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Joshua Gunn

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ON SPEECH AND PUBLIC RELEASE

JOSHUA GUNN

This essay argues for a repriviliging of the object of speech in the study of public address. To this end, public discourse concerning the tonal qualities of male and female speech, particularly in moments of affective transgression, is examined to better discern our deeply gendered, cultural norms of eloquence. The primary case study analyzes reactions to the oratory of Barack Obama and Hillary Clinton to show how their respective vocal tones played a significant role in the 2008 presidential election.

Let us note an incontestable fact. The science of the Art of Oratory has not yet been taught.

—ABBÈ DELAUMOSNE (1893)¹

Public address is transmogrifying—in many senses.² Perhaps owing to the explosion of objects that could be said to address or compose publics over the last century, as Angela G. Ray has noted in her survey of cherished, award-winning monographs, the *field* of public address seems to have abandoned claiming a specific object of study. In recent decades, Ray argues, scholars have been performing public address scholarship “as a

JOSHUA GUNN is Assistant Professor of Communication Studies at the University of Texas in Austin. The author would like to thank Barry Brummett, Michael Bruner, Chuck Morris, Angela Ray, Mari Boor Tonn, Marty Medhurst, and the blind reviewers for their advice. This essay was conceived and written to honor his teacher, mentor, and friend, Karlyn Kohrs Campbell.

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perspective or approach rather than an object domain.”³ Once upon a time we used to say that the object of public address was oratory.⁴ Then some said it was “the text,”⁵ and later others argued the object was queer and unstable from the get-go.⁶ Of course, if the scholarship published in this journal is any measure, there does seem to be a certain settled agreement about the values underwriting public address: the importance of history and moments of contingency; the significance of oratory, past and present; the necessity of the archive for understanding discursive formations in this century and those past; and the prominence of the presidential. The perspective of public address, in other words, is a value system. Yet aside from the values we share—not to mention the company we keep—if one begins to push, prod, and poke the *concept* of “public address,” the territory begins to expand beyond any consensual map: What is and what constitutes a public today? What event, practice, or object is sufficient to constitute an address?

These and related questions unquestionably bespeak a befuddling implosion of what we once knew handily as “public” and “private,” and arguably, the object domain of public address cannot be stabilized simply because these mutually constituted notions *seem* to be losing their purchase, are essentially ambiguous, or both. On the one hand, for decades scholars have challenged the notion of *the* public—especially as it is reflected in the received understanding of Habermas’s conception of the “public sphere”—as a productive fantasy or ideological construct that enables and disables various forms of civic labor and identity.⁷ In its stead many scholars prefer to speak of publics, counterpublics, public modalities, and various iterations of publicity that more accurately reflect the complexities of contemporary modes of social being.⁸ On the other hand, “a simple boundary” denoted by the public/private distinction “can reverberate and make the world intelligible,” argues Lauren Berlant, for there is no question that we continue to behave as if there are domains of publicity and privacy in our mundane and mediated lives.⁹ Jeff Weintraub has rightly noted that in scholarship, the public/private distinction “is not unitary, but protean,” and reflects “different theoretical languages or universes of discourse, each with its own cargo of assumptions and connotations.”¹⁰ Be that as it may, in these times of continual surveillance, Facebook friends, and the publicity of privates on “reality” television, there is a generally assumed, embodied, workaday understanding of the public/private distinction that seems to be rapidly transforming and continually under assault.¹¹

So perhaps, then, it is better to say that the general, perceived implosion of the public/private distinction, this slash under siege, is the name for a

condition of constant *crisis*—a continual, yet-to-be-finished implosion as the slash is ceaselessly asserted anew at and in different locations and contexts.¹² If so, how might we account for the reassertion of this conceptual boundary, both academically and in “actually existing democracy,” to borrow a phrase?¹³ How do we make sense of the uncanny persistence of privacy, of our private lives—our private parts—as a “simple boundary” that does a significant kind of rhetorical labor? And, perhaps more importantly, what is the character of that rhetorical labor today?

I will argue that this character is *sexual* in both senses. To begin to develop a fuller answer, however, let us start with an example that is conspicuously sexed and sexual. It’s an example that helps us to discern, very quickly, an ideational locus for the slash, and this by means of an obvious affective threshold crossing:

Ooh. Ohhh. Ooohah. Oooooohaah. Ohhh God ahh. Ooooh. Ooooh God.
 Ohh. Huh. Ahhhh. Uhhh. Oooh God. Oh yeah right there. Uh. Oh. Uhhh.
 Uhh. Oooohhhaah. Uuuuh. Oooh. Oooh. Ooooh God. Ooooh. Yes! Yes! Yes!
 Yes! Yes! Yes! Ahhhh. Oohhh. Oooh! Yes! Yes! Yes! Ohhhh! Yes! Yes! Yes!
 Yes! Yes! Yes! Oooohhh. Oooh. Ooh. Oh God. Ooh. Uh.

Here is a conspicuous violation of a cultural taboo that simultaneously imparts the scholarly challenge of re-presentation: as words read on the page of an academic journal, these “oohs” and “ahhs” violate the writerly mandates that yield scholarly meaning (that is, they just look funny). Yet read aloud—say, as one would poetry or the final pages of *Ulysses*—the paradigmatic axis emerges as a human body in feeling, and set within the wider context of the cinematic imaginary, a very specific body at that.¹⁴ If the reader knows her romantic comedies and spoke these words aloud, she was probably able to envision the body that enunciated these series of phonemes, likely at the occurrence of the first Joycean “Yes!” The voice that originally gave voice to these exclamations belongs to Meg Ryan, and the film was the wildly popular 1989 hit, *When Harry Met Sally*. These ejaculations first appeared in a climactic scene in which Harry, played by Billy Crystal, is astonished by Sally’s claim that women fake sexual pleasure. To demonstrate, Sally sallies forth, replete with ecstatic facial gestures and fisted table poundings with each rapturous “Yes!”

There’s nothing terribly astonishing about Sally’s orgasmic yawps; we’ve all made similar sounds (or at least faked them). Or rather, there’s nothing

terribly astonishing about Sally's orgasmic yawps *except for the fact that she is releasing them in public*. In the filmic diegesis, Sally's dispatch was made at a crowded New York deli. What is both fun and horrible about this orgasm is that something presumably private is made public: like Sheena Easton, Sally seemingly invites dining strangers into her sugar walls, violating a presumed barrier between public and private.¹⁵ The violation occurs in an ideational *space* presumed homologous to a physical place; the feelings associated with the space/place are made disjunct. It is thus with Sally's *felt* transgression in speech that we can locate both the assertion of, and challenge to, the slash between public and private. Indeed, "public/private" is (re)constituted by a crisis of (dis)establishment, a moment most discernable in an immanent experience. The felt transgression that makes the symbolic distinction between public/private discernable, however momentary, is a kind of affective "threshold crossing," to borrow a term.¹⁶ The slash denotes a continual crisis—movement, change, uncertainty, dynamism—that keeps the conception of publics and privates alive.

Spectators enjoy this scene in *When Harry Met Sally* because it is make-believe; Ryan's screams comprise a fake depiction of Sally faking an orgasm in public, and these layers of fakery provide a more comfortable, ideational distance from Sally's private publicity. Yet even despite our comfortable distance as spectators (or even further away, as readers of a transcription of a fake of a fake), Ryan's orgasm is nevertheless a public release of a certain character, one that indexes the depth of intimacy culturally associated with pleasure or pain. In general, such intimacy is often resigned to the register of the *sexual*, a register that is signified by the cry, the grunt, the scream, and the yawp.

The cry, the grunt, the scream, and the yawp: these vocal utterances are usually aligned with the sexual because they are *not* meant for public company, certainly not for public scrutiny.¹⁷ And yet, we are more likely to pay attention to such utterances in the context of an assumed public. Sally notwithstanding, I would underscore the term "sexual" in its broadest sense, not reducible to the genital, but rather consisting of a wide range of bodily stimulations and excretions that result in pleasure, pain, or both—from the visual enchantments of cinema to the uncomfortable bliss of endorphins on mile ten of that marathon some readers ran yesterday. The cry, the grunt, the scream, and the yawp index the sexual understood as *the body in feeling*. These also bespeak an absence of self-knowledge, a loss of control, even a tacit mindlessness associated with extreme affective states.

The cry, the grunt, the scream, and the yawp represent what we could simply term “uncontrolled speech,” and in this essay one of the claims I advance is that uncontrolled speech, seeming or real, plays a much larger role in public life than many have supposed.¹⁸ The trick is to understand involuntary or uncontrolled speech as that which measured speech always threatens to reveal—that every time we witness masterful eloquence, there lurks the possibility of a hiccup or belch waiting to rupture the ruse of public propriety. For just as the measured talk of two friends flirting in Katz’s Delicatessen portends the promise or threat of a *coming* scream, so does a president horrify and infuriate with an impending “duh” or the prospect of a stammer.¹⁹ In this sense, I will argue that the unspoken-uncontrolled is the regulatory organ of eloquence.

In plainer language, my central claim is that uncontrolled speech, represented by the cry, the grunt, the scream, and the yawp, is a normative constraint of public address, and that this constraint is sexual and (purportedly) private in character. As a corollary, I will suggest that the object of speech, and by extension oratory, should remain central to the study of public address. I will argue, in fact, for repriviliging the object of speech in public address scholarship.²⁰ In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the study of oratory included a robust understanding of speech that put argument and affect—language and feeling—on equal footing.²¹ The influence of scientism in the past century, however, has imbalanced our stand.²² An attention to uncontrolled public speech not only helps us to retrieve that affective or pathetic dimension of rhetoric that has been repressed, but also helps us to make better sense of the ever-evolving (non)extinction of the slash between public/private, the supposed implosion of prurience and propriety, and even the collapse of politics into entertainment.

To this end my argument unfolds in three parts. With reference to the work of “Public Feelings” scholars, as well as to psychoanalytic theory, I first turn to a discussion of public intimacy and the sexual significance of speech as such. Then, with a little help from the elocutionist Thomas Sheridan, in the second part I bring an understanding of uncontrolled speech to bear on the polarizing oratory of Hillary Clinton and Barack Obama. Finally, I conclude by discussing how a renewed attention to the object of speech provides an alternative to the monstrosity of “the Text.”

PUBLIC FEELINGS AND THE SEXUAL SIGNIFICANCE OF SPEECH

For almost two decades Lauren Berlant has enriched our understanding of the public sphere by arguing “it” has become intimate and multiple. That is, there is no one public sphere, but many public spheres (or as she would concede in later work, “publics”) that are more or less made coherent and assumed to be singular over the binary of “public/private.”²³ Historically, the “proper relation between public and private” was mapped over “spaces traditionally associated with the gendered division of labor,” perhaps most familiar to rhetorical scholars in terms of the domestic, private world of women and the public domain of men that so characterized the cult of true womanhood.²⁴ Although a gender binary continues to underwrite expressions of the public/private distinction in many discourses—a point to which I shall return with respect to the human voice—the movement of women into new spaces, both imaginary and real, the consequently transformed divisions of labor, and the ever-multiplying technologies of communication driven by the motor of consumerism have collectively contributed to a new sense of public belonging that seems continuously to publicize the putatively private.²⁵ Berlant terms this new sense of public belonging “public intimacy.” The conceptual locus of public intimacy is described as the “intimate public sphere” in her earlier work, and as “intimate publics” in her more recent work.

According to Berlant in her landmark 1997 study, *The Queen of America Goes to Washington City*, the intimate public sphere is the achievement of a conservative ideology born in the 1970s and that ripened into the “right-wing cultural agenda of the Reagan revolution.”²⁶ The gist of the earlier version of her argument focused at the level of the nation state; think, here, of the popular or cultural imaginary secured by television screens:

In the patriotically-permeated pseudopublic sphere of the present tense, national politics does not involve starting with a view of the nation as a space of struggle violently separated by racial, sexual, and economic inequities. . . . Instead, the dominant idea marked by patriotic traditionalists is of a core nation whose survival depends on personal acts and identities performed in the intimate domains of the quotidian. It is in this sense that the political public sphere has become an intimate public sphere. . . . [T]he intimate public sphere of the U.S. present tense renders citizenship as a condition

of social membership produced by personal acts and values, especially acts originating in or directed toward the family sphere. No longer valuing personhood as something directed toward public life, contemporary nationalist ideology recognizes a public good only in a particularly constricted nation of simultaneously lived private worlds.²⁷

Berlant has in mind the turn to so-called cultural issues on the Right, such as the welfare of children, anti-abortion crusades, and the regulation of sodomy and same-sex marriage.²⁸ For Berlant, conservatives have “transformed the scenes of privacy into the main public spheres of nationality.”²⁹ What one does in the bedroom has become a public issue, even though it remains conceptually off-screen (in the ob-scene).³⁰

In addition to the privatization of citizenship in the national imaginary, in subsequent work Berlant has also focused on the intimate publics created by the culture industries, such as “women’s culture”:

An intimate public operates when a market opens up to a bloc of consumers, claiming to circulate texts and things that express those people’s particular core interests and desires. When this kind of “culture of circulation” takes hold, participants in the intimate public *feel* as though it expresses what is common among them, a subjective likeness that seems to emanate from their history and their ongoing attachments and actions. Their participation seems to confirm the sense that even before there was a market addressed to them, there existed a world of strangers who would be emotionally literate in each other’s experience of power, intimacy, desire, and discontent, with all that entails. . . . “Women’s culture” was the first such mass-marketed intimate public in the United States of significant scale.³¹

Whereas Berlant describes the intimate public sphere as an (incomplete) implosion of the public and private at the level of the U.S. national political imaginary, she suggests an “intimate public” that denotes a people brought into being through the consumerist circulation of personal or private experiences. These may very well overlap depending on one’s focus—think of a politician appearing on a late-night talk show, for which the viewing public brought into being is mostly young and male. The difference between the “intimate public sphere” and an “intimate public” is one of scale and politics, of national identification with the former and any number of interest groups or audiences with the latter.³²

Berlant's project should be understood as a part of a larger scholarly push to grapple with how publics and counterpublics are fundamentally (although not exclusively) affective in character, and perhaps "how affective experience can provide the basis for new cultures," as Ann Cvetkovich has suggested.³³ Berlant's and Cvetkovich's work on citizenship, publics, and intimacy, in turn, partially results from the agenda of a small group of scholars in the humanities researching what Cvetkovich has dubbed "public feelings."³⁴ Historically, Cvetkovich explains that the loosely affiliated group's research trajectory was a result of the "collective meetings on the future of gender and sexuality and the question of how to give feminism greater impact in the public sphere."³⁵ Gradually, however, a "Public Feelings group" emerged in "the shadow of September 11 and its ongoing consequences. . . . Rather than analyzing the geopolitical underpinnings of these developments," says Cvetkovich, the Public Feelings group has "been more interested in their emotional dynamics."³⁶ This focus on the emotional dynamics of public cultures can, in turn, be further contextualized as part of a still larger "affective turn" in the theoretical humanities.³⁷

What do rhetorical scholars have to offer for understanding public feelings and intimate publics? And why should we be thinking about public intimacy at all? Answering the second question makes it easier to approach the first. If it is the case that both the public sphere and publics have become "intimate" in the past century, fusing the private, the political, and the profit-making into public zones of intimacy, then the character of public address must have also changed in ways that recommend increased attention toward public affect.³⁸ With this transformation taken as a given, I think a characteristically rhetorical contribution to the larger, theoretical engagement with public affect asks scholars to reconsider the object of criticism. For their critical work, Public Feelings scholars have tended to focus on spectacles of one sort or another for evidentiary support: readings of films, performance art, monuments, literature, and other scenic or iconic objects have carried the weight of critical observation. For example, in her widely read *An Archive of Feelings*, Cvetkovich focuses on performance art because it is "emblematic of the public cultures that intrigue me," but also because it "creates publics by bringing together live bodies in space."³⁹ Berlant has examined objects of "mass-mediated popular culture," such as novels and films, because these objects help to foment "a sense of focused belonging to an evolving world."⁴⁰ The visual object has tended to bear the weight of critical reflection on public feelings.

If we begin with the assumption that there are many publics, as well as numerous circulating discourses that call them into being, what would be the object of a public feelings approach in public address? The overdetermined answer is plain: the object is “address,” which is traditionally defined as a formal speech. And even though formal speeches no longer center all modes of public address, there remains at the very least a condition of address that has persisted for millennia: as Herbert A. Wichelns once wrote, “human nature being what it is, there is no likelihood that face to face persuasion will cease to be a principle mode of exerting influence.”⁴¹ In 1925, of course, Wichelns could not have foreseen television, cell phones, the Internet, and video teleconferencing, but the spirit of his observation continues to haunt: the intimacy of human vocalization, of *speech*, influences people because the default context for speech remains the everyday interpersonal encounter.⁴² Furthermore, even in a world dominated by screens and speakers, the human voice continues to convey and evoke emotion, formally and informally. I submit that the experience of human speech, mediated or not, is the most direct route to feelings and intimacy in publics and, consequently, that a focus on speech as such can center work on public feelings and affect from a rhetorical perspective. Rhetorical scholars have at their disposal centuries of theories about the human voice and its relationship to human feelings, and thus are uniquely primed to address public affect via the object of speech. To make this case, I will demonstrate how human speech is intimately associated, both symbolically and physiologically, with the most intimate and “private” of human feelings, and then show how these feelings are rhetorically managed and manipulated in publics.

UNCONTROLLED SPEECH AS PUBLIC FEELING

As I hinted in the introduction, I begin with the assumption that the transgression or violation of a norm is the most direct route to observing the labor of conceptual binaries like public/private or intimate/distant. The same is true of speech: uncontrolled or involuntary speech helps us better to grasp what speech norms exist in a given context, as well as how they are (re)established in that context. Instead of regressing to the theoretical scene of baby babble and toddler tantrums, which is the obvious scene in which speech norms are first internalized,⁴³ let us turn to two closely related and seemingly grown-up examples of uncontrolled speech, and work inductively.

The first scene is that of a tennis court, and the sound in question is “the

grunt.” Some fans would report that loud grunting when a player hits the ball has become a normal element of this prim and proper sport. It is almost commonplace for jokes to be made by sports journalists and reporters about the penetrating loudness of tennis squawking. In the mid-1990s, however, the racket of this racquet sport was quite the controversy.

The strife over grunting began at Wimbledon in 1992, when it was argued by many tennis fans and journalists that the projected winner of that competition, Monica Seles, was favored not so much because of her serve, but her scream. Renamed *Moanica* Seles, competitors complained her screams were so loud they masked the sound of the ball coming off her racket, an unfair advantage.⁴⁴ As a consequence of the controversy, the British tabloid magazine *The Sun* developed what it termed a “gruntometer” (basically, a simple noise level reader), and for almost two decades the paper has been printing humorous stories about tennis player grunts. Today, Larcher de Brito has received the most attention for her grunting;⁴⁵ however, the reigning queen of serving shrieks is Maria Sharapova, whose presumably involuntary exclamations have been recorded at more than 100 decibels—as loud as an ambulance siren.⁴⁶ As one *Rolling Stone* writer put it, Sharapova’s “serving grunt suggests a giraffe giving birth.”⁴⁷

The controversy over athletic grunts underscores a sexist dynamic that underwrites the norms of public intimacy. First and foremost, tennis fans have complained that the grunting of *female* players is inappropriate and vulgar; very little is said about male players. It is here where we locate an important governing norm of speech, the identification of an *inappropriate public release*. Implicit in the censure of the uncontrolled speech release is the idea that only measured, fully conscious speech is allowed (and in the context of tennis, the most perfect form is silence). Why is this (supposedly) uncontrolled speech release inappropriate? Sally’s orgasm already suggests something of an answer. As the BBC reported some years ago, competitive female grunting has been discussed as “an indicator of what the lovely lady is like in bed. During flirtatious banter on Jonathan Ross’s chat show [a British talk show; this episode from June 2005] . . . Serena Williams was playfully teased with repeated recordings of her on-court grunt.”⁴⁸ In other words, female public grunting is received as sexual, not necessarily in the orgasmic sense, but certainly in the sense that grunting represents an uncontrolled, mindless body given over to the libidinal. Involuntary speech is threatening, it is unwieldy, it represents an absence of consciousness, the body on autopilot.⁴⁹ To wit: the grunt is the signifier of spasm.

That such a norm is articulated to the feminine evokes the centuries-old ideology that associates female howls with the uncontrolled body in a series of unfortunate yet nevertheless persistent binaries: woman/body, man/*nous* (mind or soul); woman/emotion, man/reason; woman/undisciplined, man/controlled; and so on. Space limits any detailed rehearsal of the association of uncontrolled speech with the feminine, although I do wish to make this logic explicit.⁵⁰ Readers familiar with the writing of the ancient Greeks, especially with Plato and Aristotle, will recognize the widespread condemnation of female speech in ancient Greek culture. For Plato, explains Elizabeth V. Spelman, a hatred of the body funds an ideology of the spiritual superiority of men, for “to have more concern for your body than your soul is to act just like a woman.”⁵¹ Uncontrolled speech, of course, is *of the body*; it reminds the hearer of a body, *the* body. Anne Carson explains that from ancient Greece to modernity in the West, “madness and witchery as well as bestiality are conditions commonly associated with the use of the female voice.”⁵² Thus, suggests Carson, even an incorrect use of pitch by a man could invite ridicule today as much as it did in Aristotle’s time:

High vocal pitch goes together with talkativeness to characterize a person who is deviant or deficient in the masculine ideal of self-control. Women, catamites, eunuchs and androgynes fall into this category. Their sounds are bad to hear and make men uncomfortable. Just how uncomfortable may be measured by the lengths to which Aristotle is willing to go in accounting for the gender of sound physiognomically; he ends up ascribing the lower pitch of the male voice to the tension placed on man’s vocal chords by his testicles functioning as loom weights.⁵³

In modernity, Carson reports that Margaret Thatcher trained with a vocal coach for many years in pursuit of gonadal gravitas, yet “still earned the nickname *Attila the Hen*.”⁵⁴

Following the work of Julia Kristeva, Hélène Cixous, and Kaja Silverman, Adriana Cavarero has insisted the ideological linkages among body, voice, and the feminine go even further back than the Greeks, all the way back, in fact, to the origin of self-consciousness.⁵⁵ She argues that the association of body and voice is an infantile reminder of the maternal body, one from which most human beings must become independent through the normalized violence of individuation—of becoming separate from, and eventually independent of, the mother:

By insisting on the libidinal register of the vocal, these thinkers [Kristeva and Cixous] trace vocality back to the pre-oedipal phase [before the child has a sense of itself as an individual]. That is, they trace it back to the originary scene in which the fusional relationship between mother and child also works to frustrate the category of the individual. From this perspective . . . the pleasure rooted in the acoustic sphere has above all a subversive function: that is, it destabilizes language as a system that produces the subject. Rather than stand in opposition to writing . . . voice stands in opposition to language—that is, to the disciplining codes of language, to grammar and syntax, to the “Law of the Father” that separates the child from the mother by consigning the child to the logic of individuality.⁵⁶

By distinguishing the human voice as such—phonetic excess—from speech as a system of meaning, Cavarero is able to align the voice sans meaning with the maternal body. Meaningful speech and language proper is associated with the Law of the Father. Otherwise known as the “Name-of-the-Father,” the Law of the Father is what communicates limit to a child, usually in the form of “No!” but also as the gift to the child of a surname. It represents the language system that forges a “cut” between the unity of mother-child.⁵⁷ In this sense, speech gives the void of naked voice form, so to speak. Although the details of this theory are complex, the upshot of these alignments is that Cavarero understands the ideology of misogyny as deeply articulated to the process of becoming a self-conscious subject through the internalization of language, which entails a rejection of the maternal body and, in turn, the feminine. Crudely put, because misogyny is maintained as a symbolic structure (ideology), bias against the feminine voice must be learned very early in childhood.⁵⁸

For Cavarero, the association of orality with the maternal and feminine explains our habituated responses to the human voice as such. Speech given over to expression without the signifier (to what I’ve been calling “uncontrolled speech” and what Cavarero simply terms “voice”) is thus culturally coded feminine.⁵⁹ Controlled, measured speech is masculine and betokens a mastery of the passions. Uncontrolled speech is feminine and represents the anarchy of the body (an anarchy only discernable, of course, if mind and body are assumed to be twain).

By suggesting that uncontrolled speech is associated with the feminine, however, I by no means want to suggest that men get a pass. It is certainly the case that men are more frequently permitted to transgress prohibitions

in general, especially in the contexts of sport, music, or theater. Even so, the male cry, grunt, scream, and yawp continue to denote a mindless speech and impermissible bodily anarchy in contexts outside of the acceptable confines of leisure and sport. Consider, for example, this male yawp:

[applause, cheers, whistling; a crowd begins chanting the speaker's name repeatedly] Wow! [more chanting and clapping, then wild cheering from the crowd] Well, you guys . . . you have already got the picture here. I, I was about to say, you know, I, I'm sure there's some disappointed people here. You know what? You know something? You know something? If you had told us one year ago that we were gonna come in third in Iowa, we wouldda given anything for that. And you know something? You know something? Not only are we going to New Hampshire, Tom Harkin, we're going to South Carolina, and Oklahoma, and Arizona [speech rate increases—then a pause] and North Dakota, and New Mexico! [a raspy tone begins to emerge] We're going to California, and Texas, and New York! [voice shifts to a scream] And we're going to South Dakota, and Oregon, and Washington, and Michigan! AND THEN WE'RE GOING TO WASHINGTON DC TO TAKE BACK THE WHITE HOUSE! Yaaaahhhggggggghhhhh!!!!

Here again we encounter the pickle of sonorous re-presentation. Many readers will recognize these are the words to Howard Dean's now infamous "I Have a Scream Speech" at the 2004 Iowa Caucuses, otherwise known as the "Dean Scream." Even the fairly sophisticated vocabulary and techniques of linguistics such as phonetics, conversation analysis, and microanalysis will fail to capture what one senses when listening to an audio recording of the speech.⁶⁰ It seems impossible to describe what Roland Barthes termed "the grain of the voice," that pure sound of expressive vocality that doesn't simply carry meaning, but also bodies forth the *body in feeling* in a manner that cannot be signified.⁶¹ To the open and unprimed ear, Dean seems to transgress a speech norm; there is a libidinal or sexual character to Dean's voice, registered in adjectives like "raspy," "passionate," "fiery," or better, "adrenalized," that both excites and eludes the listener.⁶²

Insofar as the affect of truly uncontrolled speech defies description,⁶³ a brief aside on critical approach is helpful at this point. To capture the grain of the voice for rhetorical analysis, we are unfortunately condemned to "the poorest of linguistic categories: the adjective."⁶⁴ Even as poor as it is, in the hands of a critic with poetic skill, the adjective can render a description of

Dean's "I Have a Scream" speech with more fidelity to Dean's affect than any sophisticated, technical vocabulary would allow (most certainly those premised on the privileged figure of the number). There is also much rhetorical insight to be gleaned from analyzing how *others* affix adjectives—and by extension, nouns—to the sounds of someone's voice; therein is where we can locate the (re)establishment of a binary and the movement of ideology. The key analytical move I'm suggesting, in other words, is adjectival description followed by an analysis of how others similarly affix adjectives.⁶⁵

Turning to the way in which Dean's speech was described by others, we can begin to discern the ideological norms of political speech. I've described Dean's speech as raspy, passionate, fiery, and adrenalized; journalists, however, went for the extreme descriptors. His howl was described variously as a "battle cry,"⁶⁶ a "primal scream,"⁶⁷ and worst of all, as a "meltdown."⁶⁸ Television journalists seemed to delight in broadcasting the scream over and over in a fever that far outpaced the passion of the scream itself. After his third-place win, it has been estimated that cable network news programs replayed the clip some 633 times in the four days after the speech, presumably as a reflection of what *USA Today* eventually described as the scream's "cult-like status."⁶⁹ CNN even issued a formal apology for overplaying the clip!⁷⁰

Although almost all commentators characterized the yawp as the symptom of a flawed campaign, reviewing its coverage on YouTube and in newspapers suggests that the scream may have actually played a causal factor in Dean's demise as a viable candidate. "Emotion plays a vexing role in politics," reported Sheryl Stolberg of the *New York Times*. "It can cost candidates their elections; many say [Edmund] Muskie lost the 1972 Democratic nomination when he became overwrought, appearing to cry while defending his wife."⁷¹ As Robert Smith of the immortal pop band The Cure once sang, "Boys Don't Cry," and obviously I don't mean "cry" literally.⁷² Dean's and Muskie's cries were impermissible forms of public release, an index of spasm that threatened to reveal the defining but deliberately muted erotics of politics. Their cries reassert the threat of any body politic given over to mindless enjoyment—that is, their cries threaten the riotous, feminine, impolitic body.

THE SPEECH OF PSYCHOANALYSIS

Sally's impassioned faux orgasm, Sharapova's piercing serving grunt, and Dean's rapturous scream are examples of (seemingly) uncontrolled speech that help us to discern the vocalic norms of public speech and feeling.

However sexist, in U.S. culture controlled, masculine speech is the preferred default, while uncontrolled speech is threatening, bodily, and feminine. This does not mean, however, that speech should be unemotional, or that impassioned speaking is off limits. Nor does it mean that women cannot become excellent speakers. Rather, these examples—and no doubt countless others in recent memory—suggest that our cultural ideology of speech demands self-consciousness and a degree of control in a public context. This implies, of course, that within speech is always a tacit threat of the loss of control. As Carroll Arnold famously argued in his landmark essay, “Oral Rhetoric, Rhetoric, and Literature,” human speech harbors an inherent riskiness—that one will say something she doesn’t mean, that someone will misunderstand, that others will hear things in our voices that we would rather keep secret.⁷³ Psychotherapy trucks in this riskiness, and it is an understanding of this riskiness as a contingency that affords speech a special status.

Lacanian psychoanalytic theory advances an understanding of speech that is helpful for explaining the tacit threat of speech, as well as the pleasures of controlling it. First, psychoanalysis privileges speech because of all the objects that humans love and fear, speech is unique. Speech is unique because it is the first love object in life; its reception (hearing) is among the first senses to develop in infancy—in utero, in fact.⁷⁴ Speech is unique because, as Clifford Nass and Scott Brave have argued, “humans are the only species that is wired to understand speech fully,” so deeply “wired,” in fact, that we respond to it automatically and unconsciously.⁷⁵ Our brains are structured to develop identity at an early age based on sound.⁷⁶ Finally, psychoanalytic therapy relies on speech because it risks a certain spontaneity that reveals something about the speaker that the speaker cannot plan or control—unconscious desires or motives. Uncontrolled speech is the most conspicuous form of this unscriptedness. The spontaneity of speech—especially that which is unplanned or surprising—reveals that it is a meeting place of representation and the body, of word and feeling. Consequently, what one says and what one feels can be at odds: in tone, pitch, timbre, and volume, speech can betray what we wish to conceal, and this is precisely why Freud stressed that the unconscious meaning of a dream is not *in the dream story or symbol*, but rather, in how the analysand reports and re-reports a dream.⁷⁷ Instead of focusing on the rational march of meaning, psychotherapists are trained to attend to slips of the tongue, verbal missteps, and seemingly involuntary blurts because uncontrolled speech gives one a glimpse of the unscripted, unconscious self.⁷⁸

Psychoanalyst Bruce Fink explains that speech is the preferred route to human knowledge in the therapeutic setting because, on the one hand, it relies on a signifying system, but on the other, this system requires a body to enunciate it. Speech yokes the unavoidable dualism of body and language, and in a certain sense unites the human subject in the speaking moment. In this regard, then, speech betokens what Fink terms the “two faces of the subject,” the subject of the signifier or representation, and the bodily subject of *jouissance*, enjoyment or, simply, affect.⁷⁹ The consequence is that speech always communicates a duality; it has both a semiotic and an affective character. Furthermore, these two faces of the subject rely on one crucial, fundamental assumption about human feeling: *affect always concerns other people*.⁸⁰ When we have feelings, they tend to involve another person, whether face-to-face, mediated, or just in our own heads, where even feelings of self-pity assume the other of an idealized self. Consequently, psychotherapy is either dyadic or communal, one-on-one or in groups, because it requires the presence of other people for affect to emerge. Fink explains that in the analytic setting, therapy works not simply because one narrates something traumatic from the past, which by itself would be rather boring. Rather, the “talking cure” works because of the assumed bodily presence of another human being, someone who helps to evoke the affect articulated to our self-stories, drawing out a feeling subject from the words exiting one’s mouth.

Acknowledging the two faces of the subject betokened by speech, we can easily identify which face has been privileged in Western culture: the subject of the signifier. That is, the linguistic or representational self dominates our expressive lives, or at least that is what we have traditionally allowed to take place in publics. However illusory the idea of the private may be, the affective subject has been cordoned off in that social imaginary, and the affective dimension of speech has therefore been sent with it. Here we can locate the politics of the closet, of course, and the token of legislation there too: the so-called gay lisp or butch growl. It is also here that the cry, the grunt, the scream, and the yawp are resigned. Again, this is not to say that affect cannot be given public release by speech. This is to say, however, that norms govern how this can and should be done: the affect of public speech *must be controlled*.

Culturally, we have names for those who are permitted to give affect expression in speech, and by extension, in gesture: actors, artists, athletes,

and musicians. Similarly, we also have names for areas of study devoted to giving affect expression, such as literary studies and poetics. The affective dimension of human speech has also been disciplined through the careful rumination on spoken words, vocalics, gestures, claims, and evidence. We know this discipline, of course, as rhetoric.

Prior to psychoanalysis, the field of study most interested in examining speech in its fullness was rhetoric, or better put, oratory. Aristotle identified the *pisteis* in terms of the signifier or *logos*, and affect or *pathos*. Notably, both dimensions of speech emanated from a representation of a flesh-and-blood human being, the person who speaks, and this was the concern, of course, of *ethos*.⁸¹ For over two thousand years, rhetoricians have wrestled with balancing the subject of the signifier and the subject of affect, increasingly debasing one and privileging the other.⁸² The gradual veneration of invention and arrangement and the demotion of style and delivery reflect this trend.⁸³ (With apologies to Milli Vanilli, don't blame it on the rain; blame it on Ramus!)⁸⁴ Furthermore, as public speech and speech making have been perceived to be on the decline, so has the subject of affect taken a backseat to the subject of language. In the zeal to isolate and stabilize objects for study in the humanities and human sciences, the signifier has eclipsed affect, desire, and emotion. Fink suggests this is particularly problematic for fields like sociology and political science, which have no way to account for the subject of *jouissance* in situations when "the mass action of groups might have to be taken into account—mass hysteria, rioting, pillaging, and so on."⁸⁵ For rhetorical studies, presumably a field founded on the object of human speech, the demotion of feelings over the last century has become particularly problematic, for although we acknowledge the centrality of affect for suasive ascent, we no longer seem particularly invested in explaining just exactly what influence or persuasion actually is.⁸⁶ I would suggest that relinquishing the term "speech" from our departmental nameplates in favor of the vacuous "communication studies" is a symptom of this disinterest. I would also suggest that such a move is especially troublesome when rhetorical scholars are called upon by pressing exigencies to attend more studiously to public speech, especially in our recent election cycle, obsessed as the mainstream media have been with the eloquence of Barack Obama. It is to that obsession that I now turn.

OBAMARAMA, OR, THE PRAYERS AND TEARS OF HILLARY CLINTON

The voice is an organ of eloquence, and has the entire dominion over one sense. All that language and tones can effect to influence understanding, and to win the affections, depends on the power of the voice addressed to the ear.

—GILBERT AUSTIN (1806)⁸⁷

So far I have argued that the public release of uncontrolled speech, whether genuine or phony, excites and unsettles listeners because it is sexual in character, both in the sense that speech registers the body in feeling, and in the sense that voice as such is associated with the feminine. Furthermore, uncontrolled speech is conspicuously sexualized because it represents a dimension of speech that we tend to repress: the bodily and affective. This dimension is repressed because it threatens masculine norms of control and order. For these reasons, one could argue that since its inception, the discipline of rhetoric concerns the disciplining of speech. Fundamentally and historically, the study of rhetoric orbits speech control.

So what *about* controlled and measured speech? Or more to the point, what does overly orderly oratory do to us? Consider this speech snippet, delivered on the Senate floor on November 9, 2007:

HARRY REID: I will vote against the nomination of Mike Mukasey for Attorney General. My historical analysis is different than that of my good friend, the senior senator from Kentucky. Much different. Mr. President, it's reget [*sic*], regret—[interruption]

ROBERT MENENDEZ: [unintelligible; gavel knock] We would ask the members of the gallery to cease their conversations.

REID: [clears throat, very calmly] Thank you Mr. President, 'preciate that. Mr. President, it's regrettable that I must vote no. When the president first nominated Michael Mukasey, I was fully prepared to support him. That's the history I remember. . . .⁸⁸

In this brief excerpt, Reid's voice remains soft, calm, and measured, even when his remarks are interrupted by loud conversations in the gallery. Although Senator John McCain took the most heat for his robot-like, teleprompted speechcraft in the recent presidential election cycle, a case can be made that Senator Harry Reid stands among the most boring speakers in the world

because of his bland delivery and deadpan vocalic expression. Better than anyone in recent memory, Reid's oratory helps to demonstrate that if a speech is too orderly, it can put listeners to sleep (or at least encourage them to talk over him). In this sense, one can oppose the extreme of the scream with a linguistic reduction to a singular tone of utterance: monotony.

THOMAS SHERIDAN ON TONE

Reid's monotones bring us to the very important and often neglected concept of tone.⁸⁹ Although more recently in literary studies tone refers to a "very vague term usually designating the mood or atmosphere of a work,"⁹⁰ the concept's original meaning was musical and referred to the quality of a sound.⁹¹ In most contexts, tone is closely associated with "voice," another "vague metaphorical term."⁹² The vagueness of tone and voice is a token of the unquestionable ineffability of the body in feeling described by Barthes as "the grain of the voice": you know tone when you hear it, but it is impossible to translate this quality of sound into words. In this respect, tone indexes the two faces of the subject. Where tone is concerned, speech betrays language as a kind of vocal parasite.

Tone was of particular interest to the nineteenth century elocutionists as the "language of the passions," as Gilbert Austin suggested,⁹³ and as the vocal counterpart to gesture, and Thomas Sheridan believed.⁹⁴ Sheridan's 1762 *A Course of Lectures on Elocution* sought to revolutionize oratory by placing "tones of eloquence" at the center of delivery. For Sheridan, tone is a distinctly human vehicle that must be properly understood as both symbolic and bodily:

[The] true signs of the passions . . . are tones, looks, and gestures. This will serve to shew [show] us that the language, or sensible marks, by which the emotions of the mind are discovered and communicated from man to man, are entirely different from words, and independent of them. Nor was this kind of language left to the invention of man . . . no, it was necessary to society, and to the state of human nature in general, that the language of the animal passions of man, at least, should be fixed, self-evident, and universally intelligible; and it has accordingly been impressed, by the unerring hand of nature, on the human frame.⁹⁵

Sheridan termed these "true signs" or this "language of the animal passions," of course, "tones," and only humans pressed the tones of nature into norms

in their pursuit of perfection. Sheridan argued that these tones of the animal passions—which I have been referring to as “sexual”—are capable of exciting “analogous emotions” in listeners, “without the intervention of anything else.”⁹⁶ Sheridan isolates “tone” as the name for that element of speech that stimulates or arouses affect without or in spite of the signifier. Tone inspires identification, even if one does not understand the language employed. It is thus in elocutionary theory that we find hints of the psychoanalytic distinction between affect and the signifier—but over a century earlier than Freud.

In the rhetorical tradition, especially that of the last three centuries, tone denotes both the threat of uncontrolled speech, driven by the animal passions, as well as the attempt to control such speech. I submit that observing tone control is the dominant manner in which audiences assay eloquence. Adopting a good and pleasing tone, for example, allows one to tip-toe through the passions; it allows audiences to walk right up to abject rage or desirous ecstasy alongside the speaker, but without toppling completely into *jouissance* or uncontrolled affect. Eloquence, in other words, is an ability to allow audiences to enjoy an affective identification, a congress of bodies in feeling. Eloquence is an ability to bring audiences to the precipice of bliss or vengeance but without abandoning the limits of language. Hence the cry, the grunt, the scream, and the yawp represent an inability to control one’s tone and one’s body in turn—they represent falling off the cliff of control.

ELVIS AND THE WICKED WITCH OF THE WEST

Let us turn, then, to the most conspicuous discussion of speech tone in popular culture today: the oratory of Barack Obama. Regardless of one’s political leanings, most readers would agree that as a senator, presidential candidate, and president, Obama is a gifted speaker. The term relentlessly used to describe his speechcraft is “eloquent,” which suggests a facility with tone. I think we should stop short of saying that *what* Obama says is of little consequence, but I do want to argue that the content of his speeches is not the fundamental contributing factor to his eloquence. Indeed, this point has been ruthlessly repeated by Obama’s critics: while admitting that his “American soul was stirred” once by Obama’s oratory, columnist David Brooks lamented that Obama’s “speeches almost always have the same,” overly optimistic, Disney-esque “narrative arc.”⁹⁷ Still in the presidential race, Hillary Clinton relentlessly argued that voters should pick “a president who relies not just on words, but on work,” and that “we can’t just have speeches.

We've got to have solutions.”⁹⁸ Presidential hopeful John McCain remarked that “if there's one thing [Obama] always delivers it's a great speech. But I hope you'll listen carefully, because his ideas are not always as impressive as his rhetoric.”⁹⁹ In his remarks McCain reinforces the privileging of the signifier over that of affect, collapsing the duality of rhetoric into a singular eloquence of feeling.

Let us follow McCain's advice and listen to/read a portion of one of Obama's speeches:

On one end of the spectrum, we've heard the implication that my candidacy is somehow an exercise in affirmative action; that it's based solely on the desire of wide-eyed liberals to purchase racial reconciliation on the cheap. On the other end, we've heard my former pastor, Reverend Jeremiah Wright, use incendiary language to express views that have the potential not only to widen the racial divide, but views that denigrate both the greatness and the goodness of our nation; that rightly offend white and black alike.

I have already condemned, in unequivocal terms, the statements of Reverend Wright that have caused such controversy. For some, nagging questions remain. Did I know him to be an occasionally fierce critic of American domestic and foreign policy? Of course. Did I ever hear him make remarks that could be considered controversial while I sat in church? Yes. Did I strongly disagree with many of his political views? Absolutely—just as I'm sure many of you have heard remarks from your pastors, priests, or rabbis with which you strongly disagreed.¹⁰⁰

These remarks comprise a small but pivotal segment in Obama's now legendary “A More Perfect Union” speech, otherwise known as his “race speech.” His vocal tone is even, measured, and at times preacherly. Most commentators focused on *what* Obama said, but one does get a sense of his tonal reception by focusing on the adjectives used to describe his speech: “brave,” “incisive,” “sincere,” “thoughtful,” “frank,” “hopeful,” “patriotic,” “quintessentially American,” and “candid” were among them.¹⁰¹ Notably, throughout his speech Obama underscored in different ways that the rhetoric of his former pastor, Rev. Jeremiah Wright, was “incendiary.” In somber notes Obama references the controversial preacher's tone as a contrast to his own: whereas Wright mistepped at times into involuntary speech—the YouTube screams and yawps replayed incessantly on the television news—Obama won't “go there.” He walks right up to the grunt in this speech, but doesn't go all the

way like his pastor did. Journalists were quick to pick up on this distinction: “To answer the brief, incendiary clips of his pastor’s statements,” wrote Jodi Kantor, “Mr. Obama made a long, nuanced speech.”¹⁰² Reporters doggedly described Wright’s rhetoric as “incendiary” over and over, as well as “angry,” “ferocious,” and “divisive,” to play up a contrast with Obama’s rhetoric.¹⁰³ In short, Obama’s tone-work worked.¹⁰⁴

By not going all the way, by getting emotional but not overly emotional, Obama argues in word and manner that he is in more control of his emotions, in keeping with the self-possessed, masculine default. This form of speech control, of course, is presented to contrast directly with the cultural stereotype of the angry black male, not to mention the sexualization of the black man as a phobogenic object.¹⁰⁵ There is much to say here, too, about tonal license in black versus white vernaculars.¹⁰⁶ Nevertheless, despite however much Obama denied Wright’s *words*, he could not escape the preacher’s supposedly violent tone and the racial stereotypes it evokes.¹⁰⁷ The presumed violent tones, in other words, traveled much farther than the signifier could ever contain.

As a kind of listening by incongruity, I would invite readers to compare Obama’s vocal qualities with those of Elvis Presley. Elvis’s glottal drops and melismatic technique performing a song like “In the Ghetto” closely resembles the at-ease, velvety quality of Obama’s voice.¹⁰⁸ Both men have a similar tonal quality. Elvis’s frequent flights of kitsch, however, contrast with Obama’s tones of gravity. We can leave it to the enthusiasm of Obama’s YouTube-savvy supporters, however, to point out how perilously close Obama comes to temping kitsch himself. After hearing Obama’s January 8, 2008, primary speech in New Hampshire, will.i.am of the pop group Black Eyed Peas orchestrated a musical song/speech/video that is hard to describe in writing: titled “Yes We Can,” the artist sang over a vocal track of Obama’s speech, added some acoustic guitar strumming, and then shot a music video with a number of celebrities singing along, thereby turning Obama’s speech into a pop-song-video-construct that quickly became a YouTube hit. “It was a creed written into the founding documents, that declared the destiny of a nation, yes we can,” sings will.i.am on the left side of a split screen, while Obama delivers his speech simultaneously on the right.¹⁰⁹

At one level the “Yes We Can” construct represents a certain catholic ear, perhaps how many listeners actually hear Obama’s melodic oratory. Yet the song/video is also demonstrative of how close Obama’s tonal delivery comes to uncontrolled speech. Human expressivity tames the scream in song; it is in song that screams and cries approach the edge of emotive anarchy. This

is why kitsch is an index of the affective edge, and whenever a speaker or singer tempts kitsch, we know he or she is very close to overdoing it, very close to parody, or very close to a conversion experience—nationalist, religious, or both.

The cynical condemnation and pie-eyed celebration of Obama's eloquence stand in very sharp contrast to descriptions of the oratory of our current Secretary of State, his former opponent. One need only compare the melodic tones of will.i.am's send-up to the speech of Hillary Clinton:

You hear one thing in speeches, and then you see a campaign that has the worst kind of tactics, reminiscent of the same sort of the Republican attacks on Democrats. Well, I am here to say that it is not only wrong, but it is undermining core democratic principles. Since when do democrats attack one another on universal health care? I thought we were trying to realize Harry Truman's dream! . . . Just because Senator Obama chose not to present a universal health care plan, does not give him the right to attack me because I did! So, let's have a real campaign. Enough with the speeches, and the big rallies, and then using tactics that are right out of Karl Rove's playbook. This is wrong! And every democrat should be outraged, because this is the kind of attack that not only undermines core democratic values, but gives aid and comfort to the very special interests and their allies in the republican party who are against doing what we wanna to do for America. So, shame on you Barack Obama! It is time you ran a campaign consistent with your messages in public. That's what I expect from you! Meet me in Ohio, let's have a debate about your tactics and your behavior in this campaign!¹¹⁰

Days before the Ohio primary, Clinton went on the offensive in response to Obama campaign mailers that circulated in the state. Clinton's tone in the "Shame on You" speech is forceful and impassioned. Commentators described Clinton's speech as "fierce,"¹¹¹ "sharp," and "angry."¹¹² The *New York Times* reported, however, that Obama "waved off Mrs. Clinton's attack as campaign performance art"—a phrase that can only be construed as a dismissive editorialization at best. "I'm puzzled by her change in tone," said Mr. Obama . . . who added her anger seemed 'tactical.'¹¹³ (The affect of uncontrolled speech is a violation of vocal norms, but a feigned loss of control is especially egregious.) Clinton's "going negative" did not play well in the popular press, and this had everything to do with her voice. If Elvis is Obama's counterpart, Clinton's tone echoes that former schoolteacher-cum-actor Margaret Hamilton,

who played the Wicked Witch of the West in the film version of *The Wizard of Oz*: “Just try and stay out of my way. Just try! I’ll get you, my pretty, and your little dog too! Ahhhahahaahahahaahahaha!”¹¹⁴

Florida political consultant Laura Meyer characterizes the challenge of being a female politician and the ideological rationale for the dismissal of Clinton’s attack:

There are two voices that don’t seem very threatening. One is a little girl voice . . . and the other is the Lauren Bacall, very sexy voice. But, between these two, I think that women have to be very careful that they don’t sound like what I call “the voice of civilization,” the one who has said “eat your spinach,” “take your elbows off the table,” “where’s your homework,” a voice that sort of sounds like a bit of mother or school teacher and, finally, wife.¹¹⁵

Russian theater director and former linguist Natasha Williams similarly suggests Clinton’s voice was a handicap, but for reasons that are largely unconscious and classically infantile: “Hillary loses it when she gets excited but it comes across as angry,” Williams says. “When the mother is upset in the house, kids feel insecure. It’s not like that with the father because mother always stands between the kids and the father. But when mother loses it, then it’s really scary.”¹¹⁶ In other words, at some primal level Clinton’s voice provokes not only annoyance, but also fear.

Clinton is well aware of how her voice is received, and even tried to play down the controversy over her voice by poking fun at herself, appearing in a *Saturday Night Live* skit that lampooned her laughter:

CLINTON: I still enjoyed that sketch a great deal, because I simply adore Amy’s [Poehler] impression of me.

POEHLER: Oh, well, my ears are ringing. [laughter]

CLINTON: How are you?

POEHLER: Good, thank you!

CLINTON: Well, I’m, I’m glad to be here! Thanks for having me.

POEHLER: Oh, well, thank you for coming. I love your outfit. [they are wearing identical, brown pant-suits]

CLINTON: Well, I love your outfit, but I do want the earrings back.

POEHLER: Oh, oh, ho ho ho ho, ha ha ha, ho ho ho ha ho ha ha! [exaggerated mock laughter]

CLINTON: Do I really laugh like that?

POEHLER: Oh, ah well. [both turn and face the camera with knowing grins]

CLINTON: Well, maybe so.¹¹⁷

Yet despite Clinton's comedic efforts—which were funny and seemed genuinely humble—she could not overcome her characterization as a “stereotypical bitch,” as CNN pundit Glenn Beck once put it. Clinton is a “stereotypical, nagging” woman, said Beck, whose voice “sticks in your ear like an ice-pick.”¹¹⁸ Even after the *SNL* skit, commentators continued to ridicule her voice as “shrill.”¹¹⁹ Tucker Carlson of MSNBC asked, “[C]ould you actually live in this country for eight years having to listen to her voice?”¹²⁰

Such vocal judgments cannot be disarticulated from misogyny. As the work of Karlyn Kohrs Campbell has suggested, the all-too-familiar pastime of “hating Hillary” has now been decades long: as a smart, strong, and extremely gifted, technical politician, Clinton has nevertheless been victimized for her failure to perform femininity properly—a terrible catch-22.¹²¹ Hillary's voice is a central component to her feminine predicament, as Stanley Fish lamented in an op-ed:

Respected political commentators devote precious network time to deep analyses of her laugh. Everyone blames her for what her husband does or for what he doesn't do. (This is what the compound “Billary” is all about.) If she answers questions aggressively, she is shrill. If she moderates her tone, she's just play-acting. If she cries, she's faking. If she doesn't, she's too masculine. If she dresses conservatively, she's dowdy. If she doesn't, she's inappropriately provocative.¹²²

What I want to suggest is that performances of femininity are principally vocal and related, not to arguments, but to *tone*; not to appearance, but to *speech*; not to good reasons, but to *sound*. This implies that the ideology of sexism is much more insidious, much more deeply ingrained than many might suppose: we don't simply *think* in discriminatory ways, *we hear in sex*.

The ideological underpinnings of speech and hearing were perhaps no more obvious than in a Portsmouth coffee shop a day before the New Hampshire primary on January 7, 2008. The headlines on that day ran as follows: “Hillary Clinton Gets Emotional in N.H.,” “Choking Up in New Hampshire?,” “Tearful Clinton Vows to Fight On,” “The Tracks of Her Tears,” and the most popular headline, of course, was “The Crying Game.”¹²³ These stories refer to an apparent impromptu confession by Clinton on the campaign trail.

When asked by a fan how Clinton keeps “so upbeat and wonderful” during the campaign, she answered:

It’s not easy, umm. And I couldn’t do it, if I just didn’t, you know, passionately believe it was the right thing to do. You know, I have so many opportunities from this country, I just don’t want to see us [audible emotion] fall backwards. [plaintively and quiet] No. So. [applause] You know, this is very personal for me, it’s not just political, it’s not just public. I see what’s happening. We have to reverse it. And some people think elections are a game, they think it’s like who’s up and who’s down. It’s about our country, it’s about our kids’ futures, and it’s really about all of us together. You know, some of us put ourselves out there and do this, against some pretty difficult odds. And we do it, each one of us, because we care about our country. But some of us are right and some of us are wrong, some of us are ready and some of us are not, some of us know what we will do on day one, and some of us haven’t really thought that through enough. And so, when we look at the array of problems we have, and the potential for it getting, really, spinning out of control, this is one of the most important elections America has ever faced.¹²⁴

When making these remarks, Clinton’s voice is soft, measured, and plaintive in moments. Her volume is low (she had a microphone), and at times it sounded as if she were about to cry. Despite what was obviously and undeniably genuine feeling, critics were quick to suggest Clinton’s affect was staged. Columnist Maureen Dowd quipped, “[C]an Hillary cry her way back into the White House?,” while Bill Kristol argued that Clinton “pretended to cry, the women felt sorry for her, and she won.”¹²⁵ Regardless, after her remarks Clinton did, in fact, cinch the primary, and the “punditocracy was quick to attribute the reversal” to her quivering voice.¹²⁶ Of course, for a great many auditors Clinton’s Portsmouth remarks were *seen* as much as heard. Together, however, Clinton’s controlled tearfulness in visage and voice *conveyed a very different tone*. In February of 2008, the *Washington Post* reported that voice and drama coach Michael Sheehan was hired to work with Clinton, and one wonders if she was encouraged to let loose her voice a little bit, to admit some sort of emotional transgression or implosion that was not angry, but sad.¹²⁷

Notably, the words chosen by Clinton—seemingly on the fly—deliberately confront any easy separation of public and private, busting open the hegemony of the signifier with what was undeniably authentic affect: “This

is very personal for me,” confessed Clinton, “it’s not just political. It’s not just public.” What accounts for the “just” in her comments is the personal and private, of course, and in this sense I work toward an ending just as I began: the public and private is continually imploding in postmodernity. With Clinton’s so-called “misty moment,” we witnessed a new, permissible publicity of feelings, the emergence of a new kind of public intimacy. What this portends for public performances of femininity still remains to be heard, but there is reason for hope. Yes, Clinton lost the election to the soothing voice of an Elvis-Father. Nevertheless, if emotion-laden voices are more permissible in that most public of contexts—politics—then we may be cultivating more woman-friendly public cultures. At the very least, the rule that overt emotion has no place in the political sphere has most assuredly been relaxed. The slash remains under siege as the personal is political once again. This time, however, feelings are in play.

CONCLUDING REMARKS: ESCAPE FROM TEXT MOUNTAIN

[For Rousseau] expression is the expression of affect, of the passion at the origin of language, of a speech that was first substituted for song, marked by *tone* and *force*. . . . The force of expression amounts only to vocalic sounds, when the subject is there in person to utter his passion. When the subject is no longer there, force, intonation, and accent are lost in the concept.

—JACQUES DERRIDA (1967)¹²⁸

In what is arguably Derrida’s most influential work, *Of Grammatology*, the philosopher concludes with a critique of Jean-Jacques Rousseau’s views on the inferiority of writing to speech. Like the philosophers of antiquity, Rousseau believed speech was superior to writing because it more readily made present the thoughts and feelings of a speaker to listeners. Derrida undermines this popular speech sentiment by arguing that both writing and speech are posterior to language (or the symbolic), and consequently that speech is merely another form of inscription. Privileging speech derives from the “metaphysics of presence,” and more specifically the article of faith that something outside of language—some transcendental signified—guarantees meaning. Derrida argued that speech presences a subject no more readily or realistically than does writing.

Be that as it may, with recourse to the theoretical literature in public

feelings, psychoanalysis, and elocution, in this essay I have argued that speech has what we might call “presence effects.”¹²⁹ I suggested that such effects are affective and sexual in character, and that the felt presence of speech (real or illusory, it does not matter) continues to challenge any tidy public/private distinction. Rather, an attention to the presence of speech, especially speech that violates or transgresses some norm, helps us to hear better how the public/private distinction is in crisis and is continually born anew. In this respect, Clinton’s “misty moment” in the 2008 presidential campaign marked a new intimate form of publicity, perhaps a newly permissible form of public feeling that would not have been possible only a decade prior.

I also argued that in our culture we learn to distinguish between masculine and feminine voices at a very young age, the former paired with reason and control, the latter with emotion and the body. Because of the way in which the misogynistic norms of speech are *heard* and *felt*, not merely thought, I argued that an attention to vocal tones and uncontrolled speech can help critics to discern their cultural work. Alternately put, the point here is that *tone is essentially pointless*, but it is not normless; assuredly, for example, on *the spoken side* of language tone is gendered.¹³⁰ As the cultural reception of female grunting demonstrates, aggressive tones are less permitted in the female voice than they are in the male voice. Studying the cultural norms of uncontrolled speech provides us with a renewed way to reckon with the sexual dynamics of contemporary public address, perhaps even to resurrect and modify an elocutionary approach to sexuality and citizenship in the postmodern republic.

In advocating an attention to the norms of uncontrolled speech or to the limits of affective permissibility, I mean to pose an alternative to what I would term the monstrosity of textualism, or if you prefer, the august mountain of “Text.” As Dilip Gaonkar once wrote,¹³¹ the enigmatic arrival of the oratorical text was announced at the first meeting of the biannual Public Address Conference, then known as the Wisconsin Symposium on Public Address.¹³² The text “arrived” at the very same moment that the field formerly known as Speech Communication was killing off “speech” and administering its last rites.¹³³ For some of us, “text” replaced the oratorical object, while it sent others packing for the hills of Foucault and critical rhetoric.¹³⁴ Yet the arrival of *the* text was also the arrival of a certain sort of violence—the violence of deconstruction and poststructuralism.¹³⁵ As the subsequent controversy over the text has demonstrated, text poses a kind of antidisciplinary violence; its domain is seemingly boundless.¹³⁶ Text, however, is given over to the signifier.

Text speaks only to the subject of the signifier and, in so doing, overlooks precisely that dimension of oratory that excited our forbears in the early twentieth century. Sadly, the arrival of the text seemed to sound the death knell for oratory. It is as if “oratory has rolled under the couch,” dragging the forgotten canon of delivery with it.¹³⁷ To recover and expand on rhetorical institutional traditions, I argue along with Frank E. X. Dance for a return to the object of speech and the sound of voice.¹³⁸ In concert with Debra Hawhee and others, I commend the cartography of the body’s rhetorical dimensions.¹³⁹ And to these voices I add a call for the study of public feelings. Focusing on the body in feeling and speech as its symptom, I am arguing for a renewed focus on the canon of delivery.

Let us take the field of political science as a warning: as a number of those who work in the area of political communication would recognize, few of our colleagues in political science can account for emotion and feeling.¹⁴⁰ By moving toward the subject of the signifier in pursuit of demonstrable and quantifiable knowledge, the so-called rational choice model achieved hegemony.¹⁴¹ Such a model may be academically respectable, but it is nevertheless useless for explaining the love *of* and *for* a leader. In the field formerly known as speech communication, we already have a rich and complicated body of theory at our disposal for a vocabulary, and we have other domains of theory, such as psychoanalysis, and colleagues in cognate subfields, such as performance studies, to help us renew an attention to speech.

If the oratory of our contemporary election cycle teaches us anything, it is that the measure of eloquence is not so much in the choice of words, but in delivery, in how those words are carried aloft by modulations in tone that tease the auditor with the safe threat of involuntary speech. The eloquent orator is the one who conveys a longing that does not collapse into moaning, who ignites excitement and passion without resorting to the barbaric yawp. Or, taking the Dean Scream as our normative limit, eloquent is she who hints at the unspoken and uncontrolled. Eloquent is she who projects animus and amity but without the grunt or the cry. Eloquent is she who bodies forth feeling to the limits of linguistic control. And eloquent is she who demonstrates the fullness of human being and becoming, of feeling and of saying, in speech.

NOTES

1. Abbé Delaumosne, *The Delsarte System*, trans. Frances A. Shaw (New York: Edgar S. Werner, 1893), 3.
2. As was the case with Barack Obama in 2008, timely, well-crafted addresses can magically metamorphose a cynical public into an idealistic people over the course of a presidential campaign. Obama's addresses were not limited to speeches, however, for the campaign's modes of address also included infomercials and commercials, bumper-stickers, viral videos created by supporters and posted on YouTube, email and Facebook messages, cell phone text messages, and a very memorable—and for some, disturbingly fascistic—aesthetic campaign created by Obama's campaign staff with Shepard Fairey.
3. Angela G. Ray, "The Marie Hochmuth Nichols Award and the Living Tradition of Public Address." Paper presented at the National Communication Association Convention, Chicago, IL., November 2007.
4. Herbert A. Wichelns, "The Literary Criticism of Oratory," in *Studies in Rhetoric and Public Speaking in Honor of James Albert Winans*, ed. A. M. Drummond (New York: The Century Company, 1925), 181–216. My source for this essay is the reprint in Carl R. Burgchardt, ed., *Readings in Rhetorical Criticism*, 2nd ed. (State College, PA: Strata Publishing, 1995), 3–28.
5. See Michael C. Leff and Fred J. Kauffeld, eds., *Texts in Context: Critical Dialogues on Significant Episodes in American Political Rhetoric* (Davis, CA: Hermagoras Press, 1989).
6. See Charles E. Morris III, ed., *Queering Public Address: Sexualities in American Historical Discourse* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2007).
7. I qualify the Habermasian conception as "received" because Habermas admits of multiple "spheres." Furthermore, Fraser's famous critique repeatedly underscores the utility of Habermas's study, which is sometimes forgotten. See Jürgen Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into the Category of Bourgeois Society*, trans. Thomas Burger (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1991).
8. See Robert Asen and Daniel C. Brouwer, eds., *Counterpublics and the State* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2001); Michael Warner, *Publics and Counterpublics* (New York: Zone Books, 2005); and Daniel C. Brouwer and Robert Asen, eds., *Public Modalities: Rhetoric, Culture, and the Shape of Public Life* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2010).
9. Lauren Berlant, "Intimacy: A Special Issue," in *Intimacy*, ed. Lauren Berlant (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 3.
10. Thus he proposes a fourfold typography of the "grand distinction": (1) state/market; (2) critical public/state; (3) sociability/private life; and (4) everything else (that is, feminist scholarship on the public/private). I am in agreement with Eli Zaretsky that Weintraub

offers no argument for why these four loci are superior to other schemes, and many of the collected essays in the volume in which he introduces the topography ignore it. I would also underscore many of the “feminist” discussions of publicity and privacy that take issue with Weintraub’s analytic tidiness because of the exclusions it necessarily entails. See Jeff Weintraub, “The Theory and Politics of the Public/Private Distinction,” in *Public and Private in Thought and Practice: Perspectives on a Grand Dichotomy*, ed. Jeff Weintraub and Krishan Kumar (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997), 2–3; and Eli Zaretsky, Review of *Public and Private in Thought and Practice: Perspectives on a Grand Dichotomy*, ed. Jeff Weintraub and Krishan Kumar, *American Journal of Sociology* 103 (1998): 1443–44.

11. In other words, although I agree with Weintraub that we can analytically recognize a number of different public/private distinctions in scholarly literature, a general, popular sense informs all of them. I am arguing that this sense concerns the libidinal body.
12. Nor is this crisis a bad thing. See Carole Pateman, *The Disorder of Women* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1989), 118–39.
13. Nancy Fraser, “Rethinking the Public Sphere: A Contribution to the Critique of Actually Existing Democracy,” *Social Text* 25/26 (1990): 56–80.
14. See James Joyce, *Ulysses*, Gabler Edition (New York: Vintage Books, 1986), 642–44.
15. Alexander Nevermind (Prince), “Sugar Walls.” Performed by Sheena Easton, *A Private Heaven* (1984), EMI. “Sugar Walls” was deemed one of the “Naughty Fifteen” songs in the mid-1980s by Tipper Gore of the Parents Music Resource Center for its public celebration of the orgasm.
16. Strictly speaking, a “threshold crossing” is a term used by David Scharwz to explain that moment during which listeners are touched or moved by music, such as when one gets goose bumps listening to a favorite song. The significance of the term is that it spatializes affect, which I think also perfectly captures the way in which we discern publics and privates in a daily, embodied kind of way. See David Schwarz, *Listening Subjects: Music, Psychoanalysis, Culture* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1997), 8.
17. I say “usually” because the example of Sally underscores the instability of the binary of control/uncontrolled: Sally’s speech is very much a controlled endeavor, demonstrative of how the presumed “uncontrolled” can be used in the service of deception.
18. Some readers familiar with linguistics may object to the term “uncontrolled speech” as oxymoronic. Cries and so forth, some might argue, are better understood as *vocalizations*, not speech. Such a view, however, is focused on the voice in isolation, an impossible fiction that is useful for the so-called speech sciences. Speech implicates both someone who vocalizes as well as someone who hears that vocalization. Insofar as a vocalization is understood as meaningful by another (e.g., Sally is experiencing sexual pleasure), I argue it is speech, controlled or involuntary.

19. Although previously an eloquent speaker, once George W. Bush became president, his speech-making skills were roundly criticized and eventually ridiculed. See James Fallows, "When George Meets John," *The Atlantic*, July/August, 2004, <http://www.theatlantic.com/doc/200407/fallows> (accessed January 2010).
20. Also see Frank E. X. Dance, "Speech and Thought: A Renewal," *Communication Education* 51 (2002): 355–59; and Frank E. X. Dance, "Opposing a Change," *Spectra* 25 (1989): 4–5.
21. I am aware of the need to make distinctions among affect, feeling, and emotion. In general, by "affect" I mean the bodily experience of intensity absent meaning or the signifier. It is only when the feeling body is signified as meaningful that emotion can emerge as a concept. Feeling is a more ambiguous, middle concept that can refer to both affect and emotion depending on the context. See Patricia Ticineto Clough, "Introduction," in *The Affective Turn: Theorizing the Social*, eds. Patricia Ticineto Clough and Jean Halley (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2007), 1–33; and Brian Massumi, *Parables for the Virtual: Movement, Affect, Sensation* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2002), 26–28.
22. See Joshua Gunn, "Speech is Dead; Long Live Speech," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 94 (2008): 340–362; and Joshua Gunn and Jenny Edbauer Rice, "About Face/Stuttering Discipline," *Communication and Critical/Cultural Studies* 6 (2009): 215–19.
23. For more on the concept of publics, see Warner, *Publics and Counterpublics*.
24. Berlant, "Intimacy," 3. Also see Karlyn Kohrs Campbell, *Man Cannot Speak for Her*, vol. 1, *A Critical Study of Early Feminist Rhetoric* (New York: Praeger, 1989), esp. 1–36.
25. The ideology of publicity is also at work here. See Jodi Dean, *Publicity's Secret: How Technoculture Capitalizes on Democracy* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2002); and Joshua Gunn, "Death by Publicity: U.S. Freemasonry and the Public Drama of Secrecy," *Rhetoric & Public Affairs* 11 (2008): 243–78.
26. Lauren Berlant, *The Queen of America Goes to Washington City: Essays on Sex and Citizenship* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1997), 7.
27. Berlant, *Queen*, 4–5.
28. Edwin Black has also shown how this trend is especially conspicuous in Richard Nixon's rhetoric, which frequently "exhibited his fundamental allegiance to the private domain" while nevertheless making all sorts of personal revelations about that domain. See Edwin Black, "Richard Nixon and the Privacy of Public Discourse," *Rhetoric & Public Affairs* 2 (1999): 12.
29. Berlant, *Queen*, 177.
30. For more on this paradoxical dynamic, see Davin A. Grindstaff, *Rhetorical Secrets: Mapping Gay Identity and Queer Resistance in Contemporary America* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2006).

31. Lauren Berlant, *The Female Complaint: The Unfinished Business of Sentimentality in American Culture* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2008), 5.
32. For the Foucaudians: neither Berlant nor I would disavow that such cultures are empowering, productive, and useful to many; the point here is that the emergence of intimate publics is historical and that the public/private distinction is constantly transforming, especially in respect to the logics of (late) capitalism.
33. Ann Cvetkovich, *An Archive of Feelings: Trauma, Sexuality, and Lesbian Public Cultures* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2003), 7.
34. Ann Cvetkovich, "Public Feelings," *South Atlantic Quarterly* 106 (2007): 459–68.
35. Cvetkovich, "Public Feelings," 459. Some of the members are located in Austin, Texas, and affiliated with the University of Texas, and a good core of them are located in Chicago and originally dubbed themselves the "Feel Tank Chicago." Scholars associated with the group—officially and unofficially by way of citation—include Berlant and Cvetkovich, as well Lisa Duggan, Avery Gordon, Debbie Gould, Vanalyne Greene, Mary Patten, Rebecca Zorach, among many others.
36. Cvetkovich, "Public Feelings," 460.
37. See Patricia Tincineto Clough and Jean Halley, eds., *The Affective Turn: Theorizing the Social* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2007). For notable engagements with the affective turn in communication studies, see Barbara A. Biesecker's edited discussion forum on affect in *Communication and Critical/Cultural Studies* 6 (2009): 193–219; and Jenny Edbauer Rice, "The New 'New': Making a Case for Critical Affect Studies," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 94 (2008): 200–12.
38. Work in a similar direction is already underway, particularly in what has become known as body studies; see Debra Hawhee, *Moving Bodies: Kenneth Burke at the Edges of Language* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2009); and Brent Malin, "Communication with Feeling: Emotion, Publicness, and Embodiment," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 87 (2001): 216–35. I do not mean to suggest we should drop everything to focus exclusively on public affect; I only mean to suggest that public address has transformed significantly in ways that a focus on affect will help us to see more clearly.
39. Cvetkovich, *An Archive*, 9.
40. Berlant, *Female Complaint*, 13.
41. Wichelns, "Literary Criticism," 4.
42. See Frank E. X. Dance, "A Speech Theory of Human Communication: Implications and Applications," *Journal of Applied Communication Research* 10 (1982): 1–8. Of course, the view that quotidian face-to-face communication is the default has been contested; for an overview of the interpersonal vis-à-vis mediation literature, see Leah A. Lievrouw, "New Media, Mediation, and Communication Study," *Information, Communication & Society* 12 (2009): 303–25.

43. For more on the infantile scene of language, see Joshua Gunn, "Speech is Dead," 340–61; Daniel Heller-Roazen, *Echolalias: On the Forgetting of Language* (New York: Zone Books, 2008); and Julia Kristeva, *Revolution in Poetic Language*, trans. Margaret Waller (New York: Columbia University Press, 1984).
44. For an audio sample of the grunts, see http://www.joshiejuice.com/public_release/public_release.html (accessed January 2010). Also see "Capriati complains about Seles's grunts," *New York Times*, August 4, 2001, B18(N) and D5(L); and "Tennis: Sounds of Seles backed by rhythm of success—Frank Keating listens to the biggest noise in women's tennis as she grunts up for Wimbledon on the grass courts of Bristol," *Guardian* [London], June 20, 1992, 20.
45. John Leicester, "A Bit of Sexism with Those Strawberries at Wimbledon, Sir?" *USA Today*, June 23, 2009, http://www.usatoday.com/sports/tennis/2009-06-23-wimbledon-women-shrieking-column_N.htm (accessed January 2010).
46. Mike Penner, "Tennis Officials Prepare for Grunt Work at Wimbedon," *Los Angeles Times*, June 16, 2009, <http://www.latimes.com/sports/la-sp-random16-2009jun16,0,4332121.story> (accessed January 2010).
47. Tom Nawrocki, "Maria Sharapova: Hot Athlete," *Rolling Stone*, August 19, 2004, 94–95.
48. Megan Lane, "Why Do Women Tennis Stars Grunt?" *BBC News Online*, June 22, 2005, http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk_news/magazine/4118708.stm (accessed January 2010).
49. For more on the threatening and uncanny qualities of uncontrolled speech, see Mladen Dolar, *A Voice and Nothing More* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2006), esp. 3–81.
50. For example, see Steven Connor's discussion of the Delphic Oracle in his *Dumbstruck: A Cultural History of Ventriloquism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 47–74.
51. Elizabeth V. Spelman, *Inessential Woman: Problems of Exclusion in Feminist Thought* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1988), 29.
52. Anne Carson, *Glass, Irony, and God* (New York: New Directions Books, 1995), 120. My thanks to Jim Aune for recommending this marvelous collection.
53. Carson, *Glass, Irony*, 119. "All animals when castrated change to the female character," says Aristotle, "and utter a voice like that of the females because the sinewy strength in the principle of the voice is relaxed. This relaxation is just as if one should stretch a string and make it taut by hanging some weight on to it, as women do who weave at the loom, for they stretch the warp by attaching to it what are called 'laiai.' For in this way are the testes attached to the seminal passages, and these again to the blood-vessel which takes its origin in the heart near the organ which sets the voice in motion." Aristotle, *On the Generation of Animals*, 787b-788, http://www.greektxts.com/library/Aristotle/On_The_Generation_Of_Animals/eng/1040.html (accessed January 2010).
54. Carson, *Glass*, 120.
55. See Kristeva, *Revolution*, esp. 25–30; and Kaja Silverman, *The Acoustic Mirror: The*

- Female Voice in Psychoanalysis and Cinema* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1988).
56. See Adriana Cavarero, *For More than One Voice: Toward a Philosophy of Vocal Expression*, trans. Paul A. Kottman (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2005), 131–32.
 57. This discussion is shorthand for an exceedingly difficult Lacanian conception, the “paternal metaphor” or “Law-of-the-Father.” Space prevents discussion; however, for a lucid presentation, see Charles Shepherdson, *Vital Signs: Nature, Culture, Psychoanalysis* (New York: Routledge, 2000), 115–51. I should also mention the homology I am working with here: primary identification is to “the private,” and secondary identification is to “the public.”
 58. This claim is supported by infantile brain research; see Clifford Ivar Nass and Scott Brave, *Wired for Speech: How Voice Activates and Advances the Human-Computer Relationship* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2005), esp. 9–31.
 59. The distinction between voice and speech Cavarero strikes is well taken. Conceptually, however, for me the voice refers to the unique singularity of a person in isolation (as in, “a voice in the wilderness”). If a voice is heard and recognized as meaningful by another, my position is that it is *speech*.
 60. For an audio presentation of the speech, see http://www.joshiejuice.com/public_release/public_release.html.
 61. Roland Barthes, “The Grain of the Voice,” in *Image, Music, Text*, ed. and trans. Stephen Heath (New York: Hill and Wang, 1977), 179–89.
 62. Readers can, however, see numerous videos of the speech on YouTube.com by searching with the key words “Dean Scream.”
 63. Again, I stress the distinction between affect as the event of a bodily intensity, and its signification, which delivers it over to the signifier as emotion. Strictly speaking, affect as such is beyond signification, but that doesn’t mean we cannot or should not try to talk about it, or that we should abandon poetics.
 64. Barthes, “Grain,” 179.
 65. I first developed this approach in “Gothic Music and the Inevitability of Genre,” *Popular Music & Society* 23 (1999): 31–50.
 66. Sheryl Gay Stolberg, “Whoop, Oops and the State of the Political Slip,” *New York Times*, January 25, 2004, 1.
 67. Blake Morrison, “Dean Scream Gaining Cult-Like Status on the Web,” *USA Today*, January 22, 2004, 4A.
 68. Walter Shapiro, “N.H. May Be Perfect Place for Dean’s Modesty Makeover,” *USA Today*, January 23, 2004, 6A.
 69. David Bauder, “CNN Says It Overplayed Dean’s Iowa Scream,” Associated Press, February 8, 2004, <http://www.truthout.org/article/cnn-says-it-overplayed-deans-iowa-scream>

- (accessed January 2010); "Dean Scream," 4A.
70. Bauder, "CNN Says," 4A.
 71. Stolberg, "Whoop," 1.
 72. Michael Dempsey, Robert Smith, and Lol Tolhurst, "Boys Don't Cry" (1979), performed by The Cure, *Boys Don't Cry*, Fiction Records.
 73. Carroll C. Arnold, "Oral Rhetoric, Rhetoric, and Literature," *Philosophy and Rhetoric* 1 (1968): 191–210.
 74. Janet L. Hopson, "Fetal Psychology," *Psychology Today*, September/October 1998, 44–50.
 75. Nass and Brave, *Wired for Speech*, 1. Although the brains of primates and other mammals definitely respond to vocalization, the authors afford the human a special status in regard to the reception of speech.
 76. Nass and Brave, *Wired for Speech*, 1–5.
 77. Sigmund Freud, *The Interpretation of Dreams*, trans. Joyce Crick (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), esp. 211–412.
 78. This self is also the one that "enjoys" beyond the pleasure principle. See Stephen Melville, "Psychoanalysis and the Place of 'Jouissance,'" *Critical Inquiry* 13 (1987): 349–70; and Thomas Rickert, *Acts of Enjoyment: Rhetoric, Zizek, and the Return of the Subject* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2007).
 79. Bruce Fink, *Lacan to the Letter: Reading Écrits Closely* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2004), 143–45. Again, an "emotion" is an affect that has been attached to a signifier and, in some sense, deadened in intensity. Language, however, can also evoke emotions (meaningful affect) and affects (enjoyment or the body in feeling beyond language). The road goes both ways.
 80. Or, of course, our pets, who often function for us as people.
 81. See Aristotle, *On Rhetoric: A Theory of Civic Discourse*, trans. George A. Kennedy (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991).
 82. For example, the tension between the humanities and social sciences in the field of communication studies also reflects a movement toward the signifier—the number—and away from the ineffability of feelings. See Gunn and Rice, "About Face," 215–19.
 83. This was not always the case, even as late as the mid-twentieth century when there was still an interest in voice and delivery. See Clara Kathleen Rogers, "The Voice as a Revelation of the Individual," *Quarterly Journal of Public Speaking* 2 (1916): 229–35; Giles Wilkeson Gray, "The 'Voice Qualities' in the History of Elocution," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 29 (1943): 475–80; Giles Wilkeson Gray, "What Was Elocution?" *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 46 (1960): 1–7; F. H. Lane, "Action and Emotion in Speaking," *Quarterly Journal of Public Speaking* 2 (1916): 221–27; Charles E. A. Moore, "A Preliminary Study of the Emotional Effects of Letter-Sounds," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 24 (1938): 134–49; and B. C. Van Wye, "The Efficient Voice in Speech," *Quarterly Journal of Speech*

- 22 (1936): 642–48.
84. See Peter Ramus, “Arguments in Rhetoric against Quintilian,” in *The Rhetorical Tradition: Readings from Classical Times to the Present*, ed. Patricia Bizzell and Bruce Herzberg (Boston: Bedford Books, 1990), 563–87; and Diane Warren, “Blame It on the Rain” (1989), performed by Milli Vanilli, Arista.
 85. Fink, *Lacan to the Letter*, 145.
 86. Diane Davis makes the provocative argument that persuasion may be nothing more than suggestion, a form of hypnosis. See, “Identification: Burke and Freud on Who You Are,” *Rhetoric Society Quarterly* 38 (2008): 123–47.
 87. Gilbert Austin, *Chironomia, or, a Treatise on Rhetorical Delivery*, ed. Mary Margaret Robb and Lester Thonssen (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1966), 29.
 88. For an audio clip of this speech, see http://www.joshiejuice.com/public_release/public_release.html. Notably, what Reid said on the Senate floor is different from the statement that was published by the democrats a day earlier, and which reads with much more excitement. See “Reid: Mukasey’s Refusal to Address Legality of Waterboarding Renders Him Unfit for Attorney General,” *Democrats.Senate.Gov*, November 8, 2007, <http://democrats.senate.gov/newsroom/record.cfm?id=287289&> (accessed January 2010).
 89. For a discussion of tone as “presence” and philosophical mood, see Joshua Gunn, “Size Matters: Polytoning Rhetoric’s Perverse Apocalypse,” *Rhetoric Society Quarterly* 38 (2008): 82–108.
 90. *Oxford Dictionary of Literary Terms*, ed. Chris Baldick (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), s.v. “tone.”
 91. *Oxford English Dictionary Online*, 2nd ed., s.v. “tone.”
 92. *Oxford Dictionary of Literary Terms*, s.v. “voice.”
 93. Austin, *Chironomia*, 63.
 94. Thomas Sheridan, *A Course of Lectures on Elocution* (Delmar, NY: Scholars’ Facsimiles and Reprints, 1991 [1796]), 113.
 95. Sheridan, *A Course*, 121.
 96. Sheridan, *A Course*, 122.
 97. David Brooks, “Playing Innocent Abroad,” *New York Times*, July 25, 2008, <http://www.nytimes.com/2008/07/25/opinion/25brooks.html> (accessed January 2010).
 98. Hillary Clinton, “Hillary Clinton’s Feb. 19 Speech,” *New York Times*, February 19, 2008, <http://www.nytimes.com/2008/02/19/us/politics/19text-clinton.html> (accessed January 2010).
 99. John McCain, “Remarks by John McCain to the National Urban League,” *Time*, August 1, 2008, <http://thepage.time.com/remarks-by-john-mccain-to-the-national-urban-league-annual-conference/> (accessed January 2010).
 100. Barack Obama, “A More Perfect Union,” March 18, 2008, <http://my.barackobama.com/>

- page/content/hisownwords* (accessed January 2010). For an audio clip, see http://www.joshiejuice.com/public_release/public_release.html.
101. Jodi Kantor, "An Effort to Bridge a Divide," *New York Times*, March 18, 2008, http://www.nytimes.com/2008/03/18/us/politics/19webmemo.html?_r=1&ref=politics (accessed January 2010); Janny Scott, "Obama Chooses Reconciliation Over Rancor," *New York Times*, March 19, 2009, <http://www.nytimes.com/2008/03/19/us/politics/19assess.html?ref=politics> (accessed January 2010).
 102. Kantor, "An Effort," para. 3.
 103. Scott, "Obama Chooses," paras. 6–10.
 104. Extensive content analyses of Obama's speeches during the 2008 campaign reveal a highly consistent, "cool" tone, despite commentary that repeatedly suggested Obama's rhetoric was grandiloquent. See Roderick P. Hart and Colene J. Lind, "Words and Their Ways in Campaign '08," *American Behavioral Scientist* 53 (2010): forthcoming.
 105. See Frantz Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*, trans. Charles Lam Markmann (New York: Grove Weidenfeld, 1967), esp. 17–40 and 63–82.
 105. See Henry Louis Gates Jr., *The Signifying Monkey: A Theory of African-American Literary Criticism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989).
 107. See Alessandra Stanley, "Not Speaking for Obama, Pastor Speaks for Himself, at Length," *New York Times*, April 29, 2008, <http://www.nytimes.com/2008/04/29/us/politics/29wac.html> (accessed January 2010). I personally do not find Wright's tone "violent," however, it was reported and received as such by the mainstream media.
 108. For a clip of Elvis's voice, see http://www.joshiejuice.com/public_release/public_release.html.
 109. See http://www.joshiejuice.com/public_release/public_release.html. The video is also available at YouTube.com by using the search term "Yes We Can." For a more detailed discussion of kitsch in relation to affect, see Joshua Gunn, "For the Love of Rhetoric, with Continual Reference to Kenny and Dolly," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 94 (2008), esp. 144–48.
 110. For an audio clip of this speech, see http://www.joshiejuice.com/public_release/public_release.html.
 111. "Clinton Denounces Obama Tactics," *BBC News Online*, February 24, 2008, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/americas/7261189.stm> (accessed January 2010).
 112. Kenneth P. Vogel, "HRC: 'Shame on you, Barack Obama,'" *Politico*, February 23, 2008, <http://www.politico.com/news/stories/0208/8648.html> (accessed January 2010).
 113. Julie Bosman and Michael Powell, "Clinton Criticizes Obama over Fliers on Trade Sent to Voters in Ohio," *New York Times*, February 24, 2008, <http://query.nytimes.com/gst/full-page.html?res=9C0CE4D71F38F937A15751C0A96E9C8B63> (accessed January 2010).
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115. Frank Browning, "Do Voices Give Candidates Presidential Timbre?" National Public Radio's *Weekend Edition Saturday*, February 23, 2008, <http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=19304285&ft=2&f=1090> (accessed January 2010).
116. In Browning, "Do Voices."
117. Hillary Clinton, "Editorial Response by Sen. Hillary Clinton," *Saturday Night Live*, NBC, March 1, 2008, <http://www.buzzfocus.com/2008/03/02/saturday-night-live-highlights-from-march-1-2008/> (accessed January 2010). Of course, the skit also pokes fun at the mainstream media's obsession with Clinton's wardrobe.
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119. Megan Garber, "Shrill-ary: Is Clinton's Problem as Basic as Her Voice?" *Columbia Journalism Review*, February 28, 2008, http://www.cjr.org/campaign_desk/shrillary.php (accessed January 2010).
120. Tucker Carlson, remarks on *Tucker*, NBC, May 24, 2008, <http://mediamatters.org/research/200705250004> (accessed January 2010).
121. Karlyn Kohrs Campbell, "The Discursive Performance of Femininity: Hating Hillary," *Rhetoric & Public Affairs* 1 (1998): 1–19.
122. Stanley Fish, "All You Need Is Hate," *New York Times*, February 3, 2008, <http://fish.blogs.nytimes.com/2008/02/03/all-you-need-is-hate/> (accessed January 2010).
123. "Hillary Clinton Gets Emotional in N.H.," Associated Press wire, *New York Daily News*, January 7, 2008, http://www.nydailynews.com/news/politics/2008/01/07/2008-01-07_hillary_clinton_gets_emotional_in_nh.html (accessed January 2010); Vaughn Ververs, "Choking Up in New Hampshire?" *CBSNews.com*, January 7, 2009, <http://www.cbsnews.com/blogs/2008/01/07/politics/horserace/entry3684076.shtml> (accessed January 2010); Dahlia Lithwick, "Viewpoint: The Tracks of Her Tears," *Time.com*, January 10, 2008, <http://www.time.com/time/politics/article/0,8599,1702121,00.html> (accessed January 2010); and Victor Davis Hanson, "The Crying Game: Hillary, Part Two," *National Review Online*, January 9, 2008, <http://article.nationalreview.com/342746/the-crying-game/victor-davis-hanson> (accessed January 2010).
124. For an audio clip of this segment of the speech, see http://www.joshiejuice.com/public_release/public_release.html.
125. In Lithwick, "Viewpoint," para. 5.
126. Lithwick, "Viewpoint," para. 2.
127. Mary Ann Akers, "A Clue to How Hillary Found Her Voice," *WashingtonPost.com*, February 4, 2008, http://voices.washingtonpost.com/sleuth/2008/02/a_clue_to_how_hillary_clinton.html (accessed January 2010).

128. Jacques Derrida, *Of Grammatology*, trans. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1976 [1967]), 314-15.
129. My understanding of the presence of speech is closer to that of Walter Ong. See John D. Schaeffer and David Gorman, "Ong and Derrida on Presence: A Case Study in the Conflict of Traditions," *Educational Philosophy and Theory* 40 (2008): 856-72. Schaeffer and Gorman suggest, in part, that the conflict of "presence" metaphors comes down to Ong's commitment to rhetoric and Derrida's commitment to philosophy.
130. And by "point," I refer obliquely to that which is signified or can be signified.
131. Dilip Parameshwar Gaonkar, "Epilogue: The Oratorical Text: The Enigma of Arrival," in *Texts in Context: Critical Dialogues on Significant Episodes in American Political Rhetoric*, ed. Michael C. Leff and Fred J. Kauffeld (Davis, CA: Hermagoras Press, 1989), 253-75.
132. Leff and Kauffeld, eds., *Texts in Context*, vii-viii. I am concluding with a reference to the first public address conference in part as an anniversarial gesture. The present essay was composed for the tenth anniversary of this biannual conference and its return to the University of Wisconsin in Madison after twenty years.
133. See Gunn, "Speech is Dead," 357-61.
134. For example, see Raymie E. McKerrow, "Critical Rhetoric: Theory and Praxis," *Communication Monographs* 56 (1989): 91-111.
135. See Barbara A. Biesecker, "Rethinking the Rhetorical Situation from Within the Thematic of *Différance*," *Philosophy and Rhetoric* 22 (1989): 110-30; and Barbara A. Biesecker, "Michel Foucault and the Question of Rhetoric," *Philosophy and Rhetoric* 25 (1992): 351-64.
136. See John Mowitt, *Text: The Genealogy of an Antidisciplinary Object* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1992), esp. 23-79.
137. The couch metaphor was suggested by Barry Brummett after hearing the oral version of this essay; it is an important metaphor because it suggests neglect rather than abandonment.
138. See Dance, "Speech and Thought"; Frank E. X. Dance, "Ong's Voice: 'I,' the Oral Intellect, You, and We," *Text and Performance Quarterly* 9 (1989): 185-98; and Frank E. X. Dance, "A Speech Theory of Communication," in *Human Communication Theory: Comparative Essays*, ed. Frank E. X. Dance (New York: Harper and Row, 1982), 120-46.
139. See Hawhee, *Moving Bodies*; Debra Hawhee, *Bodily Arts: Rhetoric and Athletics in Ancient Greece* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2004); and Jordynn Jack, "Acts of Institution: Embodying Feminist Rhetorical Methodologies in Space and Time," *Rhetoric Review* 28 (2009): 285-303.
140. For an excellent example of this failure, see Mark A. Smith, *The Right Talk: How Conservatives Transformed the Great Society into the Economic Society* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2007). These failures, in part, are a consequence of the market analogy

that has driven research in political communication. A turn to the consideration of public feelings implicates an analogical shift away from market logics and rational choice, and toward *celebrity* and style. See John Street, "The Celebrity Politician: Political Style and Popular Culture," in *Media and the Restyling of Politics*, ed. John Corner and Dick Pels (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 2003), 85–98; and Barry Brummett, *A Rhetoric of Style* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 2008), esp. 74–115.

141. For clear and succinct overview, see Kaisa Herne and Maija Setälä, "A Response to the Critique of Rational Choice Theory: Lakatos' and Laudan's Conceptions Applied," *Inquiry* 47 (2004): 67–85.