

# UNDERSTANDING RHETORIC



## A Graphic Guide to WRITING

Elizabeth Losh  
Jonathan Alexander  
Kevin Cannon  
Zander Cannon

BEDFORD / ST. MARTIN'S

BOSTON • NEW YORK

# WHY RHETORIC? ARISTOTLE LIVES!

In this  
issue...

**PIECING  
TOGETHER**  
A DEFINITION OF  
RHETORIC

Page 36

**REANIMATING**  
ANCIENT VIEWS OF  
RHETORIC

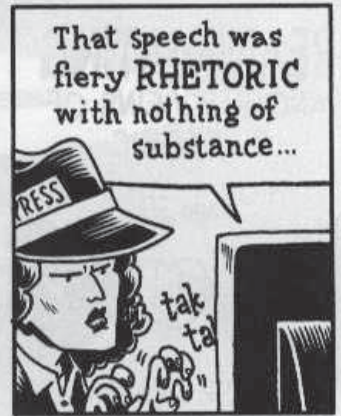
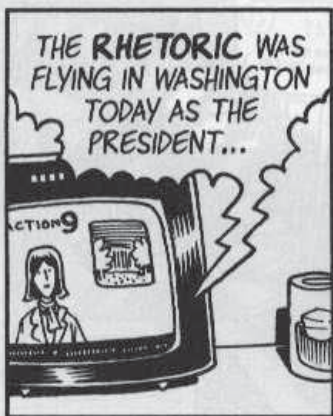
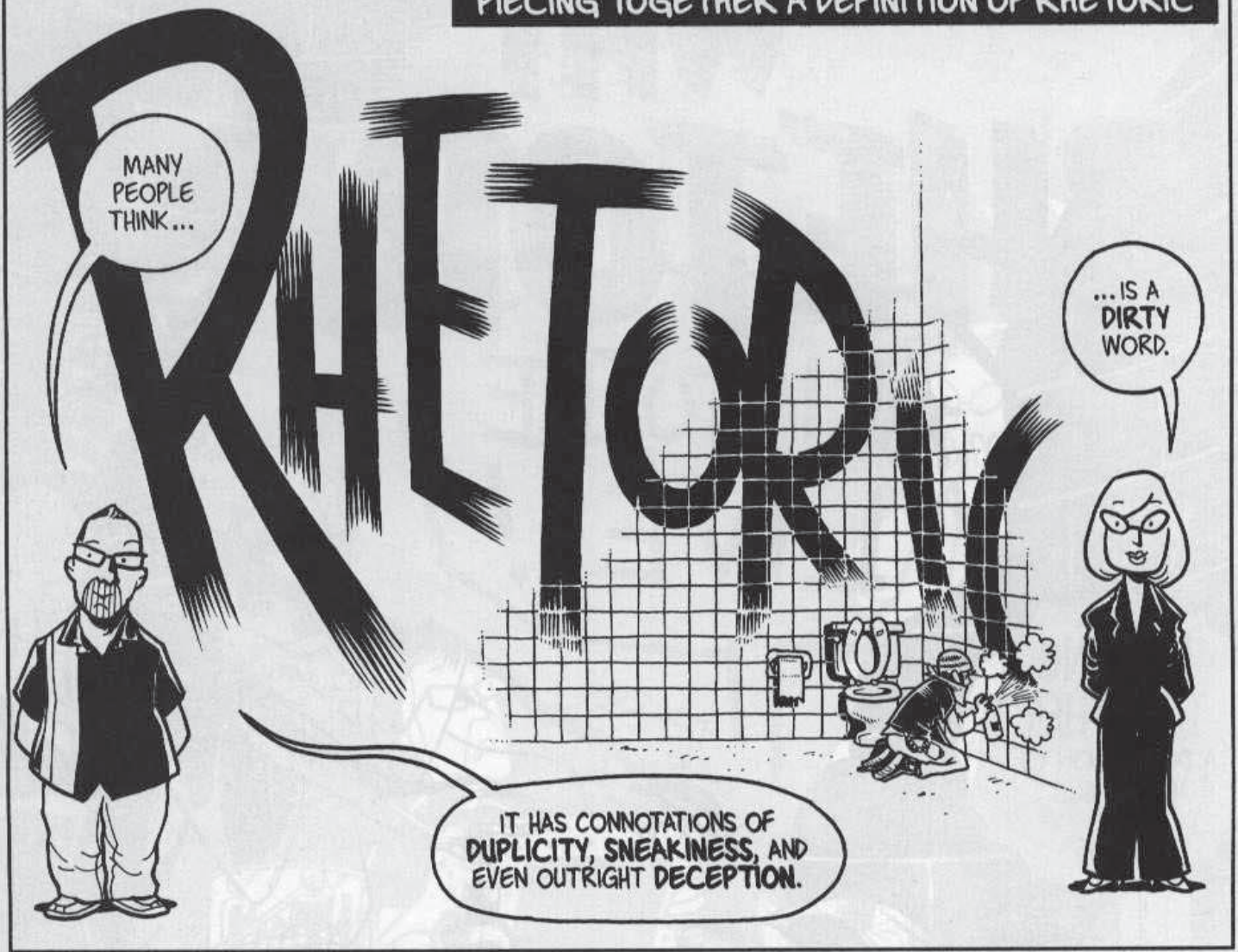
Page 39

SETTING  
RHETORICAL CONCEPTS  
LOOSE ON THE  
WORLD

Page 43



PIECING TOGETHER A DEFINITION OF RHETORIC

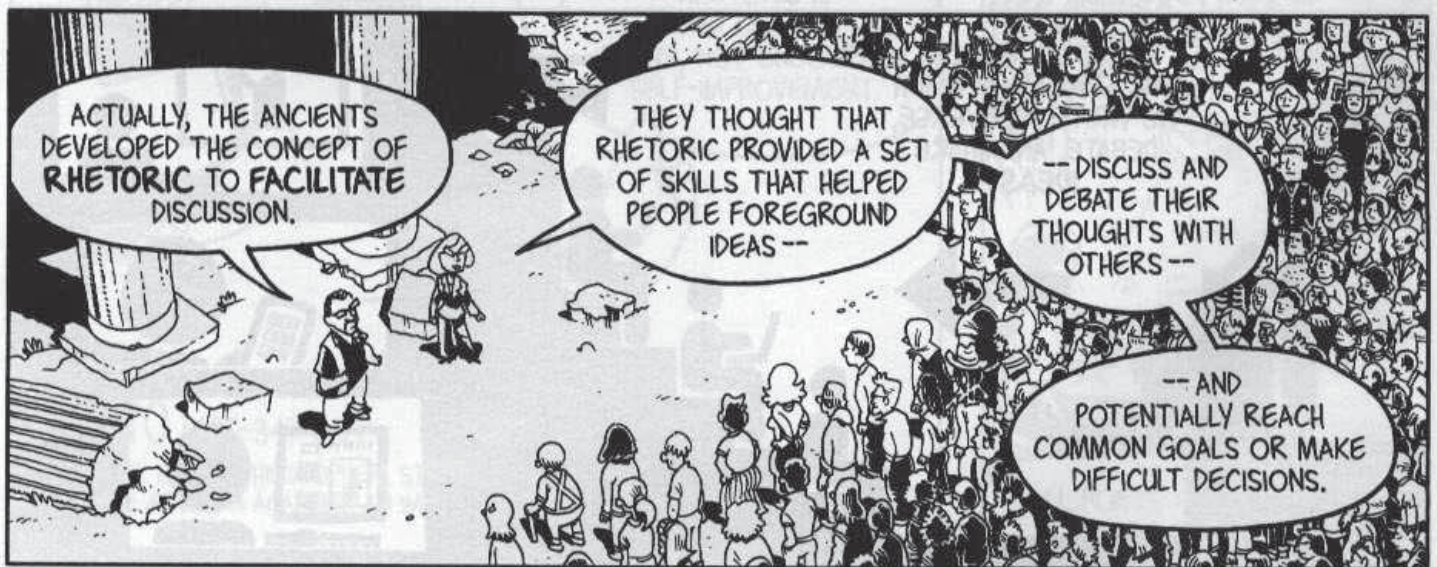


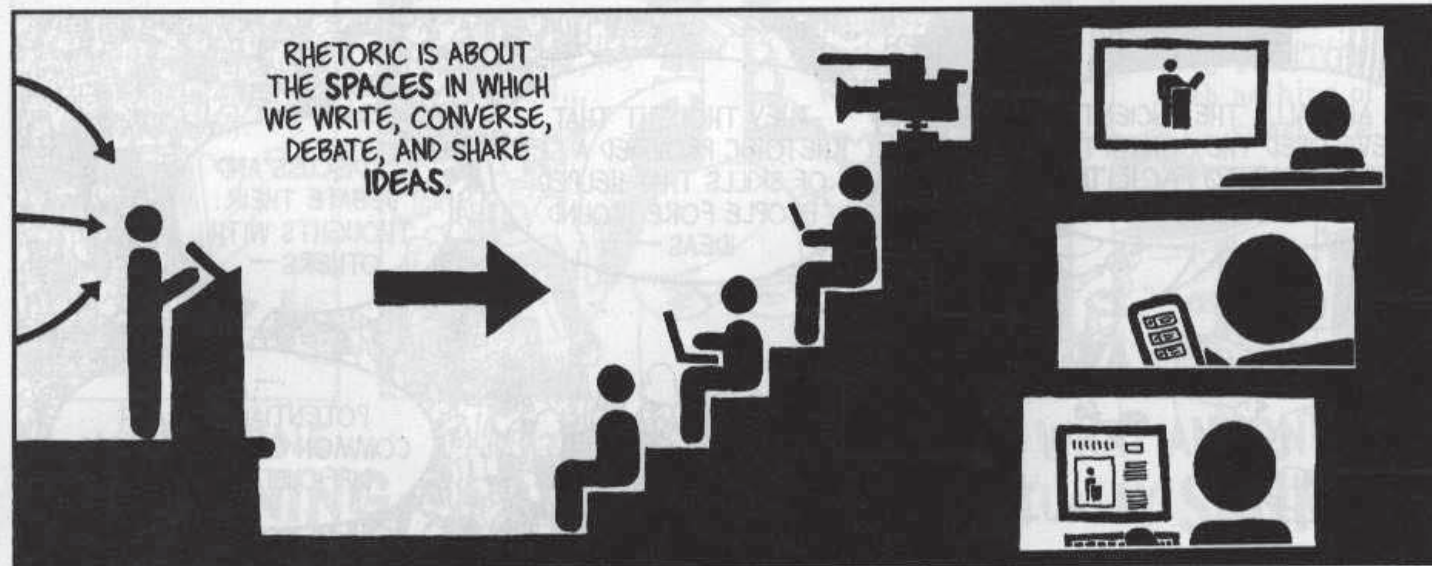
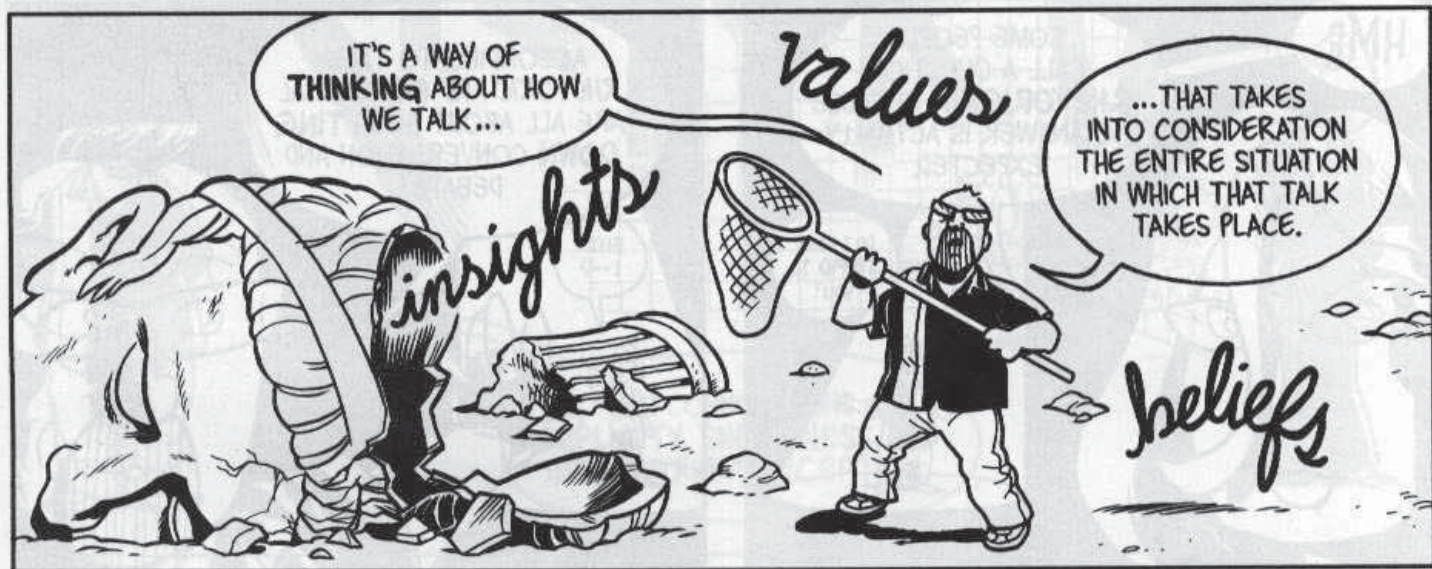
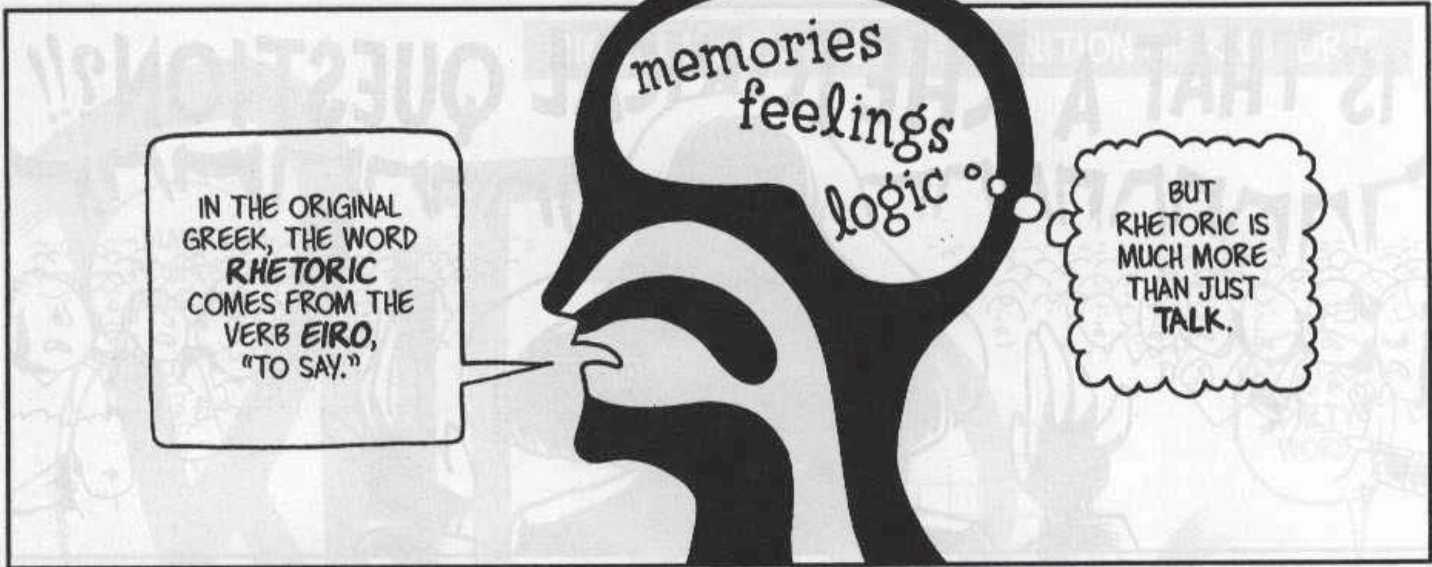
IS ANYONE LISTENING--



--TO WHAT ANYONE IS ACTUALLY SAYING?!

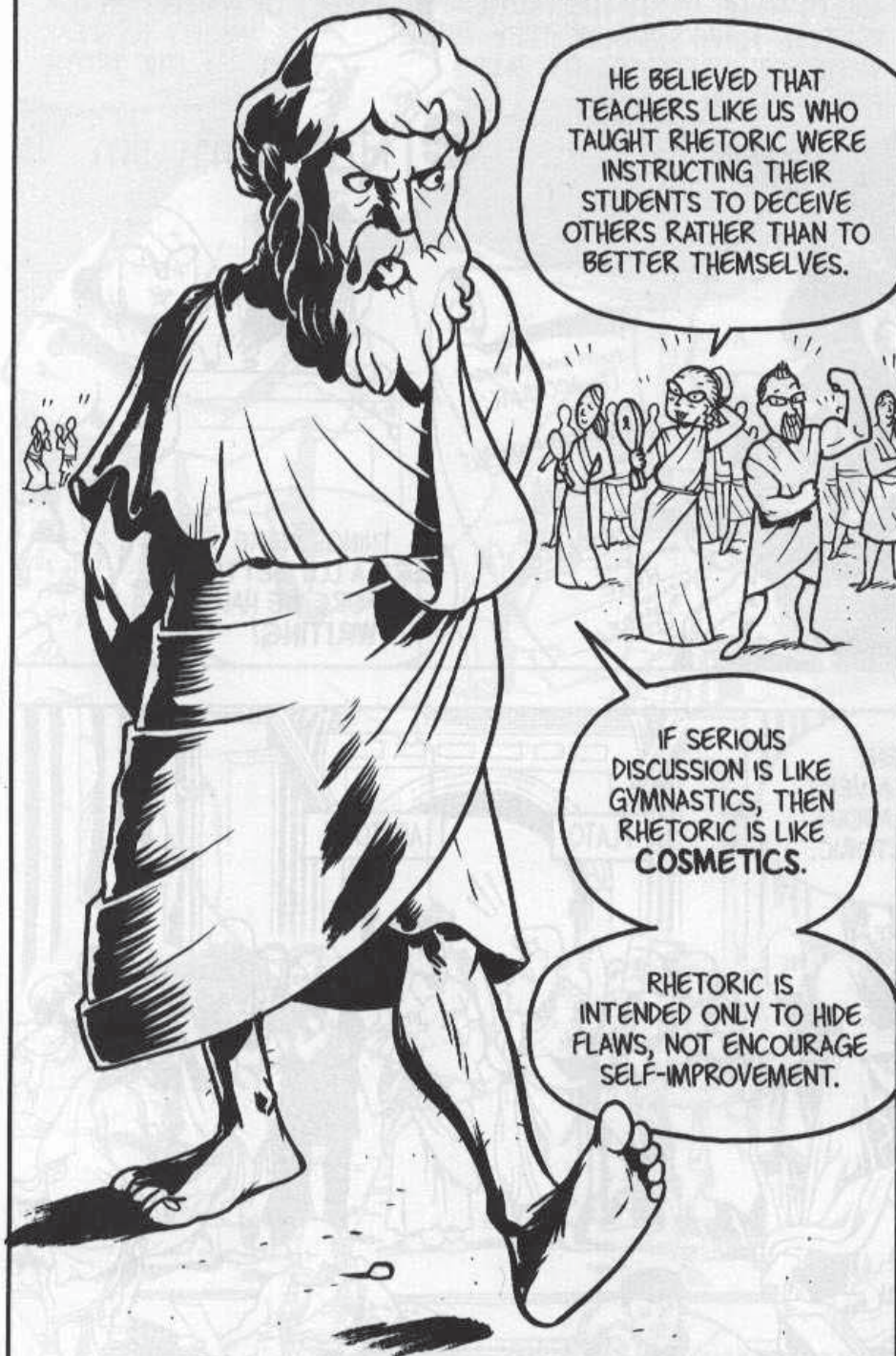
# IS THAT A RHETORICAL QUESTION?!!





## REANIMATING ANCIENT VIEWS OF RHETORIC

MANY COMMONLY HELD NEGATIVE IDEAS ABOUT RHETORIC CAN BE TRACED TO THE ANCIENT GREEK PHILOSOPHER PLATO.



HE BELIEVED THAT TEACHERS LIKE US WHO TAUGHT RHETORIC WERE INSTRUCTING THEIR STUDENTS TO DECEIVE OTHERS RATHER THAN TO BETTER THEMSELVES.

IF SERIOUS DISCUSSION IS LIKE GYMNASTICS, THEN RHETORIC IS LIKE COSMETICS.

RHETORIC IS INTENDED ONLY TO HIDE FLAWS, NOT ENCOURAGE SELF-IMPROVEMENT.

**PLATO** (427–347 BCE)

ANCIENT GREEK PHILOSOPHER, STUDENT OF SOCRATES, AND FOUNDER OF THE ATHENIAN ACADEMY, AN IMPORTANT EARLY SCHOOL OF THOUGHT.

AS FAR AS PLATO WAS CONCERNED, RHETORIC WAS AN EMPTY, UNWHOLESOME DISTRACTION THAT TOOK ATTENTION AWAY FROM IMPORTANT PHILOSOPHICAL AND CIVIC MATTERS.

INDULGING THE POPULATION'S APPETITE FOR RHETORIC IS AS BAD AS SELLING PASTRIES INSTEAD OF DISPENSING MEDICINE.



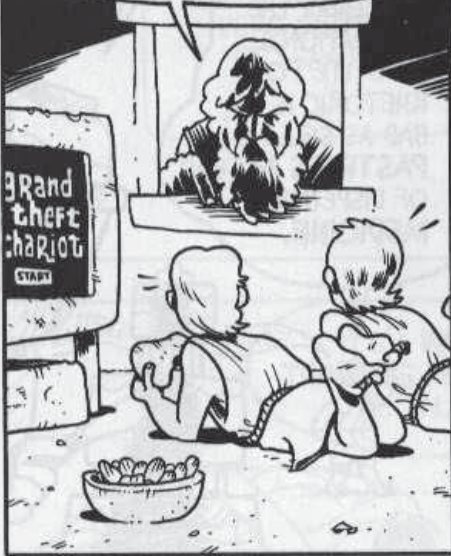
PLATO ALSO THOUGHT THAT VIVID MEDIA EXPERIENCES, SUCH AS ANCIENT GREEK TRAGEDIES THAT SHOWED EXPLICIT SEX AND VIOLENCE, WOULD HAVE A BAD INFLUENCE ON YOUNG PEOPLE.



ALL POETS AND PLAYWRIGHTS SHOULD BE BANISHED!

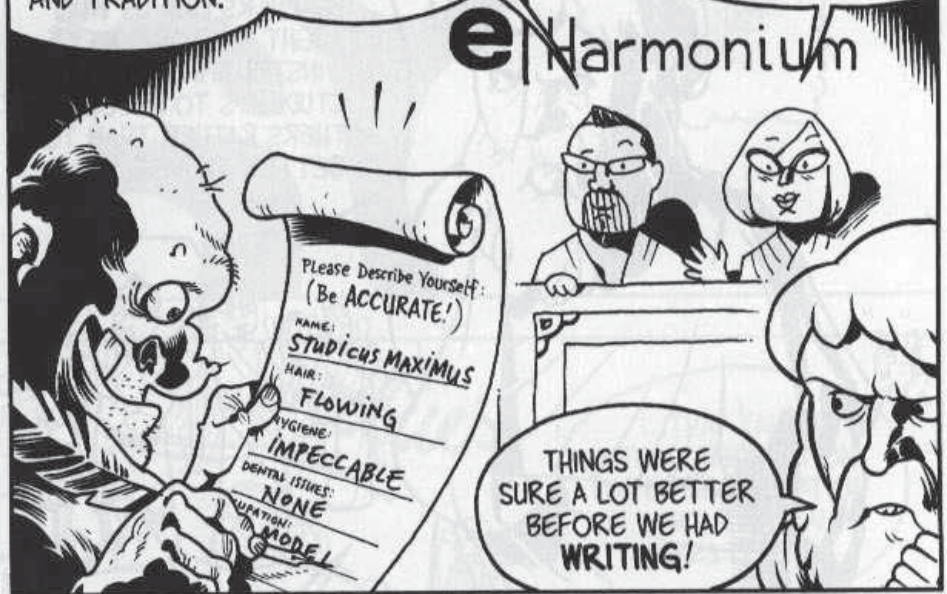
PLATO FELT THAT THE YOUNG SHOULD BE PROTECTED FROM AMBIGUOUS MORAL MESSAGES.

PRETENDING TO BE CRIMINALS CAUSES CHILDREN TO GROW UP TO BE CRIMINALS IN REAL LIFE. EVERYONE KNOWS THAT.



PLATO WASN'T JUST WORRIED ABOUT CHILDREN. HE BELIEVED THAT THE INVENTION OF WRITING IN THE ANCIENT WORLD ALLOWED ADULTS TO LIE ABOUT THE TRUTH, PRETEND TO BE SOMEONE THEY WERE NOT, OR FORGET THE PAST AND TRADITION.

JUST AS PEOPLE WORRY TODAY ABOUT MANY OF THE EFFECTS OF TECHNOLOGY ON WRITING, PLATO WORRIED ABOUT THE EFFECT OF WRITING ON OUR ABILITY TO SPEAK THE TRUTH.



ARISTOTLE WAS A PROONENT OF THE USE OF RHETORIC TO PUT ACROSS A BROAD RANGE OF IDEAS.



**ARISTOTLE (384-322 BCE)**  
ANCIENT GREEK PHILOSOPHER (AND STUDENT OF PLATO) WHOSE THINKING CONTRIBUTED MUCH TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF WESTERN EMPIRICAL AND SCIENTIFIC THOUGHT.

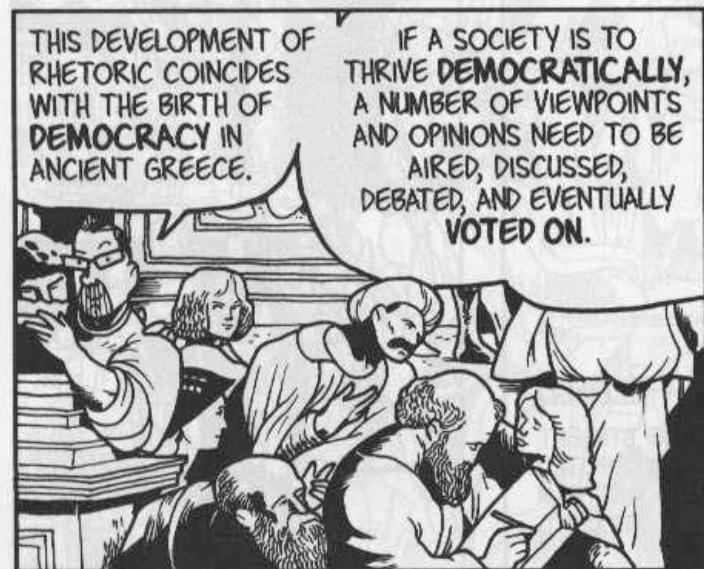
ARISTOTLE THOUGHT THAT PLAYS COULD SERVE AN EDUCATIONAL PURPOSE BY ENCOURAGING GREEK CITIZENS TO DEVELOP THEIR CAPACITIES FOR PITY AND FEAR.



BY SEEING THE CONSEQUENCES OF SEXUAL AND VIOLENT CRIMES THAT WERE COMMITTED BY ACTORS ON STAGE, SPECTATORS COULD LEARN **NOT** TO IMITATE BAD ACTIONS.







SETTING RHETORICAL CONCEPTS LOOSE ON THE WORLD

IN THE ART OF RHETORIC,



ARISTOTLE SAYS THAT TO BE EFFECTIVE, A COMMUNICATOR HAS TO TAKE THREE CONCEPTS INTO CONSIDERATION:



**ETHOS**

*ethical, ethics*

**PATHOS**

*empathy*

**LOGOS**

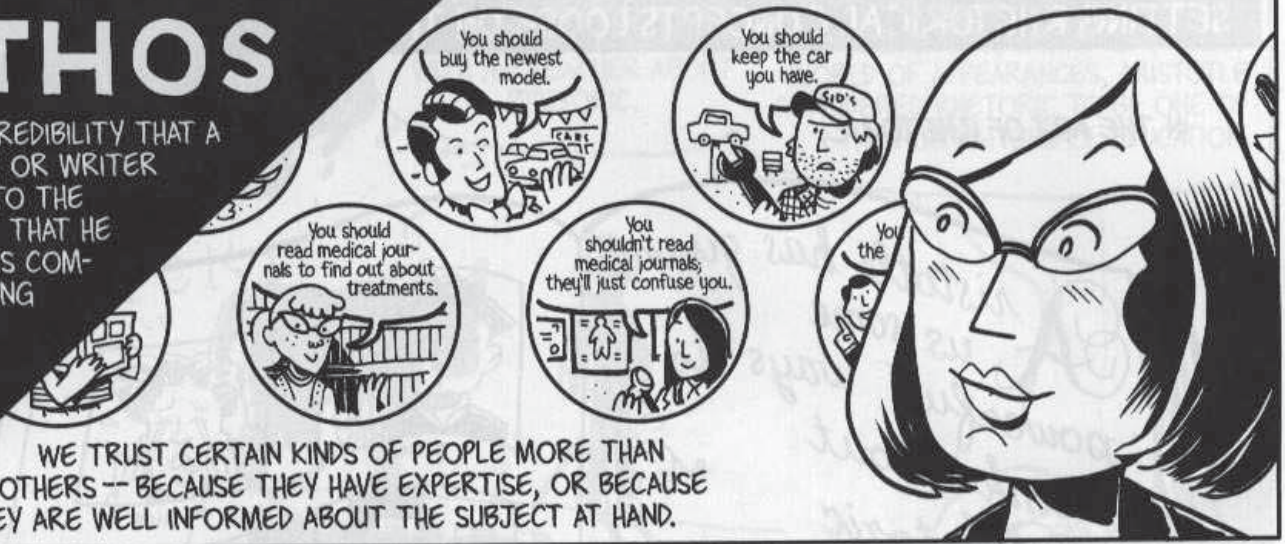
*logical*

STRANGE WORDS, BUT YOU CAN HEAR THEIR ENGLISH COUNTERPARTS QUITE CLEARLY...



# ETHOS

IS THE CREDIBILITY THAT A SPEAKER OR WRITER BRINGS TO THE SUBJECT THAT HE OR SHE IS COMMUNICATING ABOUT.



WE TRUST CERTAIN KINDS OF PEOPLE MORE THAN OTHERS -- BECAUSE THEY HAVE EXPERTISE, OR BECAUSE THEY ARE WELL INFORMED ABOUT THE SUBJECT AT HAND.

# PATHOS

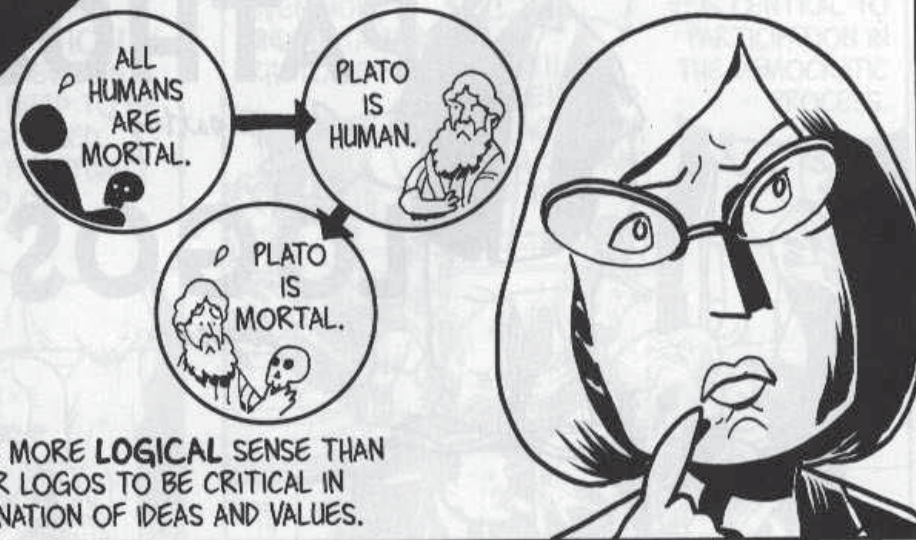
IS THE USE OF EMOTION IN DEBATE OR ARGUMENT.



APPEALS TO PATHOS SURROUND US, PARTICULARLY IN VISUAL ARGUMENTS SUCH AS ADVERTISEMENTS AND MANY ONLINE VIDEOS.

# LOGOS

IS THE APPEAL TO REASON, TO THE FORCEFULNESS OF A WELL-THOUGHT-OUT AND WELL-STRUCTURED POSITION.



SOME ARGUMENTS MAKE MORE LOGICAL SENSE THAN OTHERS, AND MANY CONSIDER LOGOS TO BE CRITICAL IN THE DEVELOPMENT AND DISSEMINATION OF IDEAS AND VALUES.

LEARNING TO RECOGNIZE THESE CONCEPTS WILL HELP YOU UNDERSTAND OTHER PEOPLE'S ARGUMENTS.

YOU'LL ALSO STRENGTHEN YOUR OWN POSITION AND THE WAY OTHERS SEE YOU.

ETHOS  
PATHOS  
LOGOS

ETHOS  
PATHOS  
LOGOS

# Social Network

FOR EXAMPLE, AN ONLINE PROFILE IS A RHETORICAL SPACE IN WHICH ETHOS, PATHOS, AND LOGOS ARE VERY IMPORTANT.

ONLINE PROFILES ALLOW USERS TO CREATE RICH, ENGAGING, AND SOMETIMES SATIRIC SELF-PORTRAITS.

Jonathan Likes:

- Douglass
- Aristotle
- Jet-Skis
- Lincoln
- Funny Hats
- The US Constitution
- Asian Food
- Monkeys

Jonathan is thinking about getting a new computer.

Plato: Pff! It would just be the shadow of the CONCEPT of a computer, anyway.

Aristotle: Ooh, but the new X432g's are so AWESOME!  
 Ep 1 DISLIKE

Jonathan wonders if he should eat some breakfast.

Aristotle: 1) Consider the pros and cons, 2) ask an expert, and 3) do it if you're hungry.

THE MIX OF PICTURES, VIDEO, AND TEXT CAN ESTABLISH -- OR DESTROY -- YOUR CREDIBILITY, OR ETHOS.

FOR INSTANCE, IF JONATHAN, AS A PROFESSOR OF ENGLISH, HAS A PROFILE RIDDLED WITH TYPOS AND IMAGES OF HIM GETTING DRUNK WITH HIS STUDENTS...

Social Network

Jonathan: Oh HAI I am Drunk with studentz !!!1!!

HIS CREDIBILITY MIGHT RISE WITH SOME, BUT FALL WITH MOST OTHERS.

IMAGES AND WORDS CAN ALSO CONTRIBUTE TO THE PATHOS OF A PAGE...

ONE DAY:

Liz: is fine, keeping busy with work.

BUT THE NEXT:

Liz: is mourning the loss of a beloved cat.

"SNOOKUMS"  
 1999 2012

CERTAINLY, PATHOS IS BEING USED HERE TO PROMOTE SYMPATHY FOR LIZ...

... AND PERHAPS GENERATE A FEW KIND WORDS FOR HER PAGE.



WE GENERALLY DON'T THINK OF SOCIAL NETWORK PROFILES AS MAKING "LOGICAL ARGUMENTS," BUT IN A WAY, THEY ARE MAKING ARGUMENTS --

-- ARGUMENTS ABOUT WHO WE ARE, WHAT WE ARE INTERESTED IN, AND WHY SOMEONE MIGHT WANT TO "FRIEND" US.

@JONATHAN: Are you trying to seem cool by having a social network homepage?

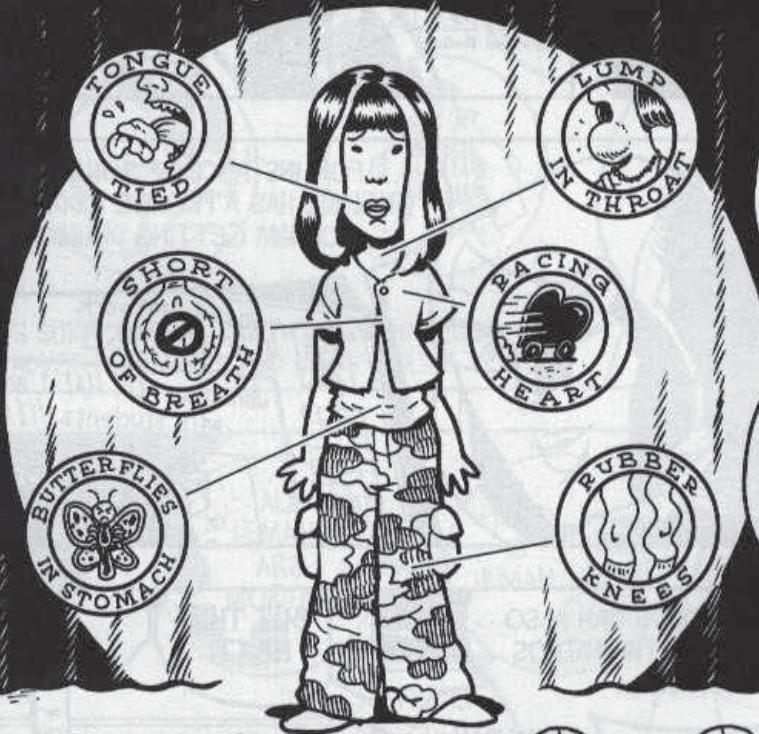


BUT RHETORIC ISN'T JUST ABOUT SPACE. IT IS ALSO ABOUT TIME.

# BENDING TIME through KAIROS



ALL OF US HAVE HAD EXPERIENCES THAT WERE EMBARRASSING, INSULTING, HUMILIATING, OR DEMORALIZING.



OFTEN WE WISH THAT WE COULD HAVE TRAVELED BACK IN TIME TO SAY JUST THE RIGHT THING AT THAT PARTICULAR MOMENT.

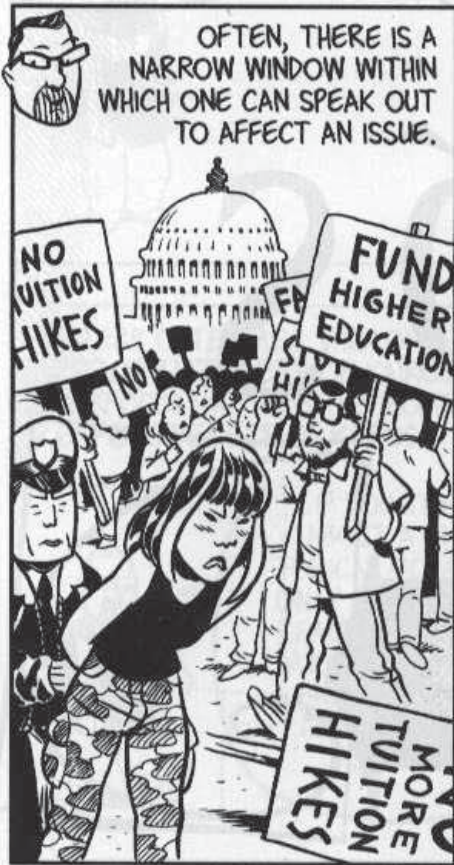
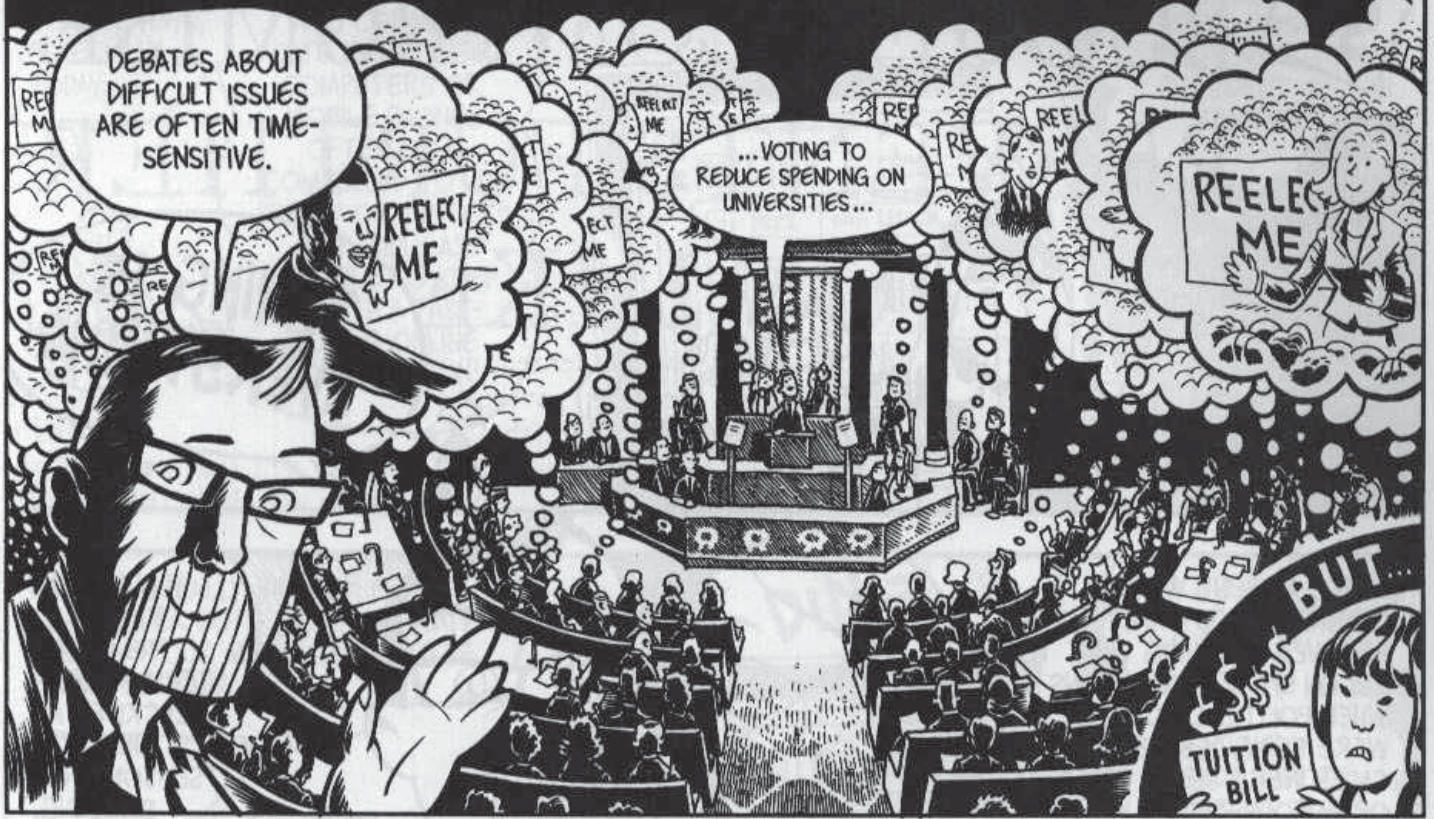
WE MAY COME UP WITH THE PERFECT THING TO HAVE SAID MUCH LATER, BUT IT IS ALREADY TOO LATE.



I-I KNOW YOU ARE, BUT WHAT AM I...?



KAIROS IS PART OF THE RHETORIC OF OUR POLITICAL, LEGAL, AND PUBLIC LIVES.



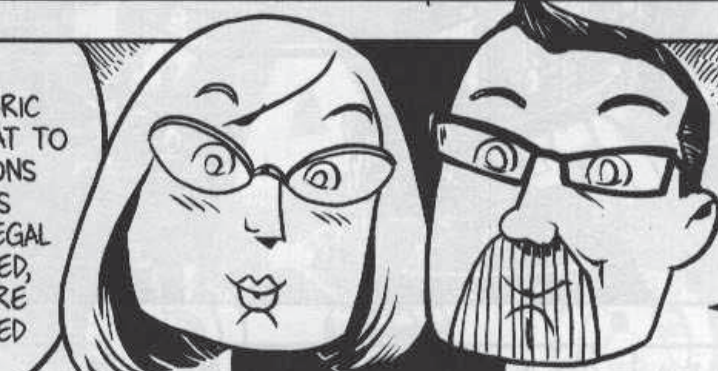
SO...

# BUDGET COMPROMISE PREVENTS FURTHER TUITION HIKES



**TIMING IS EVERYTHING!**

IN THE ANCIENT WORLD, LEARNING ABOUT RHETORIC INVOLVED LEARNING WHAT TO SAY ON SPECIFIC OCCASIONS WHEN POLITICAL ACTIONS WERE BEING DEBATED, LEGAL CASES WERE BEING TRIED, OR FAMOUS PEOPLE WERE BEING PRAISED OR BLAMED FOR THEIR CONDUCT.



IN CLASSICAL RHETORIC, THE GREEK TERM **KAIROS** DESCRIBES AN OPPORTUNITY OR "SEASON" FOR SPEAKING.

IN THE ORIGINAL GREEK, THE WORD

# Καίρós

ACTUALLY SUGGESTED **TWO** MEANINGS:

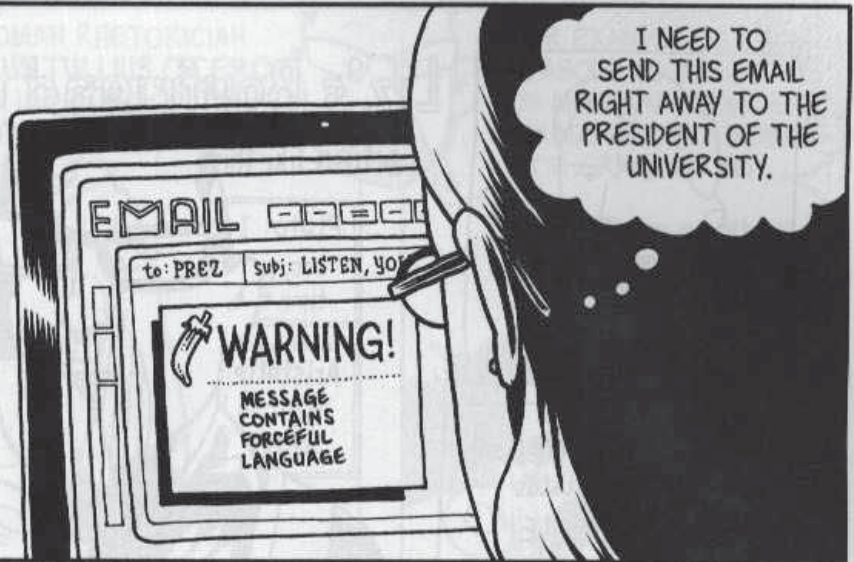
EXACT OR CRITICAL TIME, SEASON, OR OPPORTUNITY.

DUE MEASURE, PROPORTION, OR FITNESS.

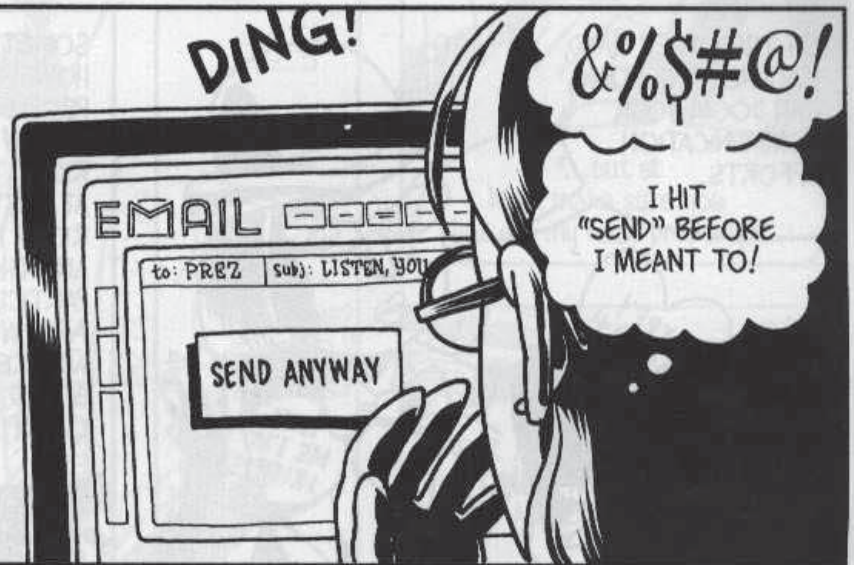
KAIROS WORKS IN MANY WAYS, ESPECIALLY TODAY.



DIGITAL WRITERS WHO COMMUNICATE USING THEIR COMPUTERS OR MOBILE PHONES OFTEN FEEL COMPELLED TO HIT "SEND" OR "ENTER" AS RAPIDLY AS POSSIBLE TO KEEP UP WITH A FAST-MOVING ONLINE CONVERSATION.



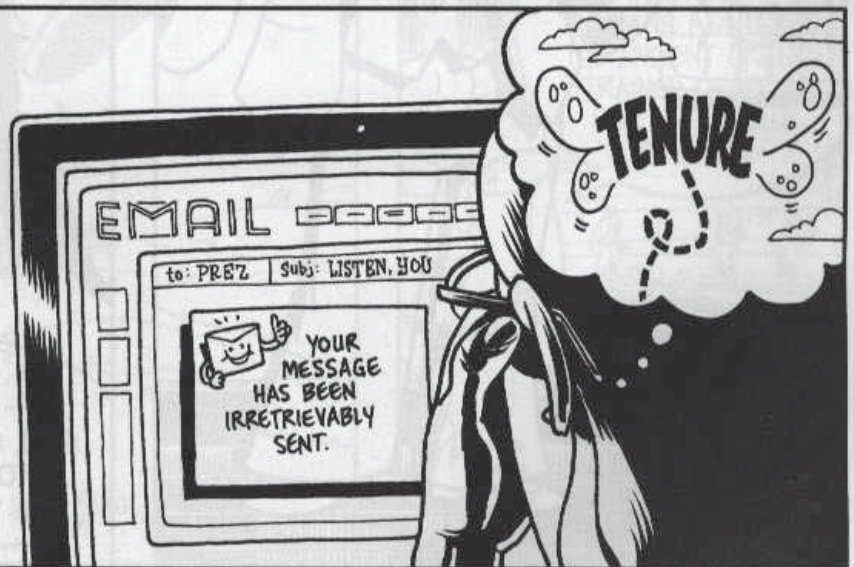
BUT IT'S USUALLY BETTER FIRST TO CONSIDER BOTH THE APPROPRIATENESS OF YOUR MESSAGE AND THE TIMING OF YOUR REPLY.



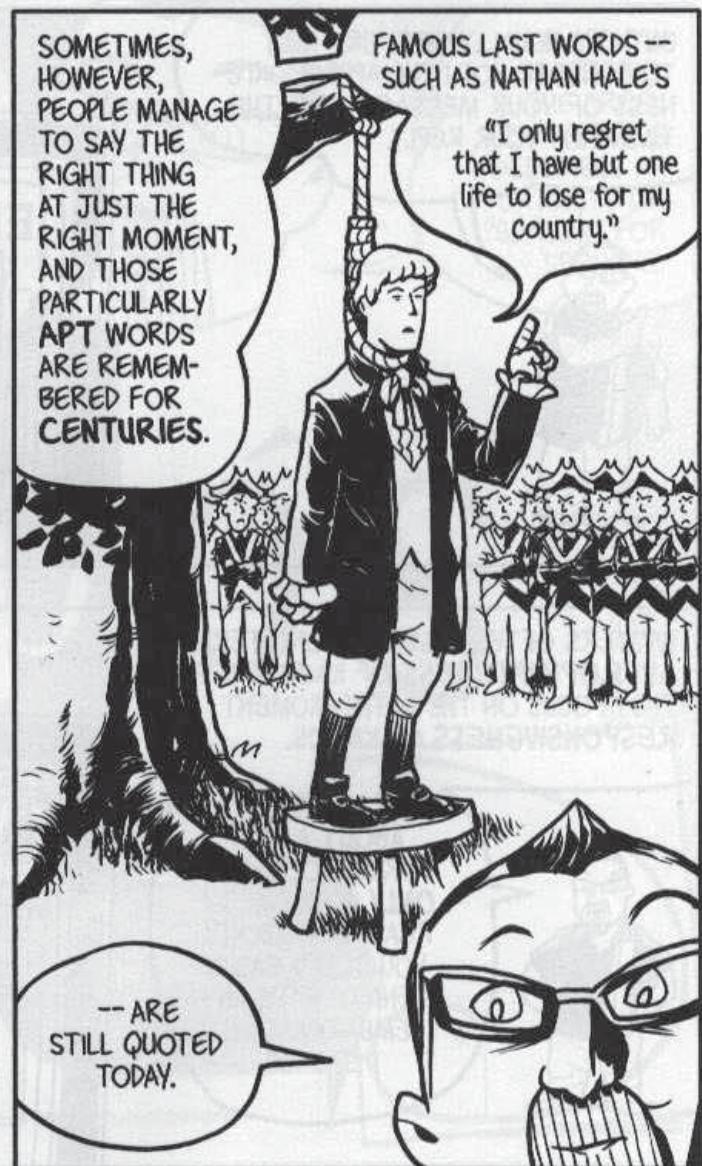
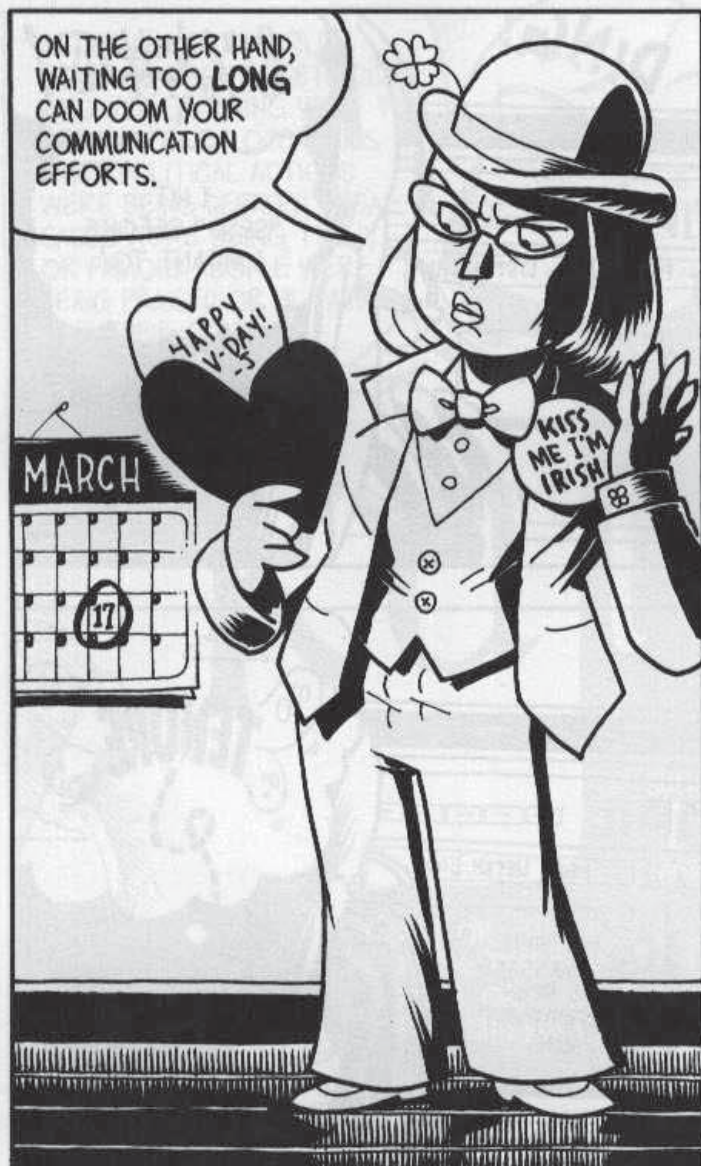
WRITERS OFTEN MISS THE LONG-TERM APPROPRIATENESS OF KAIROS WHEN THEY FOCUS ON THE IN-THE-MOMENT RESPONSIVENESS OF KAIROS.



IF YOU THINK ABOUT A RHETORICAL OCCASION ONLY IN TERMS OF REACTING QUICKLY, YOU COULD EASILY END UP WITH AN EMBARRASSING DISASTER.







THE ROMAN RHETORICIAN **MARCUS TULLIUS CICERO** REALLY UNDERSTOOD THE IMPORTANCE OF **KAIROS**.



FOR EXAMPLE, WHEN HE WAS ABOUT TO BE EXECUTED ON ARBITRARY POLITICAL GROUNDS HE SAW A MOMENT FOR GRACIOUS WIT:

"There is nothing proper about what you are doing, soldier..."

"...but at least make sure you cut off my head properly."



**CICERO** (106-43 BCE)

ANCIENT ROMAN PHILOSOPHER, LAWYER, AND STATESMAN

AFTER ALL, ARISTOTLE WASN'T THE **ONLY** FAMOUS RHETORICIAN IN THE ANCIENT WORLD.

CICERO, WHO LIKE MANY CULTURED ROMANS **ADMIR**ED THE ANCIENT GREEKS, TRAINED ORATORS FOR THE ROMAN **SENATE**.

"No one can speak well, unless he thoroughly understands his subject."

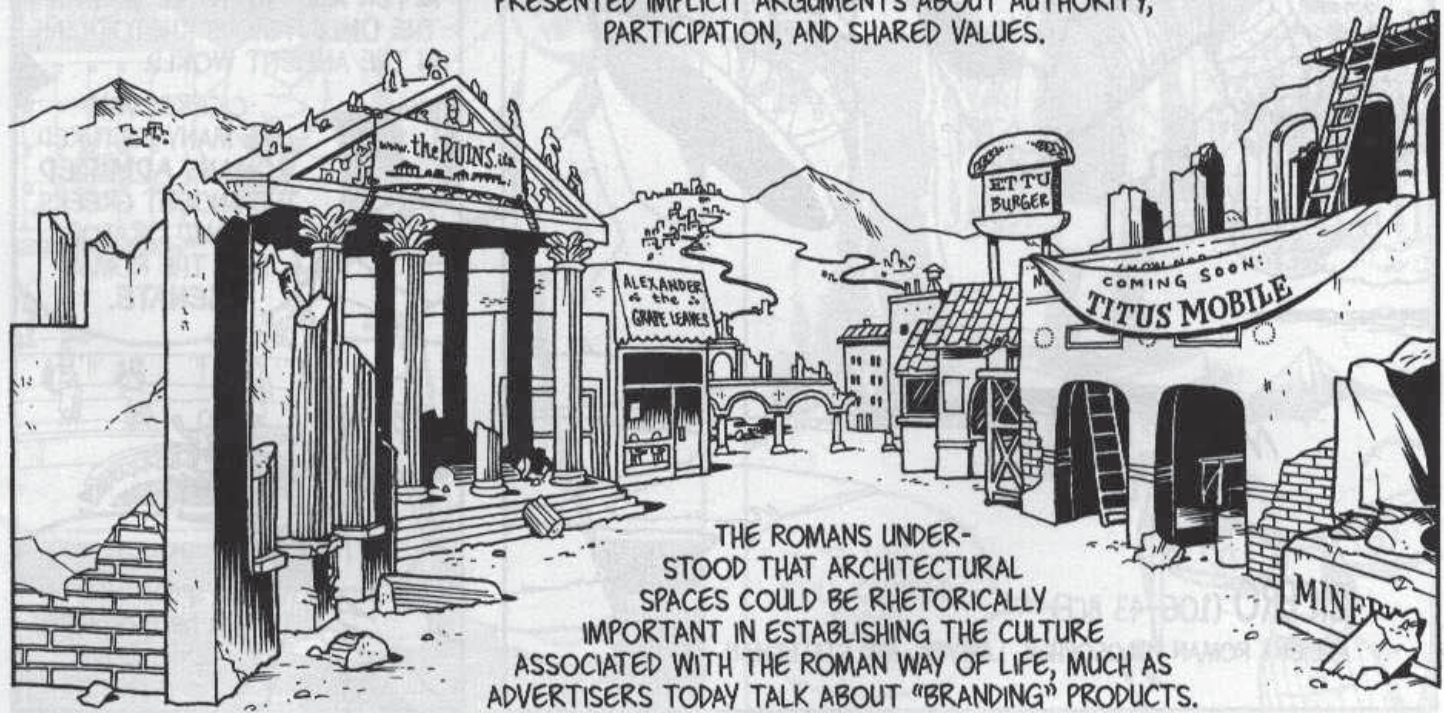


CICERO THOUGHT ABOUT THE "TEXTS" OF RHETORIC VERY BROADLY AND REALIZED THAT SPEECHES AND WRITING ARE NOT THE ONLY WAYS PEOPLE COMMUNICATE.

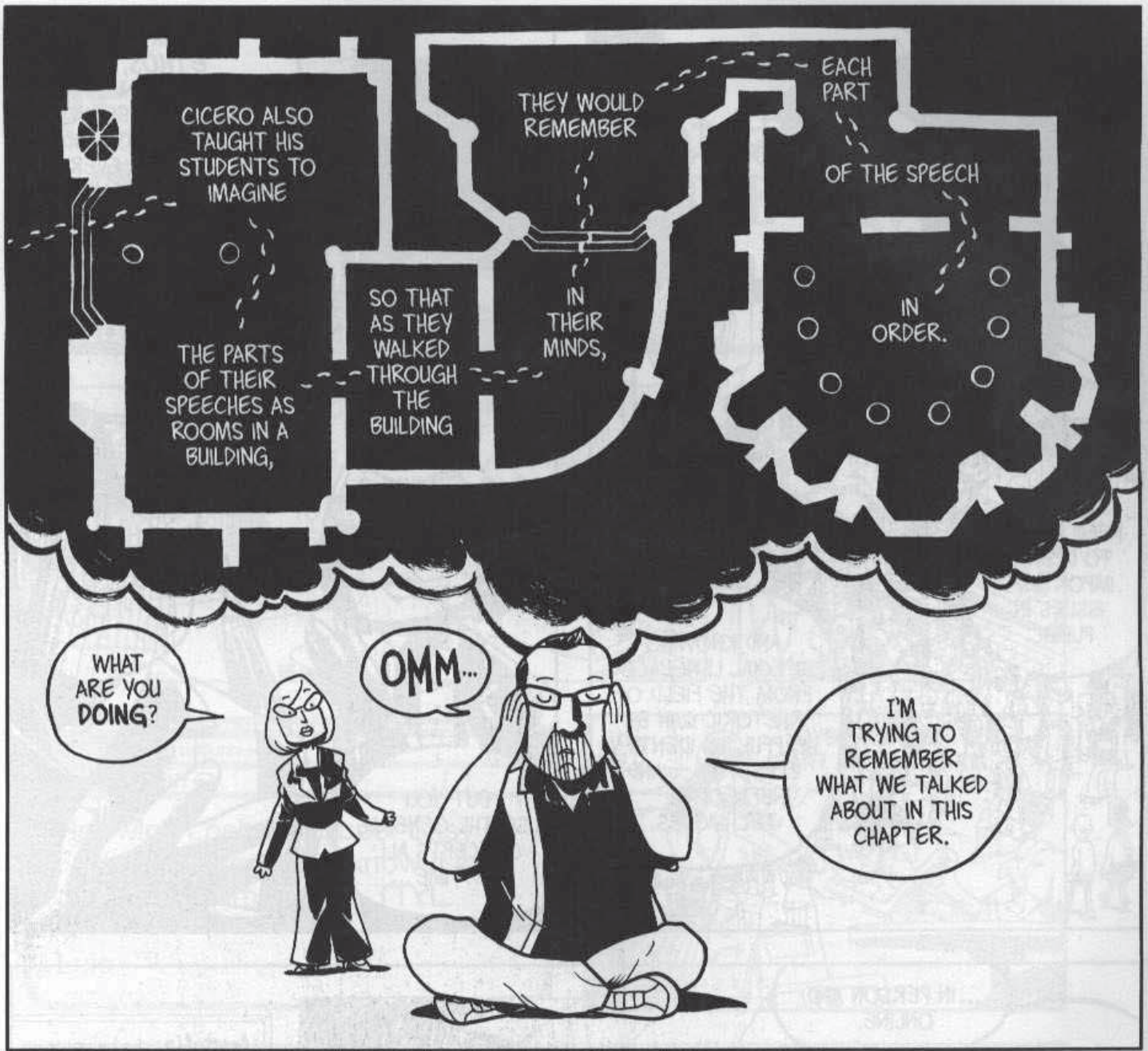
THE ROMANS DEVELOPED AN ELABORATE SYSTEM OF LAWS AND PUBLIC ENGINEERING PROJECTS TO REGULATE AN INCREASINGLY COMPLEX SOCIETY.

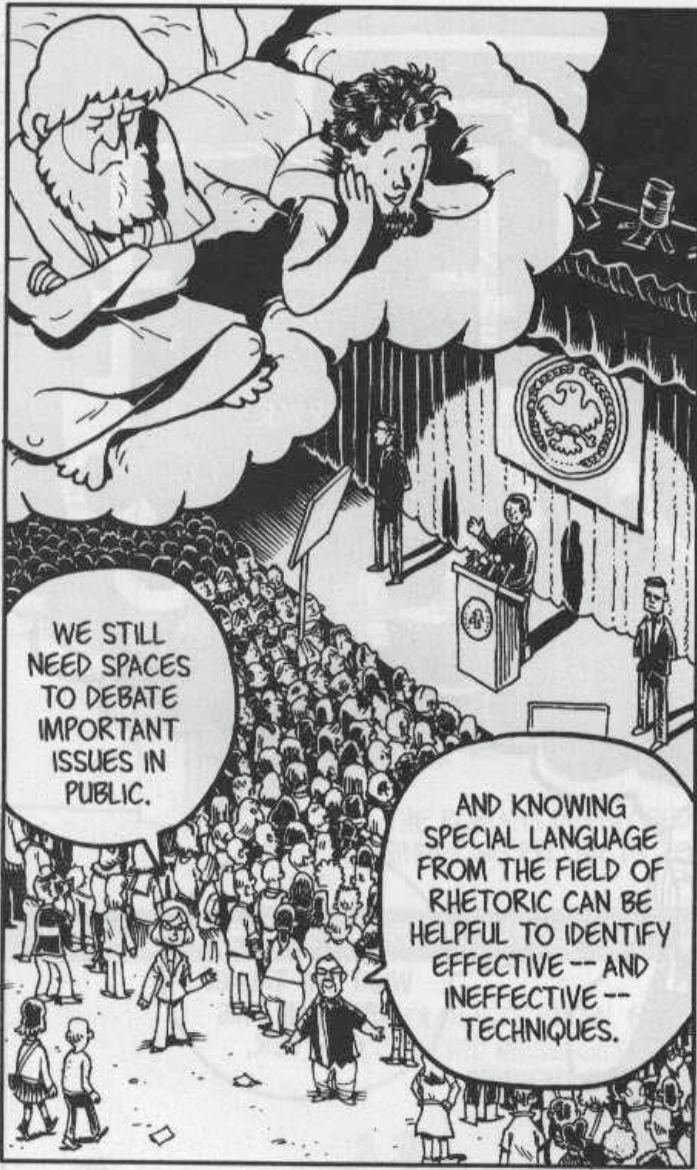
THESE **RES PUBLICA**, OR "PUBLIC THINGS," ARE WORTH CONSIDERING AS RHETORICAL ACTS AND SPACES.

AS ARCHEOLOGISTS KNOW, EVEN GOVERNMENT BUILDINGS AND TRIUMPHAL ARCHES CONVEYED MESSAGES TO CITIZENS IN THE ANCIENT ROMAN WORLD AND PRESENTED IMPLICIT ARGUMENTS ABOUT AUTHORITY, PARTICIPATION, AND SHARED VALUES.



THE ROMANS UNDERSTOOD THAT ARCHITECTURAL SPACES COULD BE RHETORICALLY IMPORTANT IN ESTABLISHING THE CULTURE ASSOCIATED WITH THE ROMAN WAY OF LIFE, MUCH AS ADVERTISERS TODAY TALK ABOUT "BRANDING" PRODUCTS.





Aristotle: haha nice hairstyle LOL

Plato: If you saw where the rain came from, you could never go back to your happy ignorance !!!!

Cicero: As the mature