

SYNTHESIS as Creative Risk:

This is an example of a counterargument/refutation paragraphs which demonstrate a strong display of academic synthesis of sources. The thesis of this paper is: “Aspasia is an important woman that scholars in rhetoric need to research more today.”

As you can see, I have **bolded** the words that are clear synthesis language. These words explain the relationship *between* sources. The underlined words are words that clearly came from the heart/mind of the person who wrote this paragraph. These underlined words are words of interpretation—these words are *not* borrowed from anyone else; rather, they are the result of careful thinking and of taking a risk, of going out on a limb. Excellent synthesis always dares to say something new, something different. Of course, various readers can interpret sources in different ways...but that is exactly what makes excellent synthesis so powerful! Synthesis is full of fiery thinking! Synthesis provokes cool debate between intellectuals. By demonstrating synthesis, you are entering an academic conversation with wit, with flair, and with confidence in what you are arguing.

Here are the paragraphs Please study this as a model:

Some scholars say that Aspasia is no longer relevant or important for study. For example, the writer Katherine Taylee writes, “Aspasia was important twenty years ago for rhetoric, but we must move to uncover new historical figures” (124). There are many other scholars who agree with Taylee’s stance. While Taylee is correct that rhetoricians need to continue to find new woman to uncover from history’s ashes, her idea about abandoning research on Aspasia is misguided and simply not true. Aspasia has much to teach scholars about silence, about listening, and about the value of a romantic partnership that had the potential to transform politics in ancient Athens in fifth century B.E. **The rhetorician Mark Walsep refutes Taylee’s point of view in a very emotional, yet powerful way when he writes:**

“Taylee and others are naïve. They do not understand the basic value of feminist recovery work. Their words have no significance for many of us, because they are based on the idea that everything has already been said about Aspasia—when that is far from the truth. Let’s not ignore Aspasia; let’s ignore Taylee instead. Let’s rally together and say enough is enough. Down with thinkers like Taylee. Down with the old, fearful, pessimistic ways.” (76-77)

Indeed, I agree with Walsep. We need to continue studying ancient Greek texts to see what we can find about Aspasia. We should not prematurely call it quits with her, but, rather, see what she can tell us about how gender, power, and language operated back in ancient Athens. Doing so may help us uncover truths about our current culture in the United States. Laura Mick **skillfully and poetically supports my point, and, also helps me to boldly stand against confused thinkers like Taylee in her article “A Women’s Voice.”** She asserts, “Women in ancient Athens were not so different from the women of Ohio or California or Vermont of now”; we need to keep on searching for parallels. Our whole human history depends upon it (350).