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Editorial Bodies: Perfection and Rejection in Ancient Rhetoric and Poetics, by Michele Kennerly

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For believing in justice, knowing her rights, and realizing her humanity, Ore herself was assaulted, jailed, and further scapegoated legally and professionally. Intimate recounts of her experiences of police brutality and attendant injustices bookend the chapters of *Lynching* as a preface and postscript. In these moving disclosures, we feel the violence reverberate across time, from Martin through Ore to Bland; moreover, Ore testifies alongside their memories. Ultimately, *Lynching: Violence, Rhetoric, and American Identity* makes undeniable the life-and-death stakes of this work and the proximity of trauma for Black scholars, a reminder to the field that's both painful and affirming.

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Editorial Bodies: Perfection and Rejection in Ancient Rhetoric and Poetics, by Michele Kennerly, U of South Carolina P, 2018, xii +242 pp., $34.99 (hardcover), $21.99 (paper and e-book), ISBN: 978-1-61117-910-1

With *Editorial Bodies: Perfection and Rejection in Ancient Rhetoric and Poetics*, Michele Kennerly has produced an erudite contribution to the fields of ancient rhetoric, intellectual history, and classics. Deriving from the Latin *ērudītus*, "erudite" implies a removal of that which is "rude," used in this sense to mean that which is unrefined. Erudition is subtractive; the imperfect or flawed is stripped away, leaving only what is necessary, good, and learned. *Editorial Bodies* is such a text, comprehensive yet focused in its treatment of its themes.

Editorial Bodies takes as its focus the role of editing, particularly "subtractive editing," in an expansive *corpus* (literally body—an important metaphor for Kennerly) of ancient texts in Greek and Latin. Kennerly engages a number of disciplinary and interdisciplinary debates, most notably George A. Kennedy's "decline narrative" of *letteraturizzazione*, wherein rhetoric loses its civic importance and concerns itself with literary expression. Kennerly counters this argument by examining how attitudes toward editing specifically and "textual culture" more generally shaped oratorical and poetic compositions (23). In this framework, editing is a rhetorical process that involves deliberate choices about what words demand increased attention and care, as well as which words may be sent into public and which must be withheld.

These editorial choices matter inasmuch as they reflect an attitude of "corpus care," a "body-based critical language about speaking and writing" that emphasizes the parallel qualities of one's writing and one's life (17). Given this conflation, ancient writers took great pains to cultivate public images of themselves and others through their editorial processes. By focusing on the material and embodied aspects of composition and editing, Kennerly shows how "the body stretches … into

every limb of rhetoric and foot of poetry and into every editorial metaphor," shaping how ancient authors contributed to the discipline of rhetoric and "created the critical conditions for their own canonicity" (17). The author/editors of Kennerly's study file, blot out, shave, and shape their texts, with the goal of taming the unruly and removing the imperfect. These decisions shaped the esthetic preferences and approaches to criticism for subsequent generations. In this way, Kennerly engages not only with Kennedy's decline narrative, but with recent turns in rhetorical studies toward the embodied and material. Rather than tackle these themes separately, Kennerly shows how bodies and textuality were frequently intertwined through the process of editing.

Kennerly explores such editorial choices throughout antiquity, beginning in Classical Athens. The first chapter examines works by writers such as Herodotus, Aristophanes, Demosthenes, and Isocrates, attending to supporters and critics of newly developing editorial practices. Throughout, Kennerly makes a convincing case for a vocabulary of textuality and editing that intersects with bodily metaphors; these authors construct an "original 'anatomy of criticism,'" repurposing terms typically reserved for "fleshy bodies" (weight, symmetry, etc.) to construct an editorial vocabulary attuned to written texts (23). The next chapter follows the development of editorial practices into the "bookish" and archive-obsessed Hellenistic period (53). Some of the figures discussed in this chapter, such as Demetrius of Phalerum and the poet Callimachus, may be unfamiliar to a reader trained in rhetorical studies; however, the chapter's treatment of the gendered language of style, which focuses on corporeal terms such as softness, is especially thoughtful and compelling. Kennerly claims that the language of "softness" typical of Cicero's evaluation of Demetrius's oratory, which might typically be read as feminizing (and, by Roman standards, as indicating inferiority), is instead leveraged to index the pliability of Demetrius's prose. In this way, the language of softness combats earlier criticisms of written language as lifeless and rigid. Likewise, Kennerly's reading of Callimachus shows that he favored a stylistic vocabulary that valued the "slender" and "sharp," in contrast to the "thick" or "bulky," highlighting the overlap in corporeal and editorial language (66).

Chapter 3 picks up many of the threads of the previous chapter and weaves them into a discussion of Cicero's *Brutus, De optimo genere oratorum*, and *Orator*. Kennerly shows how Roman debates over the value and primacy of the "Attic," or formal and forensic style, and the "Asiatic," a style focused on linguistic virtuosity and word play, consistently figured the Asiatic as "bombastic" and "garish" but also feminine (80). While discussing Demosthenes and his contemporaries, Cicero claims that in his time eloquence was "natural, not reliant upon dye" (87). Given that *eloquentia* is almost always personified as a *her*, and Asianism more specifically so in these debates, one can see a clear echo of Platonic criticisms of cosmetics as that which creates a false image of beauty and health in the body. Other examples from Cicero's *corpus* abound. In *Brutus*, Cicero claims he and his cohort "must guard 'orphaned eloquence' … as if "she" were "a virgin come of age" (91); in *De inventione*, he compares his composing method to a sculptor who takes the most beautiful features of many women to create the perfect representation of Helen (96). In this chapter, Kennerly thoroughly evidences her claim that "The language of gender and sexuality does normative work … policing style and delivery" in Roman rhetoric (98).

The next chapter, "Filing and Defiling Horace," returns to Kennerly's initial focus of pushing against Kennedy's decline narrative, claiming that Horace's affinity for the "file" as editorial tool is not indicative of a political climate that requires one to carefully manage one's words but rather of a thoroughly developed textual culture that prizes refinement. Throughout, Kennerly shows how Horace associates the labors of the composition process with the management and care of the body; plucking, filing, and scratching are common to both page and limb. In contrast to the fastidious Horace, chapter 5 focuses on the roughness and unsuitability of the compositions of the poet Ovid. Unlike Horace, Ovid represents himself as having "neither the *corpus* nor the *mens* for onerous, laborious, ambitious public life" (132). Claiming roughness of composition allows Ovid to emphasize the difficulty of his exile from the public life of Rome: deprived of the resources and social connections of his home, he is left without the desire and will to polish. These claims allow Ovid not only to emphasize the pain caused by his exile, but also to "lament … the lost sociality of poetic

creation, correction, and reception" (133). Thus, one of the main contributions of this chapter is to highlight the "interactive nature of poetic editing," encouraging the reader to understand such processes as imbedded within social networks of influence, friendship, and patronage (151).

Chapter 6 attends to Quintilian's use of textual and corporeal metaphors. Throughout the *Institutio Oratio*, Quintilian insists that the best orators begin "from a place of great abundance and then grind down" in order to hone their oratorical *corpus* (161). Represented through the image of the file, or *lima*, this process removes the unfitting from the textual and physical body; rhetorical education is thus subtractive. Like his predecessors, Quintilian engages with the gendered language of the Atticism/Asianism debate, claiming for the orator an image of "masculine hardiness" (162) and contrasting the "athletic against the cosmetic" (172). This orientation is encapsulated in the famous definition of the orator as *vir bonus dicendi peritus*; Kennerly takes care to tease out the philological nuances of *bonus*, showing that the term affirms a masculine image of oratory.

The final chapter surveys the work of Pliny the Younger and Tacitus. Both leave behind detailed descriptions of their editorial process, allowing Kennerly to show the continued currency of earlier views of textuality and editing. Tacitus, for instance, has recourse to refer to the social elements of composing poetry and performing oratory, as well as the corporeal metaphor of oratory as a healthy body with well-developed limbs (190, 193). Pliny too approaches composition and editing from a social standpoint, asking his friends to judiciously apply the file. Kennerly concludes her text with reference to Cicero's slave and scribe Tiro, demanding that the reader account for the role of slavery in the composition, copying, and preservation of ancient texts. As Kennerly puts it in the book's final lines, "Behind all bodies of work are the bodies of workers" (211). These final thoughts invite the reader to critically engage with the notion of the canon as construction, something built up through the labors of often unidentified and unacknowledged persons, many enslaved.

Stylistically, *Editorial Bodies* is playful and clever, yet clear and articulate. Kennerly's analysis is grounded in a philological method, but the import of terms is almost always spelled out for the reader; her approach is accessible, never veering into pedantry. At a time when the field is rightly questioning the nature and importance of the canon of the Western "rhetorical tradition," Kennerly's text serves as a model for how historians of rhetoric can use relatively traditional scholarly methods to engage canonical texts in new and important ways: *Editorial Bodies* suggests both the value and possibility of enlivening old traditions by revisiting them on new terms. Working in dialogue with scholarship beyond rhetorical studies, Kennerly shows how the language of editing is intertwined with bodies coded masculine and feminine, free and enslaved; with text-technologies, foreign (the file) and familiar (the blank page); and with modes of political engagement distinct from the civic agonism often foregrounded in studies of Greco-Roman rhetorics.

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Reforming Women: The Rhetorical Tactics of the American Female Moral Reform Society, 1834–1854, by Lisa J. Shaver, U of Pittsburgh P, 2019, 190 pp., $27.95 (paper), ISBN: 978-0822965480

While 2016 marked the defeat of the first woman presidential candidate nominated by a major political party, it also marked a groundswell in particular forms of women's engagement with US politics. Newspapers from the *Wall Street Journal* to the *New York Times* trumpeted that women