cognition. We think, daily, through and with heuristics; with basic rules of thumb that guide action and the way in which we enact any kind of rhetorical action. They are, altering the title of this work, things to think with. Even as Lacan notes of Freudian heuristics, “the long-term trade in truth no longer involves thought: strangely enough, it now seems to involve things” (Lacan 342). The instrumental and artificial “thing-hood” of heuristics may delimit thought processes to a specific avenue or direction (a position Byron Hawk will take, as we will see later on) but
that very constraint and directing allows for unpredictable results. Most literally, *heuristics are things in the world that we think with*—they are the vehicles and material tetherings of cognitive processes. As we will consider later in chapter two, thinking of heuristics as a subset of thinking in general characterizes the methodology of an extended mind model wherein cognition is not considered brain-bound, but a process that instead leaks out into the surrounding environment, exploiting its environment as a material heuristic.

This cognitive claim for heuristics has grounding in the materiality of language. Kelly Pender, in “Negation and the Contradictory Technics of Rhetoric” (2008), suggests that already working in rhetoric is a contradictory force of securing and unsecuring meaning. Drawing from Maurice Blanchot’s understanding of negation in language, Pender cites language as “[communicating] meaning by negating the specificity of its object…what the word represents, then, is not the object but rather the absence of the object…It is through this ability to negate—to turn presence into absence—that language give rise to the conceptual and thus to communication and understanding” (14-15).

Language, in its fundamental artificiality, through its thorough and unyielding arbitrariness, only becomes useful to us as, what Anne Berthoff calls, “the great heuristic” (Berthoff 648). As such, both local, micro-heuristics and global, macro-heuristic of language may recast themselves as things to think with, as extensions of invention into unexplored resources and avenues.

Here, I propose that if we expand our conception of invention to include cognition in general, then the more constrained and structured methodology of heuristics may, in fact, be generative in its narrow scope. Given certain constraints, the cognitive element of
invention works around and with creative constraints. As Newport and Aslin argue in their article “Innately Constrained Learning,” culturally constrained learning benefits overall the language acquisition of an individual (2). Creative alternatives and innovative manners of adopting language norms emerge from an individual that is constrained in his or her own learning capacity. Although Newport and Aslin adhere to a cognitive mapping that is more so in line with evolutionary psychologists (such as Steve Pinker and E.O. Wilson, both of whom purport a theory of cognition that bears little resemblance to what I am fostering here), I see their treatment of constrained learning as productive in speaking to the generative aspects of limitations in writing practices. Translated and transposed to the rhetorical process, constraints spur rhetors to seek alternative avenues of persuasion, to temporarily forsake traditional methods in order to adapt to the present context. Constraints prove generative in their ability to persuade and compel a rhetor to cultivate a new, more adaptive approach, thus allowing, not delimiting, the various ways in which he or she might engage in the art of invention.

Yet critiques of heuristics abound in rhetorical scholarship. Byron Hawk’s A Counter-History of Composition (2007), conceives of heuristics as instrumental tactics, “[reducing] thinking to generic inventional strategies that are then plugged into a linear and acontextual model of the composing process,” employed to respond and engage non-linear and contextual situations (Hawk 102). Viewed in this way, “writers will [only] discover what the heuristics allows them to discover, covering over many of the new possibilities that a rhetorical situation may open up” (102). Yet, Hawk’s consideration does not take into account the pragmatic or the tenable ways in which heuristics spur unconventional
thinking, at once tearing us away from the mundane on-goings on daily thought and analysis, compelling us to (re)consider a commonplace anew. Heuristics, in this way, are already and have always been specialized ways in which we cognize—specifically, a primordial employment of some external factor that constrains our common approach to thinking about and through a topic. Such a consideration reminds us that varying writing situations call for varying methods or conceptions of invention—hence the need for the pragmatic project of a continual recasting—for, as Pender notes, we often get caught up in the politics of pedagogy and forget rhetoric’s contradictory and paradoxical workings. We forget, in a sense, to be sophistic.

Although a fierce critic of heuristics, Hawk’s own views of invention offer productive insight both into Lauer’s heuristical claim and the further expansion of invention into the general realm of cognition. Hawk purposes an alternative to heuristics that cultivates a broader method of invention that engenders us, as Paul Kameen notes, “to say some things about thinking, knowing, and writing that are otherwise unsayable” (101). To revitalize invention with a more holistic theory of imagination, Hawk draws from Kameen’s treatment of Coleridge’s “secondary imagination,” and the ways in which that imagination enters into relatedness with the world. For Coleridge, the primary imagination is the primal activity of perception in the human subject. It is a primal, unconscious intuition that is recognized as “the prime Agent of all human Perception, and as a repetition in the finite mind of the eternal act of creation in the infinite I am” (Qtd. in Hawk 97). It is here, according to James Berlin, that the subject becomes an object to itself—thus ushering in self-consciousness. Existing as an echo of the primary
imagination, the secondary co-exists with the conscious will, and is the active principle in ordering those perceptions of the world. “Rather than create subjectivity, the secondary imagination writes new metaphors, new images of the world” (98). It positions itself as, in Heideggerian language, an embedded sense of relatedness. The implications of this relatedness will be explicated at the close of this chapter.

Hawk distinguishes between James Berlin’s emphasis on the primary imagination, and the way in which he focuses on subject formation in terms of the Coleridgian framework, and Kameen’s focus on the secondary imagination’s faculty of unifying language and world (98). Hawk suggests that Coleridge’s secondary imagination is not like the colloquial meaning of imagination that has been garnered. In fact, in linking it with the more colloquial meaning of pure expressivism, imagination has been coded as a “product of natural genius” which, as a result, “allow[ed] more generic models of invention to dominate by default” (100-101). Moving against such a current, Hawk suggests that incorporating imagination into rhetoric and composition allows for an expansion of invention to include the whole rhetorical process—thus, cultivating a complex vitalism that formulates rhetoric as not only rational (and therefore teachable) but as intuitive, as bodily. He writes:

The use of heuristics to invent material for moving between a predetermined problem and solution all reduce the imagination’s role in the production of knowledge. Rather than reduce invention to particular points in a process, imagination expands invention to become the entire process. As Kameen puts it, “[T]o begin to write, to begin to think about writing, to think about thinking, to
think about, to perform any of these basic acts is to have already begun a
composition; and the arena of this composition is language (Hawk 101).

Hawk notes that Berlin’s emphasis on the primary imagination, and the subsequent
formation of the subject, reduces the author of a rhetorical process to a rationally-operating
mind, ignoring its bodily, intuitive and affective dimensions (104).

THOUGHT’S INVENTIVE ROOTS/ROUTES:
NIETZSCHE, HEIDEGGER

Expanding invention to thinking in general is, to be sure, a precarious theoretical
move. An expansion of this kind is reminiscent of an anything-goes approach—stretching
the limits of a conceptual term so as to incorporate everything; which, at times, renders the
term seemingly vacuous, at best. But there is a suitable, pragmatic reason for recasting
invention as general cognition, and that logic begins and ends with the materiality of
language. In this section I argue that as thought requires language to persist, and language
is fundamentally artificial, conventional and creative (thus adhering to Lanham’s strong
defense); then thought and thinking must, likewise, be composed of the same conventional
elements. This syllogistic reasoning will hopefully gesture toward a view of invention and
inventional practices as thinking in general.

In The Gay Science (1882), Nietzsche suggests that “man, like every living creature,
thinks unceasingly, but does not know it…This conscious thinking alone is done in words,
that is to say, in the symbols for communication, by means of which the origin of
consciousness is revealed” (Nietzsche section 354). Nietzsche’s treatment of cognition
tethers conscious thought unequivocally to its linguistic basis—without language, there would be no thought, nor would there be anything, really, to think of at all. Although I will qualify this claim later in chapter two, I will move provisionally through Nietzsche’s position to suggest that thought is not an autonomous phenomenon, but interlaced into a complex web of relations. To think requires language, and to work within that language (to further thought along inventive lines) requires an acknowledgement of language’s materiality. Moving with the current of rhetorical scholarship, this interrelation of thought, language and invention composes a unique ecology. Yet, such an ecology spurs a quandary: if invention is thinking, and thinking is based on language (a language that is already and always embodied), then how might we characterize this thinking as somehow material? How are we to garner a sense of its limitations and powers?

To distill a tenable and pragmatically recasted definition, I look to Martin Heidegger’s latter work; one specific work that embodies a marked philosophical departure from Being and Time (1927), namely the series of lectures entitled, What is Called Thinking (1954). In investigating the activity of “thinking,” Heidegger stumbles across a linguistic paradox—namely, that when we speak about thinking, we cannot so much speak of thinking without first thinking about the ways in which thought emerges through speech. As such, to think about thought, then, is to also think about speech, speaking about thought. Employing a pedagogical example to illustrate this point, Heidegger suggests that

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10 Among the wealth of scholarship that constitutes the overlapping boundaries between rhetoric and philosophy, a significant portion deals with the contestation over thought’s linguistic basis. Most notably, Dallas Willard’s “Thinking in Language” (1973), seeks to deny the linguistic primacy that Nietzsche is purposing here. Here, Nietzsche seems to designate “symbols for communication” as a concise definition of language. But, as I will expand upon later, language’s boundaries are much more expansive and flexible than this definition will allow.
good teaching is not a quality held in the teacher, but only successfully emerges in the encounter between teacher and student. Good pedagogy, in this sense, can only be found in relation(s). And this is the case also with thought and language. One cannot distill the essence of “thought” without thinking of in relation to language. Yet, even here we come across a(nother) paradox. How to think about thought in relation to language without embedding oneself in language’s materiality? In this sense, language is not, as Lacan supposed, a subtle body: it is a pervasive, ubiquitous material environment that we are at once embedded in, but also the medium by which the materiality of language is constituted.

Language, then, seems to be the determinant for how we not only view thought, but how we think in general. Language is not merely the mode of expression in inquiring into thought—it is “the originary, the essential” of thought, the agency behind what calls forth thinking to emerge (128). Language’s materiality proves, then, to be the caller of thought. Vocalization, writing, reading, all activities that mark the bodily presence of language all call forth and (re)construct thought.11

In this work, Heidegger socratically inquires not only into the thing called “thinking”—the activity by which we mull, ponder, contemplate toward some end and with some purpose—but also engages what he terms “called-thinking,” or cognition that is not autonomously spurred from our emplaced ratio, but comes from elsewhere, emerging

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11 As Maturana notes, It is in language that the self, the I, arises as the social singularity defined by the operational intersection in the human body of the recursive linguistic distinctions in which it is distinguished. This tells us that in the network of linguistic interactions in which we move, we maintain an ongoing descriptive recursion which we call the ‘I.’ It enables us to conserve our linguistic operational coherence and our adaptation in the domain of language (Maturana 231).
as a thought desiring to be thought. Heidegger’s emphasis on the de-centering of thought away from the autonomous, rational agent is callings for an etymological examination of thinking itself.

Above I proposed that we view language as the basis of thought—but Heidegger’s What is Called Thinking takes this assertion further in suggesting that not only is language the basis of thought, but that both interrelate to the extent that language calls thought into being. Although Heidegger’s text, taken as a whole, might introduce more complications into this ecology of thought, language and invention, I would assert that we are not only endowed with language’s materiality but we embody it. As such, that materiality is played out through inventive practices, through thought, expression, persuasion, and creation. Through an invention conceived of as thought, individual writers or rhetors are moved beyond the idea of writing as restructuring thought, toward a realm where invention is thought, and that thought is an active and emplaced engagement with playing out language’s materiality. A consideration of this kind opens up invention to not only signifying matters, but asignifying characteristics; characteristics that will become the central focus of chapter two.

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In summation, I propose a definition of invention as thinking, qualified. This thinking, as we have seen from Lauer and Hawk, is not categorized as either purely methodological (and therefore deemed a mode of heuristics) or as a pure, unfiltered expression of the primary imagination. Instead, invention may be conceived of as thought and thinking itself. And as we have gathered from Heidegger’s What is Called Thinking
(1954), an invention as thinking paradigm is not, in any way, brain-bound. Rather, Heidegger proposes a conception of thought that merits thought—a manner of thinking that distributes agency outside of the individual mind, a thought that desires to be thought through language’s materiality.
CHAPTER TWO

THINKING AS BODY:
ASIGNIFICATION, ATTITUDES, AMBIENCE

When one considers the title of Mabel Elsworth Todd’s work *The Thinking Body* (1937), a certain image of the bodily economy is brought to mind. As the *Gestalt Journal* Press’s cover design depicts, DaVinci’s “Vitruvian Man” (1487) most readily assumes what we imagine a thinking body to be: an isolated corporeal frame; muscles stretched in an almost geometrically enclosed environment; emanating words of some kind above and below it. With muscles flexed, their sinewy make-up bespeaks some esoteric knowledge, continually acknowledging the limits to which that knowledge can reach (in this clever case, an arm’s length). As negating the singular body as a site for invention would be antithetical to not only my methodology but my overall argument, I hope here to figuratively add more bodies to this imagined economy. As such, the kind of bodily-invention that this chapter seeks more so resembles Juste de Juste’s etching, “The Human Pyramid” (1545): gripping and unbalanced but simultaneously coordinating and cooperating bodies literally inventing from the public and social dimension of their bodies.

Figure 1: Juste de Juste’s etching “The Human Pyramid” (1545).
This chapter, therefore, does not seek to explain the origins or genealogical markings of bodily thinking. Rather, it gestures towards articulating inventive thinking, as delineated in the previous chapter, not only in terms of and in relation to the body; but, more simply, as (a) body. Such a claim augments and expands the limitations of the twentieth century linguistic turn, most notably Post-Structuralism, in which all language became constituted by functionary signification, or the arbitrary coupling of a signifier with a signified. Language in a framework of this kind is marked, then, by its communicative function—a clear and associated manifestation of Lanham’s weak defense of rhetoric. In review of this, it is a pertinent rhetorical task to understand thought (and therefore invention) as a corporeal, (a)signifying framework deeply invested and emanating in/from the material contours of the body. In support of this assertion, I focus on the history of bodily-cognition, culminating in the idea of bodily-métis or, in other words, a bodily-invention, as conceived of by Debra Hawhee. From the development of a bodily-métis, I position cognitive scientist Andy Clark, working at and in between the boundaries of body studies and rhetoric, as Hawhee’s theoretical counterpart in augmenting the body’s relationality with other bodies. Acknowledging language’s embodiment (thus, opening language up to incorporate physical movement along with vocalized or written words), I will examine and exploit bodily-invention (as métis) in terms of its asignifying presence, its gestural attitude, and, finally, its ambient relation-hood. These characteristics will lead to a manner of thinking of invention and inventional practices occurring through and as a material body.
The wealth of scholarship in bodily cognition continually emerges from atypical conversations occurring across and between disciplinary and sub-disciplinary boundaries. Most notable is Varela, Thompson and Rosch’s *The Embodied Mind: Cognitive Science and the Human Experience* (1991). This seminal work in both philosophy of mind and cognitive science (or some hybrid, nondescript version of both) considers itself a “modern continuation of a program of research founded over a generation ago by the French philosopher, Maurice Merleau-Ponty” (xv). In terms of Muckelbauer’s affirmative style of engagement, Varela et al., employ and engage Merleau-Ponty’s phenomenological work as a means of orientation rather than contextual substitution (xv). The phenomenology of the 1940’s and 50’s—of which Merleau-Ponty and Heidegger’s work reign most prominent—marks a significant moment in philosophy where the phenomenal lives of individuals and collectives were being reconsidered in terms of everyday, lived experience. Varela et al hold that this emphasis on the experiential speaks directly to the “conviction that the new sciences of mind need to enlarge their horizon,” a dimension that has historically and culturally limited itself to the Cartesian cognitive framework of a sharp division between mind and body (xv).

Emphasizing the body’s role in/as cognitive practices, Merleau-Ponty, writing of the body in its sexual relation, suggests that “erotic perception is not a *cogitatio* which aims at a *cogitatum*; [rather] through one body it aims at another body, and takes place in the world, not in a consciousness” (Merleau-Ponty 181). Here, the body possesses and enacts
an (erotic) intentionality that both expresses and finds fulfillment through/in a bodily-consciousness. Merleau-Ponty, terminologically, appropriates and corporealizes the more traditional structure of Husserlian intentionality wherein consciousness is always conscious of something (Sokolowski 9). Given this bodily-intention, Merleau-Ponty situates this bodily-cognition as answering a perceived lack in eighteenth and nineteenth century rationalist philosophy. Where and when rationalism could not account for the inevitable varieties of experiential phenomena, a bodily phenomenology forces one to acknowledge that ordinary, everyday experience is lived in a bodily manner (Merleau-Ponty 170). Thus, the “ghost in the machine,” as far as that overly critical and misconstrued adage implies, does not adequately describe (here in a phenomenological sense) the bodily life that one is born into (Merleau-Ponty xxiii). From this perceived inadequacy emerge disciplines and fields of study that seek to account for the bodily life as equally as complex and important as the mind, namely the hyper-sexualized psychoanalysis of Freud and Lacan (Merleau-Ponty 182). Yet, Merleau-Ponty’s corporeal phenomenology does not intend to merely relate the body and mind. Rather, it moves to incorporate and reposition subjectivity as embedded and embodied in the world.

As Eric Matthews rightly notes on Merleau-Ponty’s model of embodiment, “human subjectivity necessarily expresses itself through the human body: quite simply, I see with my eyes, hear with my ears, act through moving my arms and legs, speak through moving my vocal chords, smile through arranging my face in the relevant way” (Matthews 51). I take this explanation, offered by Merleau-Ponty and Matthews, as offering bodily-consciousness an expressive role, one that conveys and intends its affective and sexual
desires. In this way, then, I see fertile space for a consideration of bodily materials, energies and movements as constitutive of thought, wherein one body does not solely intend and communicate to another body, but also acts on it, persuades it, and moves it toward some desired action. The sexual connotation behind this “strong defense” of bodily cognition may at first appear to undercut its more constitutive leanings, in that even in the body’s own thinking, the body thinks of its desires. Such is the case in Todd’s *Thinking Body* (1937): “a casual world over-emphasizes the face. Memory likes to recall the whole body […] primary muscle patterns being the biological heritage of man, man’s whole body records his emotional thinking” (Todd 1). I hold that by relegating the active participation of the body in thinking to affective or desiring thought we continually (and needlessly) re-inscribe a Platonic conception of the body as a desiring animal (or, in Plato’s famous allegory, wild, winged-horses) that requires the rational, logocentric mind (chariot rider) to control it, a conception that would delimit—in fact, outright deny—the inventive possibilities of the body (“Phraedrus” 246a-254e).  

I do not intend, here, to uproot the affective dimension of the body (such a move would first be antithetical to my affirmative methodology and, second, it would negate a critical component of what bodily-thinking will come to [a]signify). Rather, I hope to add (thereby augmenting) to the body’s physical actions that of invention—a thought that cannot be divorced or conceived of as separate and apart from the affects and subtle desires of the body.

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12 Plato need not solely define the affect discussed here. That is, given the embodied cognitive science this work positions as productive, I hold that there is no need to relegate affect only to the body and reason to the mind. Rather, the emotive and rational mental states are spliced and blended in an embodied model of cognition.
Specifically, I see the body as having, amongst other cognitive capacities, a cultivating aptitude for enacting rhetorical action; for playing out language’s materiality, and in doing so, enacting a bodily and public form of invention. From this, we may distill a definition of invention as the rhetorical action a body exhibits through/as a body to other similarly inventive bodies.

The assigning and positioning of cognitive powers to the materiality of the body calls to mind Adrienne Rich’s task for the future generations of feminism: “I am really asking whether woman cannot begin, at last, to think through the body, to connect what has been so cruelly disorganized” (284). Rich, following in a long tradition of critique, admonishes the fundamental privileging of the mind over the body. Even as the title of this work implies, thinking with the body, thinking through the body, or even, thinking against the body, renders the body’s cognitive powers instrumental. But as we have seen in both Lauer and Pender’s productive advocacy for writerly instrumentality, the body used as an instrument for cognitive thinking appears not as precarious as it may seem. However, conceived of only in this manner, the body appears limited in the inventive possibilities stored in the very fibers of the corporeal frame. Conceived of as a heuristic that is already part and parcel of our cognitive practices, thinking with the body and through the body proves to be a productive enterprise.

In “Thinking with the Body” (2010), an article on the instrumental cognition of the body, David Kirsh explores somatic questions of cognition by observing the methodological practices of Wayne McGregor, resident choreographer at the Royal Ballet in London (1). Through his study, involving the collecting of an extensive video log, Kirsh
was able to observe and distill a methodology that enabled dancers to use their bodies “as an instrument of cognition” (1). Specifically, using the technique of marking, a dancer became more efficient and resourceful in his/her learning of a new dance. Kirsh writes, “when dancers mark a phrase, they use their body’s movement and form as a representational vehicle” (1). In this choreographic example, dancers use their body to model the movements they are to make in the new dance. Such a practice enables the dancer to converse energy; thinking through what the body must do, physically mapping out the necessary movements. “Dancers mark to save energy, to avoid strenuous movements such as jumps, and sometimes to review or explore specific aspects of a phrase, such as tempo, movement sequence, or underlying intention, without the mental complexity involved in creating the phrase ‘full-out’” (1). Kirsh is careful to distinguish this physical thinking from simply imagining the dance phrase. Whereas some dancers report imagining their phrase in bed before sleep, or while riding public transportation (thus only utilizing a mental, imagined construct for support in learning), Kirsh’s evidence points towards physical-marking as to the most efficient and effective learning strategy.

Dancers, in a sense, “use marking as an anchor and vehicle for thought” (3). To do so, they create a physical, external model of themselves; physical replicas of their own bodies to visually see the movements that take place in the dance phase. Important here is how the dancer does not imagine, without any corresponding physical movements, the dance but rather enacts it through bodily movement, watching how the external model moves. From this model, the dancer learns the new phase by mimicking the miniaturized movements. Marking of this kind resembles a physical signification—marking movement
being an imperfect representation of some larger more elaborate movement. Yet, the representation model does something. It is not pure signification. Rather, the physical movements compel and condition the body to act in a certain way. It is the practice behind it that moves marking to include both signification and asignification.

Kirsh’s thesis here emplaces (a)signifying thought in bodies, positioning bodies as an interactive method of cognitive projection (Kirsh 1). The marking, in this case, cultivates a “gestural semiotic system,” wherein the physical movements are not played out as one would rehearse a speech but instead felt and ingrained into a movement that culminates in a bodily-habit or reflex (3). In most cases, dancers, in order to learn a new dance, require to see the full sequence to be enacted before them, thus creating a physical target, which marking will inevitably seek to mimic and augment. In this way, Kirsh suggests that this choreographic marking is not akin to language. Rather, “it relies on prior acquaintance with the target, and them matching the mark to its target” (4). In this sense, marking is much like a mimetic form of pattern completion. Kirsh’s suggestion here might seem counter-intuitive, as such a claim seems to delimit marking to a process that is contingent upon a fully-fleshed-out target as well as being entirely mimetic. How might marking anchor thought in a more efficient way than visualizing or imagining?

For Kirsh, the key concept for physical thinking is the cognitive process of projection. Explaining this cognitive element, Kirsh makes a three-part distinction between perceiving, projecting and imagining. Perceiving an object involves a stimulation of the optic nerve from a visual field. Contrarily, imagining makes us feel that we “are the sole cause of our […] experience,” such as when one imagines or “pictures” an elephant in
an empty room (4). Projection, then, for Kirsh appears to be a middle ground between the overly empirical perceiving and the autonomous imagining, wherein “when we project onto an object, we experience ourselves intentionally augmenting that object; we feel we partially cause our experience” (4). Projection involves, then, both the visual sightedness of perception alongside the process of imagining or “placing” of an image on and otherwise given visual plane.

Although I have herein argued for (and when pragmatic, from) an instrumental standpoint, I assert that a final (re)casting of the body as equipment (in the sense that, to think of the body as a thinking thing we cannot move past an instrumental approach) continually divides the mind and body into distinct categories (a move I hope to avoid making). That is, an instrumental view of the body as cognizer only tells a part of the story. The complete codification of the body as a pure instrument of cognition displays a configuration that has the mind, again rendered as the charioteer, exploiting the winged horses into augmenting his/her own desired end. The question, then, becomes how to orient ourselves toward this enmeshed sense of somatic cognition without, first, betraying the holistic configuration of an embodied mind and, second, without negating the instrumental standpoint all together?

As I suggested in the previous chapter in the discussion of the cognitive basis of heuristics, thinking of the body as always having been part in cognition allows for freer movement in discussing the body as a cognizer itself. In this way, I argue that a(ny) view of the body as equipment for cognition boils down to an instance of the body operating as a cognitive assemblage. Working on the issue of originality, plagiarism and assemblages in
contemporary composition, Johndan Johnson-Eilola and Stuart Selber write, “assemblages [in terms of texts] are interested in what works…[they] are texts built primarily and explicitly from existing texts” (380-381). Johnson-Eliola and Selber’s assemblages harkens the more elusive and esoteric assemblages of Deleuze and Guattari’s *A Thousand Plateaus* (1980), wherein “[a text] has only itself, in connection with other assemblages and in relation to other bodies without organs. We will never ask what a [text] means, as signified or signifier, we will not look for anything to understand in it” (4). Assemblages, here, are not authoritative originals, but are understood relationally, existing from and for other dynamic texts. I find the assemblage term appropriate—albeit shocking—when employed to articulate the body, making what I term “bodily assemblages.” An image of a more seamless Frankenstein, prosthetically “made-up,” of originary and imported fleshy parts, immediately conjures when we think of bodily-assemblages. The metaphor is crude, even appalling. It harkens cultural fears of harvested organs, cannibalism, and somatic-envy and deformation. My use of the term assemblage, however, more so aligns with the Butlerian bodily-mutability in *Bodies that Matter* (1993), wherein bodily materiality is a social construction, categorized through a discursive matrix. And yet, there is something literal, something material about the way I see body’s as assemblages, as made up and constituted by the integration of other bodies. The implications of this will become apparent when developed later in this chapter.

I take this textual term assemblages as productive when applied to Kirsh’s dancing bodies. As Peta Malins notes in “Machinic Assemblages,” bodily assemblages might “[unravel] the modern fantasy of the body as a stable, unified, bounded entity, and gives a
language to the multitude of connections that bodies form with other bodies (human and otherwise). A body’s function or potential or ‘meaning’ becomes entirely dependent on which other bodies or machines it forms an assemblage with” (85). By categorizing Kirsh’s bodily-cognition as instrumental, one necessarily has to ask what the singular body means, how is it animated, and to what end does it yield the body? But if we decide to orient ourselves toward viewing body’s as assemblages, then the body as equipment no longer matters in relation to the somatic-cognition occurring between moving bodies.

EMBODIED INTELLIGENCE:
MÉTIS AND (DIS)ASSEMBLING CYBORGS

To build on this idea of bodily-assemblages, I turn to consider bodily-cognition (and therefore invention) as having the characteristics of métis—a term that has garnered popular and critical support from various (often differing) sections of rhetorical theory. Métis, according to Hawhee, “is […] the mode of negotiating agonistic forces, the ability to cunningly and effectively maneuver a cutting instrument, a ship, a chariot, a body, on the spot, in the heat of the moment” (Bodily Art 47). Métis, in this sense, works as kairotic action, one that relies on the versatility of instrumentality and bodily movement in the making of a qualitative moment/momentum. Along with Hawhee, I move to treat “métis as a corporeal category rather than a solely cognitive one,” conceived as inseparable from bodily movement (46). As such, métis is a form and function of invention—in a sense, it is mode of heuristical invention, or the ability to negotiate one’s environment on the basis of a cultivated maneuvering. Thus, a bodily métis calls to mind a bodily invention,
Metis’ definition has a dynamic and thoroughly recasted history. Michelle Ballif, in her groundbreaking work, “Writing the Third-Sophistic Cyborg” (1998), cultivates a sense of métis as a “knowing, doing, and making…in ‘shifting’ […] situations,” by appropriate the figure of the cyborg to write a “Third Sophistic postmodern posthuman transrhetoric” (56). Inspired by the Sophists of the fifteen century B.C.E., the cyborg acts as a dynamic figural counter to the more neopragmatic techné that purports clear and concise communicational practices (Ballif 53). According to Ballif, neopragmatic theories of language, specifically those made famous by Richard Rorty, “still [figure] language as […] communicative in function” (58). To engender perfect communication along these lines requires an active exclusionary basis to language, one that continually filters out excess “noise” that deliberately disrupts and distorts. A possible advance toward widening neopragmatism’s compulsion toward perfect communication requires exploiting the cyborg’s propensity for

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13 A momentary pause is suitable here to discuss a distinction that is found throughout both rhetorical theory and critical scholarship on the concept of thinking and making. As Mari Sorri, famed ceramic artist, claims that the “approaches to [the topic of thinking/making]…tended to be overly intellectual and not concrete enough; making, as contrasted to thinking was not taken seriously as a cognitive activity…they assumed that all knowing is essentially mental in nature, that even such judgments as are made in artistic creation really happen in the mind of the maker and are merely given shape by the body in the work of art itself…With respect to the making with which I am involved, that of ceramics, my body frequently knows more than my mind can explicate” (Sorri 15). What I see here, in the concept of bodily-metis, is a full bodied conflation of the two.

14 As Ballif writes of epistemic noise: “[Neopragmatism] requires a disciplined language, constituted across a series of exclusions, particularly (as [Susan] Jarratt argued) of not only who can speak and when, but also what can possibly be said—not just, of course, in terms of a conversational ‘content,’ but in terms of the threatening element of language itself (which I would call sophistry), which Michel Serres terms ‘noise’ or ‘the set of phenomena of interference that become obstacles to communication’ (Hermes 66). He writes: ‘To hold a dialogue is to suppose a third man and to seek to exclude him; a successful communication is the exclusion of the third man. The most profound dialectical problem is not the problem of the Other, who is only a variety—or variation—of the Same, it is the problem of the third man. We might call this third man the demon, the prosopoeia of noise’ (Ballif 58).
generating such noise. Production of this kind categorically figures the cyborg as endowed with métis. I find this characterization productive, for it situates the cyborg as a thoroughly embodied figure, one that has to negotiate its bodily flux with its ever-altering environs. In this way, the figure of the cyborg lends itself in adequately depicting the kind of bodily-invention that occurs in the process of métis. As Jay Dolmage writes, to embody métis is to take on “elusive” characteristics, being of the sort “who is unpredictable but resourceful and clever” (Dolmage 5). The characteristics of unpredictability and resourcefulness are fundamental here. Linked to one of the etymological roots/routes of recasting, the ability to change or veer course in naval navigation allows for a spontaneous invention that “is called into being within the moment” (Ballif 55). It requires not only a working theoretical knowledge of naval dynamics, but also the ability to take or be taken by a kairotic moment, to engage in a new material shifting that requires an unconscious know-how, “a double and divergent orientation”. Ballif notes that “metis equips the possessor with the ways and means to negotiate the flux,” or, in other words, the ability to invent, or to think on one’s feet, in any given moment (Ballif 65). Here, the “making” of metis is not characterized by its “making of meaning” or “making intelligible” but rather marked by movement, both in terms of physical veering and assenting persuasion.

Ballif’s cyborg, like the Greek god Hephaestus, is endowed with bodily-metis (65). Following this logic further, the cyborg embodies both the recasting of the title of this project as well as the affirmative style of engagement proposed in chapter one. Like Muckelbauer’s methodology, the cyborg does not wish to know, think or make from the ubiquity of negation, or, in Ballif’s words, epistemic-exclusion (64). Instead, the epistemic
noise that emanates from the cyborg disrupts, distorts, and renders the environment in which it situates itself chaotic. This noise harkens to Hephaestus’ hammer, forging heated metal in the process of metallurgy, drawing attention from its quiet surroundings. Taking semiotically, moving and stretching (at) the borders/boundaries of language, the forging cyborg is at once both “artifice and artisan,” making and remaking itself (Ballif 65). This willful and disruptive mutability is not, I hold, only applicable to the postmodern subjectivity, but to the body that is thought, the bodily-metis. There is an element of persuasion in the bodily-metis, the ability to make and remake the body as what works. This self-forging, or self-persuading, moves a body in altering and negotiating its own materiality, influenced by not only the bodies around it as well as the environment in which it situates itself, but in the element of decidedness in its reacting to situations. As Ballif writes, here appropriated to the body, “the rhetorical agent or political subject of such a moment doesn’t precede the moment a priori, but is rather called into being within that moment—and thus the citizen and the political body, in a Third-Sophistic manner, exist rhetorically in a rhetorical moment as a rhetorical trope of figuration” (Ballif 55). The bodilness of the cyborg, then, is a function of its relation. As Thomas Rickert points out—a suggestion that I will discuss more thoroughly at the conclusion of this chapter—if language is the house of Being, then *kairos*, or the qualitative moment, situation, is the house of Doing (Rickert 903). Bodily-doing is, in this case, already and always embedded in an environment, emplaced and negotiating in the world.
Ballif’s cyborg, exhibiting the kind of bodily-métis Hawhee purports, moves along the edges of the material and the semiotic in its metallurgical thinking/doing. The cyborg’s bodily-métis simultaneously blurs the material with the linguistic, the nonsymbolic motion with symbolic action. Part of cultivating a bodily-métis, then, requires one to be open to inventive modes other than those supplied to us by linguistics. The linguistic turn of the twentieth century proposes that all meaning is only made intelligible through a system of continual signification—a network of signifiers and signifieds that can only be mapped, as noted by Derrida, through a trace. Yet, in terms of the cyborg as a linguistic agent, a cultivation of bodily-métis moves to consider the semiotic as well as the material. Enacting a kind of bodily-making, or in other words material-persuasion, takes part in and through the body’s thorough permeability, a permeability that is not caused only by linguistic actions. Doing so will mark the cyborg and its bodily-métis as a fleshed out figure of what bodily-invention might mean in a material setting. For an established model of this kind of cognitive outpouring, I look to Clark’s cognitive science for a firm foundation upon which to situate bodily-cognition, and to examine the ways in which the body negotiates its own boundaries.

Clark’s work, *Natural-Born Cyborgs* (2003), offers a fleshed-out model of extended mind theory, one that views environmental-scaffolding (literally, the designing of external resources for cognitive-benefitting) as a connective resources for day-to-day cognitive practices. In his section “Plastic Brains, Hybrid Minds,” Clark offers a compelling portrait of the negotiable body, literally the mediator for all cognitive extensions, exploring how
“our sense of our own bodily limits and bodily presence is not fixed and immovable” (Natural-Born Cyborgs 59). The body described here aligns with the post-humanist vision of Katherine Hayles. As the title of this section suggests, Hayles sees the human body as an “originary prosthesis,” an artificial materiality that is primed for augmentation in its interaction with other prostheses (“Desiring Agency” 146). In this view, our brains “are primed to seek and consummate such intimate relations with nonbiological resources” (Natural-Born Cyborgs 6). But in such a concept, the idea of bodily-cognition takes on an entirely different meaning. It is not only skin, muscle and bones that think, but also the nonbiological resources that are integrated into our corporeal frame. The line between these supposed discrete categories, biological and nonbiological, flesh and metal, human beings and technologies, becomes flexible and ultimately yielding in the post-humanist vision. Important here for our considerations is the negotiable image of the body and the way in which bodies integrate these resources into their own somatic-cognition. Clark’s model centers on cognition being a participatory and interactive circuitry between minds, bodies, and material environments. Opening itself up as a cognitive category, the body opportunistically embeds itself in a supportive environment through and in which it may think in more expansive and innovative ways.

The project of recasting, in light of cybernetic mutability, takes on a new somatic meaning. The body, seen as emplaced and embedded in the world, cognitively interacting with its environment, continually makes and remakes itself in these networked terms. In Ballif’s view, the body proceeds to enact métis by cultivating itself as both “artifice and artisan,” marking its thinking through its interactions with its surroundings (Ballif 65). It
must be emphasized, then, that its boundaries in this model are loose and flexible, more so akin to an expanding horizon than a biological skinbag (Natural-Born Cyborgs 4). Bodily-recasting does not operate as an enclosed system, rema(r)king itself in terms of itself, but continually opens itself up, materially, to its environs. The interaction, or, appropriating Hawhee’s term for struggle or contest in Bodily Arts (2005), the agon, proves central here in giving the cognition a bodily-basis. Clark writes, “in all the cases we have examined, what matters are the complex feedback loops that connect action-commends, bodily-motions, environmental effects, and multisensory perceptual inputs. It is the two-way flow of influence between brain, body, and world that matters, and on the basis of which we construct (and constantly re-reconstruct) our sense of self, potential, and presence…It is the flow that counts” (Natural-Born Cyborgs 114).

The image, then, of a stagnant, stretched body emanating thought, as depicted by Todd, does not quite fit the bill when configuring a bodily act of thinking. Conceived, rather, in terms of a body in motion, or, in Hawhee’s concluding terms, “bodies moving, at the edges of language,” thinking seems to embody both the mutability (“moving” here thought in terms of a material-persuasion) and the asignification (“moving,” and “assenting” in addition to “knowing” and “conveying”) necessary for a fleshed-out model of bodily-metis (Moving Bodies 167). “Movement” coalesces both a physical act of turning or altering one’s orientation with persuadability—or, literally, one’s openness assenting to some position or other from the basis of a rhetorical claim. From this, it appears necessary that recasting invention, in terms of a cognition that is both bodily and environmentally saturated at its basis, requires a further extension of the applicable terms used in defining
the activity of inventing. What I offer to extend the terminology necessary to view
thinking as a body is a prescription of rhetoric as energy\textsuperscript{15}; one that moves along signifying
and asignifying borders, embodied in how one body relates to another.

**Rhetorics of Energy:**
**Orienting Toward Asignifying Animals**

George Kennedy, in his introduction to Aristotle’s *On Rhetoric*, famously defines
rhetoric as “the energy inherent in emotion and thought, transmitted through a system of
signs, including language, to others to influence their decisions or actions” (Kennedy 7).
Kennedy’s definition proves interesting and productive on two accounts. First, his
designation of rhetoric as energy, or a speech that is imbued with a sense of force or
intensity of expression, points to rhetoric as being involved in and between bodies,
seemingly emanating from one, compelling another. If we understand this rhetorical
energy as something originating in social, bodily clustering, (precisely as something that
cannot happen without a group of bodies), then emotion and thought seem to be
predicated on a bodily basis, on the ability to move and be moved. This reasoning finds
support in the etymology of energy’s definition as intensity of expression: “With reference
to speech or writing: [a] force or vigour of expression…this sense (found in late Latin and
in Romanic) is originally derived from an imperfect understanding of Aristotle’s use

\textsuperscript{15} Hawhee’s “Toward a Bestial Rhetoric” proves useful here in her anecdote of “the venerable”
George Kennedy’s visit to University of Tennessee in 1993. Hawhee notes that when scholars cite
Kennedy’s unusual “A Hoot in the Dark,” they often focus on his idea of “rhetoric-as-energy” (82).
This notion “has found legs in both the rising interest in material and bodily rhetorics” (82).
Hawhee’s piece, along with Diane Davis’ “Creaturely Rhetoric” and Muckelbauer’s “Domesticating
Animal Theory,” make up a three-part special issue of *Philosophy and Rhetoric*’s Vol. 44, No. 2
collection, which focuses on the emergence/convergence of rhetoric and the so-called “animal
question.”
of ἐνέργεια (Rhet. III. xi. §2) for the species of metaphor which calls up a mental picture of something ‘acting’ or moving’ (“Energy”). Embedded in rhetoric’s alignment with energy is a moving, flexible body. Appeals, then, to rhetoric as a logo-centric activity, one involved in the production of arguments from a linguistic basis in order to persuade one’s rational capacities, fail to represent the larger picture of rhetoric’s overall emotive and somatic design.

What might we emplace here in order to garner a larger, more emotive and somatic design of rhetoric? I find strength and support in the rich scholarship coming out of animal studies, originating with Georgio Agamben’s The Open: Man and Animal (2003) wherein he attempts to curtail our categorical tendency of maintaining a tenable (and mostly linguistically-based) boundary between that which is considered human, and what which is considered animal, resulting in “collectivizing and […] setting the animal ‘out there.’” (Doxtader 79). In this ontological sense, it seems an intriguing question to consider; but why does Muckelbauer, in his “Domesticating Animal Theory” (2011), suggest that, “it now seems quite obvious […] that rhetoric desperately needs its animals” (“Domesticating Animal Theory” 98)?

Kenneth Burke boldly defines “man” as a “the symbol-using animal;” or, in the lecture of the same name, as “bodies that learn language” (1977) (Language as Symbolic Action 3). Muckelbauer draws from this assertion in positioning the human as “relentlessly and anxiously (instinctively?) obsessed with defining itself in relation to symbol systems” (“Domesticating Animal Theory” 99). What, aside from an overwhelming linguistic-saturation, could perpetuate such species-specific classification? Muckelbauer rightly
points to this category as the next example, in line with class, gender, race and sexuality, of what Judith Butler had termed “the embarrassed etc. of identity politics,” or, in other words, the arbitrary categories with which most individuals readily align themselves (97). But if we were to, as Muckelbauer suggests, relieve ourselves of this politically charged classification, what might the animal and rhetoric look like next to each other? What kinds of questions need to be (re)considered in reorienting ourselves in our species-classification systems? And, most importantly, what would an animal rhetoric look like?

Muckelbauer’s point here is succinct: “this animal rhetoric could be simply a diagnostic of forces and effects, responses and reactions—one that doesn’t presume to know what a ‘species’ is in advance [or the ‘human’ or ‘rhetoric’]” (“Domesticating Animal Theory” 99). If Burke’s definition centered on the creation and utilization of a linguistic system, then such a project would open up the available options of what it means to communicate in the first place. In the spirit of an affirmative style of engagement, a consideration of the potential extra-communicative features of rhetoric does not negate the communicative powers of signification, but rather adds to those features the moving and (at times) bodily power of asignification; the extra-discursive dimension of interpersonal relations. Such an acknowledgement takes aim at assenting toward language as a signifying field and an asignifying force, one that deals both with communication and disruption, conveyance and feeling. Looking to the animal, then, reorients us toward “thinking [of] communication as something other than primarily the communication of a meaning—both between and among species” (99). This over privileging, Muckelbauer contends elsewhere, results from “the linguistic turn’s commitment to language…directed toward meaning, to
 either the production of meaning or to the attempt to understand or interpret meaning/s” ("Rhetoric, Asignification, and the Other” 238). Asignification, on the other hand, poses the question, “what force does language have? […] If signification seems inclined toward meaning, understanding, and indeterminacy, rhetoric seems directed toward what we might call an ‘asignifying’ dimension of language, focusing on forces, actions and effects” (239).

Dealing with the doing of language, asignification enacts both language’s materiality as well as efficacy. To persuade, then, implies a functioning not in solely communicating, but communicating through a doing, through a turning, through a movement toward a(n) (un)desired end.

In pointing out asignification’s role in rhetoric, I hold that when read in light of bodily-métis—the kind of thinking, doing, making we have described above as concerned with material-mutability—that asignification remains true to the methodology developed by Muckelbauer and employed here. Signification and asignification should not be read as mutually exclusive—they are a melded, intertwined and laced asynchronous pair that make up how language is played out through the body. To persuade or enact any kind of change or action in another requires not only asignifying energy but the available means of communicating that force, namely a socially determined and agreed upon language system.

In affirmative contrast to Merleau-Ponty and the psychoanalytic traditions delimiting of bodily-cognition to the urges or erotic desires, conceiving of bodies as asignifying forces focuses the body as interested in the doing, in the forces of effects and how these effects move other bodies. In other words, asignification points to the body’s (moving) relation with other (a)signifying bodies. The energy of a bodily-métis is, like Clark’s model of
cognition, not in, *per se*, the actual bodies, but in their inevitable grouping and interaction. In fact, any distinction between the external and internal, here, collapses under both the fundamental reconsideration of interactions between bodies and the kind of corporeal mutability that opens itself up its material environs. However, the coupling here of bodies does not imply a pure communication (as asignification implies). Rather (and significantly), the body makes an energy, in whatever form it may, that moves other bodies, pragmatically aimed at inducement of emotive or affective responses. Implied here is a bodily role that is not ornamental or supportive of some rationally based argument; but, rather, one coupled structurally with signification.\(^\text{16}\)

**GESTURAL ATTITUDES: MULTIMODAL MATERIALITY**

The body is capable of knowing, doing, making as both a signifying field (open up to and producing concrete communication) as well as an asignifying energy (one involved in the doing of language, and, in the full sense, the enacting of rhetorical action). Thus it is important to note how these faculties are made manifest and present in one’s bodily life. How does one look at body and apprehend its asignifying force? What I am interested in here is how the above manifests itself materially (explicitly and often-implicitly) in the day-to-day on-goings of the body.

\(^{16}\) How might one cultivate a sense of writing that includes both signification and asignification? Norma Tilden offers a compelling argument in her “Wildwriting” (2007) wherein she argues for the development of a convergence of a more generic term for animals, “wildlife,” with the Aristotelian “poetics,” producing a writing that “encourages a surrender to irreducible likeness at the level of bodies: a mimicking of instinct, appetite, perception…wildwriting inscribes a consciousness of experience not held together by what we humans would recognize as a coherent and public persona” (Tilden 59).
Beginning to examine the way these asignifying forces emerge in the human body, I look to Hawhee’s *Moving Bodies* (2009). Hawhee gestures towards the acknowledgment of a bodily basis in Burke’s rhetorical theory; a basis that stems his life long career, from *Counter-Statements* (1931) to *Language as Symbolic Action* (1966). Hawhee points to several instances in Burke’s work wherein the body positions itself as an arbiter in communication, a facilitator: “[Burke] could never shake the point that language always involves the body: writing and reading are physical acts, and most compellingly for Burke, the spoken word both depends on and channels physical effort and energy” (106). In a chapter on the influence of physicist and philologist Richard Paget’s gesture-speech theory—a glossogenesis in which bodily gestures are seen as the priming expressive means that eventually lead to vocalization and language-formation—Hawhee argues for Burke’s sympathetic view toward language as a “bodily, mimetic, even affective art” (111). Words, for Burke, were a “rendering of bodily attitude, its energy and vitality” (112). In this way, bodily gesture and movement were expressive, aimed at some purpose and intended action. The body, here, is the seat of symbolic action, whereby purpose and direction are enacted through the expression of an attitude. Paget, drawing from animal attitudes, equated bodily gesture with a kind of proto-symbolic action, wherein “gesture [as a coded expressive mode]...[induces] action on the part of another individual” (112). Paget’s fox terrier is given as an illustrative example here. When Paget’s terrier thought it time to be taken for a walk, or wished to be brought upstairs to sleep, he would pull on the skirt of Paget’s cook, Mrs. Wright (112-113). What is poignant here, Hawhee points out, is that the terrier provides both bodily cues (in the form of tugging) along with the ability to vocalize a bark
or whine. Paget writes, “the bark or yap or growl signifies the emotional state, but purpose is expressed by action and expression” (113). The terrier’s bodily cues, then, illustrate an intertwined enactment of both signification and asignification. The vocalization marks the sound as a signifier, but the inducing of an actionary result is completed by a bodily action. “This division of expressive or communicative labor” Hawhee argues, “whereby sounds convey feeling but the body performs purpose lays the groundwork for Paget’s theory, in which the laryngeal area becomes the place on the human body where both functions converge…the resulting movements—words—combined and recapitulate the body’s emotive energy and purposive action” (113).

In arguing that Paget’s communication-based role of the body is not an embodiment of Lanham’s weak defense, I position cognitive scientist David McNeil’s *Gesture & Thought* (2005) next to Hawhee in hopes of augmenting and highlighting asignification’s role in the expression of bodily-attitudes. McNeil’s gestural work studies the everyday occurrence of gestures essential relation to thought. By gestures, McNeil means the “everyday occurrences—the spontaneous, unwitting, and regular accompaniments of speech that we see in our moving fingers, hands, and arms” (3). Such movements accompany speech, employed virtually unconsciously, without conscious attention. Yet, McNeil argues that it is a profound error to “think of gesture as a code or ‘body language,’ separate from spoken language” (4). Rather, gesture and speech are concurrent components of language, both constituting and expressing thought-processes. As gestures are regarded as a part of language itself (a notion that requires us to recast the idea of language in terms of its bodily and material basis), we come to full view that they
cannot be characterized as “embellishments or elaborations, but as integral parts of the processes of language and its use” (13). Gesture and speech form, what McNeil terms, a “multimodal unit,” similar, I suggest, to the structural coupling of signification and asignification (13). Yet, I think the urge here might be to designate and quarter off these structural couplings with their respective dimension of language. Thus, gestures (and any other purposive expression of bodily-attitude) will be designated as a form and function of asignification whereas speech remains tethered to the perfect communication of signification. How might we go about preserving the synthetic unit of “co-expressive but nonredundant” speech and gesture?

McNeil’s multimodal model of gestural-speech proves productive here in resisting such a fundamental bifurcation. Implicitly arguing for language’s materiality, McNeil argues that “language is inseparable from imagery…the imagery in question is embodied in the gestures that universally and automatically occur with speech…such gestures are a necessary component of [both] speaking and thinking” (15). But we can imagine language not embodying and encoding as a gestural system of thought: our own system of writing. Key here is McNeil’s elaboration on gesture-based cognition. *Gesture & Thought* (2005) elaborates “a mechanism of language-gesture integration, the growth point, and the moment-by-moment thinking that takes place as one speaks” (15). Thus, the multimodal language system that McNeil proposes differs from Saussure’s static conception of language as an object (17). Rather than view language as a static model that may be dismantled and studied, McNeil offers a more phenomenological approach to language as a dynamic process, one that continually makes and remakes itself for the sake of use.
However counter-intuitive it is to move beyond an alignment of “static” with “material” and “dynamic” with “immaterial,” I offer to view language as a dynamic material, one that alters and shifts on a material basis (and, in fact, can only alter as material). For language to be mutable, for language to evolve in its materiality means it must first alter as bodily practices, thus remaking the way in which body’s express attitudes and the way in which those attitudes may express themselves.

If we are, as Clark suggested, able to negotiate the borders of our bodily lives, then this negotiation has a direct, if not fundamental, connection with the alteration of the materiality of language. Language, conceived of as only lived out through and in the bodily-basis of a speaking, reading, thinking, writing body, continually recasts itself in the image of bodily attitudes. Even the idea, then, of a disembodied rhetoric—one that does not see the body as central to communicative and asignifying activities—falling into the category of the weak defense delimits language by presuming an a priori language construction that can be employed (or in the phrase I have used here, played out) without the presence of a body.¹⁷

With gestures, then, we see a bodily attitude that finds itself expressed with and through a body, represented before other bodies as a body itself. Cognitively, these gestures are imbued with thought processes (as Kirsh’s experiments gathered) and they

¹⁷ Indeed, even beyond the obvious bodily-basis of writing (the physical act of holding a pen, or typing on a keyboard), graphic inscription marks not only the presence of a body, in terms of an “author”, but presents itself as a material inscription that can be read by the body of another. In terms of Clark’s negotiable and mutable corporeal model, if, per Walter Ong, writing is a technology that restructures thought, and technologies are nonbiological resources that are integrated into our bodily-make up for our own cognitive benefit, then inscriptions, wherever they appear, regardless of origins or author, are extensions of the body.
communicate purposive action to surrounding and perceiving bodies. They also function as an asignificative force that compels other bodies to feel the attitude being implicitly or explicitly expressed. As with my discussion of rhetoric-as-energy and the interactive structure of asignification, this manifestation of bodily-métis in attitudes reaches its most productive height when viewed in its interactions between varying bodies. Yet, Clark's integrative principle here seems to, at once, highlight the body's negotiable horizon, but in doing so marks the horizon as equally important of a feature as the body itself. The negotiable body's boundaries then, ebb and flow as a result of invention role in the negotiating and setting up of a supportive environment. Thus, the remainder of this chapter will explicitly look at this theme of necessary bodily-interaction, how we might conceive of the body in its surroundings and how that conception does not betray the negotiable horizon by over-privileging the body as pure agent in rhetorical action.

**Ambient Bodies, Background Bodies**

Throughout this chapter a vital concept emerged in the consideration of bodily-métis; namely the necessary role of bodily-clustering. As Hawhee notes, “when we talk about bodies […] we talk about sensation, touch, texture, affect, materiality, performativity, movement, gesture, habits, entrainment, biology, physiology, rhythm and performance…such clustering can—and likely will—persist” (5). Hawhee’s point targets the essential theme of all body studies—namely, that to talk of the body, not only does one talk about the activities by enacted by and surrounding the body but one must also talk of several bodies. As chapter three of this work will examine how bodily-métis works on a
public, social scale, I am content here to mention only the monumental but ambient role body’s play in inventive practices.

Recent works that weave together the body with new media studies have given significant attention to the emergent concept of a network. Thomas Rickert, drawing from Mark Taylor’s significant *The Moment of Complexity*, writes, “network culture signifies ‘overconnection,’ akin to ‘overdetermination,’ in which a multiplicity of connections are always ongoing and interactive, and none of which can be said to be primary” (“In the House of Doing” 902). Rickert turns then to consider the co-adaptive relations between an emplaced body and its environment (903). In doing so, he offers the metaphor of “ambience” to augment the concept of a “network” to allow the subject to be, literally, surrounded (or immersed) and thus constituted by its environment. Like the principle working in Clark’s negotiable body model, Rickert views the subject and its surrounding environs as a constitutive whole or, in his words, a “blended environment” (904). Thus, he suggests that ambience better supplies a metaphorical framework for the productive work the connected-network metaphor sought to signify.

As I have stated above that language and the body’s materiality are intertwined, Rickert too suggests that “language and environment are perhaps not so much linked [as a network metaphor would imply] as they are enmeshed,” or surrounded. Rickert’s work here supplies a tenable and productive metaphor that “puts place, language and body into co-adaptive, robust interaction” (904). To support this assertion, he points towards the work of the “Tangible Media Group,” out of MIT. In their essay “ambientROOM: Integrating Ambient Media with Architectural Space,” the TMG sought to test the limits of
peripheral learning, acknowledging that direct and deliberate perception is not the only means of garnering a subject’s attention. As such, the TMG designed a room that supplied information in subtle, surrounding keys. “Rather than present all information through a foregrounded graphical user interface, they construct an ambientROOM as a personal interface environment. Such a room [displays] information through subtle cues of sound, light, or motion easily relegated to the periphery of awareness” (910). Users—or occupants—then, pick up on these cues through an unconscious awareness of their significance.

Rickert’s work posits the idea of an environmental asignification. These subtle cues, though signifying some outside referent, are aimed toward inducing an effect in the room’s occupant, therein causing the occupant to co-adapt with the room on an unconscious and bodily level. I suggest the same holds for body-to-body co-adaption. As we have suggested through a discussion of the negotiable body as a horizon, the so-called dwelling encompasses the body as well, and so it is the case that just as an environment may be in an ambient relation with an individual, so too can other bodies. I term these background, subtle frames, “ambient bodies.” Though, spatially, the image is amusing (bodies in the background compelling action), the idea of ambient bodies coincides with its asignifying role. The main function of the ambientROOM is not to communicate information directly, but rather, to subtly move an occupant to some kind of understanding without appealing to the conscious mind. With ambient bodies, our concern is not so much the direct communicative field of signification that conveys information, but the subtle, bodily energy of moving another body to action.
Thus, if we conceive of the body as only a signifying field, then the idea of bodily-clustering becomes less important as there is nothing present compelling another body to assent to anything anyone states. Thought of as an asignifying energy, existing in ambient-relation with other bodies, we begin to reveal and illuminate the ways in which bodies participate in the forces and effects of other bodies. Manifested through attitudes, the ambient-relation between bodies underscores the necessary work to be done in developing how these attitudes are communicated and perpetuated in more conscious and deliberate ways.
I have, thus far, suggested a view of bodily-invention (here conceived of as an inventive thinking that not only occurs through and with the body, but as [a] body) that cultivates itself through bodily interactions; through modes of social clustering(s) that spark(s) inventive possibilities in playing out language’s materiality. From my epigraph, I initially departed with Lacan’s fundamental notion in mind, namely that “[language] is a subtle body, but body it is” (Lacan 248). As Hawhee’s treatment of métis as a corporeal category indicated, the body’s role in the cognition behind knowing, thinking and making marks language as always embodied, always material. Such materiality, in the Clarkian view of our negotiable bodies, integrates into our somatic frame, rendering bodily life as thoroughly “symbolic,” as moving with and by language’s swaying force.\(^\text{18}\) In what follows, I offer a wider, more holistic portrait of a system of what coordinating and cooperating\(^\text{19}\) bodies might look like and how such a system both integrates bodily-invention into a distributive effort in inventional practices. Appropriate for imagining this system, I put

\[\text{18}\] As the term “the symbolic body” harkens a whole host of images, it would be best to qualify this phrase both in light of this project and in its Lacanian roots/routes. As Colette Soler points out in “The Body in the Teaching of Jacques Lacan” (1995), “the true body, the primary body, says Lacan, is language; that is, what he calls the body of the symbolic. It is a perfectly correct usage of the word ‘body.’ You can check it for yourselves in the dictionary. The symbolic is a body in so far as it is a system of internal relations… language is not a superstructure. Language is [a] body, and [a] body which gives body, what is more” (5).

\[\text{19}\] Here, in the sense of co-operating. Cooperation itself will be a term that requires an expansion—cooperating, might, in a sense, be most productive if it does with Ballif’s cybernetic “noise,” or disruption in mind. Anne Berthoff’s discussion of “chaos” in the classroom will prove essential in explicating this aspect of social, bodily-thinking.
forth a distributed model of cognition (one that is more or less continually but inadvertently described in disembodied terms) as the best way of envisioning a working and tenable system of bodily-invention. Emerging from this chapter, then, is a model of bodily-thinking that roots itself in the necessarily social aspects of corporeal life. The primary argument of this chapter gestures towards a reconsideration of scaffolded environments as not only a place or context but as bodies as well, an ecological enactment of Juste de Juste’s “Human Pyramid” (1543). Such a consideration puts into play the asignifying attitudes of ambient bodies, as explicated in the previous chapter.

PUBLIC BODIES: BODILY LIFE IN VIEW OF OTHERS

Writing of the post-9/11 national vulnerability and grief, Judith Butler, in Prearious Life (2004), develops the necessary conditions that constitute the mundanity of bodily life. She writes:

The body implies mortality, vulnerability, agency: the skin and the flesh expose us to the gaze of others, but also to touch, and to violence, and bodies put us at risk of becoming the agency and instrument of all these as well. Although we struggle for rights over our own bodies, the very bodies for which we struggle are not quite ever only our own. The body has its invariably public dimension. Constituted as a social phenomenon in the public sphere, my body is and is not mine (26).

The over-exposed body here presents itself as a brute and relegating force, simultaneously open to harm and a giver of violence. The materiality of our skin and muscles render our presence knowable and known. This version of bodily life is strictly opposed, according to
Butler, to the systems of thought about the body that our language continually cultivates, namely that we are “bound beings—distinct, recognizable, delineated […] subjects” (24). Before the law, we are all distinguishable and identifiable—a framework that allows for culpability and the laying of blame on individuals who are deserving of commendation or punishment. Without negating such a pragmatic, legalistic language, Butler’s claim positions the body (in a very phenomenological sense) as at once subject, object and mediator between other(ed) bodies. The body has, in Butler’s words, a “public dimension,” a relationality in which and through which it constitutes itself. These claims have their roots in Butler’s earlier *Bodies that Matter* (1993), but the productive point here marks the body as a social body, one given over to and given by its relation with other bodies. In this relationality, we cannot be wholly described as autonomous and individual, for social clusterings “bind us to others, transport us, undo us, implicate us in lives that are not our own, irreversibly, if not fatally” (25). We are always, before other bodies, bodies ourselves: “we are, from the start and by virtue of being a bodily being, already given over, beyond ourselves, implicated in lives that are not our own” (28). And this solely from being embodied. Even in an age of electronic and digital lives, the corporeal frame still finds its way into representational imag(in)ing.20

20 The most popular and ubiquitous social networking site, to date, Facebook utilizes a terministic screen through which you may identify and describe yourself—as well as, following a strong defense of rhetoric, to create the self you wish to present to the Facebook community. Implicit in this, of course, is a visual imagining—made possible through photo applications. Although it is not necessary, the majority of users on Facebook default to using a representational (accurate or inaccurate, it does not matter here) image for their profile. Even in these social-networking sites, where one might argue (thereby arguing against this present project) a disembodied self emerges. We continually fall back on embodied images, and stylistics that assume a bodily (though digital) life on the Internet. The bodily, in this manner, finds its way into all aspects of (digital) life.
In *Precarious Life* (1994), Butler considers the histo-cultural explanation of bodily clustering as a bodily enactment of a social contract: overly exposed and vulnerable bodies compel other bodies to shield and protect each other from somatic harm. Butler here harkens the Hobbesian model of a social contract, positioning vulnerability and the potential for physical harm as not only a motivating factor in community-building, but as the sole somatic reason. Yet, it is not Butler’s intention to explain away bodily vulnerability as the product of a primal urge to project our bodily boundaries. She remarks that “to foreclose that vulnerability, to banish it, to make ourselves secure at the expense of every other human consideration is to eradicate one of the most important resources from which we must take our bearings and find our way” (Butler 30). I take this admonishment to be a call for examination, for a look at our bodily boundaries, understanding them as blurred and flexible, and how such a blurring is constituted in bodily interactions. Such an admonishment echoes the Clarkian negotiable body, wherein the bodily-image reconfigures based on a co-adaptive relationship with one’s environment. Yet, in Butler approach, what makes up the social, public dimension of bodily life (the so-called environment) is the regulation and exclusionary practices of other (normative) bodies. Butler’s insight here marks an important feature that was only hinted at in my earlier chapter: namely, these clustering bodies, which exist in ambient relation-hood, are very much a part of the environment in which they are embedded. That is, like Bruno Latour’s Actor-Network theory which argues for the agency of nonhuman components in a networked relationality, bodies that are emplaced and embedded in the background of a situation (thereby ambient) are equally influencing as foregrounded and explicitly acting bodies. Their influencing
character pivots on not only a signifying power (as a communicative force that expresses desire), but also through an expression of an asignifying attitude (whereby bodily attitudes move other bodies in unpredictable ways).\textsuperscript{21} In a bodily-ecology, inventive-thinking distributes across both human and nonhuman counterparts, dispersing through our environments comprised of both bodies and non-bodies. Bodily-thought, then, imbues all. It is the task here, then, to extend the agency given to nonhuman actors (or, in Clark’s case, technologically scaffolded environments) to those ambient bodies that do not appear to invent, but invent nonetheless.

Butler’s claim points us to the invariable “public dimension” of the body (Butler 26). In the philosophic tradition, the clustering of bodies has been cited as a preemptive tactic for preserving bodily life or property. It is my intention here to argue for bodily clustering as an expression of bodily attitude, or, in other words, as kind of rhetorical action. To cluster bodies together and create a community means a negotiating of and with the group’s surroundings. As James Fredal points out in Rhetorical Action in Ancient Athens: Persuasive Artistry from Solon to Demosthenes (2006), ancient Greeks constructed their material environments with rhetorical intent, shaping the public sphere with the purpose of cultivating a specific view and opinion of politicians and rhetors. This architectural design and arrangement functioned as rhetorical action. Fredal defines such action as “those actions or those elements of action […] that rely upon symbolic means to achieve their effects, whether or not they occur within public orations” (Fredal 25). Fredal’s claim

\textsuperscript{21} Important here is the unpredictable nature of this interaction. As we will see later on in a discussion of Bruno Latour’s Reassembling the Social, the most productive feature of a tenable Actor-Network Theory is the unpredictable results.
echoes an earlier, more Marxist-oriented claim made by Raymond Williams in *Culture and Society, 1780-1950* (1983), wherein all treatments (and constructions) of communities necessarily import established theories of communication. Putting both Fredal and Williams into brief conversation, I suggest that Fredal’s view of rhetorical action and how that action carries itself out through a spatial rhetoric augments the communicational basis of community-building by importing an as-signifying force; literally, the environments around us that compel, nudge and perpetuate certain behaviors and actions.

Given an affirmative license to recast Fredal’s point, I would like to suggest that bodies, embedded as they are, not only communicate back and forth, always conveying given information, but also act in a rhetorically suasory manner, as as-signifying environments. This was indeed the same kind of move toward ambient bodies discussed in the previous chapter. Once we begin thinking of bodies as not the main and central actors of a situation and begin viewing them as existing in the so-called background or ambience of a situation, we may begin to understand the as-signifying power of bod-ily-invention. Bodies, from this view, very much make up the environment in which they are embedded. And if social clustering makes up an environment in and through which bodies think, then it becomes an important task to ascertain what exactly an environment of cognition might look like.

**BODILY SCAFFOLDS: DISTRIBUTED COGNITION AND THE POINTING CHILD**

Distributed cognition is a model of cognition developed by Edwin Hutchins, which highlights the social and public dimension of cognitive practices. Drawing from sociologist
Lev Vygotsky, Hutchins argues: “depending on their organization, groups must have cognitive properties that are not predictable from a knowledge of the properties of the individuals in the group. The emphasis on finding and describing ‘knowledge structures’ that are somewhere ‘inside’ the individual encourages us to overlook the fact that human cognition is always situated in a complex sociocultural world and cannot be unaffected by it” (*Cognition in the Wild* xiii). That is, in Hutchins’ exploration and investigation into the cognitive practices of the navigation team aboard the U.S.S. *Palau*, he observes that complex cognition emerges as a process embedded in social interaction. As such, he treats the navigation team not as individually-thinking components (all bringing their own cognitive powers to the table, so to speak) but instead as a social, computational system (xiv).

Hutchins later revises some of his claims in *Cognition in the Wild* (1995), in a symposium presentation at the University of California San Diego entitled “Imagining the Cognitive Life of Things” (2006). There, he acknowledges the book’s influence on cognitive science as a whole, pointing to the deliberate and re-directed focus he puts on embodied cognition and how cognitive properties emerge from the social interaction of person and material world. Yet, he remarks, *Cognition in the Wild* (1995) gives an incomplete answer to how cognition of this kind emerges from social interaction. The answer provided remains, oddly, disembodied: “[*Cognition in the Wild*] describes social processes and the cognitive properties of those social processes, but it says almost nothing about the embodied practices of the navigators as flesh-and-blood-people” (“Imagining the
Cognitive Life of Things” 1). The body, here, was left unthinking. It was a facilitator for cognitively supportive environments but never a cognitive player in itself.

Hutchins begins to discuss the body as a site of distributed cognition by appealing to the body as a “material anchor” for complex cognition (“Imagining the Cognitive Life of Things” 3). Like Kirsh’s dancing bodies, Hutchins sees physical movement as representational models, or “proxies” for complex, conceptual relations (3). Hutchins supports this assertion by citing Hiroyuki Nakahara’s 1996 study in which the learning practices of elementary school Japanese students were observed. The study showed that the student’s learning used bodily features in enacting their cognitive practices. Students developed a method by which they somatically remembered the names of the months as well as the days of the week, using only their left hand. Hutchins remarks that these students, without any instructional provocation, learned a way to use the hand as a “date calculator” (3). They learned by “mapping…names of the months onto the segments of the first three fingers of the left hand…[learning] a sequential pattern [by] touching the tip of the thumb to the segments” (3). The muscle memory of this bodily-movement was learned prior to (and more efficiently than) a complete visualization of the general ordering of months and days. Hutchins remarks that the hand became a distant and distinct object, a cognitively enhancing “‘thing’ possessing a set of regions and a learned motor routine [controlling] the assignment of conceptual content to the regions” (3). Important in this example is the invention of conceptual generation that emanated from the collective, bodily lives of the students. The somatic-heuristic developed, emerged from the social interactions of these embodied students—the setting of a task (namely, learning the months of the year and days
of the week) and the subsequent social solution of a bodily-calculator, thus, emerged not from one set of ten fingers (as in one individual “solver” of the problem), but a collective set of bodies that were able to see other employed fingers, and exploit them as conceptual proxies. The body, then, offers a compelling “material anchor” by which and through which distributed cognition can occur.

Employing the terms “anchor” and “proxy” here appears dubious, in that “anchor” and “proxy” implicitly refer to a kind of signifying cognition, where there is a material signifier (namely, the fingers) and an abstract concept (months and days) in need of representation. Yet, important here is the asignifying emergence of such a solution: the inventive operation of learning months/days on their fingers was not learned by one child and taught to the rest (invented, then communicated), but was caused by a collective observance of each other’s bodies as extensions of the mind (invention through bodily movement, adopted by all). To balance this signifying heavy instance of bodily-thinking, I draw on another example of distributed or social cognition that incorporates both a signifying element (as communication) and an asignifying action (converting that communication into a symbolic action). In doing so, I hope to situate bodily-invention (the invention as body, clustered among other bodies) as already and always a distributed task of cognition.

Reacting to Hutchins’ oddly disembodied Cognition in the Wild (one year prior to Hutchins’ public revision), Jessica Lindblom and Tom Ziemke, explore the body’s role as not only a “medium of information flow” but as a site of cognition itself (87). They employ the term “social scaffolding” to explore the cultural and social environments that
include not only material anchors for thought, but other flesh-and-blood bodies. Embedded in this social scaffolding of material environments and bodies, is a moving body. I find Lindblom and Ziemke’s harkening of the “body-in-motion” productive in relation to my previous discussion of the two possible interpretations of “moving,” namely as physical alteration (from one space to another, whether in a predictable fashion or not) and persuasive assent. As in the case of persuasive assent, Lindblom and Ziemke argue that physical motion, even in infants, is not an “individual enterprise” (89). Rather, it is the product of bodily interaction, of the mimetic features of bodily-cognition. They write, “the human infant is not born inanimate, but already moving, and has to catch herself in the tactile-kinesthetic apprenticeship of her own body” (89). Positioning physical movement as not merely an individual endeavor allows for us to orient ourselves from the nature-bound conception of gene-wanting (here, in inventive terms, a “discovery” of one’s own body wanting to walk) and the individual creating ex nihilo (in inventive terms, the subjectivist creation) of walking every time an infant is born. Rather, the invention of walking emerges from a structural coupling of signification and asignification in a bodily encounter with another body. Linblom and Ziemke term such a bodily interaction, “social scaffolding” (88). This kind of social scaffolding or the cultural and social practices that are developed for the sake of invention echoes Lauer’s concept of “[a]signifying practices” (Invention in Rhetoric and Composition 10). Not only is the social scaffolding the co-adaptive “inventional strategies […] typical of particular peoples and communities,” but it also allows for the cultivation of asignifying elements in distributed bodily invention.
But how is this accomplished? How might social scaffoldings—inventive as they are—incorporate the seemingly disparate elements of distributed cognition, bodily-cognition and invention with the structurally coupled signification and asignification? Lindblom and Ziemke point to the reaching/pointing child. Their example has its roots in Vygotsky’s 1930’s observation of how a child learns to (digitally) point, and the subsequent garnering of understanding that gestural expression (here of a bodily attitude) is a form of rhetorical action. Thus, the development of reaching/pointing occurs in both the signifying and asignifying realm of bodily-expression. That is, pointing not only communicates something (perhaps an “I want”) but also does something (concurrently compelling a parent or adult to retrieve the desired object) to another body. Movements, then, become intended actions in the social scaffolding (89). Lindblom and Ziemke suggest that the movement of a child pointing at some desired object “is only constituted by the child’s bodily movement, and nothing more” (89). Then, “when the caretaker assists the child, the meaning of the situation changes” (89). Seeing that his/her asignifying physical movement spurred a corresponding physical movement from the caretaker, the child’s pointing takes on significance. They write:

The child’s ‘failed’ reaching attempt provokes a reaction, not from the desired object, but from another person. The individual gesture ‘in itself’ becomes a gesture ‘for-others’. The caretaker interprets the child’s reaching movement as a kind of pointing gesture, resulting in a socially meaningful communicative act, whereas the child at the moment is not aware of its communication ability (89).
The learned behavior here is not solely communicative. What spurs a connection between the gestural expression (of reaching/pointing) and the resultant action of the caretaker is the socially embodied interaction between the two bodies. The inventional proceedings of the act function, from the point of view of the caretaker, as a signifying gesture—but the expression of bodily attitude that cultivates in the child is asignifying: namely, this type of gesture will cause this type of response. Invention here occurs as a body, in its asignifying (inter)action with another body. Such an inventional result, namely the adoption and learning of pointing, cannot occur without a distribution of cognitive powers, both perspectives operating under different hermeneutic assumptions about the gestures enacted. The social scaffolding, then, functions as a facilitator for this inventing, an invention that occurs, nevertheless, as a body amongst other bodies.

Notice, then, that the invention occurring here is neither directed nor deliberate. It emerges as the result of social scaffolding for bodily and gestural development. The gestural move, then, gains meaning in the social scaffolding. In addition, the gesture functions as rhetorical action in its power to compel action from other bodies. Clark’s negotiable body proves important here. As we saw earlier, the body’s supposedly discrete boundaries are negotiable, leaking out into its environment, integrating material supports for its own cognitive benefit (forever contesting any kind of difference between inside and out, internal and external). Yet, this social scaffolding component of environments seems to position an environment that is somehow separate and distinct from the body. For our consideration, especially in light of viewing bodies as ambient environments in and of themselves, it will be imperative to position the body’s “external” supports as biological as
well as non-biological. For this discussion, I refer back to Clark’s extended mind model in hopes of depicting both language and bodies as “artificial neural networks,” analogous to the bodily form of distributed cognition I have developed here. This discussion will, in an indirect manner, lead us back to the field of rhetoric and composition.

Clark’s *Being There: Putting Brain, Body and World Together Again* (1998), argues for a model of cognition that extends into the material environments in which we are embedded. These material environments, or cognitive scaffolds, are alterable resources for our cognitive benefit, so far as we are able to “restructure that environment so as to better support and extend our natural problem-solving abilities” (*Being There* 32). As we saw in Chapter Two, Clark’s conception of the body allows for a bodily integration of material supports. Examples cited point to cell phones or computers as functionally a part of our cognitive system, extending mind-power out and through non-biological resources. Clark’s emphasis in *Natural-Born Cyborgs* focused on the technological, on the making of artificial neural networks through a participatory circuitry of minds, bodies and technologies. Yet, his earlier work offers a compelling case to include other bodies into that cognitive extension as well. Clark writes, “the biological brain, which parasitizes the external world […] so as to augment its problem-solving capacities, does not draw the line at inorganic extensions. Instead, the collective properties of groups of individual agents determine

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22 As “problem-solving” harkens the heuristic-dilemma addressed in “The Logic of Recasting,” I will move to soften these categories in a formal recasting in a discussion later on in this chapter. For now, Clark’s explanation of our materially supportive environments, I suggest, can rightfully extend to creative-thinking as well (as both heuristics and creative-thinking are formally and functionally a part of invention). To negate that would entail resurrecting and reinforcing the age old binary between so-called objective writing and subjective expression. As this thesis seeks to recast rather than resurrect, I aim to include all forms of inventive-thinking in Clark’s discussion.
crucial aspects of our adaptive success” (Being There 73). Other biological bodies stand poised, in this view, as supportive resources for the cognitive opportunism of an extended mind.

There are two possible interpretations of this kind of biological-extension. First, Clark offers the example of language as the ultimate artifact, the ultimate cognitive scaffolding that stems from bodily interaction. Beyond its basic endowment of socially agreed-upon-communication, language both “enables us to exploit our basic manipulative capacities to fulfill new ends, [as well as] enables us to exploit our basic cognitive capacities of pattern recognition and transformation in ways that reach out to new behavioral and intellectual horizons” (193-194). It allows us, as Clark draws from Carruthers, to enact public thinking: “one does not first entertain a private thought and then write it down: rather, the thinking is the writing” (Qtd in Being There 197). Language, as we have seen, only works with and through bodily-counterparts: literally, bodies reading, writing and speaking language. Language cultivates itself through the body, and thus allows for the distributed cognition posited by Carruthers. Bodies, then, coordinate and cooperating through extra-communicative forms of language, allowing and ushering in a more complex breed of thinking; one that, inventionally, does not end at its mimetic function of representing, but allows for the enactment of rhetorical action between and across multiple bodies. Language, always material, always embodied, categorizes itself as biological extension of this sort. Indeed, language is artificially created and thus exceedingly different from “natural” developments in the biological make-up of the body (such as arms, legs, fingers and torsos). But when viewed through the lens of Clark’s negotiable body (a view that calls
into question distinctions between natural and artificial, external and internal); a body that incorporates and extends itself with and through material counter-parts, language seems to be very much a part of our bodily makeup. It is employed with and through the body, and nowhere present without some vestige of a bodily presence. Language stands, then, as the ultimate artifact that functions as an extension of our neural networks—an extension that is part and parcel of the body.

A second possible interpretation of configuring extension in biological terms centers on the asignifying force of bodily clusters. The image of this kind of biological extension to other biological entities relies on a notion of perspective. As discussed above, distributed cognition models cognition, not as the summation of individually distinct cognitive agents, but rather situates cognition as constituted through their (bodily) interaction. Clark speaks directly to this asignifying exploitation of biological extensions in his treatment of “indirect emergence.” He writes, “indirect emergence […] relies on the interaction of individual elements but requires that these interactions be mediated by active and often quite complex environment structures” (73). Clark uses the following example to demonstrate the environmental component of this emergence:

You have to remember to buy a case of beer for a party. To jog your memory, you place an empty beer can on your front doormat. When next you leave the house, you trip over the can and recall your mission. You have thus used what is by now a familiar trick—exploiting some aspect of the real world as a partial substitute for on-board memory (Being There 75).
In other words, Clark sees the changing the environment as an asignifying alteration, prompting one to recall the intended task of buying beer. Alterations to one’s surrounding does not have to stop, I contend, at these non-biological environmental structures but may also, in fact, extend themselves to ambient bodies. That is, if altering the environment prompted a desired recollection and subsequent action, then (em)placing and arranging ambient bodies, always already working in an asignifying manner, might constitute indirect emergence as occurring not only between bodies and world but also between bodies and bodies. The placing of the beer can on the front doormat does not directly communicate some encoded message to the viewer—or does the emplacement of ambient bodies signify some direct individuated knowledge. As I have ascertained, distributed cognition of this kind is not a summation of individual cognitive power; rather, it works through prompting an encounter that produces a distribution in material terms.

**COMPOSING BIOLOGICAL EXTENSIONS:**
**LEFEVRE AND BODILY RESONANCE(R)S**

Biological extension of this kind works through a model of embodied, distributed cognition. The body appears here as decentralized; existing in an extended bodily-network of neural activity. The resulting image, as Juste de Juste’s etching prophetically provides, is of bodily scaffolding: external, material support systems that are at once embodied subjects as well as augmenting (and supportive) environments. Yet, the image of these bodies mangled together, forming an almost inhuman structure, might strike some as frightening or, at best, grotesque. It begs the question: what might this look like in a systematic form of invention? How might one go about exploiting the (a)signifying
component of a distribution of bodily invention, without producing a bundle of bumping and un-coordinating bodies? In what context might this exploration be most productive and generative?

As Lester Faigley famously notes, “where composition studies has proven least receptive to postmodern theory is in surrendering its belief in the writer as an autonomous self, even at a time when extensive group collaboration is practiced in many writing classrooms” (Faigley 15). Both in response to Faigley’s *Fragments of Rationality* (1992) and more extensive work in collaborative writing practices and social invention, the field of rhetoric and composition has accelerated to meet the demands of a postmodernist narrative that distributes subjectivity across a variety of cultural fixtures. Indeed in the field of rhetorical theory, and very much as in this present work, some are calling for a “material turn,” wherein rhetorical principles are being applied to the material environments around us. One of the texts that I am most indebted for the inventive movement toward this argument is Karen Burke LeFevre’s *Invention as a Social Act* (1987). LeFevre’s work, specifically, kairotically operates in the recent revival of interest in inventional scholarship²³ for it offers compelling ground upon which to build a thoroughly embodied perspective on social invention. In this section, I examine LeFevre’s work in light of the distributed and embodied claims put forth above.

LeFevre begins her work by suggesting that contemporary rhetorical and composition theory has made invention commonplace, often designating it as a static

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²³ Essential to this (re)interest in rhetorical invention is Lauer and Atwill’s *Perspectives on Rhetorical Invention* (2002).
“private act of an individual writer for the particular event of producing a [particular] text” (1). She refers to this common conception as a Platonic view, for it conceives of “invention as individual introspection: ideas are created in the mind of an atomistic individual and then expressed to the rest of the world” (1). Yet, this portrait of invention(al practices) persists as incomplete. LeFevre suggests that our conception of an individual, atomistic and autonomous being, already and always persists as a social being, thoroughly embedded in both a social context and culture. Like Hawk’s call for a constant remapping of compositional history, LeFevre suggests that our definition of invention will continually change, for the manner of inquiry and the way of expressing how our cognitive practices produce ideas will continually require new metaphors and perspectives for adequate classification. Akin, here, to the Platonic conception is the autonomous cognitive agent theory that both Clark and Hutchins (often in very different ways) argue against. As such, LeFevre suggests that the writer lives in an “open system,” where the sociocultural context in which the writer writes acts as a kind of social architecture or scaffolding, directing and influencing. She writes:

A match or a meshing occurs of characteristics of the individual with the characteristics made available by the socioculture at a given time and place. The ‘magic synthesis’ that these individuals achieve creates something new that in turn goes into the socioculture, which may itself change as a result (LeFevre 25).

LeFevre’s claim here is directly global and macro, based on the influencing character of societal norms. Her work, in this regard, marks itself as one of the earliest and most consistent attempts at constructing a compositional theory in light of postmodernist
subjectivities. Yet, in doing so, LeFevre leaves the micro, the subjectivity to subjectivity interworkings largely unexamined. As she characterizes invention as having three possible social manifestations, I hope to examine closely one to make the case for embodiment as essential to social invention.

Social invention, according to LeFevre, manifests itself in three forms. First, invention may take the form of an “internal dialogic perspective,” whereby an individual conducts internalized social interactions with varying perspectives of the self (50). In some ways, this first manifestation is at once both closely aligned with the Platonic assumption, and yet the most postmodern, for it presumes and depends entirely on the notion of an irrevocably-fractured self. It largely views the writerly individual as consciously or unconsciously engaging in an internal dialogue, bouncing ideas around other dialectic selves. Second, invention may take the form of a collective perspective. Whereas the internal dialogue perspective focused in on one individual, influenced and in social interaction with another internal self, this perspective sees one as inventing in a socially constructed context, whereby one’s perspectives are already and always shaped by societal norms. The underpinning of this perspective, as supplied by Emile Durkheim, suggests that “invention is neither a purely individual nor an interpersonal act or process; rather, it is encouraged or constrained by social collectives whose views are transmitted through such things as institutions, societal prohibitions and cultural expectations” (50).

In an attempt not to negate either of the above two options (for they are generative views of invention), I assert that LeFevre’s third option, namely the “collaborative perspective,” to be most productive for this current somatically oriented work. LeFevre
writes that the collaborative perspective bases itself on George Herbert Mead’s “explanation of the making of meaning (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), a collaborative view maintains that people interact to invent and to create a resonating environment for inventors” 50). Even at first glance, LeFevre’s rooted discussion in pragmatist philosopher George Herbert Mead brings to the forefront some of the highlighted components of both bodily and public thinking. According to LeFevre, the collaborative perspective functions through “resonant relationships” (65). That is, collaborative efforts, rather than the individuated internal dialogue and the culturally directed social perspective, involve “real people” (65). By this, I take LeFevre to mean flesh-and-blood bodies; bodies that are present (in whatever manner—corporeal or digitally). In this way, we imagine two bodies discussing ideas and eventually emerging with some inventive possibility in hand. Yet, as my discussion above has shown, this is not necessarily always the case. In LeFevre’s conception, there exists room for the asignifying, for the rhetorical sausory that occurs in bodily interactions. Social invention, in this case, is necessarily embodied. It occurs in the bodily clustering and interaction of two or more embodied subjects, cooperating and coordinating toward some inventive end.

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As this chapter has pointed out, I see bodily invention and public, distributed cognition as inextricably linked with and in the materiality of language. As a body, I am at once my own and simultaneously given over, phenomenologically, to those around me. They have and
play a part of my bodily life and the variety of (a)signifying invention practices that emerge through my somatic frame. In light of this, I expanded Clark’s extended mind model of cognition to include other bodies. In doing so, I cultivated an embodied sense of distributed cognition to showcase that bodies, along with other non-biological, material supports that make up one’s environment, are paramount in the act of invention.
CONCLUSION

A PEDAGOGY OF MATERIAL CONCERNS

To conclude this inventive exploration seems, if not anti-climatic, thoroughly antithetical. Thus far, I have suggested that, methodologically, an embodied form of invention first occurs in (re)cognizing the role of recasting—the act of heating up ideas, letting them melt into a molten liquid, then reforming into any shape needed. In addition to this, it is important to remember the other intimation of recasting, namely the navigational veering; a quick maneuvering as spurred by some unexpected event. This version of recasting calls to mind the quick-witted and cunning bodily-intelligence of métis, or as Ballif conceives, the ability to make oneself both “artifice and artisan” (65). Recasting, as métis, then, means the inventive manner in which we arrange, design and negotiate our environments, and the way those supportive environments begin to act on and compel us into action. But environments, in this sense, need not be limited to our material, non-biological surroundings or the homes and dwellings we inhabit. These ambient surroundings—that, through an asignifying presence, compel us to action—also include flesh-and-blood bodies. As Butler has pointed out, we are simultaneously made and undone in the presence of others: for as much control and sense of ownership I have over my body, sensorially it is very much not my own.

And this notion bleeds well into invention. As thought composes itself in language and language is materially tied to the body, any inventive practices I enact, and the subsequent ideas that emerge from those practices, remain tethered to my bodily life. And in this way, my bodily life is giving over to what Burke calls “the unending conversation”
of bodies with other bodies (Philosophy of Literary Form 110). According to Burke, when one walks into an already occurring conversation, it takes a certain amount of adaptive metis to “put in your oar,” so to speak (110). You listen, you catch the tenor of the conversation, and once you begin to engage: “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 upon 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” (110-111). The resonance Burke finds so compelling here echoes LeFevre’s view of social invention. Although not stated in such explicit terms, the bodies in Burke’s envisioning are impressionable and susceptible to claims made by other bodies. In hearing things, bodies feel, they are moved or they are spurred to be more obstinate in their stance. These ideas resonate, stew, meltdown, reform, and are expressed, bodily, again and in new, often unpredictable ways.

The bodily, public kind of invention that I have been gesturing toward occurs in this manner on a day-to-day basis. But we may rightly ask, how might we consciously cultivate this public bodily invention in a productive and generative way? How might we (re)forge these claims into actual, teachable inventive practices? I suggest that we might begin by taking into consideration what I term a pedagogy of material concerns. Geoffrey Sirc’s English Composition as a Happening (2002) implicitly abides by such a pedagogy when he calls for the composition field to view students as simple bodies: “they’re just humans, out in the world, perceptive, observing things” (286). Sirc’s admonishment echoes an earlier claim made by Richard Miller wherein he suggests that, “as seductive as it is to say that all
the world is a text, the dramatic structure of [Foucault's] *The Order of Discourse* illustrates the ultimate barrenness of the simile [...] because “discourse” and “the body,” “language” and “lived experience” are neither identical nor interchangeable terms” (269-270). Although Miller’s claim appears to be counter to the kind of interlaced relationship between language and bodies that I have been developing herein, his remarks are poignant in that they pinpoint an oversimplification of both the body as inventive and language’s materiality. Miller here argues against the interchangability of terms—wherein when we talk about discourse, we are only talking about bodies and, as is certainly prevalent, when we talk about bodies we are really only talking about discourse. It is a simile that has grown stale, sterile, and ineffectual. The body as discourse means nothing when one is compelled, as Miller articulates, to confront the reality of the body as a “hermeneutic system that courts its own destruction,” the body on the verge of destruction (265).

In view of Sirc’s admonishment that our field, our theories of rhetoric and composition “must change materially,” this work calls for rhetorics, theories of composition and pedagogies, to look to bodies as inventive, public and distributed—as working in and through both biological and non-biological relations (115). It calls for bodies to recognize other bodies as biological resources, resources that work in both signifying and asignifying ways. They are (at times) background bodies, ambient in relation, always expressing bodily attitudes that, regardless of intent, can be picked up on, attuned to and accommodated. We falter in gaining the whole picture of invention without acknowledging the body’s central role in the generation of ideas; the making of complex connections; the deploying, arranging and composing of a text. To view otherwise moves
the body into an ancillary position in composition, thus making the composer a disembodied, singular and isolated mind. But yet this is not the image of the writer we all experience. We also know, regardless of whether or not we have the terms, what a bodily resonancer is and does—we know of how mulling over others ideas not only contributes to theirs but cultivates new and invention ways of our own thinking. If language is, according to Berthoff, the great heuristic, then other emplaced bodies are also embodiments of that heuristic, constantly available and open for inventional collaboration (647).

We move, then, with the consideration of bodily, public invention, to more open, more expansive and more collaborative views of thinking and writing. It distributes compositional agency from the individual to the biological (and responding) resources around him or her. The invention, as a product of recasting, is made and remade whenever needed, by whoever, for whatever end. The point, though, is that the recasting be done by a collective, by a group willing to give bodily and publically to the task of invention. Ultimately, invention as public, bodily thinking positions the masses, the crowds, comrades, friends, families and colleagues as not distinct, autonomous agents but as functioning, productive and generative bodies to think with.
WORKS CITED


