ENVIRONMENTALISM ON THE WEB:

POLITICAL ACTIVISM IN THE AGE OF NEW MEDIA

by

DYLAN WOLFE

(Under the Direction of Kevin DeLuca)

ABSTRACT

This dissertation is a study of the rhetoric of environmental activism in the

communication context of new media. I specifically focus on how the rhetoric of

environmental activism operates on the internet. The group of media technologies known

as "new media" are characterized by a high volume of cursory message fragments

circulating speedily yet detached from a clear distinction between producers and

consumers. I propose that in this communication context, circulation of new media texts

is rhizomatic, moving on lines of flight rather than clearly delineated pathways.

Determining the force of rhetoric requires engagement of textual elements, a surveying of

relationships between textual fragments and technological characteristics in a discursive

plateau. In this study I offer resonance as a conceptual basis for considering the rhetoric

of advocacy in new media communication. Resonance aligns the rhetoric of a text with

potential viewers' experiences in discourse. Resonant elements of a text challenge

dominant meaning, seeking to articulate knowledge more favorably to environmentalists.

In order to account for the implications of an image-centered communicative

circumstance, I also forward image resonance, a counterpart and compliment to

resonance. Image resonance aligns with the rhetorical forces at the surface of images with

the communicative conditions of the accelerated and surface-oriented world.

INDEX WORDS: Environmental Communication, Rhetoric, New Media,
                 Environmentalism, Communication,

ENVIRONMENTALISM ON THE WEB:

POLITICAL ACTIVISM IN THE AGE OF NEW MEDIA

by

DYLAN WOLFE

B.S., State University of New York, College of Environmental Science & Forestry, 2001

M.S., State University of New York, College of Environmental Science & Forestry, 2003

A dissertation Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of The University of Georgia in Partial

Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

ATHENS, GEORGIA

2006

ENVIRONMENTALISM ON THE WEB:

POLITICAL ACTIVISM IN THE AGE OF NEW MEDIA

by

DYLAN WOLFE

Major Professor: Kevin DeLuca

Committee: John Murphy
Christine Harold
Vanessa Beasley
Paul Sutter

Electronic Version Approved:

Maureen Grasso
Dean of the Graduate School
The University of Georgia
August 2006

DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to Kourtney and Julie, whose resonance in my heart is

simply too powerful to express.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Completing this project would not have been possible without the guidance, camaraderie, friendship, and support of many people, a few of whom I would like to thank here. Kevin DeLuca, my advisor, mentor, and friend, will forever inspire my scholarship. Celeste Condit has influenced my criticism and relationship to the world. John Murphy has taught me to consider the traditions of my intellectual heritage, while Christine Harold has helped me shake free of traditions. Vanessa Beasley and Bonnie Dow imparted lessons on personal and professional life that are beyond value.

My compatriots in the graduate program at the University of Georgia are without question the bright future of the discipline. Kristy Maddux was instrumental in avoiding disaster at many crucial moments. Lisa Slawter required that I make sense when it was necessary. Davi Johnson and Shannon Holland became true friends in an unlikely time. Jarrod Atchison was a friend from the moment we met, as is his nature. Shanara Reid teaches tough lessons with her friendship, lessons that are indispensable.

Friends and mentors from my time in Syracuse remain the most shaping of my life. I must thank Mark Meisner, Amardo Rodriguez, Pat Lawler, Deb Robson, Sue Senecah, and the Environmental Studies program at ESF for their direction in my education. Sam Snyder, Jack Lawrence, Ben Stahlberg, Lesleigh Cushing, Erik Eacker, Andrew Saldino, Willow Jacobson, and Chad Snyder are due thanks for other directions.

Finally, my family has taken me farther than I expected I should ever go. Thank You.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF FIGURES

Page

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION: FROM EVENT TO CONCEPT

I.

On June 9, 1966 Sierra Club Executive Director David Brower reticently placed a

full page advertisement in the *New York Times* and other national newspapers. His

reticence was due to the advertisement's sensational headline: "Now Only You Can Save

Grand Canyon From Being Flooded…For Profit" (Figure 1). The ad, designed by

marketing professionals Howard Gossage and Jerry Mander (Mander would later become

a leader in environmental and public advocacy movements), was meant to be "an event,"

a strong appeal to public sentiment[1]—as the advertisement stated, "After all, as

astonishing as it may seem, it *is* the Grand Canyon that's in danger this time. *The Grand

Canyon*."[2] Such a bold move was unheard of in political advocacy at the time. Arizona

Representative Morris Udall angrily took the House floor, decrying the "hatchet job," and

"inflammatory" character of the message (which he knew was directed at the plan

outlined by his brother, Secretary of the Interior Stewart Udall).[3] The next day the Sierra

Club was served notice by the IRS of an investigation that would soon strip the

organization of its not-for-profit status.[4]

---

[1] Byron E. Pearson, *Still the Wild River Runs: Congress, the Sierra Club, and the Fight to Save Grand Canyon* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2002), 137.
[2] Advertisement, *New York Times*, June 9, 1966, 35 (original emphasis)
[3] Pearson, *Still the Wild River Runs: Congress, the Sierra Club, and the Fight to Save Grand Canyon*, 142.
[4] Ibid., 144. Pearson also reports that Morris Udall is reputed to have eaten lunch with Assistant IRS Commissioner Sheldon Cohen on June 9th, and to have later admitted to initiating the IRS action (ibid., 144).

(If they can turn Grand Canyon into a "cash register" is any national park safe? You know the answer.)

Now Only You Can Save Grand Canyon From Being Flooded...For Profit

Yes, that's right, *Grand Canyon!* The facts are these:

Figure 1. Sierra Club Advertisement in the New York Times, June 9, 1966

The Sierra Club would never be the same, nor would environmental advocacy or political activism in general. Front page media coverage of the controversy and IRS actions are credited with expanding Sierra Club membership from 39,000 to 135,000.[5] Letters to key political offices numbered in the hundreds of thousands, leading to eventual removal of all dam projects from the Central Arizona Project passed by

Congress in 1968.[6] The American environmental movement had gone public, and the strong sensational "event" of June 9, 1966 brought environmentalism into a new era of rhetorical advocacy—or, at least, this is how the story is told.[7]

II.

On March 16, 2006 my RSS aggregator "Bloglines" contained an entry from the "WorldChanging" Blog titled "How Much is that in Oil." The short entry included a hyperlink, which I followed, to the download page for "Oil Standard," which is described as "a web browser plug-in that converts all prices from U.S. dollars into the equivalent value in barrels of oil." I downloaded and installed the plug-in, which is specifically designed for use on the open-source Mozilla browser with a "Greasemonkey" extension. Consequently, when I later searched the Amazon.com website, the webpage added ".55 Barrels Oil" to the cost, $34.99, of "The Sims 2: Open for Business Expansion Pack" for Windows XP (Figure 2). In addition, as I rolled my mouse pointer over the price in oil, a dialog box appeared, informing me that "Superior Oil and Gas Co. Announces an Agreement to Acquire Williams Equipment Company of Oklahoma City, OK." Clicking on the box led my browser to the news release of the proposed acquisition by Superior Oil.[8]

---

[5] Roderick Nash, *Wilderness and the American Mind*, 3rd ed. (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1982), 231.

[6] Ibid., 234.

[7] My own introduction to this narrative came in an undergraduate course, "History of the American Environmental Movement," taught by Susan Senecah, whose beloved dog was named "Brower."

[8] Superior Oil and Gas, *Superior Oil and Gas Co. Announces an Agreement to Acquire Williams Equipment Company of Oklahoma City, Ok* (Primezone Newswire, 2006 [cited March 16 2006]); available from http://www.primezone.com/newsroom/news.html?ref=rss&d=95723.

Figure 2. The Standard Oil plub-in alters the information on an Amazon.com website

The Event and the Diffuse

David Brower's reluctant acquiescence provided the event that brought environmentalists a new means of rhetorical advocacy. While Brower, Gossage, and Mander deserve ample credit as pioneers of this new rhetorical mode, the possibility for its use was not solely their creation. A convergence of technological changes, both mechanical and social, produced the circumstances for this new form of rhetoric, the advocates' media "event." The mass production and national distribution of daily newspapers, at its peak in the mid-twentieth century, were advancements in mechanical technology that provided the speed of distribution and cohesive audience necessary for the appeal to American nationalism to have its proper effect. In addition, new social knowledge (cultural technologies) such as graphic design and Madison Avenue's corporate style of sensational advertising, were necessary requisites for both the production of the advertisement and its common acceptance as a legitimate form of communication by the readers.

Yet it was not the advertisement itself that convinced Udall, the IRS, and hundreds of thousands of people that a strong statement had been made. The form itself, a bold headlined advertisement in a national newspaper, was not the force behind the sentiments of the readers, not completely anyway. What created the event was the rhetoric of the ad: "Yes, that's right, *Grand Canyon*!"[9] The force of rhetoric in this ad derived from an appeal to American nostalgia. As Donald Worster writes in his essay, "The Nature We Have Lost," "Nostalgia runs all through this society—fortunately, for it may be our only hope of salvation."[10] Specifically, the Sierra Club advertisement appealed to the American nostalgia for its providential significance as the nation of wilderness, distinct from its European predecessors as a land of natural grandeur.[11] As Roderick Nash noted, "In the early nineteenth century American nationalists began to understand that it was in the *wildness* of its nature that their country was unmatched…And if, as many suspected, wilderness was the medium through which God spoke most clearly, then America had a distinct moral advantage over Europe."[12] Ultimately, Nash concludes, "When Congress in 1874 appropriated $10,000 for one of [Thomas] Moran's paintings of the Grand Canyon to hang in the Senate Lobby, the American wilderness received official endorsement as a subject for national pride."[13]

Although American history is steeped in a nationalist view of wilderness in general and the Grand Canyon specifically—including Theodore Roosevelt's designation of the area as a national monument in 1906—the idea of wilderness would not have been

---

[9] This is the subheading of the advertisement.

[10] Donald Worster, *The Wealth of Nature: Environmental History and the Ecological Imagination* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), 3.

[11] Nash, *Wilderness and the American Mind*. This is the central argument made by Nash, see especially chapter 4, "The American Wilderness," 67-83.

[12] Ibid., 69.

[13] Ibid., 83.

in the minds of so many Americans had it not been for its continued presence in discourse. For example, the Sierra Club was not limited to Washington politics and newspaper advertisements, but also produced glossy, full color books of nature photography, including *Grand Canyon* in 1963 and *Time and the River Flowing: Grand Canyon* in 1964 and 1967. They also used direct mail to distribute pamphlets, sent bumper stickers to their members, and created color movies, including *The Grand Canyon*. Each of which, of course, were again the composite of the activist message and the possibility created by new technologies like color reproduction, an inexpensive public mail system, the burgeoning automobile culture, and color motion pictures.

The nostalgia for the American wilderness, the grandeur of its natural monuments, existed in a diffuse state. Publications, campaign materials, and films are able to multiply that nostalgia to a state of diffusion with higher density thanks to new communicative technologies which engendered innovative rhetorical forms. The event of a sensational appeal, then, activated the diffuse nostalgia that pre-existed in the readers' minds. Activism, environmental or otherwise, could be described as the rhetorical process of activating diffuse fragments of discourse, fragments which can be promulgated by the advocate. New forms of activism are new approaches to rhetoric, either as activation or promulgation, and new technologies create new opportunities for rhetoric, either diffuse or eventful.

Am I arguing, then, that the "Oil Standard" plug-in to my browser is a form of diffuse rhetoric awaiting the activation of a sensational media event? Based on the model of mass-mediated communication guiding the environmental movement and other advocates since the 1960s, yes, the circumstance of viewing the price of my consumerism

in the form of a non-renewable and environmentally disruptive resource has a diffuse

rhetorical force on my consideration of the world that could be drawn upon by the

rhetorical articulation of a spectacular event. To a point this is the argument I would like

to extend, but that point, I caution, is linked to the technological base for the model:

mass-mediated communication. The introduction of the contemporary example, so far

awry of the importance of June 9, 1966, serves here as counterpoint to the technological

basis of mass-mediated communication in two ways. First, contemporary communication

technologies, from the world wide web, the Blog, RSS, to the virtual reality of computer

gaming, provide new opportunities for rhetoric, new forms available to the advocate.

Second, with changes in the forms of media there are consequential changes in the way

we interact with its stimuli, and so too do the models of understanding rhetoric need to

change. The "new media" I discuss in the ensuing project are a continuation of a pattern

wherein new technology opens opportunities for new rhetorical appeals by advocates.

New technologies, however, also shift the perceptual habits of its users, in this case

favoring the diffuse while enervating the mass-media event.

Introduction to the Study

  Environmental advocates have historically made use of emerging media

technologies and formats to challenge dominant perspectives and argue for natural

protection. A brief survey of environmentalism in the United States provides a wealth of

examples. The "sublime" landscape paintings of Thomas Cole and the Hudson River

Valley School of the mid-nineteenth century are often credited as the first American

school of painting and as the first school of painting to depict the pure beauty of

untrammeled nature.[14] Soon thereafter the publication of Carleton Watkins Yosemite photographs (1861) were instrumental to conservation advocates campaigning for formation of the United States' first area of natural preservation[15] and are also argued to have longstanding reverberations on the American environmental mindset.[16] The beginning of the twentieth century coincided with the exponential growth of American cities and the industrial revolution's necessary rise of a working class, and along with cities and industry came all the environmental hazards of an industrializing nation. These advances in mechanical and social technology also generated the possibility for the rise of a citizens' environmental movement, a movement based in quality of life (as opposed to the previous concerns for leisure, recreation, and natural wonders associated with the interests of the countries' elite).[17] A large source of the advocacy in urban settings came from now well-developed women's rights movement, and the infrastructure of women's civic organizations and speaking circuits. Such is the case for the creation of Audubon Society groups throughout the country in the 1890s and early 1900s.[18]

As the twentieth century moved forward, the establishment of a loosely defined scientific discipline would become the rhetorical resource for a rapidly developing preservationist movement. The science of ecology, as Worster writes, "has had a popular

---

[14] Carolyn Merchant, *Major Problems in American Environmental History: Documents and Essays* (Lexington, Mass.: D.C. Heath, 1993), 171 and 78-80. Gregory Clark, S. Michael Halloran, and Allison Woodford, "Thomas Cole's Vision of 'Nature' and the Conquest Theme in American Culture," in *Green Culture: Environmental Rhetoric in Contemporary America*, ed. Carl George Herndl and Stuart C. Brown (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1996), 261-80. Nash, *Wilderness and the American Mind*, 78-83.
[15] Kevin DeLuca and Anne Teresa Demo, "Imaging Nature: Watkins, Yosemite, and the Birth of Environmentalism," *Critical Studies in Media Communication* 17, no. 3 (2000). Protection of Yosemite Valley and Mariposa Big Tree grove was passed by congress and signed into law by Abraham Lincoln in 1864 (ibid., 241).
[16] Deluca and Demo, 2000 write that Watkins' "most important legacy is how his imagistic construction of nature influenced environmentalism." (ibid., 254).
[17] Merchant, *Major Problems in American Environmental History: Documents and Essays*, 414.

impact unlike that of any other academic field of research."[19] With the publication of Rachel Carson's best-selling admonition of the chemical pesticide industry, *Silent Spring*, in 1962[20] the academic discourse of ecology combined with the "apocalyptic narrative"[21] of post-WWII "future shock" to create what Kirkpatrick Sale argues had not existed before: "an environmental *movement*—concerted, populous, vocal, influential, active."[22] Such a movement now approached environmental concern with professional and organizationally adept precision.[23] The rapidly expanding resources of political interest organizations like The Sierra Club allowed Brower the capacity to appeal to aesthetic nationalism through its newspaper advertising, photographic collections, and books. Later, the electronic age arrived in full and Greenpeace and EarthFirst! manipulated television news media to challenge industrial practices.[24]

The internet, now available to hundreds of millions worldwide, offers environmental rhetors yet another channel for advocacy. With each new media technology, however, there are new challenges and opportunities for rhetorical practice—new ways of public interaction. As such, it is of interest to rhetorical scholars, media scholars, and environmental communication scholars to study how environmental

---

[18] Jennifer Price, *Flight Maps: Adventures with Nature in Modern America* (New York: Basic Books, 1999), 57-110.

[19] Worster, *The Wealth of Nature: Environmental History and the Ecological Imagination*, 156.

[20] Rachel Carson, *Silent Spring* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1962).

[21] M. Jimmie Killingsworth and Jacqueline S. Palmer, "Millennial Ecology: The Apocalyptic Narrative from *Silent Spring* to *Global Warming*," in *Green Culture: Environmental Rhetoric in Contemporary America*, ed. Carl George Herndl and Stuart C. Brown (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1996), 21.

[22] Kirkpatrick Sale and Eric Foner, *The Green Revolution the American Environmental Movement 1962-1992* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1993), 6.

[23] Christopher Bosso, "Environmental Groups in the New Political Landscape," in *Environmental Policy*, ed. Norman J. Vig and Michael E. Kraft (Washington: CQ Press, 2000), 55-76.

[24] Kevin DeLuca, *Image Politics: The New Rhetoric of Environmental Activism*, *Revisioning Rhetoric* (New York: Guilford Press, 1999). Jonathan I. Lange, "Refusal to Compromise: The Case of Earth First!," *Western Journal of Speech Communication* (1990), Harold Schlechtweg, "Media Frames and Environmental Discourse: The Case of 'Focus: Logjam'," in *The Symbolic Earth*, ed. James G. Cantrill and

advocates are (and could be) making use of new media technologies in their activism. The following is a study of the rhetoric of environmental activism in the communication context of new media. I specifically focus on how the rhetoric of environmental activism operates on the internet.

The central question I am asking in this dissertation project is: How are environmental advocates adapting their rhetoric to new media formats?

I have already argued that emerging technologies, both mechanical and cultural, open up new kinds of activism for environmental advocates. The new forms of activism are contingent upon the characteristics of the emerging technology. The group of media technologies known as "new media" are characterized by a high volume of cursory message fragments circulating speedily yet detached from a clear distinction between producers and consumers. I propose that in this communication context, circulation of new media texts is rhizomatic, moving on lines of flight rather than clearly delineated pathways. A new media public, then, cannot be clearly traced along traditional pathways of distribution, but rather must be mapped rhizomatically.

While mapping circulation is important for determining the breadth of dissemination, determining the force of rhetoric requires engagement of textual elements, a surveying of relationships between textual fragments and technological charactersitics in a discursive plateau. In this study I offer resonance as a conceptual basis for considering the rhetoric of advocacy in new media communication. Resonance aligns the rhetoric of a text with potential viewers' experiences in discourse. Resonant elements of a text challenge dominant meaning, seeking to articulate knowledge more favorably to

Christine L. Oravec (Kentucky: University of Kentucky, 1996), Brant Short, "Earth First! And the Rhetoric of Moral Confrontation," *Communications Studies* (1991).

environmentalists. However, this model of the rhetorical moment assumes a certain depth of conscious consideration. In order to account for the implications of an image-centered communicative circumstance, I also forward image resonance, a counterpart and compliment resonance. Image resonance aligns with the rhetorical forces at the surface of images with the communicative conditions of the accelerated and surface-oriented world.

Audience

This project is addressed to several audiences. As a student of rhetoric, I engage the scholarship of rhetorical criticism and theory. The approach of this project is explicitly rhetorical and I see my work following and extending the tradition of criticism. Additionally, this is a work that studies rhetoric in mediated form. As such, I draw upon the scholarship of critical media studies, and see my project to be of value to those with interest in mass communication. In particular, I am centering my study on new media, also referred to as digital media or computer-mediated communication. Since I argue that new media are incorporated with our everyday experiences and a vital new area of rhetorical study, I see the new media aspect of this project not only as an engagement with media scholarship, but a foray into new media studies from the perspective of a rhetorical critic. The focus on images in the later chapters also places the work in conversation with scholars of visual rhetoric, from the disciplines of communication studies, art history, and—to some extent—aesthetic philosophy. In addition, I believe that my broad consideration of texts, including the rhetoric of everyday interaction, should make this project of interest to those in cultural and American studies. Similarly, the content of the case studies intersects the study of environmental issues and the practice of

environmental advocacy. All of these areas of study and practice, in fact, underlie the broad category of environmental communication (discussed in detail below), from which I draw significantly.

This litany of potential audiences may be surprising given the limited scope of the project. Such is the case with the forms and characteristics of the rhetoric I am studying—there are overlaps, dispersed fragments, and unexpected connections. The greatest difficulty in writing about this rhetoric, in fact, comes from a need to present the materials and arguments in a language readable to its diverse audience. That being the case, some sections of this exposition may seem simplistic to some readers, glossing over the nuanced debates taken with the utmost seriousness within specific disciplines. Other sections may appear strikingly complicated. Each is a symptom of the bounds of the media and the diffuse nature of any rhetorical event.

Environmental Communication

Along with rhetorical studies, the other central constituency of this project, environmental communication, has been described both as an interdisciplinary conversation and as a sub-discipline of communication studies.[25] With my own background in environmental studies and participation in the academic conversations of environmental rhetoric,[26] this interdisciplinary/sub-disciplinary area is where I see my

---

[25] As interdisciplinary, environmental communication combines studies in philosophy, environmental studies, communication, journalism, social movements, sociology, ecology, literature, and politics. As intra-disciplinary, environmental communication draws from communication scholars in the areas of organizational communication, rhetorical studies, media studies, and communication theory. Examples of these convergences are too many to begin listing but most of these areas of study are frequently represented at the Biennial Conference on Communication and the Environment.

[26] Dylan Wolfe, "The Common Erasure of Space and Nature: Communication as a Bridge between the Discourses of Designed Space and Ecocentred Identity," *The Trumpeter* 19, no. 3 (2003), Dylan Wolfe, "Critical Ecorhetoric: Theoretical Explorations of Critical Rhetoric and Ecocentric Thought" (paper

strongest scholarly connection.[27] Entering the proposed study into conversation with

environmental communication, however, is not the simple matter of extending or

presented at the Conference on Communication and the Environment, Silver Falls, 2003), Dylan Wolfe, "Media Frames Earth First!: Interpretation, Construction, and Alignment in Frame Analysis" (paper presented at the NCA Conference, New Orleans, 2002). I received a Bachelors and Masters of Science in environmental communication from the Graduate Program in Environmental Studies at The State University of New York, College of Environmental Science and Forestry at Syracuse in 2003.

[27] From my Masters program in environmental studies I bring a particular background in what my advisor, Mark Meisner, described as environmental thought. Within this corpus of work are included texts on environmental philosophy, human interaction with the nonhuman, and historical perspectives. While much of this work has moved to the background in my writing, the influences remain viable in my approach to human-nature interaction and the role of rhetoric. See, for example: Thomas Berry, *The Great Work* (New York: Random House, 1999), Michael Bruner and Max Oelschlaeger, "Rhetoric, Environmentalism, and Environmental Ethics," *Environmental Ethics* 16, no. Winter (1994), J. Baird Callicot, "Environmental Philosophy Is Environmental Activism: The Most Radical and Effective Kind," in *Environmental Philosophy & Environmental Activism*, ed. Don Marrietta and Lester Embree (Maryland: Rowman and Littlefirld Publishers, 1995), J. Baird Callicott, *Beyond the Land Ethic : More Essays in Environmental Philosophy*, *Suny Series in Philosophy and Biology* (Albany, N.Y.: State University of New York Press, 1999), J. Baird Callicott, *Earth's Insights: A Multicultural Survey of Ecological Ethics from the Mediterranean Basin to the Australian Outback* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994), J. Baird Callicott, *In Defense of the Land Ethic : Essays in Environmental Philosophy*, *Suny Series in Philosophy and Biology* (Albany, N.Y.: State University of New York Press, 1989), J. Robert Cox, "Nature's 'Crisis Disciplines': Does Environmental Communication Have an Ethical Duty? (Keynote Address)" (paper presented at the Eighth Biennial Conference on Communication and the Environment, Jekyll Island, Georgia, 2005), Alan Drengson, "Some Fundamentals of Ecophilosophy as Ecocentric Inquiry," *The Trumpeter* 13, no. 3 (1996), Alan Drengson, "Termonology of the Deep Ecology Movement," *The Trumpeter* 13, no. 3 (1996), John Dryzek, "Green Reason: Communicative Ethics for the Biosphere," in *Postmodern Environmental Ethics*, ed. Max Oelschlaeger (Albany: SUNY Press, 1995), John Dryzek, *The Politics of the Earth: Environmental Discourses* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), Robyn Eckersley, *Environmentalism and Political Theory: Toward an Ecocentric Approach*, *Suny Series in Environmental Public Policy* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1992), Neil Evernden, *The Natural Alien* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1985), Warwick Fox, "The Deep Ecology-Ecofeminism Debate and Its Parallels," *Environmental Ethics* 11, no. 1 (1989), Warwick. Fox, *Toward a Transpersonal Ecology: Developing New Foundations for Environmentalism* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1990), Eric Katz, "Against the Inevitability of Anthropocentrism," in *Beneath the Surface: Critical Essays Ua the Phllosophv of Deep Ecology*, ed. Andrew Lights Eric Katz and David Rothenberg (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2000), Eric Katz, Andrew Light, and David Rothenberg, "Deep Ecology as Philosophy," in *Beneath the Surface: Critical Essays in the Philosophy of Deep Ecology*, ed. Eric Katz, Andrew Light, and David Rothenberg (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2000), James Lawler, "Ecocentric Ethics," *Free Inquiry* 13, no. 2 (1993), Andrew Light and Jonathan M. Smith, *Space, Place, and Environmental Ethics* (Lanham: Roman & Littlefield Publishers, 1997), Carolyn Merchant, *The Columbia Guide to American Environmental History*, *The Columbia Guides to American History and Cultures* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002), Merchant, *Major Problems in American Environmental History: Documents and Essays*, Carolyn Merchant, *Radical Ecology: The Search for a Livable World* (New York: Routledge, 1992), Arne Naess, "The Deep Ecological Movement: Some Philosophical Aspects," in *Environmental Philosophy: From Animal Rights to Radical Ecology*, ed. Michael E. Zimmerman, et al. (Upper Sadle River: Prentice Hall, 1998), Arne Naess and David Rothenberg, *Ecology, Community, and Lifestyle: Outline of an Ecosophy* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1989), Roderick Nash, *The Rights of Nature: A History of Environmental Ethics*, *History of American Thought and Culture* (Madison, Wis.: University of Wisconsin Press, 1989), Nash, *Wilderness and the American Mind*, Max Oelschlaeger, *The Wilderness Condition: Essays on Environment and Civilization* (San Francisco: Sierra Club Books, 1992), Max Oelschlaeger, ed., *Postmodern Environmental*

challenging a narrow area of scholarship. On the one hand, environmental

communication is a wide and varied field while, on the other, little work has been done

that is similar to my project.[28]

Environmental communication scholars have written on diverse topics including:

public participation; environmental mediation; images of nature in popular culture;

rhetoric in environmental debates, advocacy, and education; and media treatments of

environmental issues.[29]A large portion of this literature falls into social scientific

Ethics (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1995), Val Plumwood, "Androcentrism and Anthropocentrism: Parallels and Politics," in *Ecofeminism: Women, Culture, Nature*, ed. Karen Warren (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1997), Val Plumwood, *Environmental Culture : The Ecological Crisis of Reason*, *Environmental Philosophies Series* (New York: Routledge, 2001), Price, *Flight Maps: Adventures with Nature in Modern America*, John Rodman, "Four Forms of Ecological Consciousness Reconsidered," in *Environmental Ethics, 2nd Ed.*, ed. Richard Botzler and Susan Armstrong (Boston: McGrawHill, 1998), Sale and Foner, *The Green Revolution the American Environmental Movement 1962-1992*, Kirkpatrick. Sale, *Human Scale* (New York: Coward McCann & Geoghegan, 1980), George Sessions, "Ecocentrism and the Anthropocentric Detour," in *Ecology*, ed. Carolyn Merchant, *Key Concepts in Critical Theory* (NJ: Atlantic Highlands, 1994), Charlene Spretnak, "Critical and Constructive Contributions of Ecofeminism," in *Worldviews on Ecology*, ed. Peter Tucker and Evelyn Grim (Philadelphia: Bucknell Press, 1993), Charlene Spretnak, *The Resurgence of the Real : Body, Nature, and Place in a Hypermodern World* (Reading: Addison-Wesley, 1997), Paul Sutter, "What Can U.S. Environmental Historians Learn from Non-U.S. Environmental Histiography?," *Environmental History* 8 (2003), Mitchell Thomashow, *Bringing the Biosphere Home: Learning to Percieve Global Environmental Change* (Cambridge: MIT, 2002), Mitchell Thomashow, *Ecological Identity: Becoming a Reflective Environmentalist* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1995), Anthony Weston, "Berfore Environmental Ethics," *Environmental Ethics* 14, no. 4 (1992), Anthony Weston, "Non-Anthropocentrism in a Thoughoughly Anthropocentrised World," *The Trumpeter* 8, no. 3 (1991), Donald Worster, *The Ends of the Earth: Perspectives on Modern Environmental History*, *Studies in Environment and History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), Donald Worster, *Nature's Economy: A History of Ecological Ideas* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), Donald Worster, "Transformations of the Earth: Toward an Agroecological Perspective in History," *Journal of American History* 76, no. 4 (1990), Worster, *The Wealth of Nature: Environmental History and the Ecological Imagination*.

[28] Relatively little work has been done in any form of environmental rhetoric and new media study. The few scholars interested in this intersection tend to write broadly about the possibilities for effective organizing or issue dissemination Laurie Kutner, "Environmental Activism and the Internet," *Electronic Green Journal*, no. 12 (2000), Jenny Pickerill, "Spreading the Green Word? Using the Internet for Environmental Campaigning," *ECOS* 21, no. 1 (2000).

[29] Mark Meisner, *What Is Environmental Communication* [website] (2005 [cited September 23 2005]); available from http://www.esf.edu/ecn/whatisec.htm.. There are a core set of book length studies and collections often cited as an emerging cannon: James G. Cantrill and Christine L. Oravec, *The Symbolic Earth : Discourse and Our Creation of the Environment* (Lexington, Ky.: University Press of Kentucky, 1996), âEric Darier, *Discourses of the Environment* (Oxford, UK ; Malden, Mass., USA: Blackwell, 1998), Kevin Michael DeLuca, *Image Politics : The New Rhetoric of Environmental Activism*, *Revisioning Rhetoric* (New York: Guilford Press, 1999), Dryzek, *The Politics of the Earth: Environmental Discourses*, Rom Harré, Jens Brockmeier, and Peter Mühlhäuser, *Greenspeak : A Study of Environmental Discourse* (Thousand Oaks, Calif.: Sage Publications, 1999), Carl George Herndl and Stuart C. Brown, *Green Culture*

categories.[30] The rhetorical criticism and theory in environmental communication trends

toward traditional topics of public address/political rhetoric[31] and news media.[32] The

: Environmental Rhetoric in Contemporary America (Madison, Wis.: University of Wisconsin Press, 1996), M. Jimmie Killingsworth and Jacqueline S. Palmer, *Ecospeak : Rhetoric and Environmental Politics in America* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1992), Mark Meister and Phyllis M. Japp, *Enviropop : Studies in Environmental Rhetoric and Popular Culture* (Westport, Conn.: Praeger, 2002), Star A. Muir and Thomas Lee Veenendall, *Earthtalk : Communication Empowerment for Environmental Action*, *Praeger Series in Political Communication,* (Westport, Conn.: Praeger, 1996), George Myerson and Yvonne Rydin, *The Language of Environment : A New Rhetoric* (London: UCL Press, 1996), Tarla Rai Peterson, *Sharing the Earth : The Rhetoric of Sustainable Development*, *Studies in Rhetoric/Communication* (Columbia, S.C.: University of South Carolina Press, 1997), Craig Waddell, *Landmark Essays on Rhetoric and the Environment*, *Landmark Essays ; V. 12* (Mahwah, N.J.: Hermagoras Press, 1998).

[30] Social scientific methodology can be seen clearly in many environmental scholars work, including Cramer, Meisner and Shannahan and McComas using quantitative analysis of media and Patterson and Allen's organizational approach to stakeholder analysis: Phillip Cramer, *Deep Environmental Politics* (Connecticut: Preager, 1998), mark meisner, "Knowing Nature through the Media: An Examination of Mainstream Print and Television Representations of the Non-Human World" (paper presented at the Conference on Communication and the Environment, Silver Falls Conference Center, Sublimity, Oregon, July 20 2003), James Patterson and Myria Allen, "Accounting for Your Actions: How Stakeholders Respond to the Strategic Communication of Environmental Activist Organizations," *Journal of Applied Communication Research* 25 (1997), James Shanahan and Katherine McComas, *Nature Stories : Depictions of the Environment and Their Effects*, *The Hampton Press Communication Series* (Cresskill, NJ: Hampton Press, 1998).

[31] Dayle C. Hardy-Short and C. Brant Short, "Fire, Death, and Rebirth: A Metaphoric Analysis of the 1988 Yellowstone Fire Debate," *Western Journal of Communication* 59, no. 2 (1995), Jonathan I. Lange, "The Logic of Competing Information Campaigns: Conflict over Old Growth and the Spotted Owl," *Communication Monographs* 60, no. 3 (1993), Carolyn Merchant, *Major Problems in American Environmental History : Documents and Essays*, *Major Problems in American History Series* (Lexington, Mass.: D.C. Heath, 1993), Mark P. Moore, "Making Sense of Salmon: Synecdoche and Irony in a Natural Resource Crisis," in *Western Journal of Communication* (Western States Communication Association, 2003), Tarla Rai Peterson, *Green Talk in the White House : The Rhetorical Presidency Encounters Ecology*, 1st ed., *Presidential Rhetoric Series ; No. 11* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 2004), Alan Razee, "Problems and Prospects for Articulating a Vision in Dam Removal Rhetoric" (paper presented at the Conference on Communication and Environment (COCE), Silver Falls, Oregon, July 2003), Steve Schwarze, "Economic Arguments in Forest Conservation Rhetoric: Fire Recovery, "Wise Use" And Environmental Justice in the West," (2004).

[32] Stuart Allan, Barbara Adam, and Cynthia Carter, *Environmental Risks and the Media* (London ; New York: Routledge, 1999), Alison Anderson, *Media, Culture and the Environment* (New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 1997), Joel J. Davis, "The Effects of Message Framing on Response to Environmental Communications," in *Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly* (Association for Education in Journalism & Mass Communication, 1995), Sharon Dunwoody and Robert Griffin, "Journalistic Strategies for Reporting Long-Term Environmental Issues: A Case Study of Three Superfund Sites," in *The Mass Media and Environmental Issues*, ed. Anders Hansen, *Studies in Communication and Society* (London: Leicester University Press, 1993), David Edwards, "Can We Trust the Media on the Environment?," *Ecologist* 30, no. 4 (2000), Anders Hansen, *The Mass Media and Environmental Issues* (Leicester ; New York
New York: Leicester University Press ;
Distributed exclusively in the USA and Canada by St. Martin's Press, 1993), Micheal Karlberg, "News and Conflicts: How Adversarial News Frame Limit Public Understanding of Environmental Issues," *Alternatives Journal* (1997), Mark Neuzil and William Kovarik, *Mass Media and Environmental Conflict: America's Green Crusades* (Thousand Oaks: Sage, 1996), Mark Paxton, "Gone Fishin': A Framing

publications of one of the discipline's most noted scholars, Tarla Rai Peterson, exemplify

these trends. Peterson's work with environmental topics begins with Burkean/dramatistic

analyses[33] and institutional and stakeholder analyses of environmental issue debates.[34]

Peterson's first book discusses the political rhetoric of sustainable development from

social movements and governmental sources on an international scale.[35] She later

introduces environmental communication to the rhetorical community as "exploring

interpretations and political practices associated with the environmental movement."[36]

Along with discussions of conflict management approaches to environmental issues,[37]

Peterson's most recent publication is an edited volume focused on presidential rhetoric of

environmental issues.[38]

The focus of environmental communication scholarship on traditionally perceived

politics and the rhetoric of the environmental movement in its institutional forms has

been productive and often enlightening. Nevertheless, it is also valuable to study how

---

Analysis of the Fight over a Small Town's City Seal," in *Journal of Media & Religion* (Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 2004), Schlechtweg, "Media Frames and Environmental Discourse: The Case of 'Focus: Logjam'.", Joe Smith, *The Daily Globe : Environmental Change, the Public and the Media* (London: Earthscan, 2000).

[33] Tarla Rai Peterson, "The Meek Shall Inherit the Mountains: A Dramatistic Criticism of Grand Teton National Park's Interpretive Program," in *Central States Speech Journal* (1988), Tarla Rai Peterson, "The Will to Conservation: A Burkeian Analysis of Dust Bowl Rhetoric and American Farming Motives," in *Southern Speech Communication Journal* (1986).

[34] Tarla Rai Peterson, "The Rhetorical Construction of Institutional Authority in a Senate Subcommittee Hearing on Wilderness Legislation," in *Western Journal of Speech Communication: WJSC* (Western States Communication Association, 1988), Tarla Ray Peterson and Cristi Choat Horton, "Rooted in the Soil: How Understanding the Perspectives of Landowners Can Enhance the Management of Environmental Disputes," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 81, no. 2 (1995).

[35] Tarla Rai Peterson, *Sharing the Earth: The Rhetoric of Sustainable Development*, *Studies in Rhetoric/Communication* (Columbia, S.C.: University of South Carolina Press, 1997).

[36] Tarla Rai Peterson, "Environmental Communication: Tales of Life on Earth," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 84, no. 3 (1998).

[37] Markus J. Peterson, M. Nils Peterson, and Tarla Rai Peterson, "Embracing the Paradoxical in Environmental Decision-Making," in *Finding Our Way(S) in Environmental Communication: Proceedings of the Seventh Biennial Conference on Communication and the Environment*, ed. Gregg B. Walker and William J. Kinsella (Corvallis: Department of Speech Communication, Oregon State University, 2005).

[38] Tarla Rai Peterson, *Green Talk in the White House: The Rhetorical Presidency Encounters Ecology*, *Presidential Rhetoric Series ; No. 11* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 2004).

environmental rhetoric might be functioning in other ways.[39] I do this by analyzing

rhetoric produced by environmental activists, but circulated outside the traditional

political sphere. I see new media as one arena for politics that escapes the framework of

more traditional political analyses. Environmental communication scholars can benefit

from opening up the definition of environmentalism to include texts operating in arenas

outside the traditional conceptualization of the political sphere.

New Media

The term "new media," often synonymous with digital media or computer-

mediated communication, is a fashionable categorization for the technology associated

with digital formats: the internet, digital photography and video, mobile phones, DVDs,

and computer gaming (among others).[40] However, the use of the terms digital (describing

---

[39] That isn't to say that environmental communication hasn't branched out at all. There are select examples of works that do address communication beyond the traditional political sphere James G. Cantrill, "Percieving Environmental Discourse: The Cognitive Playground," in *The Symbolic Earth: Discourse and Our Creation of the Environment*, ed. James G. Cantrill and Christine L. Oravec (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1996), Darier, *Discourses of the Environment*, âEric Darier, "Foucault and the Environment: An Introduction," in *Discourses of the Environment*, ed. âEric Darier (Oxford: Blackwell, 1998), Jean Retzinger, "Cultivating the Agrarian Myth in Hollywood Films," in *Enviropop: Studies in Environmental Rhetoric and Popular Culture*, ed. Mark Meister and Phyllis Japp (Westport, Conn.: Preager, 2002).

[40] This section draws upon an extensive review of literature, including a number of book length reviews as well as reviewed articles in journals in the discipline of communication studies and in the specialty area of new media, or computer mediated communication. Jay Blumler, "The New Media and Our Political Communication Discontents: Democratizing Cyberspace," *Information, Communication & Society* 4, no. 1 (2001), Marsha Cassidy, "Cyberspace Meets Domestic Space: Personal Computers, Women's Work, and the Gendered Territories of the Family Home," *Critical Studies in Media Communication* 18, no. 1 (2001), Andrew Flanagin, Wendy Farinola, and Miriam Metzger, "The Technical Code of the Internet/World Wide Web," *Critical Studies in Media Communication* 17, no. 4 (2000), Elfriede Fursich and Melinda Robins, "Africa.Com: The Self-Representation of Sub-Saharan Nations on the World Wide Web," *Critical Studies in Media Communication* 19, no. 2 (2000), Susan Herring, "Slouching toward the Ordinary: Current Trends in Computer-Mediated Communication," *New Media & Society* 6, no. 1 (2004), Mary E. Hocks and Michelle R. Kendrick, *Eloquent Images: Word and Image in the Age of New Media* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2003), John Jordan, "(Ad)Dressing the Body in Online Shopping Sites," *Critical Studies in Media Communication* 20, no. 3 (2003), Richard Kahn and Douglas Kellner, "New Media and Internet Activism: From the 'Battle of Seattle' to Blogging," *New Media & Society* 6, no. 1 (2004), Paul Leonardi, "Problematizing "New Media": Culturally Based Perceptions of Cell Phones, Computers, and the Internet among United States Latinos," *Critical Studies in Media Communication* 20, no. 2 (2003), Ananda Mitra,

the format) and computer-mediated (describing the machine) sometimes confuse an

understanding of new media technology. As Flew and Everett and Cladwell argue, the

technologies discussed in new media studies are neither the machine nor its format, but

both (and more).[41] Thus Flew writes,

> Technology is understood not only as *hardware*, or the things that we as
>
> humans make use of, but also as *content* or *software*, and as systems of

"Diasporic Web Sites: Ingroup and Outgroup Discourse," *Critical Studies in Mass Communication* 14 (1997), Lynn Owens and L. Kendall Palmer, "Making the News: Anarchist Counter-Public Relations on the World Wide Web," *Critical Studies in Media Communication* 20, no. 4 (2003), Steven Schneider, "The Web as an Object of Study," *New Media & Society* 6, no. 1 (2004), Elana Shefrin, "Lord of the Rings, Star Wars, and Participatory Fandom: Mapping New Congruencies between the Internet and Media Entertainment Culture," *Critical Studies in Media Communication* 21, no. 3 (2004), David Silver, "Internet/Cyberculture/Digital Culture/New Media/Fill-in-the-Blank Studies," *New Media & Society* 6, no. 1 (2004), Peter Van Aeist and Stefaan Walgrave, "New Media, New Movements? The Role of the Internet in Shaping the 'Anti-Globalization' Movement," *Information, Communication & Society* 5, no. 4 (2002), Barbara Warnick, "Masculinizing the Feminine: Inventing Women on Line Ca. 1997," *Critical Studies in Mass Communication* 16 (1999), Barry Wellman, "The Three Ages of Internet Studies: Ten, Five and Zero Years Ago," *New Media & Society* 6, no. 1 (2004). An array of books have emerged in the last few years with the phrase "new media" in the title. *New Philosophy for New Media*, *New Media Language*, *The New Media Book*, *The Handbook of New Media*, *New Media*, *New Media: An Introduction*, *New Media: A Critical Introduction*, and *New Media Cultures* are among the texts circulating with the resonant term, new media. Many of these books seek not only to describe new media in its various forms, but also place the phenomenon of new media within the various discursive contexts of academic disciplines. Thus, *New Philosophy for New Media* engages in the discourse of media arts; *New Media Language* is primarily a collection intersecting language studies; *New Media*, *The New Media Book*, and *The Handbook of New Media* are all edited volumes containing works in the areas of mass media, communication, and film studies; and *New Media: an Introduction*, *New Media: A Critical Introduction*, and *New Media Cultures* are all written from a cultural studies perspective. As one might expect, the various approaches to "new media" lead to somewhat different assessments of how new media are defined and what the impacts of these technologies might be. Jean Aitchison and Diana Lewis, eds., *New Media Language* (London: Routledge, 2003), J. David Bolter and Richard A. Grusin, *Remediation: Understanding New Media* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1999), Anna Everett and John Thornton Caldwell, *New Media: Theories and Practices of Digitextuality* (New York: Routledge, 2003), Terry Flew, *New Media: An Introduction* (South Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 2002), Mark B. N. Hansen, *New Philosophy for New Media* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2004), Dan Harries, *The New Media Book* (London: British Film Institute, 2002), Hocks and Kendrick, *Eloquent Images: Word and Image in the Age of New Media*, Leah A. Lievrouw and Sonia M. Livingstone, *Handbook of New Media: Social Shaping and Consequences of Icts* (London: SAGE, 2002), Martin Lister et al., *New Media: A Critical Introduction* (London: Routledge, 2002), P. David Marshall, *New Media Cultures*, *Cultural Studies in Practice* (London: Oxford University Press, 2004).

[41] Flew, *New Media: An Introduction*.; Everett and Caldwell, *New Media: Theories and Practices of Digitextuality*.

> *knowledge and social meaning* that accompany their development and use.[42]

And Everett and Caldwell argue,

> technologies are far more than mere machines. They are the total constellation of conceptual and ideological investments that animate and perpetuate those machines.[43]

The approach to new media, then, attempts to avoid the bifurcation between media technology and content, paying close attention to both communicative form and its interaction with text and social elements. Still, the description of digital is important to new media study because, on the one hand, the universality of the binary code allows for the cross-media convergences of technologies, and, on the other, digitalization of content is also the basis for other new media characteristics like hypertextual interactivity and network interconnection. For the purposes of clarification, I will use the term new media to refer to the set of emerging technologies and propose to use digitalization as a primary characteristic of new media.

A second area of discussion in new media studies is the notion of technological *convergence*—how various media technologies are interconnecting. This interconnection is discussed in one of two forms: either through various technologies' influence of each other (remediation) or through technologies being embedded in other technologies (media convergence). Interconnection via cross-media influence has been depicted as *remediation* by Botler and Grusin who write:

---

[42] Flew, *New Media: An Introduction*, 2.
[43] Everett and Caldwell, *New Media: Theories and Practices of Digitextuality*, xxi.

No medium today, and certainly no single media event, seems to do its

cultural work in isolation from other social and economic forces. What is new

about new media comes from the particular ways in which they refashion

older media and the ways in which older media refashion themselves to

answer the challenges of new media.[44]

Examples of remediation include the World Wide Web's repackaging of news

information in newspaper formats and television news' refashioning of news programs to

include multiple and simultaneous information streaming (see for example the news and

stock tickers on CNN or MSNBC). This bi-directional movement of form and content is

important to keep in mind given the propensity to focus solely on the "newness" of an

emerging media.

What has been termed media convergence, on the other hand, is less focused on the

stylistic/aesthetic process of media interconnection and instead concentrates on the use of

media technologies in combination.[45] Media convergence is particularly prevalent in new

media because of the digital format. As Marshall notes, "The basis of media convergence

that we associate with new media is the ability to convert all media forms into computer

code."[46] The contemporary form of telephony, for example, uses digital code to

incorporate digitized voice communication with other technologies such as text

messaging, email, web-browsing, and digital photography and video. The internet is

probably the best example of convergence. As the anecdote at the beginning of this

---

[44] Bolter and Grusin, *Remediation: Understanding New Media*, 15.
[45] The edited volume by Everett and Caldwell takes as its unifying premise that new media should be studied in terms of a "theory of convergence." John Watkinson has also written a book-length analysis of media convergence, attempting to outline issues of convergence in all forms of contemporary media. Everett and Caldwell, *New Media: Theories and Practices of Digitextuality*. John Watkinson, *Convergence in Broadcast and Communications Media: The Fundamentals of Audio, Video, Data Processing, and Communications Technologies* (Boston, MA: Focal Press, 2001).

chapter shows, the internet is not one thing at all, but many forms of hardware and software combined. Hardware elements include all of the various points of access to the internet, which includes not only home and office computers, but also mobile phones, gaming consoles, and cable television. Internet technologies falling into the software category are far too numerous to catalog, but include not only the World Wide Web, but also the various types of web browsing programs; plug-in programs like Flash, Java and Quicktime; email and email client software; listservs; instant messaging, and file sharing. The convergences of these software and hardware elements "on-line" creates a system of infinite hybridization.[47]

Like convergence, the technological characteristic of hypertext is ultimately derived from digitalization. Digital code, based in the ones and zeros of binary, equalizes the base system for both textual content and technological programming. In other words, both the operational code and the encoding for all types of text, audio, visual, and worded, is all reducible to a common system of representation. This allows interconnections between texts and across media forms. The term hypertext itself hints at this connection. The prefix 'hyper' is derived from the Greek word meaning outside or beyond. A hypertext is a text that links beyond itself, to the outside.[48] When combined with the binary system of computer encoding, hypertext produces a level of rapidity, and explains much of the sense of *hyper*-speed in contemporary communication. Lister et al explain:

> In a digitally encoded text any part can be accessed as easily as any other
> so that we can say that every part of the text can be equidistant from the

---

[46] Marshall, *New Media Cultures*, 17.
[47] Lievrouw and Livingstone, *Handbook of New Media: Social Shaping and Consequences of Icts.*

reader. In an analogue system like traditional video, arriving at a particular frame 10 minutes into the tape involves having to spool past every intervening frame. When this information is stored digitally this access can be more or less instantaneous…[thus,] any data location might have a number of instantly accessible links to other locations built into it.[49]

The speed of linking information to or within a text allows for creation of texts made from other texts. Hypertext is thus one of the primary forms of yet another characteristic of new media technologies: interactivity. A broad definition of interactivity as a shift from viewing and reading to using the text tends to both overestimate the capability of hypertextual linkage and underestimate the viewer or reader interaction with non-digitized content. However, it is the case that new media technologies favor a more tactile form of interactivity, one that increases the viewer's possible encounters and limits the authorial connection between authorship and text.

The digital base system of program and content, media and text, also allows the users and texts in new media environments to develop complicated interconnected networks. Networking, itself a broad and irregular field of discussion, is not exclusive to new media formats (consider that television broadcasts originated in the 'networks' of ABC, CBS and NBC) but the homogeneity of underlying code and speed of transmission have allowed for the production of vast, often transitory networks of users, information, and technologies for transmission.

In addition to digitalization, convergence, hypertext, interactivity, and networks, a final characteristic discussed in new media studies is ubiquity. New media have swept

---

[48] Lister et al., *New Media: A Critical Introduction*, 23.(Lister, et al 23)
[49] Ibid., 25.

through the social world and immersed us in their technological implications. Many

scholars would here point to the so-called "digital divide," the millions of U.S. citizens

(and several billion world-wide) disconnected from the "on-line" experience. However,

even the lives of those individuals who for reasons of geography, poverty, education,

politics, or preference never encounter new media in their daily activities, are still shaped

by the changes new media have produced in the social world. Globalization, both as an

economic and political establishment and as a phenomenon of networked information and

communication, is in some ways a product of new media technologies. The

predominance of new media technologies in the U.S. and most world cultures,

particularly among the peoples with the strongest effect on social, political, and

environmental reality, leads to a classification of new media as, if not ubiquitous, at least

extensive in their reach. Just like mechanical printing, mass production, or television

broadcasting, new media are changing perceptions, communication practices, and

material manifestations. There are a number of media theorists who take on the role of

cultural historian by analyzing how developing media technologies affect society. Harold

Innis, for example, theorized that the forms of communication media are all biased

toward space or time, and the form of social empire depends on the balance of these

media.[50] Marshall McLuhan, a follower of Innis, is probably the most well-known media

theorist. McLuhan argued that media act as extensions of bodily senses, and that the rise

of electronic media fundamentally alters structures of human perception.[51]

---

[50] Harold Adams Innis, *The Bias of Communication* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1951), Harold Adams Innis, *Empire and Communications* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1950).

[51] Marshall McLuhan, *The Gutenberg Galaxy; the Making of Typographic Man* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1962), Marshall McLuhan, *Understanding Media; the Extensions of Man*, 1st ed. (New York,: McGraw-Hill, 1964), Marshall McLuhan and Quentin Fiore, *The Medium Is the Massage* (New York,: Bantam Books, 1967).

Rhetorical Study

This project is a discourse analysis with a largely poststructural perspective on texts and circulation. I now introduce my rhetorical approach to environmental advocacy in new media by engaging some of the longstanding debates in the field of rhetorical study. In addition, some of the most prevalent concepts in contemporary discussions of rhetoric, such as multiple publics and circulation, are also considered.

Publics and Texts

Rhetorical scholars have a sustained interest in the notion of audience interactions in public debate. Debates over the idea of a "public sphere," for example, have centered on this notion. Jurgen Habermas' exploration of the bourgeois public sphere sparked much of the contemporary discussion. Habermas theorized an historical conception of the bourgeois public sphere as an open and egalitarian forum for debate.[52] Although Habermas himself points out the exclusions of class and citizenship in this model, his theorization has been criticized for stopping "short of developing a new, post-bourgeois model of the public sphere."[53] Rita Felski and Nancy Fraser become two of the early Habermas critics to turn toward multiplicity in public theorization as a remedy. Robert Asen and David Brouwer note that while both Felski and Fraser turn respectively toward "the current plurality of public spheres" and the "plurality of competing publics," their

---

[52] Jürgen Habermas, "The Public Sphere: An Encyclopedia Article," in *Staat Und Politik*, ed. Fischer Lexicon (Frankfurt: Frankfurt and Main, 1964), Jürgen Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society*, *Studies in Contemporary German Social Thought* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1989), Jürgen Habermas, *Strukturwandel Der Öffentlichkeit; Untersuchungen Zu Einer Kategorie Der Bürgerlichen Gesellscahft* (Neuwied,: H. Luchterhand, 1962), Jürgen Habermas, *Theory and Practice* (London: Heinemann, 1974).
[53] Nancy Fraser, "Rethinking the Public Sphere: A Contribution to the Critique of Actually Existing Democracy," in *Habermas and the Public Sphere*, ed. Craig Calhoun (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1992).

consideration of *counterpublics* was problematic in its basis on identity politics, like race and gender, which can "mask important difference among individual group members."[54]

Asen draws on the multiplicity of modern publics theorized by John Dewey[55] and weighs Dewey's critique of public division with Dewey's call for integration of these multiple publics.[56] Although critical of Dewey's reliance on "face-to-face communication as unmediated presence," Asen places Dewey on the side of possibilities inherent in a multiple notion of public. While scholars from Habermas forward have critiqued the divisions and mediations of the public sphere in contemporary communication[57] others have embraced the possibilities of both multiplicity[58] and mediation.[59] I take up the concept of a multiple, mediated public sphere and concentrate on how the characteristics of new media, along with rhetoric in use by environmental advocates, continues to trouble the notion of a public sphere.

In doing so I take a perspective toward texts and public interaction aligned with the poststructural positions of philosophers and critics including Michel Foucault,

---

[54] Robert Asen and Daniel C. Brouwer, *Counterpublics and the State* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2001).

[55] John Dewey, *The Public and Its Problems* (New York: H. Holt and Company, 1927).

[56] Robert Asen, "The Multiple Mr. Dewey: Multiple Publics and Permeable Borders in John Dewey's Theory of the Public Sphere," *Argumentation & Advocacy* 39, no. 3 (2003).

[57] G. Thomas Goodnight, "The Personal, Technical, and Public Spheres of Argument: A Speculative Inquiry into the Art of Public Deliberation," *Journal of the American Forensic Association* 18 (1982), Jürgen Habermas, "New Social Movements," *Telos* 49 (1981), Habermas, "The Public Sphere: An Encyclopedia Article."

[58] Asen, "The Multiple Mr. Dewey: Multiple Publics and Permeable Borders in John Dewey's Theory of the Public Sphere.", Asen and Brouwer, *Counterpublics and the State*, Robert Asen and Daniel C. Brouwer, "Introduction: John Dewey and the Public Sphere," *Argumentation & Advocacy* 39, no. 3 (2003), Michael Calvin McGee, "In Search of 'the People': A Rhetorical Alternative," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 61 (1975), Phaedra Pezzullo, "Resisting 'National Breast Cancer Awareness Month': The Rhetoric of Counterpublics and Their Cultural Performances," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 89, no. 4 (2003), Michael Warner, *Publics and Counterpublics* (New York: Zone Books, 2002), Michael Warner, "Publics and Counterpublics (Abbreviated Version)," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 88, no. 4 (2002).

[59] DeLuca, *Image Politics: The New Rhetoric of Environmental Activism*, Kevin DeLuca and Jennifer Peeples, "From Public Sphere to Public Screen: Democracy, Activism, and The "Violence" Of Seattle," *Critical Studies in Mass Communication* 19, no. 2 (2002), Kendall Phillips, "The Spaces of Public Dissension: Reconsidering the Public Sphere," *Communication Monographs* 63 (1996).

Jacques Derrida, and Michael McGee. I consider the text, like the subject, to be a product

of relationships.[60] In rhetorical criticism the text is broadly defined as the basic unit of

analysis. While this rings of essentialist methodological approach, it nonetheless serves

as a common term within the field. More importantly, the *text* has been decentered, "put

into play,"[61] through theoretical troubling of speech acts as primary rhetorical texts as

well as through various extensions of the term "text" in rhetorical praxis. Everything

from public memorials[62] to commemorative medals,[63] to editorial cartoons[64] have been

introduced within the canons of rhetorical criticism. Theoretically, the text has been

"fragmented,"[65] "visualized,"[66] and presented as a means toward liberatory criticism.[67]

---

[60] Judith Butler, "Contingent Foundations: Feminism and the Question of 'Postmodernism'," in *Feminists Theorize the Political*, ed. Judith Butler and Joan W Scott (New York: Routledge, 1992). Butler writes that "No subject is its own point of departure" (ibid., 9). She interprets Foucault to say that "subjects who institute actions are themselves instituted effects of prior actions" (ibid., 10).

[61] Jacques Derrida, "Structure, Sign and Play in the Discourse of the Human Sciences," in *Writing and Difference* (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1978).

[62] Sonja Foss, "Ambiguity as Persuasion: The Vietnam Veterans Memorial," *Communication Quarterly* 34, no. 3 (1986), Michael North, "The Public as Sculpture: From Heavenly City to Mass Ornament," in *Art and the Public Sphere*, ed. W.J.T. Mitchell (Chicago: Univeristy of Chicago Press, 1990).

[63] Lester Olsen, "Benjamin Franklin's Commemorative Medal *Libertas Americana*: A Study in Rhetorical Iconology," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 9 (1990).

[64] Denise Bostdorff, "Making Light of James Watt: A Burkean Approach to the Form and Attitude of Political Cartoons," in *Rhetorical Dimensions in Media: A Critical Casebook*, ed. Martin Medhurst and Thomas Benson (Dubuque: Kendall/Hunt Publishing, 1991), Michael Desousa, "Symbolic Action and Pretended Insight: The Ayatollah Khomeini in U.S. Editorial Cartoons," in *Rhetorical Dimensions in Media: A Critical Casebook*, ed. Martin Medhurst and Thomas Benson (Dubuque: Kendall/Hunt, 1991), Janis Edwards and Carol Winkler, "Representative Form and the Visual Ideograph: The Iwo Jima Image in Editorial Cartoons," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 83, no. 3 (1997), Martin Medhurst and Michael Desousa, "Political Cartoons as Rhetorical Form: A Taxonomy of Graphic Discourse," *Communication Monographs* 48 (1981).

[65] Michael Calvin McGee, "Text, Context, and the Fragmentation of Contemporary Culture," in *Contemporary Rhetorical Theory*, ed. John Louis Lucaites, Celeste Michelle Condit, and Sally Caudill (New York: Guilford, 1999), Michael Calvin McGee and Carol Corbin, *Rhetoric in Postmodern America : Conversations with Michael Calvin Mcgee, Revisioning Rhetoric* (New York: Guilford Press, 1998).

[66] DeLuca, *Image Politics: The New Rhetoric of Environmental Activism*, DeLuca and Peeples, "From Public Sphere to Public Screen: Democracy, Activism, and The "Violence" Of Seattle.", Sonja Foss, "Visual Imagery as Communication (Review Essay)," *Text and Performance Quarterly* 12 (1992), Bruce Gronbeck, "Rhetoric, Ethics, and Telespectacles in the Post-Everything Age," in *Postmodern Representations: Truth, Power, and Mimesis in the Human Sciences and Public Culture*, ed. Richard Harvey Brown (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1995), Michael Gurevitch and Anandam Kavoori, "Television Spectacles as Politics," *Communication Monographs* 59 (1992).

[67] Raymie McKerrow, "Critical Rhetoric and the Possibility of the Subject," in *The Critical Turn: Rhetoric and Philosophy in Postmodern Discourse*, ed. Ian Angus and Lenore Langsdorf (Carbondale: Southern

As such, rhetorical criticism has taken a turn toward what Vivian Burr would describe as "discourse studies."[68] Burr writes that:

> Given that there is virtually no aspect of human life that is exempt from meaning, everything around us can be considered as 'textual', and 'life as text' could be said to be the underlying metaphor of the discourse approach.[69]

In the discourse approach, the text is a unit within the discourse and always interwoven with other texts, discourses, relationships of power, an episteme of knowledge, and the critic as a constructed identity.[70]

Foucault's theorization of power in relationships and discourse is helpful in elucidating the place of text in rhetoric. Foucault writes that:

> Power must be understood in the first instance as the multiplicity of force relations immanent in the sphere in which they operate and which constitute their organization…power is everywhere; not because it embraces everything, but because it comes from everywhere.[71]

Illinois University Press, 1993), Raymie McKerrow, "Critical Rhetoric: Theory and Practice," *Communication Monographs* 56 (1989), John Murphy, "Critical Rhetoric as Political Discourse," *Argumentation and Advocacy* 32, no. 1 (1995).

[68] Vivien Burr, *An Introduction to Social Constructionism* (London: Routledge, 1995).

[69] Ibid., 51.

[70] In this sense I am taking heed of St. Pierre's interpretation of discourse. She writes that "Within the rules of discourse, it makes sense to say only certain things. Other statements and other ways of thinking remain unintelligible, outside the realm of possibility" Elizabeth Adams St. Pierre, "Poststructural Feminism in Education: An Overview," *Qualitative Studies in Education* 13, no. 5 (2000): 485. I am also thinking here of Bove's summary of discourse, wherein he notes that essentializing questions will invariably produce essentialist answers. Paul Bove, "Discourse," in *Critical Terms for Literary Study*, ed. Frank Lentricchia and Thomas McLaughlin (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990).

[71] Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality. Volume 1: An Introduction*, trans. Robert Harley (New York: Vintage Books, 1978), 92.

Power, for Foucault, is not a simple force of oppression (in fact, he writes that power comes from below), but the force exerted in every relationship.[72] Foucault approaches the study of power in relationships through discourse analysis, for "it is in discourse that power and knowledge are joined together."[73] What rhetorical scholars have traditionally referred to as texts, he describes as "a multiplicity of discursive elements," emphasizing that "we must conceive discourse as a series of discontinuous segments whose tactical function is neither uniform nor stable."[74]

In the discipline of rhetorical studies, several scholars have adapted Foucault for their own purposes. Raymie McKerrow's critical rhetoric, for example, draws heavily from Foucault in developing an approach to "power/knowledge study" which conceives of the role of critic as "inventor," pulling elements together from a fractured discourse.[75] McKerrow is another scholar who perceives a move from public address to "discourse which addresses publics." Barbara Biesecker, who also draws on Foucault, similarly invokes discourse in relation to audience in her Derridian re-conceptualization of the rhetorical situation. Biesecker writes that the rhetorical event "marks the articulation of provisional identities and the construction of contingent relations that obtain between

---

[72] While there is a tendency to consider Foucault's notion of ubiquitous power as a condemnation of power, Foucault is pointed in responding to criticism that his theory negates freedom and resistance. He writes that: "In order for power relations to come into play, there must be at least a certain degree of freedom on both sides. Even when the power relation is completely out of balance, when it can truly be claimed that one side has "total power" over the other, a power can be exercised over the other only insofar as the others still has the option of killing himself, a sleeping out the window, or of killing the other person. This means that in power relations there is necessarily the possibility of resistance because if there were no possibility of resistance... there would be no power relations at all... If there are relations of power in every social field, this is because there is freedom everywhere" Michel Foucault, "The Ethics of Concern of the Self as a Practice of Freedom," in *Ethics: Subjectivity and Truth*, ed. Paul Rabinow, *Essential Works of Foucault, 1954-1984* (New York: The New Press, 1997), 292.

[73] Foucault, *The History of Sexuality. Volume 1: An Introduction*, 101.

[74] Ibid.

[75] McKerrow, "Critical Rhetoric: Theory and Practice."

them"[76] Biesecker takes discursive analysis in the direction of rhetorical events because she sees a thematic of *differance* as integral to the process of communicated meaning and identity/audience construction. Rhetoric is thus "an incident" that "constructs and reconstructs linkages" and "processes entailing the discursive production of audiences."[77] McGee is also insightful when considering the discursive production of audience. McGee responds to Lloyd Bitzer's definition of "the public" as a stable, institution-driven group with shared knowledge by arguing that this public is a fiction—though, a fiction constituted through discourse with transitory power.[78] McGee later adds to this deconstruction of the rhetorical situation with his description of "the fragmentation of contemporary culture," concluding that the text is what is constructed by the audience (or critic) from "discursive fragments of context."[79] McGee believes that rhetorical theorists and critics have devoted too much attention to the idealized study of singular texts.

What, then, is expected of a rhetorician (McGee's preference over critic, emphasizing the constructive, material role of the rhetorical scholar) within a field of discourse mired in fragmented elements creating force only in articulated relationships of power? McKerrow describes the rhetorical scholar as an "inventor" pulling elements together from a fractured discourse.[80] Biesecker, less ideologically rigorous, calls instead for application of whatever might be productive of "the exorbitant possibilities of rhetoric"—the approach of the *bricoleur*.[81] Derrida employs the notion of bricolage, seeing the role of interpretation not as "deciphering a truth or an origin which escapes

[76] Barbara Biesecker, "Rethinking the Rhetorical Situation from within the Thematic of Differance," *Philosophy and Rhetoric* 22 (1989): 243.
[77] Ibid.
[78] McGee, "In Search of 'the People': A Rhetorical Alternative."
[79] McGee, "Text, Context, and the Fragmentation of Contemporary Culture," 76.
[80] McKerrow, "Critical Rhetoric: Theory and Practice."
[81] Biesecker, "Rethinking the Rhetorical Situation from within the Thematic of Differance," 244.

play and the order of the sign," but as that which "affirms play and tries to pass beyond man and humanism."[82] Foucault is somewhat more explicit in his formulation when discussing "method." As a multiplicity of discursive elements "come into play" across the field of interrelationships, he writes

> It is this distribution that we must reconstruct, with the things said and
> those concealed, the enunciations required and those forbidden, that it
> comprises; with the variants and different effects.[83]

In rhetorical study, there are two positions for the critic employing a discursive approach. One seeks to uncover inequalities and the other demonstrate the way rhetoric operates discursively. For example, to deal with the problems of oppressive force inequalities in human relationships, Condit argues that "one must understand the world in which we live."[84] McGee writes that "the analysis of rhetorical documents should not turn us inward to an appreciation of persuasive, manipulative techniques, but outward to functions of rhetoric."[85]

In this study, the choices made in terms of data selection and analysis reflect my own engagement with "the world in which we live" and the "functions of rhetoric." While textual elements interact with diverse publics, it is only in relationship to a field of discourse that their rhetorical functions can be understood. Part of the world in which we live is the new media communication environment, an accelerated interactivity of publics and rhetorical elements. Thus, it is valuable to understand the function of rhetoric in this environment. While the usual means of data selection involves strict parameters, the

---

[82] Derrida, "Structure, Sign and Play in the Discourse of the Human Sciences," 292.
[83] Foucault, *The History of Sexuality. Volume 1: An Introduction*, 100.
[84] Celeste Michelle Condit, "Hegemony, Concordance, and Capitalism: Reply to Cloud," *Critical Studies in Mass Communication* 13 (1996): 383.

interconnected field of discourse, especially eminent in the networks of new media, requires an inventional approach to data selection. In my project, selection of data and means of analysis is a bricolage, yet one selectively directed toward the functions of rhetoric in our world. It is important to identify a set of data, elements of rhetoric, not as a limitation, but as a starting point for invention. Given the interconnection of rhetorical elements, relationships between elements become the central point of analysis, not the definition of singular texts.

Circulation

In the study of mediated rhetoric, circulation most often refers to the distribution patterns of some text between producer and consumer audience. Perhaps the strongest advocate of circulation study in the field of rhetorical criticism today is Cara Finnegan whose work with photographic texts centers on the importance of circulation.[86] In her book length study tracing circulation of depression era photographs depicting American poverty in selected magazines, Finnegan writes

> circulation itself is a decidedly rhetorical process, meaning that it is
>
> always contingent, partial, and utterly context-bound...Overall, then, an
>
> account of rhetorical circulation enables not only an understanding of the
>
> complexity and multiplicity of ways in which the magazines pictured

---

[85] McGee, "In Search of 'the People': A Rhetorical Alternative," 249.

[86] Cara A. Finnegan, *Picturing Poverty: Print Culture and Fsa Photographs* (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 2003), Cara A. Finnegan, "Recognizing Lincoln: Image Vernaculars in Nineteenth-Century Visual Culture," *Rhetoric & Public Affairs* 8, no. 1 (2005), Cara A. Finnegan, "Social Engineering, Visual Politics, and the New Deal: Fsa Photography in Survey Graphic," *Rhetoric & Public Affairs* 3, no. 3 (2000), Cara A. Finnegan, "Television as Historian," *Review of Communication* 3, no. 2 (2003), Cara A. Finnegan and Kang Jiyeon, ""Sighting" The Public: Iconoclasm and Public Sphere Theory," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 90, no. 4 (2004).

poverty, but also a deeper appreciation of how and why the photographs circulated at all.[87]

Translating the circulation of poverty photographs to environmental rhetoric, the proposed value of circulation study is to understand how the environmental advocates' texts function rhetorically, how they are distributed, and why distribution occurs. Described as a 'rhetorical process,' 'utterly context bound,' Finnegan argues that "we need to abandon a sense of circulation as merely a medium of transfer, a passive conduit of meaning or representation."[88] Key to this assessment is the idea that texts in circulation are "inventional resources in the public sphere."[89] Thus, Finnegan traces the circulation of texts through mass media to show how the different contextual uses of various texts can provide insight on the production of meaning in the public sphere.

Reframing Finnegan's public sphere circulation through the more specific creation of multiple publics and counterpublics, we can draw from another advocate of circulation study, Michael Warner, who writes that "the notion of a public enables a reflexivity in the circulation of texts among strangers who become, by virtue of their reflexively circulating discourse, a social entity."[90] Warner's perception of circulation is the function of texts in circulation and their creation of publics and counterpublics through engagement. Circulation is basic to public creation because publics are "constituted through mere attention."[91] It is crucial to point out that Warner's publics are

---

[87] Finnegan, *Picturing Poverty: Print Culture and Fsa Photographs*, 224.
[88] Ibid., 223.
[89] Ibid.
[90] Warner, *Publics and Counterpublics*, 11-12.
[91] Warner, "Publics and Counterpublics (Abbreviated Version)," 419.

not anything like the rational deliberations of a utopist public sphere, but instead,

comprised only by the attention, "however notional or compromised" to a text.[92]

There are several problems with the circulation/publics model when interrogated

with the characteristics of new media. The first problem arises when we consider how to

go about the tracing of circulation in an environment of hypertexuality. The second

problem introduces a dilemma given the immersive ubiquity of new media texts. While

circulation can be useful for understanding public creation, the full analysis of rhetorical

texts demands additional consideration of rhetorical force.

Approaching circulation from a new media perspective introduces what initially

appears to be an insurmountable problem: how can we trace the ineffable? This is

Warner's worry when he questions the applicability of "the temporal framework" to the

temporally resistant texts on the World Wide Web. Warner writes:

> Once a website is up, it can be hard to tell how recently it was posted or
>
> revised, or how long it will continue to be posted. Most sites are not
>
> archived. For the most part they are not centrally indexed. The reflexive
>
> apparatus of web discourse consists mostly of hypertext links and search
>
> engines, and these are not punctual.[93]

Warner, although limiting his perspective of new media to one aspect of one technology,

is generally correct in identifying the non-linear nature of new media circulation.

Although there is regularity to some new media texts, and some archiving, the

hypertextual/ interactive/networked characteristics of new media generally lead to

circulatory tracing as a methodological impossibility. The solution to this problem lies

---

[92] Ibid.
[93] Ibid.: 421.

not in abandoning the idea of circulation, but in adapting what our view of circulation might be. In contrast to the temporal, archival tracing of circulation, I suggest thinking in terms of mapping the rhizome (Chapter Two).

The second problem with the circulation model of public creation arises out of the notions of speed and ubiquity, wherein potential publics are deluged with texts. Although rhizome mapping can give us an idea of textual circulation, this circulation does not account for rhetorical function. In the new media environment of production and possibility, there are too many textual choices available to simply say that texts circulate, therefore they are rhetorical. While I agree with Warner's notional attention concept, the immersive nature of new media leads to the conclusion that something beyond circulation is necessary for understanding the function of rhetoric. In addition to the study of circulation, therefore, there is a need to understand how the rhetoric of the texts themselves is operating to create changes in consciousness. Given the characteristics of new media, including hypertextuality, interactivity, and networking, I explore how resonance operates with rhetorical force, articulating and re-articulating understanding (Chapter Three).

<div align="center">

Concepts

</div>

I have outlined above how the literatures of environmental communication, new media studies, and rhetorical criticism and theory impact the approach of this study. As I continue on to discuss the content of the other chapters, I feel that I should add one further influence: that of concepts. Nietzsche writes:

Let us give special consideration to the formation of concepts. Every word

immediately becomes a concept, inasmuch as it is not intended to serve as

a reminder of the unique and wholly individualized original experience to

which it owes its birth, but must at the same time fit innumerable, more of

less similar cases—which means, strictly speaking, never equal.[94]

Deleuze and Baudrillard, whom I engage in detail in chapters two and four, each draw upon Nietzsche in their own way, but it is in the performance of their writings that we find allegiance to this position that the concept is best left unfixed, plastic. That does not mean that terms are left undefined. On the contrary, each employment of a concept requires redefinition, either implicitly through its use or explicitly in the form of an expressed, yet temporary, fixation.

Since I see the emergence of new technologies and media forms as the precursor for new rhetorical forms, it is valuable to think in terms of new approaches to understanding rhetorical function. While traditional forms of rhetorical analysis are useful for underscoring the similarities between rhetorical forms, when new technologies point to the possibility of new perceptual habits, it is vital to also study the differences. In this light, I often find myself returning to a Deleuzian perspective of concepts, one based in the affirmation of difference. Throughout this study, I take Deleuze in particular as a model for approaching concepts as a basis for considering new rhetorical forms, new technological characteristics, and new approaches to rhetorical analysis. What I think of as a Deleuzian perspective, however, is somewhat misleading, since much of the writing I

---

[94] Nietzsche, Friedrich Wilhelm "On Truth And Lies in a Nonmoral Sense" in Friedrich Wilhelm Nietzsche, *The Portable Nietzsche* (New York: Penguin Books, 1976), 42.

am most influenced by is credited to Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari.[95] Deleuzian, in

this case, is a shorthand for the works of Deleuze alone *and* in collaboration with

Guattari. This is, perhaps, a disservice to Guattari. However, I am put (mostly) at ease by

their own discussion of their collaborative work. In the introduction to *A Thousand

Plateaus*, the sequel to *Anti-Oedipus*, they write that "The two of us wrote *Anti-Oedipus*

together. Since each of us was several there was already quite a crowd…Why have we

kept our names? Out of habit, purely out of habit."[96] Much of the Deluzian perspective is

based in such plays on the norm of representation, whether in the form of proper names

to organic bodies or in the form of long-standing philosophical principles. The concept,

as they see it, is a challenge to think differently, to think in terms of a creative becoming.

The goal is not to represent, since representation assumes that there are true definitions,

but to invent. We should not simply accept conventional reason or norms, they argue, we

should create anew. Concepts are not labels attached to some thing but the producers of

orientations for thinking. Concepts are always tied to the contingent circumstances of

their production (thus never *a priori*). They are, as Nietzsche said, tied to "innumerable"

circumstances, "never equal."

Chapter Two

In the course of this study I will offer several concepts for thinking about the

environmentalist rhetoric of new media. In chapter two the concept of *rhizome* is

borrowed from Deleuze and Guattari's *A Thousand Plateaus*[97] and adapted to the

---

[95] Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia* (New York: Viking Press, 1977), Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *Nomadology: The War Machine* (New York: Semiotext(e), 1986), Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, trans. Brian Massumi (Minneapolis: University of Minneapolis Press, 1987), Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *What Is Philosophy?* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994).
[96] Deleuze and Guattari, *Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, 3.
[97] Ibid.

circumstances of new media's textual dissemination. I argue that new media characteristics such as interactivity and hypertextuality require a rethinking of the audience in terms of productivity. Deleuzian concepts of becoming and difference are connected to hypertextual productivity in the creation of diverse communicative events. This chapter takes as a case study a widely distributed internet animation, *The Meatrix*—an activist text that indicts corporate factory farming as morally and environmentally objectionable. The productive possibility for *The Meatrix* is found in the multiple networks and interconnections of new media dissemination. Since the mass-mediated models of distribution are insufficient to make sense of the productive audience, I map dissemination of *The Meatrix* rhizomatically, considering lines of segmentarity, molar lines, and lines of flight rather than broad channels of mass distribution. I conclude that the rhizome reveals speed and authoritative dissociation in the new media communicative circumstances. These circumstances lead to an expansion of importance for textual elements and diffuse discursive elements for the viewer.

Chapter Three

In new media communicative encounters, then, interpretative forces enter the rhetorical moment through the individual viewer's previous experiences in diffuse discourses of contemporary culture as well as through the rhetorical elements of the text itself. The interaction of viewer and text in the moment of rhetorical encounter is further conditioned by the circumstances of viewing, the technological characteristics of media practice. The speed and volume of communicative circumstances implied in rhizomatic analysis generate a state of immersion in a stream of textual fragments. The concept of resonance is offered as a means for thinking about rhetorical encounters in an advancing

state of immersion. Resonance considers the effect of evoking diffuse discursive elements in the viewer rather than engaging in public deliberation. *The Meatrix* serves as the first of two case studies in this chapter. Resonant appeals to prominent instances of cultural discourses are juxtaposed to contradictory images to create resonant reversal in *The Meatrix*. In the second case study Woody Harrelson's status as a celebrity expert and his use of a soundbyte style are examined in his environmental website.

Chapter Four

In the fourth chapter I take into consideration Jean Baudrillard's challenge to the depth of meaning in a world of surface and simulation. This perspective on communicative encounter posits that the speed of image dissemination and uptake precludes interpretation based on discursive experience. I use the term image resonance to describe forces of the image at the level of surface. A counterpoint to resonance, image resonance explores the interaction of viewer and image removed from the depth of discursive forces. A study of images from Leonardo DiCaprio's environmental website shows how surface forces of an image can function in the new media circumstances. I argue that elements of the image, projection, and play interact with technological characteristics to generate a derivative force. I consider the possibility that the articulation of the world is moving from rational deliberation and consideration meaning toward the continual fractalization of an individual screen.

Chapter Five

Finally, the last chapter of this dissertation returns to the central question: *How are environmental advocates adapting their rhetoric to new media formats?* Taking a systems approach to the findings of each previous chapter, I outline the interconnected

milieus of media technology, rhetorical communication, and environmental activism. I conclude that the rhetoric of environmental activism is adapting to new media formats by systemically maintaining mass-mediated strategies while incorporating rhizomatic dissemination, resonance, and image resonance. As the communicative circumstances continue to shift toward speed and dissociation, however, the relative impact of the mass-mediated event and the new media diffusion of texts begins to equal out. Ultimately, there is a distinct possibility that strategies of surface can become the basis for environmental activism—an activation of the diffuse through diffuse production.

CHAPTER TWO:

CREATING *THE MEATRIX* RHIZOME

Introduction:

Neo: The Matrix?

Morpheus: Do you want to know what IT IS? The Matrix is everywhere. It

is all around us, even now in this very room. You can see it when you look

out your window or when you turn on your television. You can feel it

when you go to work, when you go to church, when you pay your taxes. It

is the world that has been pulled over your eyes to blind you from the

truth.

Neo: What truth?

Morpheus: That you are a slave, Neo. Like everyone else you were born

into bondage, born into a prison that you cannot smell or taste or touch. A

prison for your mind. Unfortunately, no one can be told what the Matrix

is. You have to see it for yourself. This is your last chance. After this there

is no turning back. You take the blue pill, the story ends, you wake up in

your bed and believe whatever you want to believe. You take the red pill,

you stay in Wonderland, and I show you how deep the rabbit hole goes....

Remember, all I'm offering is the truth, nothing more....[98]

---

[98] Andy Wachowski and Larry Wachowski, "The Matrix," (Warner Studios, 1999).

The Matrix series of films, with a worldwide gross over 1.6 billion dollars in box office receipts,[99] has spawned more than its fair share of parodies, tributes, and references. For example, the MTV Movie Awards spoofed both of the first two movies in the opening of the shows, first in 2000 with Sarah Jessica Parker combining a parody of her own *Sex and the City* HBO television series with a *Matrix* plot, then again in 2003 with N'Sync singer Justin Timberlake and *Dude Where's My Car* co-star Seann William Scott interacting with film imagery from follow-up film *Matrix Reloaded*. Lesser known *Matrix* mimicry also include items found on the world wide web, including *The Fanimatrix*, a 16 minute tribute film produced by amateur actors and film-makers in New Zealand; *Fart Matrix*, an edited medley of *Matrix* scenes dubbed with various farting noises; and *South Park Matrix*, an unlicensed use of South Park cartoon characters— taken from a South Park video game—to reenact scenes of the *Matrix*.

Environmental activists have also gotten into the act with their own Matrix allusions. Mirroring portions of plot and character from the original *Matrix* film, *The Meatrix* is a four minute Flash animation which argues against factory farms. The film's distributor summarizes:

> Instead of Keanu Reaves, *The Meatrix* stars a young pig, Leo, who lives
> on a pleasant family farm … he thinks. Leo is approached by a trenchcoat-
> clad cow, Moopheus, who shows him the ugly truth about agribusiness,
> complete with a send-up of the "stop-motion" camerawork immortalized

---

[99] Bruce Nash, *Box Office History for Matrix Movies* [Web Page] (The Numbers, 2004 [cited June 1 2004]); available from http://www.the-numbers.com/movies/series/Matrix.php.

by the Matrix. The mix of humor, pop culture references, and an important message clearly resonates with a wide swath of the web-using public.[100]

The Meatrix allusion to the culturally pervasive *Matrix* narrative, imagery, and characters attract and challenge its viewers (as I detail in the following chapter). However, the distribution of the text to the audience, like many new media texts, escapes simple description and is also worthy of close consideration. In this chapter I argue that the unique qualities of digital hypertext and internet dissemination can be metaphorized as rhizomatic. Rhizomatic dissemination is descriptively incongruous to the channeled distribution of mass media because, unlike mass media texts, new media texts have more propensity for redirection, misdirection, and appropriation. New media texts like *The Meatrix* exemplify the textual fractures and hypertextual networking prominent in contemporary communication. Pieces of these "texts" change and interconnect, both through direct hypertextual linkage and through indirect allusions and articulations. The political quality of this form of interaction works on the micro level, functioning in tandem with other rhetorical elements and sensory information on a plane of articulation. A necessary parallel to micrpolitical articulation, dissemination, requires the constant becoming of difference, as individuals encounter, engage, and propagate the artifact. In the following analysis, I will discuss how Deleuze and Guattari's concept of rhizome can be utilized as a means of viewing this complicated interconnection of hypertextual networking and productive difference. *The Meatrix* is used as a case-study. I argue that by placing ourselves in the middle, and considering the rhetorical forces functioning from

---

[100] GRACE Global Resource Action Center, "Organizational Documentation (Provided by Grace Staff)," (New York, NY: 2005).

a productivity perspective, we can better understand the creative possibilities of new media activism.

Productivity Perspective

Our society has developed into one replete with cursory messages, highly visual in nature, with little in the way of direct attachment between rhetor and rhetoric. New media technologies both exemplify and heighten this context. Video games, mobile telephones, interactive video and television, email, the World Wide Web, peer to peer file sharing, digital photography and video, and a vast array of new media technologies in combination—like text messaging (email and mobile phones) and camera phones (digital photography and mobile phones)—all have the effect of increasing both the volume of textual fragments and the speed by which many view, process, and pass on messages.

It is within this context that P. David Marshall provides his analysis of the new media audience, arguing that it is developing from active to productive.[101] Marshall notes that the discipline of cultural studies has often viewed the active audience in terms of "productive consumption," but adds that "new media as cultural forms further challenge the divides between production and consumption, and in some cases makes the distinction meaningless."[102] Marshall poses the "productivity thesis" to describe an audience shifting from active to interactive, described as both interpersonally networked and ecologically virtual. Another description of the move from intertextual audience consumption to networked, interactive production is generally given under the title

---

[101] Marshall, *New Media Cultures*.
[102] Ibid. 10

hypertextuality, where the digital format allows immediate access to any part of a text or other texts.

The speed of linking information to or within a text allows for creation of texts made from other texts. Hypertext is often described not only by its digital system, but as the product of intense intertextual linkage. Since any frame or fragment can be linked to many others, in multiple forms and formats, the end-product is far more open than traditional texts like books or television. The hypertextuality of new media technologies is significant when considering not only the problems with a readerly approach, but also in identifying anything as a distinct text. The characteristic of interactivity and its related characteristic of networking make for unique communication situations both in terms of reception and production. Hypertextual networking, the combination of hypertext productivity with the ease and reach of social networking in the digital age, synergistically enhance the speed and reach of communicative dissemination.

Marshall's productivity perspective, and hypertexuality in general, exemplifies the Deleuzian perspective I discussed in the preceding chapter. Deleuze revels in the forms of productivity Marshall ascribes to new media. A poststructuralist in as much as he rejects closed systems, hierarchical thinking, and fixed meaning, Deleuze is also refreshingly affirmative, emphasizing that open systems allow for creativity, invention, and transformation. Looking at open systems, Deleuze highlights the excess and instability of the systems, or how they *become*, a key term for Deleuze. The concept of becoming aligns with new media because the characteristics of hypertextuality and productivity facilitate the inventive or excessive in the communicative system. The

hypertextual networking so prominent of internet communication aligns itself nicely with Deleuze's affirmative orientation toward systems of excess and instability.[103]

Deleuze is similarly fixated on the "diversity of becoming;" becoming in the sense of creating *difference*. Thinking differently, becoming different, provides the ability to live and live joyously and affirmatively. Differences should not be eliminated by dialectics, he asserts, but left in constant tension to reveal difference and becoming—rather than generalize some universal. Difference also needs to be continually repeated. This does not mean reoccurrence of the same thing but beginning again, refusing sameness. Hypertextual productivity allows for the repetition of difference as each communication event is distinguished by the differing engagements produced by hypertext users. Unlike a mass mediated text, which tends to encourage the productive consumption of the text, the hypertextually networked text tends toward difference in its productive becoming. A newspaper, for example, may allow room for active production of the consumed messages (polysemy or polyvalence[104]), but hypertext also encourages production of new texts, subsequently creating new communicative encounters with differences in the rhetorical elements. It is the difference in communicative encounters that further aligns hypertexual networking with a Deleuzian perspective.

Deleuze is not interested in measuring change, which privileges the sameness that would necessarily be used as the basis for measurement. Difference is not to be grounded in a unity of existence, which would be counter to the difference evident in experience.

---

[103] Gilles Deleuze, *Negotiations, 1972-1990* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1995), Gilles Deleuze, *Nietzsche and Philosophy* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1983), Deleuze and Guattari, *Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, Deleuze and Guattari, *What Is Philosophy?*
[104] Celeste Michelle Condit, "The Rhetorical Limits of Polysemy," *Critical Studies in Mass Communication* 6, no. 2 (1989)., Leah Ceccarelli, "Polysemy: Multiple Meanings in Rhetorical Criticism," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 84, no. 4 (1998).

Difference is therefore not the difference of degree but difference in singularity of every thing or moment. Deleuze thus privileges the difference even if there are shared attributes between things. This version of difference challenges the norms of identity, sameness, and representation. Rather than re-presenting the same thing again, the basis for individual identity, we must destabilize thinking, consider difference-in-itself, and concentrate on the singular circumstances of a thing's production (becoming). It is my argument that we can look affirmatively at the differences in new media's characteristic hypertextual productivity. The productive audience repeatedly creates not new texts but new circumstances for rhetorical encounters. The collective possibilities for such encounters push rhetorical dissemination away from the sameness of channeled circulation and toward an open system of lines and motion—the rhizome. In the remainder of this chapter I introduce a case study for examining hypertextual networking and then engage Deleuze and Guattari's rhizomatic model as a form of thinking difference in rhetoric and new media. This is followed by an analysis of the case study using the rhizome as a model.

<div align="center">**The Meatrix Set Loose**</div>

The Meatrix was "published" at www.themeatrix.com on November 3, 2003. In its first week on the World Wide Web *The Meatrix* was viewed by 350,000 people. 152,000 watched it on a single day in the first month. After six weeks there had been 2.5 million viewers from around the world. As of January 2005, over 5 million individuals had seen *The Meatrix*, with 5,000 new viewers every day. By December of 2005 the total views had leapt to 10 million.

The Meatrix's unprecedented popularity has led its sponsors, the Global Resource Action Center for the Environment (GRACE), to create "action pages" not only for its primary U.S. audience, but also for the UK, Australia, Canada, and eight other countries. The animation has been translated into Polish, Spanish, French, German, and Catalan with subtitles in 10 languages. The script of *The Meatrix* is available in 21 languages. Due to a great number of requests, Meatrix based merchandise (including t-shirts, coffee-mugs, and lunch boxes) has also been offered.

The *availability* of the text, however, does not explain its popularity. Unlike mass mediated texts, which can be traced through channels of distribution to relatively distinct public audiences, many new media texts disseminate in ways that defy the logic of mass distribution. Whereas a television program, for example, will be broadcast to a surveyable number of homes, with limitations in choice and habitual behavior generating an estimable audience with roughly determinable demographics, a webpage like *The Meatrix* does not utilize the pipeline of mass media. The model of broadcasting simply doesn't fit in this case. While the text may begin in the hands of a rhetor seeking a wide public audience, it does not remain so. On the contrary, the productivity of hypertextuality drives the distribution across multiple pathways with individuals and small groups repeatedly creating new distributive patterns. The hyper-networked social dissemination characteristic of new media harkens to an age before mass reproduction, though the speed and ubiquity of digital technologies exponentially alter the scale of this social type of hyper-dissemination.

That isn't to say that *The Meatrix* operates wholly outside the mass media. On the contrary, evidence of its entry into mass mediated discourse is readily available. *USA*

Today's online "Web Guide" listed it first among their "Hot Sites" on November 5th, just two days after its release.[105] The next day *The Meatrix* was reported in print in the "Living" section of the *Boston Globe*. Similar reports would soon surface in major papers and small publications from Seattle Washington to Appleton Wisconsin as well as internationally.[106] *The Meatrix* would receive a second round of media attention in January after a case of Mad Cow disease was found in the United States.[107] This renewed attention to *The Meatrix* led to another spot in *USA Today*, this time in the daily "Hip Clicks" column.[108] Distribution of *The Meatrix* occurs at intersections of mass systems and more open, hyper-networks. There are no binaries in place as there would be in a broadcast vs. word-of-mouth system. Instead, there are crossovers between mass and social, hierarchical/elite and electronic egalitarian. *The Meatrix* appears to move at random, with random outcome, random message. But the piece itself is anything but random.

The Meatrix is not just a clever movie spoof, a humorous piece of cultural kitsch to spread around the workplace. *The Meatrix* has been carefully crafted to spread an activist message: a message that corporate factory farms are morally and environmentally objectionable. As such, *The Meatrix* joins a growing list of popularly disseminated political animations on the World Wide Web. Prominent in this group are the animations

[105] USAToday, *Web Guide: Hot Sites: What Is the Meatrix?* [Web Page] (2003 [cited November 5 2003]); available from www.usatoday.com/tech/webguide/front.htm.
[106] Jim Lundstrum, "Meaty Spoof: 'the Meatrix' Makes Its Point with Takeoff of 'the Matrix'," *The Post Crescent*, December 7 2003, "'Meatrix' Revolting," *The Seatlle Post-Intelligencer*, November 15 2003, Staff, "Meatrix Film Highlights Crisis Facing Farming," *Western Mail*, December 1 2003.
[107] Tom Liskey, "Advocacy Group Grills Meat Industry in Net Parody," *Arkansas Democrat-Gazette*, January 4 2004.; Jessica Belasco, "Animal-Rights Animation," *Milwaukee Journal Sentinal*, February 9 2004, Jessica Belasco, "Web Site Feuls Debate over Beef Supply," *San Antonio Express-News*, January 9 2004, Reed Stevenson, "Consumers Flock to Web for Mad Cow Information," *Reuters*, January 11 2004.

of Mark Fiore, a liberal political cartoonist turned Flash animator.[109] Fiore posts

animations regularly (about one a week) on topics ranging from the war in Iraq to nuclear

power.[110] This genre of political animation is produced with political motivation, and—as

I will argue a bit later—there is the potential for rhetorical impact. The question for now,

however, is how a fragmenting, differing text moves in the spaces between mass media

and digital networking while maintaining a *potential* for political articulation.

Free Range Graphics, the public relations team responsible for creating *The

Meatrix*, describes this type of message as "*Viral Flash Activism,*" "the most powerful

publicity tool available to non-profits today."[111] The metaphor of the virus has ironically

taken hold as a term akin to both electronic terrorism and advertising miracle. The phrase

'computer virus' is a culturally pervasive term for a damaging program that spreads from

computer to computer through self-replication. In the other instance, the phrase 'viral

marketing' in advertising circles is a buzzword referring to marketing strategies that use

the properties of contemporary digital technology to reach an audience with little or no

paid broadcasting. Instead, an ad, often a video or animation file, is 'released' on the

internet, in hopes of 'spreading,' virally, through the digital network. This technique has

been used by corporate entities to promote products ranging from major motion pictures

to cars and chicken sandwiches. The latter of these examples, subservientchicken.com, is

one of the pioneers in creating a popular viral advertisement. A Burger King "viral"

---

[108] Whitney Matheson, *Reader Clicks: Barbie Lobster, Hidden Songs and More* [Web Article] (USA Today, 2004 [cited January 8 2004]); available from www.usatoday.com/life/columnist/hipclicks/2004-01-08-hip-friday_x.htm.

[109] www.markfiore.com

[110] While *The Meatrix* remains the most viewed single activist animation, the most viewed animation is also politically themed, though seemingly neutral in its stance. JibJab.com's "This Land" spoof of the 2004 Presidential election caricatured George W. Bush and John Kerry singing Woody Guthrie's "This Land is Your Land."

created for Miami advertising agency Crispin Porter & Bogusky, subsurvientchicken.com features a person in a chicken costume who performs actions based on user commands (Figure 3). The acts are pre-recorded but appear to be responses to the commands, much like an interactive webcam. The website has only one small link to the Burger King main website, otherwise appearing to be a random/bizarre product of internet culture (but was actually based on a Burger King advertising slogan: "Get chicken just the way you like it").

Figure 3. Typing into the command bar appears to direct the "chicken's" actions

Although the term viral has been popular among advertisers, I believe the metaphor is more applicable to the damaging software than the marketing campaigns. A virus implies that there is predation involved, and that the hosts are unwitting and unwilling. The spread of a virus like the flu or a computer virus is based on a model wherein the virus first attacks one organism (or machine), self-replicates, and then attacks

---

[111] FreeRangeGraphics.com, *Flash Movies* [Webpage] (2004 [cited May 29 2004]); available from www.freerangegraphics.com/flash/flash3.html.

another of its own volition. While advertisers may dream of such an insidious form of marketing, the so-called viral marketing does not follow this form. On the contrary, what viral marketing employs are the *social* portions of social networks, as individuals readily pass on what they perceive to be interesting or humorous artifacts. While some of these individuals may be unknowing of advertiser content, as in the subservient chicken site, it is still dependent on content of the material and not solely the nature of the genre to drive its distribution. It is for this reason that I will explore the rhizome metaphor rather than the viral in discussing distribution of *The Meatrix*.

Repeating Multiple Origins:

A textual analysis often includes identification of the party or parties involved in creation of the text (the rhetors) as well as any information that might point toward the motivation behind the text. Although I argue that communication events in new media often put distance, sometimes considerable distance, between an originating rhetor and the eventual viewers, it is still valuable to consider rhetorical motivations (in the places we can find such information). While the ultimate "source" of a "text" is seriously questionable in the eventuality of a new media rhetorical encounter, this does not preclude the possibility to consider what more traditional scholars might call "intentional rhetorical persuasion." While we cannot determine precisely how a text will be read by viewers, the rhetor's purpose in producing the text remains a source of information, a starting point for determining rhetorical possibility.

The constellation of discursive elements conjoined in the creation of a text are open to reconfiguration by the productive hypetextual media as it interfaces with a

viewer, and the viewer will similarly bring to bear their own interpretive biases, further skewing the outcome of a rhetorical event. Nevertheless, although the open properties of a system of symbolic interaction allow for or even encourage reconfiguration of communicative events, the properties of the *system* remain in place to maintain some semblance of symbolic conservation. The conservative nature of the system, open or not, not only allows for productive communication encounters, but also privileges continuity, the simplicity of faithful interpretation. As such, I will offer the parties and information relevant to origination of *The Meatrix* as a baseline. After all, if we are to contemplate the possibilities for activism in new media, there will be need to be some consideration of the activists' political force. Please note, however, that I am not giving any ultimate intention or true origination to the so-called rhetor, only considering these parties as momentary fixations of discourse. The problem of naming an "original author" in an open system is neatly exemplified by the affixation of origination to *The Meatrix*. It becomes clear that the entry of previous discursive formations like *The Matrix* exist prior to the text, but we also find, more concretely, multiple parties available for attribution as "original authors."

The first authorial party, Free Range Graphics, self-described as "creativity with a conscience," is a highly sought-after company because of its ground-breaking work with groups like Greenpeace, Amnesty International, and The Sierra Club. In early 2003 the firm invited proposals for their first "Free Range Flash Activism Grant." The grant was eventually awarded by Free Range founders Jonah Sachs and Louis Fox to GRACE (a second attributable party) from a field of over 50 proposals.[112]

GRACE is a non-profit organization based in New York City whose efforts are divided between several "projects," including a Nuclear Abolition Project and a

Sustainable Energy Project. Most of GRACE's resources, however, are used for their

Factory Farm Project[113] and the associated campaign titled "Sustainable Table." The

Sustainable Table campaign is primarily focused on the internet-based "Eat Well

Guide,"[114] a directory of retailers and restaurants "offering meat raised sustainably

outside the factory system."[115] *The Meatrix* has become the primary means of promoting

Sustainable Table and the Eat Well Guide.[116]

GRACE provided Free Range Graphics founder Louis Fox with "background

material" from which he drew inspiration for *The Meatrix*. GRACE documentation notes

that Fox's "decision to spoof *The Matrix* was based on the similarities between the film

and today's corporate system of agriculture." *The Meatrix* itself is a Flash file which

plays automatically when a user opens the website: www.themeatrix.com. Upon

completion of the animation the viewer is prompted to "click here" and switch to

GRACE's "action page."

www.themeatrix.com/action acts as a gateway to Grace's Sustainable Table and

Eat Well Guide, as well as other related materials. The page is designed primarily as a

stepping stone between *The Meatrix* and the Eat Well Guide, headlined with "Stop *The*

Meatrix, Fight Factory Farms Now!" in *Matrix* styled lettering. A large block below the

headline introduces the Eat Well Guide, implores viewers to "buy meat from family

farmers," and offers a simple "GO" link to www.eatwellguide.org. Other "action" and

"information" websites are briefly described and links provided, but these are made

clearly secondary by their placement on the page, their relative size to the Eat Well

---

[112] Global Resource Action Center, "Organizational Documentation (Provided by Grace Staff)."
[113] www.factoryfarm.org
[114] www.eatwellguide.org
[115] The Eat Well Guide is produced in partnership with the Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy

Guide, and their lack of graphic interest. Information about *The Meatrix*, GRACE and

Free Range Graphics is also supplied in a web-sidebar and in the bottom third of the

webpage. Notably, the most prominent graphic elements within the sidebar—both in

visual impact and hierarchic position—are links to "Sign Up for News, Actions and

Updates" and to "Send *The Meatrix* To Your Friends!"

While we might be tempted to categorize the links on the action page as "the

point" of the animation, I would caution against such enticement. Although a connection

between *The Meatrix* and an increase of traffic on the associated websites listed on the

action page is plain, the rhetorical function of *The Meatrix* itself should not be limited

only to the role of intermediary. *Meatrix* creators Free Range Graphics certainly don't see

their work that way when they describe the qualities of "Viral Flash Activism:" "With the

click of a button, thousands of viewers pass the movie on to friends, family and co-

workers. At no extra cost, your message continues to travel around the web reaching an

ever-expanding audience."[117]

Indeed, even independent evaluation of *The Meatrix* focuses on the

communicative value of the animation itself, as opposed to the increased web-traffic on

associated sites. *MarketingProfs.com*, besides describing *The Meatrix* as an example of

"doing it 'right'," laud *The Meatrix* creators for their understanding of "the nuances of

the individual's interaction with modern media."[118] These marketing professionals

underscore the need to be aware of multiplicities inherent in the consumer audience.

Their view of marketing is described as "*Fresh Baked*;" companies succeeding in the

---

[116] Global Resource Action Center, "Organizational Documentation (Provided by Grace Staff)."
[117] FreeRangeGraphics.com, *Flash Movies.*

contemporary media market, the Fresh Baked, "realize the sheer delight people have in being connected with each other and the market power derived from being connected. These companies enable connections and truly participate in them."[119] As uncomfortable as some—myself included—may be with crediting PR execs with insight into an hyper-connected populace, I use their analysis here to point out that changes in the dominant forms of communication are not only being surveyed in academic circles, but are evidently being considered, and applied to, by rhetors as varied as small nonprofits and companies creating worldwide advertising campaigns.

Instead of concentrating on the conduit properties of campaign texts like *The Meatrix*, organizations like GRACE and Free Range Graphics perceive value in the "viral" quality of a popular text. In such a case the choice to "Buy Meat From Family Farmers" by clicking the www.eatwellguide.org link is no more valuable than a choice to "Send *The Meatrix* to Your Friends." It is in the multiple networks and interconnections that we find the productive possibility of a new media text like *The Meatrix* because this is how the text disseminates. In addition, as the authorial links break down in hypertextually productive communication, new media networks can become the basis for textual authority. We choose what to view but because of who produced it or what mass mediated channel distributes it, but because it comes to us through networks we interact with. The Deluzian perspective, invested in producing and connections, seems well rehearsed among the "doing it 'right'" marketing analysts. One need not have a

[118] Gary Goldhammer and Linda Zimmer, *Enter the Marketing Meatrix* [Web Article`] (MarketingProfs.com, January 27 2004 [cited January 28 2004]); available from www.marketingprofs.com/4/zimmer2.asp.
[119] Gary Goldhammer and Linda Zimmer, *Fresh Eye for the Marketing Guy* [Web Article] (MarketingProfs.com, October 28 2004 [cited May 30 2004]); available from http://www.marketingprofs.com/zimmer1.asp.

Deleuzian philosophy, it would seem, to intuit the efficacy of applying a productivity

thesis to rhetoric in the world of new media (though I'm sure it won't hurt either).

The Rhizome

Although at first *The Meatrix* was distributed to a definite list of GRACE

members via email this was soon supplemented with a combination of press coverage,

web-links and email forwarding. The concept of the virus would have us assume that

there is some quality of the text which forces itself upon the unconscious mind, causing

the individual viewer to unwittingly spread the message to new audiences. This predation

model invests too heavily in the intentions and abilities of a rhetorical message. Re-

casting the viral as the rhizome, however, we move from an assumption of text based

predation—as in the unwitting spread of the virus—to a focus on the dissemination of

text by individuals through multiple social networks.

Deleuze and Guattari offer the rhizome as an alternative to the constricted,

arborescent forms of Western thought: the root and the radicle, or fascicular root.[120]

Professing that "the multiple *must be made*" Deleuze and Guattari offer a model based

not on the "sedentary point of view" of history but a "Nomadology," "a logic of the

AND." Such a perspective is useful in thinking about new media because the

methodological tracing of a text like *The Meatrix* appears in a historical model only as a

chaotic whirlwind. The rhizome as an alternative model is appropriate for its

characteristics of interconnection, linear dimensionality, and multiplicity. Deleuze and

Guattari summarize the rhizome:

---

[120] Deleuze and Guattari, *Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, 3-25.

Unlike trees or their roots, the rhizome connects any point to any other

point, and its traits are not necessarily linked to traits of the same

nature…It is composed not of units but of dimensions, or rather directions

in motion. It has neither beginning nor end, but always a middle (*milieu*)

from which it grows and which it overspills.…Unlike a structure, which is

defined by a set of points and positions, with binary relations between the

points and biunivocal relationships between the positions, the rhizome is

made only of lines: lines of segmentarity and stratification as its

dimensions, and the line of flight or deterriorization as the maximum

dimension.[121]

Deleuze and Guattari contrast the closed, hierarchical form of the arborescent

system, the tree, and the open system of the rhizome. In the arborescent system structure

is strictly hierarchical, with an immutable concept at the top and the particulars arraigned

underneath it as trunk and roots. The top concept dictates the meaning of all else in the

system, which is closed to outside thinking. The tree is fixed and static and because

creative potential and interconnection is limited, so is thinking. The rhizome is an open

system, creating interconnection beyond itself, without hierarchical fixation.

In order to understand the rhizome as a system, whether as a system of philosophy

or as a system of rhetorical dissemination, we must orient ourselves differently. Deleuze

and Guattari's nomadic perspective references those who live without borders and

national (or methodological/philosophical/ideological) identities. The Nomad travels in

and out of the "civilized" world, taking part in systems of exchange but also living

beyond order. Philosophically speaking, the nomadic or nomos opposes the logic of voice

---

[121] Ibid., 21.

or logos. The nomadic is a point of view within itself, as opposed to the (Platonian) logos view of hierarchical order and a view from above. This nomadic view is immanent and intrinsic, within the circumstances, rather than transcendent and extrinsic. As a perspective, the nomadic logic of the "and" is to orient oneself in the middle and view direction and interconnection. Rather than solely relying on tracing from beginning to end, and assuming that such a genealogy will provide a complete picture, viewing the rhizomatic system requires study of creation as well as product. If we want to view the new media system as rhizomatic, for example, we have already seen that it is problematic to simply trace the artifact from originator to viewer. Deleuze and Guattari's perspective, on the other hand, urges that we consider, instead, what is happening (becoming) in the middle.

The nomadic orientation I will use in deploying the model of the rhizome to an analysis of new media will center on the components of the rhizome identified by Deleuze and Guattari: lines. The line, or direction of motion, replaces the static notion of position. Rather than considering a static text, a defined mode of distribution, and the position of the viewer, the rhizome calls for looking at instances of direction from a middle. Drawing from Nietzsche, Deleuze and Guattari discuss the *forces* involved in communicative encounters, or *events*. Collective forces, called *assemblages*, collide in events, redirecting themselves based on the mechanics of the collision. The forces allied with textual assemblages and rhetorical encounters move along lines, adding and subtracting new forces, interacting in events which create new events.

Deleuze and Guattari identify three types of lines: lines of segmentarity, or molar lines, lines of fluid segmentarity, or molecular lines, and lines of rupture, the lines of

flight. The segmentary or molar line is arborescent, a taproot of hierarchical order, moving from the top down. The molecular line is rhizomatic, allowing for deterritorializng, a Deleuzian notion of political re-alignment—though deterritorialization leads itself back to reterritorialization, a concept akin to co-option. Finally, there is the line of flight, a line that can lead to metamorphosis of assemblages. Deleuze and Guattari use the example of the Roman Empire as the hierarchically regulatory molar, raiding and assimilation of the barbarians as molecular, and the nomads as lines of flight.[122] Thus a nomadic orientation is a form of rupture and metamorphosis.

In terms of an orientation or perspective on new media, I use these linear concepts to describe the movements of a disseminating text (assemblage). The point is not simply to demonstrate that texts like *The Meatrix* operate rhizomatically, but to use this perspective to better conceptualize what is happening in the new media communication environment. This project is not about proving the ultimate new-ness or specialness of its artifacts, but to examine both the differentiations and the conservation of norms—both the deterritorializations and the reterritorializations, the lines of flight and the lines of segmentarity, the rhizomatic and the arborescent. Deleuze and Guattari are clear that there are lines of flight in arborescent systems and knots of arborescence in rhizomes. The same is true in new media, where we find technological convergence along with creation of new rhetorical means. Using the Deleuzian perspective allows us to adapt to the multiplicity of communication contexts.

Much of *The Meatrix*'s dissemination develops rhizomatically, especially if we consider "knots of arborescence" as a normal feature of rhizomes. Let me return to the description of *The Meatrix*'s distribution but revisit it as a rhizomatic creation. Although

---

[122] Ibid., 222-23.

we could historicize the process from an original email list and press release, we would

soon discover its viral, rhizomatic qualities incoherent to a genealogical project. From a

small distribution of individual emails and press releases to 350,000 viewers in one week

simply cannot be reasonably traced. From one freestanding website to 27,000 web pages

linking to *The Meatrix* in a single month cannot be traced. From www.themeatrix.com to

the 10 million viewers cannot be methodologically traced.[123] "The rhizome is altogether

different, a *map and not a tracing*."[124] The trace, a metaphorical reference to the Western

tradition of scientific inquiry, looks to follow the results prescribed by the system. A

map, on the other hand, attempts to show where connections occur. Tracing the

distribution of *The Meatrix* would attempt to trace the text through channels to its end

points. As a rhizome, however, *The Meatrix* disseminates in limitless directions, and

endpoints, when they exist at all, are only possible points of origin. Mapping the

dissemination of a rhizome doesn't attempt to locate every communicative encounter, but

posit the directions of motion, show how the rhizome can function through various

connections. Projected as a map, the rhizome can be better observed.

A rhizome grows from the inside out. There may be a cluster of forces in the

middle, but no point of beginning. There is also no point of conclusion as the rhizome

spreads along multiple pathways. Rather than a beginning and an end we must draw

instead on the middle. At any given moment *The Meatrix* grows in innumerable

directions, with varied lines of dimensionality. Arborescent or segmentary lines exist

along with the fluid lines and lines of flight. No system, whether of thought or

dissemination of an assemblage, is completely free of arborescence or segmentarity. I

---

[123] Global Resource Action Center, "Organizational Documentation (Provided by Grace Staff)."
[124] Deleuze and Guattari, *Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, 21.

have already described how press releases and email distribution lists began the process of dissemination. These lines could be considered segmentary, either as molar or molecular, following the path of hierarchy or acting in conjunction with the hierarchical, arborescent system. The arborescent, hierarchical, fixed system of distribution associated with mass distribution and broadcast, however, is soon supplemented with rhizomatic dissemination. The molecular and lines of flight begin to act together in the rhizome of Meatrix dissemination as individuals encounter the arborescent lines of distributed emails and news-media publications and reflect them in new directions. In a sense, *The Meatrix* itself is not only an assemblage of rhetorical forces, but also a rupture in the arborescent system, a line of flight.

One of the most powerful forms of non-arborescent dissemination in the New Media world is the email. One sends to many, others receive and resend (forward), individuals email individuals, some ignore, others persist, resending, re-forwarding (How many times have we received an email message with a subject line approximating: Fwd:Fwd:Fwd:Fwd:Re:funny). These are the lines of a rhizome, moving sporadically in new directions, creating new connections. The lines of email dissemination are the central network of the so-called 'viral marketing' approach. Utilizing the ease of hypertextual linkage, the speed of digital communication, and the diverse patterns of interconnection present in contemporary digital networks, the viral, or rhizomatically forming assemblage spreads quickly, though erratically. Like word-of-mouth in hyperspeed, the rhizome is capable of disseminating from the small email list to hundreds of thousands in a matter of days—all without paid broadcasting.

In true rhizome form, however, the medium is never singular: some individual receives several forwards and post to a Blog, others will read the Blog, some will activate the link. Another line might connect a newspaper article to a viewer. This viewer may begin a new line with an email or a "Hot Clicks" listing in an electronic publication. Message boards and listservs, *Meatrix* merchandise, state fairs, a radio interview , and a *Google* search for "Mad Cow" can all *become* new, rhizomatic, lines of dissemination. While some lines would connect friends and co-workers, and others might connect known entities like distribution lists or readership, *The Meatrix* itself is not expressly created or distributed with specific individuals or groups in mind. The text cannot anticipate the movement of the rhizome. Not even after its publication can we trace the development of its audience—we can only map the connections, directions and possibilities.

The rhizomatic multiplicity is discernible in the variability seen in some of the perceptible lines of dissemination for *The Meatrix*. For example, *The Meatrix* is linked predictably by the People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (*PETA*) website[125], but it is also linked on *Seth Godin's Blog*. Godin, a marketing specialist and bestselling author, writes that he received the link from fellow author and advertising consultant Nick Usborne. Godin says "it's hard to catalog how many things this site does right"[126]; *The Meatrix* is also linked in a post on the *Movie Gazette Forum* where "Tim" reports that he was "very amused"[127]; and on the *Cinema-L listserv* at American University—"Sasha"

---

[125] PETA People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals, *Features* (2005 [cited January 15 2005]); available from www.peta.org/feat/meatrix.

[126] Seth Godin, *The Meatrix* (2003 [cited January 15 2005]); available from http://sethgodin.typepad.com/seths_blog/2003/11/the_meatrix.html.

[127] Movie Gazette Forum, *The Meatrix* (2003 [cited January 21 2005]); available from http://www.movie-gazette.com/discussions/topic.asp?TOPIC_ID=24.

posts that it is "pretty funny stuff."[128] Each of these lines are both a connection between *The Meatrix* and new viewers as well as rhetorical assemblages of their own. The link from PETA could be described as a molecular line, connecting its own site visitors to a message with similar ideological attributes. It could even be considered arborescent, as it keeps its visitors moving within a system of singular values—based on the singular notion of animal welfare. A few caveats, however, may release the arborescence here. First, *The Meatrix* and PETA are not completely unitary in their beliefs. *The Meatrix* does condemn animal cruelty, but is also solely focused on consumption of sustainable meat, rather than the strict vegetarianism idealized by PETA. Second, both of these assemblages, the PETA site and *The Meatrix*, operate outside the dominant closed social system of anthropocentrism. As such, they are linked (though not unitarily) through their connections outside the arborescent perspective of human relationships with animals. On the other hand, both of the organizations sponsoring the websites, PETA and GRACE, operate under an arborescent model of social organization: the 501c non-profit organization. PETA in particular is a massive operation, with hierarchical systems of labor and thought. The rhetoric of these organizations, on the other hand, destabilize the system they operate within. Each of these connections between these arborescences, then, are rhizomatic. Thus we find the molecular line, a rhizomatic form weaving in contact with and releasing power from (deterritorializing) the root of arborescence.

The other lines described above are similarly brushing against arborescence, yet, in these, cases, appear less entwined than indirectly associated. While the marketing profession, film industry, and institutionalized higher education are all organizationally

---

[128] Cinema-L listserv, *Meatrix?* (American University, 2003 [cited January 15 2005]); available from http://listserv.american.edu/cgi-bin/wa?A2=ind0311b&L=cinema-l&T=0&F=&S=&P=885

arborescent, the blogs, forums and listsevs represented here are much less so. What's more, the content of these posts, with comments like "pretty funny stuff," are tangential to the conversations in their respective circles. These are lines of flight, ruptures that push the discourse into new places. Each of these lines of flight show us how the rhizome spreads. Sasha and Tim, for example, would not have encountered *The Meatrix* within the forum or listserv, but, instead, brought the connection into the forum/listserv from the outside. The line of flight they create produces new rhetorical encounters. In addition a potential line of flight is represented by themeatrix.com hyperlink.

We can appreciate the unpredictable quality of rhizomatic distribution when we read a posting about *The Meatrix* on an anonymously written Blog called *TheMacMedic: Fantasies, delusions, and random thoughts from the life of the MacMedic*. Scattered with references to pastoral settings in *The Meatrix,* MacMedic reminisces about his upbringing in the New England countryside. He also includes various assertions of his own *Meatrix* neutrality, such as "Don't get me wrong, I am certainly not anti-meat, anti-agriculture, anti-business, or anti-progress."[129] Still, the MacMedic is a viewer of *The Meatrix*, and creates a potential line of flight: he provides a hyperlink to www.themeatrix.com which directs his readers into new territory. Still, in the spirit of orienting in the middle, I would be remiss to ignore the forces in play when readers encounter the MacMedics's assemblage of commentary and hyperlink. While the MacMedic's comments seem to diffuse the politics of the animation, his reminiscing could also be read as a tacit agreement with its central point: factory farms are not as good as the family farms of the MacMedic's past. Even if MacMedic's commentary is read as completely negative, the

---

[129] The Macmedic, *The Meatrix* (2003 [cited January 15 2005]); available from http://www.themacmedic.us/archives/000253.html.

hyperlink, the line of flight, is provided for potential becoming. MacMedic's readers, contextually jaded by the MacMedic's reading or not, do have the potential to encounter *The Meatrix* and, when they do, experience it in a context including not just the MacMedic's commentary, but also the articulating connections, or forces, brought to bear by the viewer and the text itself. The MacMedic's commentary can act forcefully to alter the subsequent encounters with *The Meatrix*, but the drive to continue rhizomatic creation remains regardless. The creation of new becommings, creation of difference, is exactly what Deleuze and Guattari see as driving the production of the rhizome.

Take as another example what Godin says about the politics of the piece: "You don't have to agree with the message (though I do) to be in awe of how well executed the strategy and tactics of the campaign are." Here we see a potential line of dissemination, the hyperlink, connected to a commentary that could be read as neutral ("you don't have to agree") or positive ("though I do") toward the politics, or as positive toward the "strategy and tactics" of the link. Each of these interpretations has the potential to be a different form of line. A neutral stance toward the politics and positive stance toward the tactics is a read favoring the marketing perspective of Godin's readers, a molecular line moving them between their arborescent norm into the discourse of *The Meatrix*. Read as an endorsement of the politics, this is a line of flight, providing a potential for rupture of the marketing-focused discourse.

The Communicative Encounter of New Media Rhetoric

It is clear that there is no singular pathway for this rhetorical assemblage, one is not encountering a text in the usual or expected sense. The selections, or middles,

provided above only confirm the capability of new media to repeatedly create difference, become different. There are other lines or potentialities involved too: they include the emails and forwarded emails, websites linking to and from *The Meatrix*, news reports, web reviews, "Hot Clicks" type listings, word of mouth, word of dissertation.[130] The rhizomatic dissemination of *The Meatrix*, with no paid advertising and no direct access to mass broadcasting, points to the value of the internet for environmental activists seeking to get out a message. A four minute political animation viewed over 10 million times, without the expense of broadcasting, certainly argues for consideration of new media's rhetorical possibilities. The rhizomatic adaptation of the hypertextual network provides connections to an extraordinarily diverse audience. The examples provided, ranging from animal rights activists to movie-buffs, marketing professionals, and bloggers, are only small fragments of an intricate, dense, and spreading rhizome.

The possibility for inexpensive textual dissemination to a potentially large and diverse audience is understandably the focus of attention for advocate organizations used to operating in the corporate-dominated era of electronic broadcasting. From a rhetorical perspective, however, dissemination is only a precursor—albeit a necessary precursor— to the communicative encounter, the rhetorical event wherein text and viewer collide. The circumstances of the event influence, perhaps even dictate (if we accept McLuhan's thesis), the outcome. As such, a proper consideration of the rhizome and new media characteristics should include their implications for the circumstances of the communicative event.

---

[130] At this point we can count this essay among the various texts and its readership among *The Meatrix* public.

Clearly, *The Meatrix* reached its audience in a manner far outside the model of mass consumption. The availability of digital content, the ability to reorganize textual fragments, and the incredible speed of access derive from the technological innovations of digitalization and hypertextual networks—and are also the reason for new media's rise toward ubiquity. Rather than a broadcast, or a channeled distribution, a rhizome formed, spreading through digital networks via hypertextual networks. Rhetorical encounters were also outside expectations, as individual communication events varied widely. While *The Meatrix* was offered to a few listserv subscribers, the rhizome quickly spread, and with it, the circumstances continually changed. What does this rhizome model of dissemination tell us about new media at the moment of communicative encounter: the rhetorical event?

First, there is the implication of rhizomatic speed. The productivity perspective and hypertextual networking not only engender speed of textual production but its necessary corollary, the speed (brevity) of textual encounter. The speedy dissemination of *The Meatrix* to broad, variable, and distinct audiences demonstrates that texts are not only circulating rapidly, but they are being processed and re-produced with great rapidity. In order for the rhizome to spread in a new media context, individual viewers must not only be able to receive the text, but must be actively watching the text and generating the hyperlinks and lines of flight necessary for further rhizomatic growth.

Second, the ease of hypertextual productivity and the diverse patterning of network dissemination create another implication: a contextual and authoritative void. When a text like *The Meatrix* is interpreted through its rhizomatic lines, it becomes clear that neither the deliberative context of the animation, nor its authorship, are playing

central roles in the communicative encounter. A reader of Seth Godin's Blog does not come to *The Meatrix* from a contextualized perspective of animal welfare, animal rights, or environmental degradation—at least not in the way prescribed by advocates of the public sphere. Instead, the context provided by the rhizome is spurious—perhaps whimsical, perhaps deceptive. Such is the circumstance of communicative encounters within the new media rhizome. The setting of *The Meatrix* in close hypertextual proximity to the GRACE action page does little to dispel this circumstance. Although the final frame of *The Meatrix* includes a link to the action page, the hypertextuality of internet communication only allows for marginal benefit of prescribed linkages. A viewer can just as easily move in completely new directions as activate the link provided.

The technology of new media and the rhizomatic character of textual dissemination therefore point in the direction of a discursive imbroglio, a necessary engagement with texts outside the expected deliberative discourse. Discourse analysis in its usual form assumes that there are overlapping discursive arenas in which texts are interpolated by the audience.[131] The content of the text, the association in context, and the authorial position generally prescribe the discourses associated with interpretation. In the new media circumstance of contextual and authorial void, these discursive signposts are missing. Instead, there remains only the textual content and spurious context to provide interpretive associations. In addition, the circumstances of new media speed preclude reasoned contemplation of the text's proper context, authoritative value, or place in public deliberation. Interpretation of the new media text must rely solely on the generalized experiences of the viewer in broad contemporary discourses. The specifics of

---

[131] Ian H. Angus, *Primal Scenes of Communication: Communication, Consumerism, and Social Movements* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2000), 1-18.

discursive context are neither provided nor discernable, rather, the diffuse elements of discourse available at the broadest levels of communication are the only sensible tools for interpretation.

The circumstance of communicative encounters in new media limit the association of the text with the deliberative discourses it would otherwise be associated with. In addition, reasoned interrogation of a text at the level of public deliberation is precluded by the necessity to move quickly through the encounter. As a result, the content of the text and the generalized discursive experiences of the viewer are the primary forces for interpretation. While we could denigrate such circumstances for their non-deliberative bias, it is also possible to celebrate the release of the text from the hierarchically favorable relations of power prevalent in public deliberations. Either way, there is need to consider how such a communicative circumstance functions as the viewer encounters the text. The next chapter explores this circumstance more closely by considering new media rhetoric with the technological implications of rhizomatic dissemination in mind.

CHAPTER THREE:

A THEORY OF RESONANCE IN TWO CASE STUDIES

Introduction

I feel like a run-on sentence

in a punctuation crazy world.

and I see the world around me

like a mad collective dream.

An endless stream of people

move like ants from the freeway

cell phones, pc's, and digital displays

"In Money We Trust,"

we'll find happiness

the prevailing attitude;

like a genetically modified irradiated Big Mac

is somehow symbolic of food.

      -from Woody Harrelson, "Thoughts From Within"

Harrelson's poem is a rousing indictment of modern American society, and it also

shows how our rhetoric, even our dissent, is tied to the grand flows of discourse. While

the elements and fragments within texts maintain the potential for rhetorical force, communicative encounters, always occur within some fields of discourse. The moment of the rhetorical event collides textual forces, individual interpretation, and communicative circumstances within an infinite chain of moments, a flow of discourses driven by the derivations of each encounter. In the passage above Harrelson decries the speed of life and the technological bondages, yet it is precisely these characteristics of modern living that create the dazed confusion of over-stimulation, the "mad collective dream" that inspires him. Harrelson cringes at the simulacra of food, yet it is an icon of this simulation, the Big Mac, that provides the punch for his indictment. Harrelson is a run-on sentence, but speaks in pithy language to make his point. The modification of a national slogan is a clear statement because what is removed remains. "God" resonates in our minds, not because of a subtle invocation, but because every coin and bill we've ever seen displays it. It is the money that Harrelson mocks that provides the stage from which he performs. It is the resonance of our memories and experiences in a discourse-driven culture that allows for such a clear and poignant indictment. I am not searching out the futile irony of such dissenting rhetoric, however, but possibility. Harrelson's poem is no less activist because of its dependence on the prevailing culture than a Declaration of Independence is impotent because it names the Monarch.

The previous chapter discussed how new media technologies have engendered a shift from hierarchically channeled mass distribution to rhizomatic dissemination. Using rhizoanalysis, I could spend an equal amount of time describing how "Thoughts From Within," the poem referenced above, spread along lines of flight and segmentarity. In fact, this poem has been used in an array of media forms, including public appearances, a

documentary film, a book, and as the basis for an inspirational, activist-oriented flash animation. As I concluded in the last chapter, however, the mapping of dissemination is descriptive of the rhetorical circumstance but does not offer a complete picture of the rhetorical event. Texts like "Thoughts From Within" and *The Meatrix* move along lines within and between discourses, but the characteristics of new media often preclude textual interrogation within specific contexts of public deliberation. I have argued that rhizomatic dissemination and hypertextual productivity require that we think differently about rhetoric in new media. I now move from a discussion of new media dissemination to the circumstances of new media communicative encounters. I argue that interpretive forces enter the rhetorical moment through the individual viewer's previous experience in the diffuse discourses of contemporary culture and through textual elements—which are also conditioned by discourse. The interaction of text and viewer is further conditioned by the circumstances of viewing, the technological characteristics of media practice. Ultimately, the moment of a rhetorical event generates an interpretive outcome, a derivative force, an opportunity to engage consciousness. This is a vital consideration for dissident rhetoric, including environmental activism, especially in the new media setting of speed and productivity.

In this chapter, then, I am further discussing how changes in communication technology open new possibilities for rhetoric. Specifically, I highlight studies of media technology and environmental rhetoric. New modes of technology and rhetoric, I argue, call for new ideas in studying the circumstances of rhetorical events. One way of thinking about rhetorical encounters in new media lies in developing a theory of resonance. I discuss Tony Schwartz's resonance principle of communication as a starting point for a

theory that lends itself to the rhetorical interactions in new media settings. As a means of developing a robust theory of resonance, I turn to two case studies. First, I again consider *The Meatrix*, this time concentrating on the rhetorical forces called forth from the viewer and offered by the elements within the text. Second, I begin discussing the project's second case study: Woody Harrelson's poem "Thoughts From Within." This discussion includes an analysis of celebrity discourse as well as a specific read of Harrelson's role as a celebrity expert. I then turn to a Flash produced movie version of "Thoughts From Within," highlighting the interactions of discourse and text within frameworks of celebrity resonance and soundbyte resonance. The chapter concludes by considering the possibilities a theory of resonance might offer to scholars of new media, rhetoric, and environmental activism.

A Parallel History of Communication Technology and Environmental Rhetoric

Broadly speaking, the introduction of sweeping changes in media, such as writing, printing, telephone, and television, have had well-documented effects on the nature of rhetorical appeals[132]. As I discussed in the introductory chapter, media historians have argued that widespread use of new communication technologies change human perceptions, communication practices, and material manifestations. Similarly, rhetorical scholars have argued that the rise of technologically-rooted media forms create new possibilities for producing and understanding rhetoric. Bonnie Dow, for example, has shown that when television reached ubiquity with prime-time programming, the

---

[132] Innis, *The Bias of Communication*, Innis, *Empire and Communications*, McLuhan, *The Gutenberg Galaxy; the Making of Typographic Man*, McLuhan, *Understanding Media; the Extensions of Man.* Friedrich A. Kittler, *Gramophone, Film, Typewriter* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1999).

"liberated woman" came into prominence as a rhetorically expressive character.[133]

Thomas Long has similarly discussed how the technology of Zine production opened an

avenue for rhetoric of gay men, AIDS infection, and the social anxieties present at the

intersection.[134] In new media studies, John Jordan's study of virtual models shows how

corporate entities can use new technologies to produce new means of rhetorical

manipulation of the consumer.[135] While disparate in their rhetorical analyses, each of

these examples speaks to the link between the use of new technologies and new rhetorical

modes.

Specific to the interests of environmental advocates, Kevin DeLuca has

committed much of his scholarly efforts to demonstrating how new forms of

communication have opened new avenues for environmental rhetoric. For example,

DeLuca (with Demo) has argued that the landscape photography of Carleton Watkins is

foundational to the "construction of a wilderness vision that has shaped the contours and

trajectory of environmental politics."[136] The changes brought on by television are even

more deeply considered by DeLuca in *Image Politics*.[137] For DeLuca, the use of image

rhetoric on television by environmental activists, including Greenpeace, EarthFirst!, and

environmental justice groups, has the dual purpose of gaining the attention of an audience

(by gaining the attention of news media) *and* providing a means to challenge dominant

ideals. Deluca's thesis on image events is:

---

[133] Bonnie J. Dow, *Prime-Time Feminism: Television, Media Culture, and the Women's Movement since 1970* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1996).

[134] Thomas L. Long, "Plague of Pariahs: Aids 'Zines and the Rhetoric of Transgression," *Journal of Communication Inquiry* 24, no. 4 (2000).

[135] Jordan, "(Ad)Dressing the Body in Online Shopping Sites."

[136] DeLuca and Demo, "Imaging Nature: Watkins, Yosemite, and the Birth of Environmentalism," 242.

[137] DeLuca, *Image Politics: The New Rhetoric of Environmental Activism*.

the unorthodox tactic of staging image events as the primary rhetorical

activity of environmental groups that are radically challenging and even

changing public consciousness in the United States (if not the entire

industrialized world). When taken seriously as rhetorical activity, image

events challenge a number of tenets of traditional rhetorical theory and

criticism, starting with the notion that rhetoric ideally is "reasoned

discourse," with "reasoned" connoting "civil" or "rational" and

"discourse" connoting "words."[138]

DeLuca's argument centers on the idea that the media form of television opened up the

possibility for a new rhetorical appeal (image events) and that this appeal operated

differently than previous environmental rhetoric. Image events, "crystallized

philosophical fragments, mind bombs," are neither the self-perpetuating identity politics

studied by social movement scholars, nor the rational argumentation considered as norm

by most traditionally minded public-address and rhetorical critics.[139] Instead, image

events make use of the rhetorical openings created by television as a medium to effect

change. The two purposes of image events as rhetorical appeals, "to call attention to

particular problems" and "also to challenge the discourse of industrialism," fit with

televisual characteristics.[140] First, attention must be drawn within the televisual

circumstances of "fleeting images."[141] DeLuca, like many new media scholars, identifies

that audiences are "immersed" in a stream of texts, and argues that image events are

---

[138] Ibid., 14.
[139] Ibid., 6.
[140] Ibid., 52.
[141] Ibid., 121.

necessary and effective strategies to gain attention (and reception) via distraction.[142]

Second, since the circumstances of communicative encounters are based on distraction as a means of reception, the image event not only draws attention but also functions rhetorically. Drawing upon an engagement of the theory of articulation discussed by Laclau and Mouffe with the rhetorical perspective on social movements offered by McGee, DeLuca argues:

> we can and should study the rhetorical tactics of groups attempting not merely to move the meanings of key ideographs but to disarticulate and rearticulate the links between ideographs, the synchronic cluster of discourse.[143]

Operating in "the field of discursivity," environmental advocates attempt to shift dominant meaning through the "micropolitics" of image rhetoric. This type of rhetorical strategy is both afforded by and made effective because of the televisual characteristics of immersion (ubiquity) and distraction.

Another of DeLuca's analyses, this time focusing on the more generalized globalization protests, argues that contemporary media usage can be thought of as a "public screen."[144] DeLuca, with Peeples, writes:

> The public screen. Such a concept takes technology seriously. It recognizes that most, and the most important, public discussions take place via "screens"— television, computer, and the front page of newspapers…Television and the Internet in concert have fundamentally transformed the media matrix that

---

[142] Ibid.
[143] Ibid., 45.
[144] DeLuca and Peeples, "From Public Sphere to Public Screen: Democracy, Activism, and The "Violence" Of Seattle."

constitutes our social milieu, producing new forms of social organization and new modes of perception.[145]

Concentrating on the television coverage of the 1999 Seattle WTO protests, DeLuca and Peeples amend the common critique of state spectacles, arguing that the public screen provides space for dissent as well as (the manufacture of) consent. Thus, they write that:

> On today's public screen corporations and states stage public spectacles (advertising and photo ops) certifying their status before the people/public *and* activists participate through the performance of image events, employing the consequent publicity as a social medium for forming public opinion and holding corporations and states countable. Critique through spectacle, not critique versus spectacle.[146]

The WTO protests provide a powerful example of the emerging public screen's new opportunities for dissenting rhetoric. Environmentalists joined with labor unions, anarchists, and advocates of the so-called "third world" in a display of massive public outrage. While there has been significant debate over the efficacy of the globalization protests in Seattle and elsewhere, there remains the fact that such public screen demonstrations brought the issues of global politics into the vocabulary of political consideration. Furthermore, as long as new forms of technological communication "are productive of new modes of intelligence, knowledge, politics, rhetoric, in short new modes of being in the world," rhetorical scholars have the opportunity (if not obligation) to "chart the topography of this new world."[147] DeLuca's work, in sum, historically maps the intersections of communication technologies and new rhetorical opportunities for

---

[145] Ibid. 131
[146] Ibid. 134

environmental (and other) activists. We can see his work as standing at the present moment looking back on the historic link between emerging communication technologies and environmental rhetoric. It is my purpose to turn this perspective around, to stand at the present moment and look forward toward the emergence of new media and the possibilities this emergence is beginning to develop for environmental activists.

A condition of immersion, in the sense of rapid and fragmented textual encounters, has become more prevalent in the new media circumstances created by the characteristics of digitalization, convergence, hypertextual networking, and the productivity thesis. In order to approach new media's rhetorical possibilities we can extend the immersive analyses of DeLuca and other early electronic media scholars. I argue that, like the dual role of image rhetoric, the means of attraction and rhetorical articulation can be found in the same places. I will return to image events in the next chapter to discuss their place in postmodern analyses, but first shift to another rhetorical form, resonance, to discuss how its use can be extended from electronic media to digital (new) media.

Towards a Theory of Resonance

Media theorist and political advertising guru Tony Schwartz applies the concept of resonance to communicative events as part of his analysis of rhetorical appeals and electronic communication.[148] Like McLuhan, Schwartz is adamant that we must rethink communication in light of technological changes. The use of the traditional transmission model relied on a perceptual base of communication occurring over long distances over

---

[147] Ibid. 147
[148] Tony Schwartz, *The Responsive Chord* (Garden City, N.Y.: Anchor Press, 1973).

long periods of time. This was a necessary problem to grapple with historically, how to *transport* messages, but this problem has been all but eliminated by electronic communication technology. Generalizing communication under this model, using its basic terminology (senders, receivers, channels, etc.) and thinking in its problematic focus (transport) lead to weak theorizing of communication.[149] Schwartz writes:

> In electronically mediated human communication, the function of a communicator is to achieve a state of resonance with the person receiving visual and auditory stimuli… The critical task is to design our package of stimuli so that it resonates with information already stored within an individual and thereby induces the desired learning or behavioral effect. Resonance takes place when the stimuli put into our communication evoke meaning in a listener or viewer.[150]

Rather than attempting to engage the deliberative processes of the rational thinker, it is more effective, Schwartz argues, to pattern stimuli to "evoke" stored information. "We seek to strike a responsive chord in people, not get a message across" he argues.[151] This is what Schwartz calls the resonance principle of communication. Content of rhetoric produced under the resonance principle "will be determined by the effect we want to achieve and the environment where our content will take on meaning."[152]

In practice, Schwartz demonstrates the resonance principle in the production of political campaign ads. This includes his most famous production, the 1964 Lyndon Johnson commercial called "Daisy Girl." Described by the American Museum of the

---

[149] This argument has been made numerous times in communication theory, including criticisms by DeLuca and Peters. DeLuca, *Image Politics: The New Rhetoric of Environmental Activism*. John Durham Peters, *Speaking into the Air: A History of the Idea of Communication* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999).

[150] Schwartz, *The Responsive Chord*, 24.

[151] Ibid., 27.

[152] Ibid.

Moving Image's archive of Presidential campaign commercials as "The most celebrated and perhaps most notorious of all political commercials," "Daisy Girl" is what Schwartz called "the first Rorschach test on the American public."[153] The ad, which is also known as "Peace Little Girl," begins with a young girl counting up to ten as she picks petals off a daisy. When she reaches ten, the voice changes to a man counting down from ten as the camera zooms into the girl's pupil. At zero the scene transforms to a nuclear explosion and Johnson's voice is heard, saying, "These are the stakes: To make a world in which all of God's children can live, or to go into the darkness. We must either love each other, or we must die." Although the controversial ad was pulled from the air by the Democratic committee after a single broadcast, it was repeatedly shown in full on network news programs. Although the ad never mentions Johnson's Republican opponent Barry Goldwater, most viewers connected the iconic image of the mushroom cloud to Goldwater's well known statements on nuclear weapons. This example demonstrates the power of discursive experiences brought into the communication event by the viewer. This is more telling when Schwartz reveals that the original ad wasn't made for Johnson at all, but for the United Nations. When Schwartz was contacted by the Johnson campaign, he claims to have "pulled it off a shelf" and added Johnson's voice to the end.[154]

I see the adoption of Schwartz's resonance theory of communication as a promising means of mapping the circumstances of new media rhetorical events. However, the resonance principal as introduced by Schwartz requires specification and

---

[153] American Museum of the Moving Image, *Daisy Girl* (2006 [cited March 1 2006]); available from http://livingroomcandidate.movingimage.us/election/index.php?nav_action=election&nav_subaction=D&campaign_id=168.

adaptation to the conditions of new media if it is to be used adequately for our purposes of understanding advocacy rhetoric in new media. Schwartz is clear that developments in the communication context require constant reconsideration of rhetorical appeal. He writes, "[t]he specific applications of the resonance principle are totally dependent on the context where communication takes place."[155]

One way to think of resonance is the way it is defined in physics, as "sympathetic vibration." Within the new media text, I look for rhetorical elements that are meant to evoke the discursive experiences of the audience, creating a sympathetic vibration between text and viewer. As a play of forces, we can say that rhetorical forces within the individual, brought from previous experience in the discursive world, interact with forces within the text, which are also conditioned by the discursive play of symbols and articulated meanings. When forces align so that the text and individual run a parallel (or perhaps perpendicular) course, they resonate, vibrating in such a way as to encourage a derivative force, an interpretive outcome with implications on the articulations of consciousness. This, of course, is the goal of activism, to shift consciousness (along with consequential material manifestations)—a goal unrealized in diffusion or dissemination alone. As the "Daisy Girl" illustrates, it is by combined understanding of the forces brought to the communicative encounter by the individual and the text that we can more fully reveal possibilities of new media.

The glance within white-noise-like arrays of signs, fragments filtered through the stream of piecemeal messages, soundbytes, and spectacles have created a need for ways of reconceptualizing our understanding of rhetorical function. In the two case studies that

---

[154] Jonathan Rowe, "From Political Ad Man to Nightclub Comic," *Christian Science Monitor*, August 21 1989.

follow, I expand upon resonance to discuss it as an appeal to cultural and experiential memories, specifically engaging concepts of cultural reference, reversal, celebrity, and soundbytes.

Case Study One: Resonance in *The Meatrix*

In order to draw the attention that drives rhizomatic dissemination, *The Meatrix* primarily makes use of allusions to prominent cultural themes, icons, and narratives. As an activist text, however, *The Meatrix* maintains conflict with the norms of the cultural narratives through contradiction and repudiation of those allusions. Such tactics, I argue, can be thought of as *resonant reversal*, a rhetorical strategy of juxtaposing allusions to prominent instances of cultural resonance with contradictory messages of opposition.

The Meatrix unabashedly references a prominently resonant text, *The Matrix*, starting with its name. *The Meatrix*, in fact, was released just two days before the release of *Matrix Revolutions*, the third film in the highly publicized and popular *Matrix* film series. Any doubt of this allusion is quickly eliminated in the opening moments of *The Meatrix*. The opening title, "What is The Meatrix," uses the same highly distinctive and recognizable font as the *Matrix* (Figure 4) (Figure 5).

Figure 4. Title graphic for The Matrix.

---

[155] Schwartz, *The Responsive Chord*, 161.

Figure 5. The Meatrix opening title uses the same distinctive font as The Matrix movie series.

The allusion to *The Matrix* connects *The Meatrix* not only to a popular set of major motion pictures; it also enters *The Meatrix* into dialogue with mainstream culture. *The Matrix* in this case ironically acts as a marker for cultural norms. I say ironically because the surface narrative of the *Matrix* films purports to question what we take for the "real world." As a point of reference for *The Meatrix*, however, the *Matrix* films become the link to mainstream cultural discourse, while *The Meatrix* questions reality.[156] Thus we find that allusion to the *Matrix* functions to draw the attention of a public *and* to set a referential marker for contradiction. In other words, reference to the popular narrative and characters of the *Matrix* film not only attract interest but also become a representative of mainstream culture; *The Meatrix* will contradict the mainstream representations in a way that can shift consciousness.

The visual representations of characters within *The Meatrix* exemplify this dual attraction and contradiction. Take, for example, Moopheus, a reconstruction of *Matrix*

---

[156] I am not implying that *The Matrix* is not a contrarian text. What is ironic here is that the culturally resonant features of *The Matrix*, widely incorporated into contemporary culture, themselves become points of mainstream cultural resonance. This occurs, in this instance, out of direct context with the film. The graphics, characters, and plot elements referred to by *The Meatrix* are taken out of the original context, and do not carry with them the contrary notions ascribed within a reading of the film in whole. It is because of their commercial, branded popularity that these decontextualized elements are resonant to most *Meatrix* viewers.

character Morpheus, played in the film series by Lawrence Fishburne (Figure 6).

Moopheus, like his exemplar, sports a black overcoat and "armless" sunglasses and

speaks in a deep, monotone voice. As a point of reference, however, the resonant reversal

becomes clear when the viewer realizes that Moopheus, although standing erect, is a cow

(Figure 7). We can consider this move resonant because there is an obvious reference to

the popular movie character. The introduction of the bovine Moopheus is also a reversal

because it transfers the character, and the story's narrative, from the human to animal

realm. The anthropomorphic Moopheus representation of Morpheus transfers the cultural

resonance of a human story to a contradictory setting where nonhuman affairs are central.

This reversal is clear when we consider that the rhetor explicitly seeks to contradict the

cultural norm of human-centered inconsideration of animals and animal products.

Figure 6. Matrix character Morpheus shown in this publicity image for "Matrix Reloaded", the second Matrix film.

Figure 7. Moopheus' appearance is patterned after Morpheus

This same use of characters for resonant reversal is also manifest in *The Meatrix*'s other principle, Leo. Although his position in the narrative and character name clearly reference Keanu Reeves' *Matrix* role as "Neo," "Leo" appears to have little, if any, physical resemblance to the film character. Instead, Leo is portrayed as a simple-minded, stout and smiling pig. Like Neo, Leo the pig begins the story unaware that his reality is false and that the existence of a "real world" is made present only through Moopheus/Morpheus's intervention. As a reversal, however, Leo does not live the dark, lonely life of a self-questioning computer hacker in present day New York City. Instead, Leo lives the idyllic life of a farm animal: happily eating slop from a trough in a spacious country barnyard (Figure 8). The contradictory reversal here plays further on the irony of the reference by suggesting that the barnyard is as false as the computer generated "reality" of the Matrix.
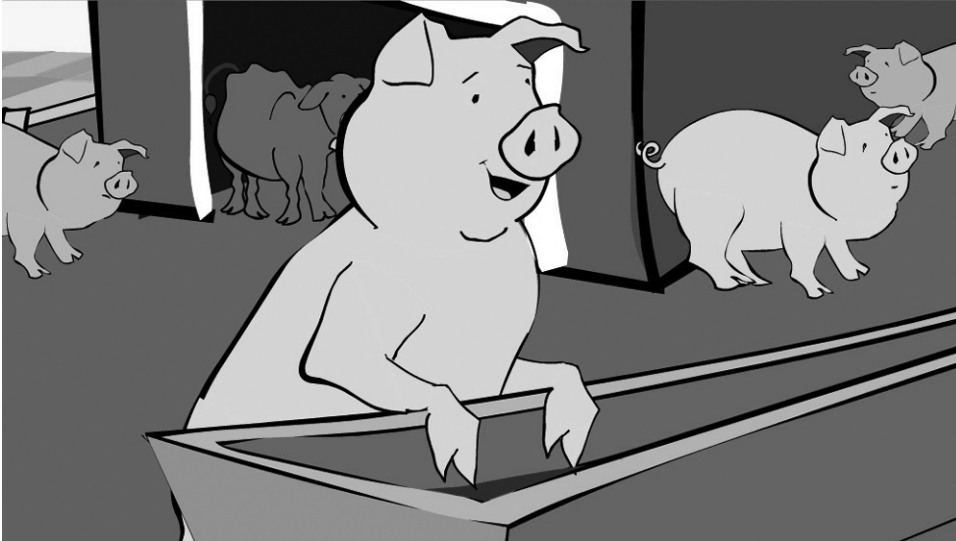
Figure 8. Leo the pig feeds happily in the idealized barnyard

Animals and humans do have a common fate in their respective "real world" lives in *The Meatrix* and the *Matrix* respectively. The narrative of the *Matrix* reveals that humans in the real world have become a source of energy for their masters; they are "food" for the robots. Cows, chickens and pigs in *The Meatrix*'s real world are not only similar as a food source for their masters, but they are also similar in treatment as industrial resources. Of course, as the consumers of this food source, the viewers in contemporary culture become the robots.

This representation of Leo the pig and his barnyard environment also references two other markers of cultural resonance. First, the happy talking pig and his animal friends reference the tradition of animated cartoons. Whether in the form of Bugs Bunny, Huckleberry Hound or Porky Pig, Americans are not only familiar with the talking cartoon animal, they are also comfortable with the benign images of simplistically rendered characters encountered on Saturday morning television. This is similarly true of feature film pig and farmyard representations, animated or not, in movies like *Babe* and *Charlotte's Web*. Second, as those two films illustrate, Leo's barnyard calls upon the

cultural norm of America's small farm. *The Meatrix* draws on the common cultural perception of farm animal life represented in movies, children's books, and toys. The child-like innocence of this idyllic image resonates with viewers, attracting their gaze while setting-up the opportunity for reversals.

Most of the balance of *The Meatrix* is based on presenting resonant reversals of the cartoonized idyllic barnyard life. It could be said, in fact, that the answer to the question posed in the title of *The Meatrix*, "what is the Meatrix?" is the idealized barnyard itself. *The Meatrix* is meant not as a fictional representation, however, but as an allegorical account of the false image presented as real in common cultural representations.

Moopheus: "Do you want to know what it is?"

Leo: "OK."

Moopheus: "The Meatrix is all around you, Leo. It is the story we tell ourselves about where meat and animal products come from. The family farm is a fantasy, Leo. Take the blue pill and stay here in the fantasy, take the red pill and I'll show you the truth."

> *Leo takes the red pill. They go through a crazy transition. And land in a huge bleak factory farm pig barn, pigs in gestation crates as far as the eye can see. Leo finds himself standing in one.*

Moopheus: "Welcome to the real world."[157]

The ceremonial taking of the red pill scene reprinted here mirrors Neo's introduction to the "real world" in the original *Matrix*. Although this exemplifies a further use of resonant attraction via reference to the feature film, it is simultaneously the

beginning of a series of resonant reversals turning the happy farm image on its head.

Visually, the "real world" of the factory farm balances itself between maintaining the

innocent feel of the cartoon and disrupting the viewer with dissonant images.

Take, for example, the images of chickens which accompany Moopheus's

description of "cruel conditions" in factory farms. One image uses resonant reversal by

taking the idealized cartoon depiction of the barnyard hen and placing it in cramped,

heavily barred and tiered cages, with apparent feces on the floor and spots of blood

scattered on the bodies of the birds. One of the chickens lies upside-down, with its neck

bent back, head hanging out of the cage and the cartoon norm for death, Xs for eyes,

indicating the condition of the carcass (Figure 9).

Figure 9. Harsh conditions portrayed in The Meatrix.

Although such a description of the image indicates the gruesome conditions of

real factory farms, the image is lightened by the comic quality of the animation. Unlike

---

[157] FreeRangeGraphics.com, "The Meatrix Transcript," (2003), 1.

more realistic genres of animation, such as the often brutally violent and realistic Anime style of Japan, the cartoon style used in *The Meatrix* always tempers the horrific. This is, moreover, what allows explicitly violent material in well-known animated series like *Tom and Jerry* and *The Road Runner* to be culturally acceptable for child viewing.

Particular care is present in *The Meatrix's* application of the cartoon style to introduce otherwise repugnant scenes of factory farms. This is perhaps the exceptional genius of *The Meatrix*; while gruesome photographs of maltreatment and poor conditions in factory farms have been readily available for years, the sickening quality of the images often repulses the casual viewer (Figure 10). *The Meatrix*, however, introduces the concepts and conditions in a format that is not only acceptable but draws viewer attention. On the other hand, the use of resonant imagery of barnyard cartoon animals in scenes of pain and suffering also contradicts the cultural norms. Take as an example the images used to portray what Moopheus describes as "systematic mutilation, practices such as debeaking chickens." Here the cartoon image is shown only in silhouette; a human body holding a cartoonized chicken by the neck places its beak into an apparatus, pulls a lever, and cuts the beak from the chicken (Figure 11). While the image disrupts the normal understanding of barnyard life, and introduces the viewer to a horrifying practice, it is also visually palatable, allowing the attention to be maintained and the concept to be absorbed.

Figure 10. This image, taken from PETA campaign video, "Chew on This" shows chicken debeaking in "real life."
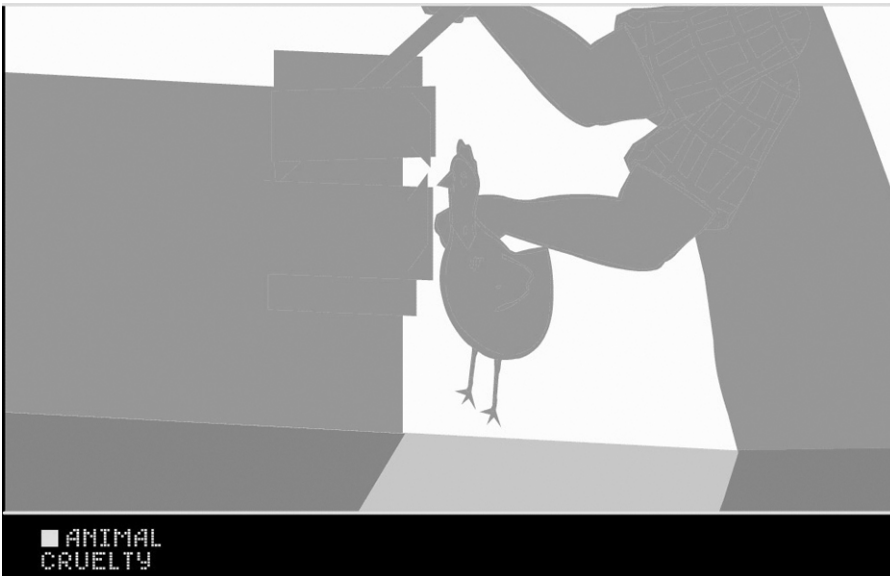

Figure 11. A chicken is debeaked in silhouette

Further reversals of the barnyard norm continue throughout the body of the animation. Moopheus describes antibiotic use and environmental pollution while images of "super strains" of "disease-causing germs" and stream and air pollution caused by "12 million pounds of excrement" are portrayed as cartoon contradictions (Figure 12). At one

point the rather childish sound of defecation accompanies images of a rural countryside, where factory farm pollution turns the river from blue to brown and the sky from yellow to grey. The combinations of cartoon humor and idyllic country scenery are thus used as referential points upon which serious issues can be placed in contradiction.

Figure 12. Leo and Moopheus show cartoonish disgust.

Finally, the idyllic cultural norm of the family farm is itself obliterated—by a giant cycloptic robot with waving tentacle arms (Figure 13). The robot not only plays into the *Matrix* image of the human harvest depicted in the film, the "Agri-corp" label is reminiscent of cartoon-world's all-in-one corporate provider "ACME." Moopheus narrates as the Agri-corp robot moves through a pastoral countryside stomping out the traditional symbol of the family farm: a red barn and a white-fenced animal pen. Each of the family farms is systematically replaced as the robot squats over the site of the former barn and seemingly defecates out a plain grey warehouse representative of the factory farm. The sky darkens ominously as the Agri-corp robot moves through the scene, growing larger as it approaches the screen.
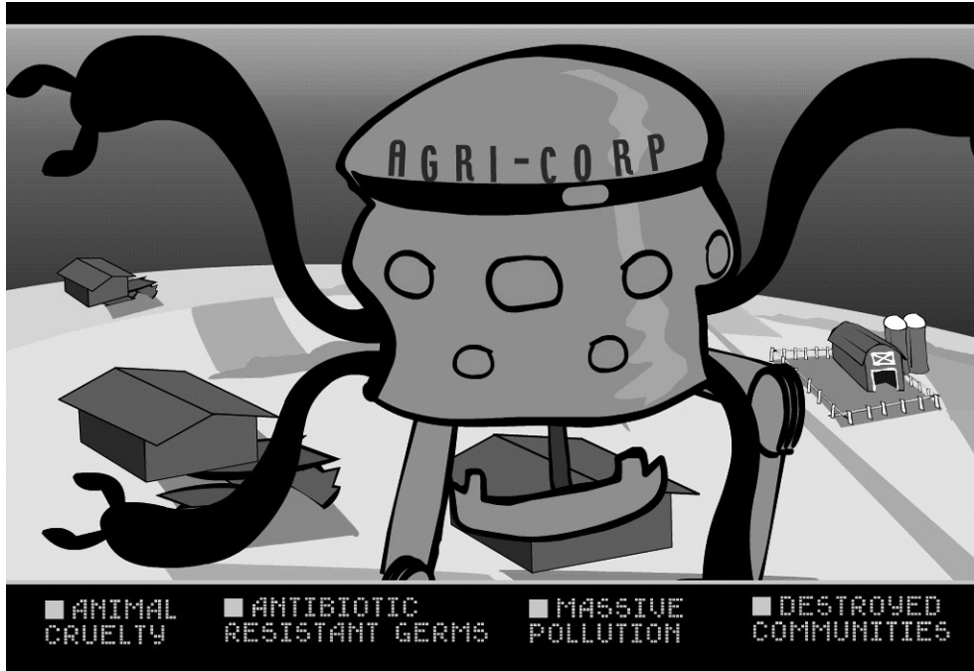
Figure 13. A giant robot crushes family farms and replaces them with factory farms.

Moopheus: That is the Meatrix, Leo. The Lie we tell ourselves about

where our food comes from. But it's not too late, there is a resistance.

> *(Moopheus is joined by another pig, and a chicken. All wearing*
>
> *black overcoats and sunglasses).*

Leo: Count me in.

> *(Enraged Leo jumps up out of the crate and freezes in "bullet*
>
> *time" ala the Matrix)*

Leo: How do we stop them Moopheus?

Moopheus: *(Addresses the user in the foreground)* We are going to spread

the word. But it's you, the consumer who has the real power! Don't

support the factory farming machine! There is a world of alternatives!

> *(He holds out his hoof with a large red pill in it).*

Moopheus: Click here and I'll show you what you can do to escape the

Meatrix. [158]

The final image of *The Meatrix* has Moopheus looking toward the viewer, large

red "pill" in hoof, "Click Me" printed in large black letters beckoning the viewer to

mouse-click on the hyperlinked pill (Figure 14). This red pill acts as a final resonant

reconnection to *The Matrix*. In the original *Matrix* film, Keanu Reeves' Neo character,

like Leo the pig in the opening of *The Meatrix*, is given a red pill by Morpheus

(Moopheus) to show him "just how far down the rabbit hole goes." Taking the red pill is

a decisive moment for Neo, who is also offered a blue pill, which would allow him to fall

asleep, awaken in his own bed, and continue to live in the false reality of the matrix. On

the other hand, Neo can take the red pill and find out the "truth" about the matrix.

Morpheus informs him that "no one can be told what the matrix is; you have to see it for

yourself."

Figure 14. Moopheus offers the viewer their own red pill, the gateway to "the truth"

---

[158] Ibid.

So too is the case with Moopheus and his red pill. The hyperlink to GRACE's "action page" (described in chapter two) is also a choice: the viewer can choose to ignore the link, accept the entertainment value of the animation, and, presumably, remain in the Meatrix. On the other hand, the viewer can follow the hyperlink to the GRACE action page and browse the information available there. I would like to suggest, however, that in this case the viewer has already taken the red pill, whether she chooses to click on the link or not. I would suggest that there may have been a choice made, but that choice was in pointing the web browser to *The Meatrix* animation in the first place. As I described, the viewer of *The Meatrix* has been exposed to words and images which already demonstrate the rhetorical points GRACE seeks to express. Not only has the viewer been exposed to the concepts of animal cruelty, pollution and destruction of family farms, *The Meatrix* has also presented these concepts within the norms and in contradiction to the norms of resonant culture. The resonant reversals evident in the animation posit the viewer in a situation where their attention has been attracted by resonant features and their perception has been challenged by contradicting cultural narratives.

Case Study Two: Resonance and Woody Harrelson's "Thoughts From Within"

Viewers of the flash movie presentation of Woody Harrelson's poem, "Thoughts From Within," frequently use the term "resonate" to describe their viewing experience. In this second case study I will propose two additional forms of resonance functioning in Harrelson's internet presentation of "Thoughts From Within." The first and most immediately apparent form of resonance relates to Harrelson's status as a celebrity. Rather than generalizing the ethos of celebrity status, however, I argue that this is a more

potent use of resonance via the celebrity expert. The celebrity expert is a familiar form of authority in a world often remiss of clear authority. Harrelson's status as celebrity is combined with the voice of expertise to create a stylistic structure recognizable to the contemporary audience. The second form of resonance operating in this text is soundbyte resonance, a pervasive form of communication becoming ubiquitous as we move from the electronic to the digital age. Soundbytes are easily dismissed as counter to reasoned public discussion and manipulative of public opinion, but they are also the norm of public discussion and the basis for much public opinion.[159] With pervasive use, however, also comes the capacity for subtle implementation. Harrelson's poetic style and the Flash production of TFW functions by calling upon the discursive experiences of viewers to generate potential moments of resonance.

My analysis of resonance in "Thoughts From Within" develops in three stages. This development first progresses from the broad discourse of celebrity and the culture of soundbytes through a narrowed discussion of Harrelson's representation in the media as a celebrity expert and soundbyte speaker. Finally, I draw upon the expectations and experiences of viewers within these discourses to engage TFW as a text comprised of rhetorical elements and potential moments of resonance.

<div align="center">Woody</div>

Some readers might be surprised to learn that Woodrow Tracy Harrelson was born in 1961 in Midland, Texas. Surprised perhaps at his definitive middle age or,

---

[159] Sig Mickelson, *From Whistle Stop to Sound Bite: Four Decades of Politics and Television* (New York: Praeger, 1989), Joseph Russomano and Stephen Everett, "Candidate Sound Bites: Too Much Concern over Length?," *Journal of Broadcasting and Electronic Media* 39, no. 3 (1995), David Slayden and Rita Kirk Whillock, *Soundbite Culture: The Death of Discourse in a Wired World* (Thousand Oaks, Calif.: Sage Publications, 1999), Mitchell Stephens, *The Rise of the Image, the Fall of the Word* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998).

alternatively, in his common Texas origin with President George W. Bush.[160] Some

might seem to recall Harrelson originating from the mid-west—and certainly he couldn't

be more than 35? Our recollections, I would argue, are blurred by a confusion of

Woodys. Woody Harrelson was born in Midland, Texas in 1961. Woodrow "Woody"

Tiberius Boyd, however—Harrelson's breakthrough character on the NBC sitcom

Cheers[161]—was born in Hanover, Indiana and remains forever (in syndication) the young

assistant bartender to the properly middle-aged, ex-Red Sox relief pitcher Sam Malone

(Ted Danson[162]). While little of this is reflected directly in TFW, even the hint of a

confusion of Woodys illustrates several of the qualities of celebrity in a soundbyte world.

First, it points toward the blurred boundary between celebrity life and celebrity product.

Woody Harrelson is an actor from Texas in his mid-forties. Woody Boyd is a bartender

from Indiana in his late twenties. They share the common celebrity persona, Woody, and

inhabit some of the same discursive space in the soundbyte culture. Of course, one is a

fictional portrayal by the other. Still, the distinction is not as clear as one might assume it

would be.

The celebrity phenomenon in the United States isn't as simple as the fame of good

performance, rather the ability to "manufacture fame," according to Gamson, leads us

"into mistaking the signs of greatness for its presence."[163] Celebrity is complicated in a

few critical ways. One complication is the marketing of celebrity status in advertising and

other forms of product promotion (including promotion of the celebrity themselves). This

---

[160] President Bush was actually born in New Haven Connecticut, but spent his childhood in Midland, the town he most frequently refers to as his hometown.

[161] NBC aired 273 episodes of *Cheers* between 1982 and 1993. Harrelson joined the cast in the fourth season and was awarded an Emmy in 1989 for "Outstanding Supporting Actor in a Comedy Series."

[162] Ted Danson was born in 1947 in San Diego and has never played professional baseball (though he is rumored to have taken part in monkeywrenching in his youth).

has the effect of dimming the distinctions between the text and the celebrity voice of the text, which is the reason for the celebrity spokesperson in the first place. As Marshall writes, "the celebrity as public individual who participates openly as a marketable commodity serves as a powerful type of legitmation of the political economic model of exchange and value—the basis of capitalism—and extends that model to include the individual."[164] A second complication is the parallel use of celebrity life and celebrity product as entertainment. We are entertained by the product of celebrity work, but also the product of celebrity life, what Gamson calls the "illusion of intimacy."[165] *Entertainment Tonight*, for example, isn't a show about the products of celebrities but about the celebrities themselves. Heiress Paris Hilton seems to derive all of her celebrity status from her lifestyle. Thus, Marshall argues that "Fundamentally, celebrities represent the disintegration of the distinction between the private and the public."[166] Third, the arena of public politics is particularly complicating in its relationship with celebrity. Celebrities are politically outspoken, celebrities run for (and win) political office, and celebrities campaign with politicians. On the other side, politicians are celebrities, with their lives and work blurring into the realm of popular entertainment.[167]

These conditions are all present when we encounter the Flash presentation of TFW. More specifically, the complicated celebrity world includes the complex persona known as Woody Harrelson. Working from the broad spectrum of celebrity discourse toward the narrowed rhetoric of Harrelson's activism, I believe it becomes clear that little

---

[163] Joshua Gamson, *Claims to Fame: Celebrity in Contemporary America* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994), 9.
[164] P. David Marshall, *Celebrity and Power: Fame in Contemporary Culture* (Minneapolis, Minn.: University of Minnesota Press, 1997), x.
[165] Gamson, *Claims to Fame: Celebrity in Contemporary America*, 172.
[166] Marshall, *Celebrity and Power: Fame in Contemporary Culture*, 247.

of this discourse can be separated from TFW. Subsequently, I will also discuss how TFW

maintains the celebrity persona from the specific position of expert authority.

<div align="center">Woody Goes Further</div>

In the Spring of 2001 Harrelson took a break from appearances on the television

program *Will and Grace* to travel down the western U.S. coast from Seattle to Santa

Barbara—on a bicycle. The Simple Organic Living, or SOL, tour, combined a 1500 mile

bike ride with a mural covered bio-diesel tour-bus inspired by Ken Kesey, a raw food

chef, a Yoga instructor, Harrelson's wife Laura Louie, various other friends and family,

director/producer Ron Man, a film crew, several speaking engagements at colleges along

the way, a visit with Ken Kesey (just months before his death), a tour of an organic farm,

and a short stay at a RUCKUS society activist training camp. The website

Voiceyourself.com was launched by Harrelson and Louie to support and extend the tour.

Ron Man released a documentary film, *Go Further*, which chronicles the trip.[168] Later,

the book *How to Go Further: a Guide to Simple Organic Living* was produced from film

footage transcripts and other interviews with Harrelson and his colleagues.[169] In the

closing moments of the film Harrelson speaks to an audience of supporters, reading a

poem titled "Thoughts From Within." The poem is reprinted in the book and was

reproduced as a Flash file (along with music and associated imagery) for the website. The

TFW flash presentation has been a feature element of VoiceYourself.com since its

inception and remains its most frequently referenced component by site visitors.

---

[167] See Jeffrey P. Jones, *Entertaining Politics: New Political Television and Civic Culture*, *Communication, Media, and Politics* (Lanham, Md.: Rowman & Littlefield, 2005).
[168] *Go Further*, DVD, Directed by Ron Mann (2003; Home Vision Entertainment, 2005)

Woody in the News

News media coverage of Harrelson's tour, the website, the film, and the book exemplify the complexities of the celebrity life/product non-distinction. First, Harrelson uses his celebrity to promote the tour, website, film and book. Second, the content of his self-promotion isn't the product of his primary career as an actor but the entertainment value of his own life(style). Third, Harrelson's persona moves easily between the discourses of politics and celebrity. The media's coverage/portrayal of Harrelson as celebrity expert functions to position TFW as entertainment and political wisdom.

When we think of the Hollywood actor as spokesperson, we typically imagine celebrities hawking beauty products, beverages, and other corporate wares. Actors are just as likely to be selling themselves and their films, however, as they are anything else. It is no coincidence that guests on *The Tonight Show with David Letterman* almost always have some recently released film or other project. Nor is it a coincidence that the same celebrity will turn up on Letterman, *The Today Show*, and *Ellen* in the span of a day or two. Similarly, actors are never so available to entertainment writers and lifestyle editors than the few weeks before and after a movie release. Woody Harrelson is no exception. Interviews and appearances by Harrelson spiked in the months surrounding the launch of VoiceYourself.com and the SOL tour in 2001, the release of the *Go Further* film in 2003, and the *How to Go Further* book release in 2005. Interviewed by the *Washington Post*, Harrelson offers that he will make promotional appearances for the film in Portland, Seattle, and San Francisco. A press release on the *Canada Newswire* similarly notes that readers can "meet actor and activist Woody Harrelson as he signs

---

[169] Frank Condron, ed., *How to Go Further: A Guide to Simple Organic Living* (Toronto: Warwick Publishing, 2005).

copies of *How to Go Further*…Don't miss the opportunity to meet Woody Harrelson."

Each case demonstrating the clear use of Harrelson's celebrity status to promote his

products.

In this case such self-promotion could be alternately read as use of celebrity status

to either gain material profit from product sales or to disseminate his activist message.

Whatever the interpretation, it does indicate that Harrelson is operating within the

discursively-produced expectations of the celebrity. His own statements—with whatever

value we can ascribe to them—point to the latter interpretation. In interviews, Harrelson

repeatedly refers to himself as a role model, particularly in relating his lifestyle. "The

[environmentally conscious] model is the most important thing to bring about change in

other people," he is quoted as saying in the Palo Alto Weekly.[170] The Toronto Star

surmises that "He's more interested in winning over recruits to his way of life than in

scoring debating points."[171] If Harrelson does use his fame to advance his message it is an

operation of means to end.[172] His status provides a means and activists often believe they

are obligated by the primacy of their cause to utilize all means to reach their end.[173] The

point of promoting and documenting the bicycling trip is to make use of this means.

---

[170] Bill D'Agostino, "Woody's Children: Former 'Cheers' Actor Lectures Stanford Students on the Benifits of Organic Living," *Palo Alto Weekly*, May 11 2001.
[171] Peter Howell, "Go Further," *Toronto Star*, August 31 2003.
[172] Fraser and Brown find that "celebrity identification" can lead to "role modeling" the values of a celebrity and changes in lifestyle. Benson P. Fraser and William J. Brown, "Media, Celebrities, and Social Influence: Identification with Elvis Presley," *Mass Communication & Society* 5, no. 2 (2002).
[173] Wark specifically calls upon using the celebrity culture to generate social change. McKenzie Wark, *Celebrities, Culture and Cyberspace: The Light on the Hill in a Postmodern World* (Sydney: Pluto Press Australia, 1999).

This leads to the second element of celebrity complexity: the celebrity life and celebrity product are not only confused but are often packaged equally as entertainment.[174] Consider this extended quote from Harrelson

> I made a book about how to go further, which is just coming into bookstores. I just did my first book signing in Toronto. And that's kind of based on a documentary called Go Further with me and my friends going down the coast from Seattle to Santa Barbara and talking to people about how to leave a lighter footprint. I know it sounds like heavy lifting, but both the book and documentary are entertaining. And then I've got a website with my wife called voiceyourself.com and that's really the heart of what we're doing in terms of our activism. You should look at "Thoughts From Within" there. It's a poem I wrote, putting pictures to it, and that will tell you exactly where my head is at.[175]

Harrelson clearly dances between the promotion of his products and the promotion of his message by moving between the entertainment value of his life and work. The passage above is about a book and then a bike ride, a message and then entertainment, activism and then personal insight.

But the celebrity confusion between life and work doesn't end with Harrelson's self-promotion. The discourse surrounding Harrelson never seems to clearly separate Harrelson the actor from Harrelson the activist. Most news articles, in fact, define Harrelson in a way that confuses the two Woodys. One article is headlined "Former 'Cheers' actor lectures Stanford students on the benefits of organic living" and later

---

[174] For an historical reading of this phenomenon see Joshua Gamson, "The Assembly Line of Greatness: Celebrity in Twentieth-Century America," *Critical Studies in Mass Communication* 9, no. 1 (1992).

describes his activism: "The 'EdTV and 'Natural Born Killers' star faced a similar fate [arrest] later that year when he and some friends climbed the Golden Gate Bridge to protest the cutting of redwood trees."[176] The inter-stitching of life and work is so common as to seem formulaic, which it is. The Associated Press, for example: "'It has solar panels on top and hemp cloth on the ceiling and walls,' said Harrelson, perhaps best known for his role as a bartender on the long-running sitcom 'Cheers'."[177] CNN.com similarly reports that "'Go Further' follows the former 'Cheers' star and Oscar nominee for 'The People vs. Larry Flint' during his environmentally conscious trek."[178] Santa Barbara's *Daily Nexus* writes that "Harrelson is known for the roles he played in the sitcom 'Cheers' and in the movies 'White Men Can't Jump' and 'Natural Born Killers' and is also the founder of voiceyourself.com."[179]

In particular, there is a clear over-determination of Harrelson as the "affable young bartender in the TV sitcom 'Cheers'."[180] Bill O'Reilly dismisses his activism through it, calling him "the 'Cheers' guy."[181] Other media outlets seem genuinely surprised to discover a distinction between the two Woodys: "The actor's real persona is nowhere near the bumbling bartender on NBC-TV's hit 1982-1993 series" according to the Media Industry Newsletter. Interviewers' questions similarly point toward a confusion between the two Woodys. London's *Independent* moves fluidly between "What do you think Woody would be doing now?" to the next question "You're a vegan,

---

[175] Paul Fischer, "The Return of Woody Harrelson," *Film Monthly*, September 15 2005.

[176] D'Agostino, "Woody's Children: Former 'Cheers' Actor Lectures Stanford Students on the Benifits of Organic Living."

[177] Associated Press, "Actor Makes 1,500-Mile Trek to L.A. To Save the World," *Associated Press State and Local Wire*, April 12 2001.

[178] Associated Press, "Woody Harrelson's Long, Strange Trip," *CNN.com*, March 10 2003.

[179] Rowena Lambert, "Woody Harrelson Speaks for Simply Organic Living," *Daily Nexus*, May 17 2001.

[180] Jonnie Gilman, "Gett'in in the Bus with Woody Harrelson," *Natural Choice Directory*, October 30 2004.

[181] O'Reilly, Bill. "The O'Reilly Factor," Fox News Network. August 9, 2002.

no coffee, sugar, additives – do you miss these?" followed by a question on his promotion of hemp.[182] Similarly, in *Film Monthly* the questions turn from "When you were on the cast of Cheers, did you imagine it would lead to where you've gone in your career?" to "What are you focusing on in the environmental movement these days and what do you think the status of the environmental movement is?"[183]

Even more fascinating is how Harrelson responds to these questions. There is some confusion between Woodys even for him, it would seem, when he remarks that: "'There's a lot of similarities between me and Woody [Boyd], although I wish I was more like him in terms of the purity of heart. If remembering Cheers makes people happy, then it makes me happy, too."[184] In discussing his lifestyle the confusion is also apparent: "I'm vegan and eat raw as much as I can. And we mostly grow our own food – probably 90 percent. I played a farmer for so long it's ironic I finally got around to it."[185] The farmer Harrelson refers to is Woody Boyd, who grew up on a corn farm.

Finally, the discourse surrounding Harrelson—with its complexities and in-distinctions—is similarly murky in the separation of celebrity and politics. Harrelson's politics are portrayed as another extension of his fame, and, as such, another form of entertainment. One writer describes the movie in terms akin to a review of superior acting in film: "Go Further seems downright prophetic, but you won't catch Harrelson acting smug about it."[186] Most articles simply weave his politics into the story as if they were a new acting endeavor, a film in promotion: "the same year he was nominated for an Oscar for his starring role in 'The People vs. Larry Flint'—Harrelson was arrested in Kentucky

[182] Mike Higgins, "Q the Interview: Woody Harrelson," *Independent*, July 28 2002.
[183] Fischer, "The Return of Woody Harrelson."
[184] Richard Ouzounian, "Acting out Angels and Devils," *Toronto Star*, September 6 2004.
[185] Gregory Dicum, "Walking the Talk: Woody Harrelson's Sustainable Life," *SF Gate*, July 20 2005.

for planting industrial hemp seeds."[187] Several news leads mark the confusion of entertainment and politics by referring to "*Actor* Woody Harrelson" promoting "organic living."[188]

What can be taken from an analysis of Harrelson's media discourse is that the celebrity image is so matter-of-fact in contemporary narratives—be they marketing, entertainment, or political—that the voice of the celebrity functions as a form of intellectual, the celebrity expert.[189] Reasons for such a conclusion go far beyond Harrelson's case: celebrity athletes promote cosmetics, celebrity actors are the narrative voices of documentaries, professional wrestlers, bodybuilders and actors are elected governor, even President. Americans are rather used to being told what to wear, drink, and vote by celebrities.[190] A celebrity pitching a movie or a beverage or a politically oriented lifestyle are not only equal in the eyes of entertainment discourse, but also equal in the world of soundbyte culture.

Harrelson expresses his celebrity expert role in two ways. First, he offers his rhetoric within the fragmented world of articulation through soundbytes. He is expert in his role as celebrity speaker, and this is expressed in his style of speaking—the soundbyte. In contrast to the narrowly defined and derogatively employed "sound bite" of electronic news and political campaigns, I use the term *soundbyte* to describe a broad style in contemporary culture. Although often derided as a "disturbing" trend in public

---

[186] Ouzounian, "Acting out Angels and Devils."

[187] Dicum, "Walking the Talk: Woody Harrelson's Sustainable Life."

[188] Associated Press, "Actor Makes 1,500-Mile Trek to L.A. To Save the World.", "Harrelson," *Headline News*, May 8 2001.

[189] See also Tania Lewis, "Embodied Experts: Robert Hughes, Cultural Studies and the Celebrity Intellectual," *Continuum: Journal of Media & Cultural Studies* 15, no. 2 (2001).

[190] Gamson refers to the discourse of celebrities as presenting "instructions" for their interpretation. Gamson, "The Assembly Line of Greatness: Celebrity in Twentieth-Century America," 16-17.

deliberation,[191] Stephens points out that the emergence of sound bites in electronic news are actually an "efficient use" of the medium, a necessary adaptation.[192] I argue that this adaptation has now permeated much of contemporary discourse, an argument that has also been the basis for further sound bite derision. In the aptly titled *Sound Bite Culture: The Death of Discourse in a Wired World*, the editors summarize the position of the collected essays: "We have deceived ourselves and cheapened the value of genuine discourse if we look around and believe that what we hear is meaningful communication."[193] Suspending judgment in favor of the analysis of rhetoric as it occurs—at the intersection of technology and culture—I consider the sound*byte* culture. Second, Harrelson points the readers to his website as the place to find more expert testimony. While he variously promotes the film and book as well, Harrelson is plain that the website is the prime location to know more.

Speaking to a crowd in Santa Barbara, Harrelson says, "Our message is not for everyone; it's just for the hardcore." This is a demonstration of the expert position and deft use of soundbyte rhetoric, as reported in the *Palo Alto Weekly* article on his speech.[194] While we might think of "hardcore" as an exclusive reference, the term in popular usage is a buzz word for everything from music (hardcore techno, hardcore rock, hardcore rap), to "hardcore gamers" (video game enthusiasts), to almost any reference involving an inside perspective (super-nerd Bill Gates calls his software company "hardcore"[195]). Harrelson is simply placing himself in the center of the action, promoting

---

[191] Mickelson, *From Whistle Stop to Sound Bite: Four Decades of Politics and Television*, 61.
[192] Stephens, *The Rise of the Image, the Fall of the Word*, 146.
[193] Slayden and Whillock, *Soundbite Culture: The Death of Discourse in a Wired World*, 3.
[194] D'Agostino, "Woody's Children: Former 'Cheers' Actor Lectures Stanford Students on the Benifits of Organic Living."
[195] Apple Matters, *Does Bill Gates Have the Prescription for Apple's Market Share Blues?* (May 4 2005 [cited March 10 2006]); available from

his own lifestyle buzz. The same article leads with a Harrelson soundbyte as well: "'The world is having some issues,' Woody Harrelson said with a movie-star smile on his face."[196] While the quote is colloquial and the attribution confuses Harrelson's celebrity roles, as a unit the fragment of discourse matches the cultural norms of unified entertainment, politics, and promotion.

In other instances, Harrelson's use of soundbytes are polished catch-phrases, like "evolution, not revolution" and "personal transformation equals planetary transformation."[197] He has even been given credit for the terms and catch-phrases of others, such as "leaving a lighter footprint on the earth" which refers to the term coined by William Rees and Mathias Wackernagel that is in widespread use to measure individual impact on the environment.[198] Another example both misattributes and mis-defines a common phrase: "what Harrelson calls 'going off the grid' – getting away from corporate products and influence," writes The Associated Press. Not only has the term "off the grid" been in use for decades, the phrase specifically refers to homes using self-sustaining power systems, thus they are "off" the electrical "grid." Harrelson's own home in Hawaii is "off the grid," which is the context in which he often uses the term (correctly).

Nevertheless, Harrelson is offered as an expert, and his soundbytes and catchphrases function to direct the combined forces of promotion, entertainment, and

http://www.applematters.com/index.php/section/comments/does_bill_gates_have_the_prescription_for_app les_market_share_blues/.

[196] D'Agostino, "Woody's Children: Former 'Cheers' Actor Lectures Stanford Students on the Benifits of Organic Living."

[197] Michael Hollett, "Woody," *Now Toronto*, August 28 - September 3 2003, Lambert, "Woody Harrelson Speaks for Simply Organic Living."

[198] Nicky Chambers, Craig Simmons, and Mathis Wackernagel, *Sharing Nature's Interest: Ecological Footprints as an Indicator of Sustainability* (London: Earthscan, 2000), Mathis Wackernagel and William

politics in the general direction of his environmental message. More explicitly, however,

Harrelson directs readers to continued exposure to the message at voiceyourself.com.

Voiceyourself.com is frequently presented as the conclusive source for Harrelson's ideas,

or as the end-product of his activism.[199] Harrelson clearly encourages this. Consider again

this statement:

> I've got this website with my wife called voiceyourself.com and that's
>
> really the heart of what we're doing in terms of our activism. You should
>
> look at "Thoughts From Within" there. It's a poem I wrote, putting
>
> pictures to it, and that will tell you exactly where my head is at.[200]

A viewer of TFW comes to the experience within the discourse of celebrity and the world

of soundbyte rhetoric. An individual may or may not have read any of these articles, or

seen Harrelson in appearances, the film, or the book. Nonetheless, the expectations of

celebrity and soundbyte culture remain. There is a general social narrative that conjoins

the life and work of a celebrity, interweaves politics and entertainment, and sometimes

melds the actor and the characters portrayed. Within this state of affairs, the celebrity

expert not only exists, he/she resonates as a comfortable constant. As Marshall writes,

"Celebrity status operates at the very center of the culture as it resonates with conceptions

of individuality that are the ideological ground of Western culture."[201] The culture of

soundbytes operates similarly, as the technology of new media communication favors

pith and aphorism. As the viewer experiences the flash version of TFW the celebrity

---

E. Rees, *Our Ecological Footprint: Reducing Human Impact on the Earth* (Gabriola Island, BC: New Society Publishers, 1996).

[199] Dicum, "Walking the Talk: Woody Harrelson's Sustainable Life.", Hollett, "Woody.", "Woody Harrelson, Furthering the Cause," *Washington Post*, November 5 2004.

[200] Fischer, "The Return of Woody Harrelson."

[201] Marshall, *Celebrity and Power: Fame in Contemporary Culture*, x.

expert and soundbyte forms of resonance are powerful rhetorical options for articulating

activist messages.

<div align="center">"Thoughts From Within"</div>

www.voiceyourself.com was created in 2001 to coincide with Harrelson's Simple

Organic Living Tour (SOL). Although Harrelson is listed as the website's "founder," his

wife Laura Louie is named as both "co-founder" and "creative director."[202] Louie is given

credit as the site's manager when interviewed in the film, *Go Further*—where she is also

shown working on site design and blogging. The website's current design was produced

by Tree Media Group, a media production company with a mission "to use media to

support and sustain civil society."[203] The content of the site, however, is a collaborative

effort by the "team of people who put their hearts and minds to work." The

VoiceYourself team currently consists of Harrelson and Louie, an executive producer,

moderator, technology chief, team rabble rouser, chef, and two contributing editors. The

site also offers internships and contains entries by guest editors and contributors. The

VoiceYourself team works under the organizations mission statement: "We believe all

life on earth is sacred. VoiceYourself promotes and inspires individual action to create

global momentum towards simple organic living and to restore balance and harmony to

our planet."[204]

Currently, voiceyourself.com's main page features three prominent sections

(Figure 15).[205] First, a section titled "What's New" offers short blurbs and links to newer

---

[202] VoiceYourself.org, *Who We Are* ([cited February 10 2006]); available from
http://voiceyourself.com/14_contactus/14_whoweare.php.
[203] Tree Media Group, *History* ([cited February 5 2006]); available from
http://www.treemedia.com/history.htm.
[204] VoiceYourself.org, *Mission* ([cited February 2006]); available from
http://voiceyourself.com/14_contactus/14_mission.php.
[205] As of February 15, 2006

and featured sections of the website. Included in this section is a large photograph of

Harrelson which links to information for the *Go Further* film and *How to go Further*

book. The second feature section, "Action Alert," also provides short blurbs and links.

The links provided here take the viewer to other organization webpages, most frequently

involving a petition of some kind. Finally, a sidebar on the left of the page functions as a

table of contents gateway to the rest of the website. Tabs here include: "Da Kine

Kitchen," offering information on raw food diets and recipes; "Wood's Goods," "eco-

conscious products" recommended by Harrelson; and "Thoughts From Within," a link to

the flash production of Harrelson's poem.

TFW is the top link on the sidebar, and has been available on the site longer than

any other content.[206] The webpage containing the flash production features the first image

seen in the flash version (Figure 16). This picture of Harrelson's knit-capped head from

behind, surrounded in thick smoke and looking into a mirror, is overwritten with links to

the flash production, the website for downloading Flashplayer, and a related page

containing the text of the poem alone. Above the links is the title of the poem, "Thoughts

From Within," along with its first line: "Sometimes I feel like an alien creature for which

there is earthly explanation."[207]

---

[206] The online database, Internet Archive, has saved versions of VoiceYoirself.com dating back to May 1, 2001 and Voiceyourself.org from October 20, 2001. VoiceYourself.org, "Voice Yourself Homepage," (Internet Archive, 2001).
[207] VoiceYourself.org, *Thoughts from within Main* ([cited February 2006]); available from voiceyourself.com/03_thoughtsfromwithin/03_main.php.

Figure 15. The Home Page for VoiceYourself.org
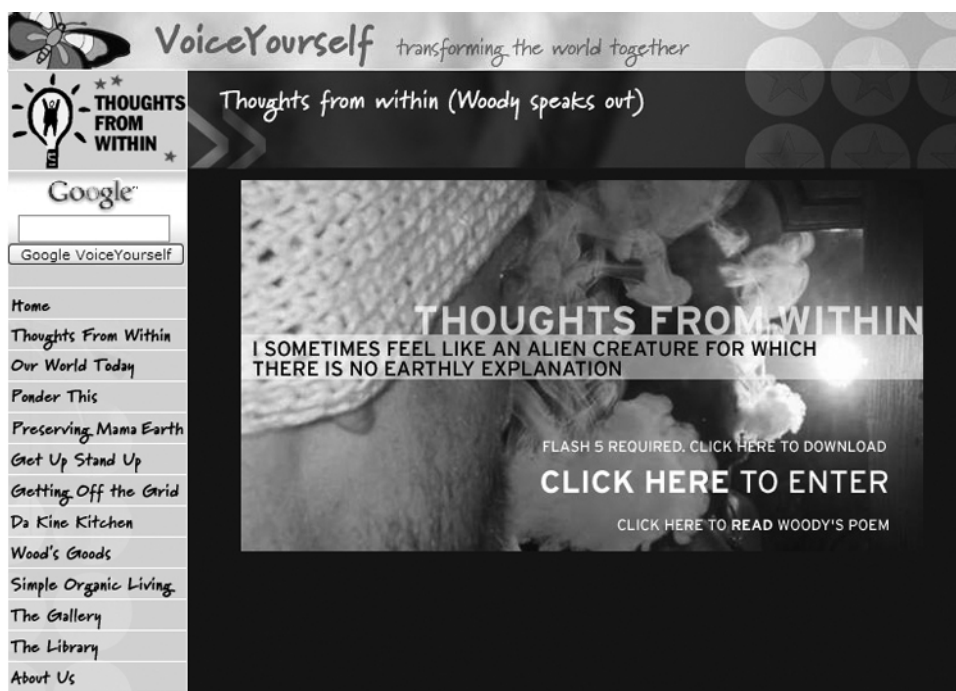
Figure 16. The launch page for TFW shows the first image from the Flash production

Although TFW is not graphically or textually the website's core element, it is the only individual text referred to by viewers and reviewers on the web. Many outside links to VoiceYourself.com, in fact, either link directly to the TFW sub-page, or refer viewers to seek it out. Anita Roddick, founder of the eco-sensitive business The Body Shop, blogs about being referred to a "short film" on her friend Woody Harrelson's website. "I checked it out. You should too," she writes. She provides both a link to TFW and the text of the poem, "if you have technical difficulties."[208] Popular link blog MetaFilter.com similarly offers a direct link to TFW, writing, "Thoughts From Within is an interesting multimedia poem from Woody Harrelson."[209] Another blog, JimBlog.net, also supplies

---

[208] Anita Roddick, *February 2 Blog Post* (2005 [cited March 2006]); available from AnitaRoddick.com.
[209] MetaFilter, *Blog Post August 20* (2004 [cited March 2006]); available from MetaFilter.com.

the link and text of the poem, writing that "The Ron Mann documentary film of Woody's "SOL" (Simple Organic Living) contained this poem, and I went to the website and found it."[210]

Posts on VoiceYourself.com's bulletin board, called "village forum," have cited TFW as the key text on the website. One forum member writes that "'Thoughts From Within' really grabbed me…pure heart felt brilliance. Looking back, it seems that it was a small part of my wake up call."[211] Another writes that TFW "hooked" him to the site and says that "thoughts from within resonated greatly within myself."[212] In the analysis of TFW that follows I argue that what grabs or hooks the viewer are resonant moments that function through alignment with the discursive expectations of celebrity expertise, and soundbyte rhetoric.

"Thoughts From Within" was converted to a Flash movie by adding photographs, graphics, worded text, and music to a recording of Harrelson reading the poem.[213] Opening the Flash file first brings onto the screen a loading scene with a green butterfly. When the file has loaded the viewer can click the butterfly to begin the movie. Audio for the movie consists of Harrelson's voice recording of the poem and a looped track of jazz drums combined with a hypnotic four note base line and three note melody. Harrelson's voice is calm and tonally flat. The lines are read with steady meter, holding many of the final vowel sounds to maintain rhythm. Although the printed versions of the poem are 63 lines divided into eight stanzas, the alignment of phrases and images in the Flash

---

[210] JimBlog, *Blog Post November 19* (2005 [cited March 2006]); available from JimBlog.net.
[211] Ken Jacobie, *Voice Yourself Forum Post January 29 - Oops* (2006 [cited February 2006]); available from www.voiceyourself.com/forums.
[212] jasonjl, *Voice Yourself Forum Post January 28 - Re:Fr Woody* (2006 [cited February 2006]); available from www.voiceyourself.com/forums.
[213] Tree Media Group, *Featured Site: Woody Harrelson's Thoughts from Within* ([cited February 2006]); available from http://www.treemedia.com/projects_mmedia.php?site=voiceyourselfmm.

production divide the piece into 32 sections (see Appendix XX and XX) which lasts just over three minutes. Images in the production are all photographs with the exception of two. The second image is a parody of the iconic painting "March of Progress" by Rudy Zallinger.[214] The drawing shown in this section depicts the evolution of humans from ape to hominid and then continuing on to a hunched form over a computer terminal (Figure 17). This coincides with Harrelson reading the lines "Sure I have human form / walking erect and opposing digits."[215] The fourth image is a textual representation of the coinciding lines of poetry. In this image a jumble of incoherent letters appears while Harrelson reads "I feel like a run-on sentence / in a punctuation crazy world / and I see the world around me."[216] This jumble sorts itself out so that the words on screen match Harrelson's final line of the section, "like a mad collective dream" (Figure 18).[217]
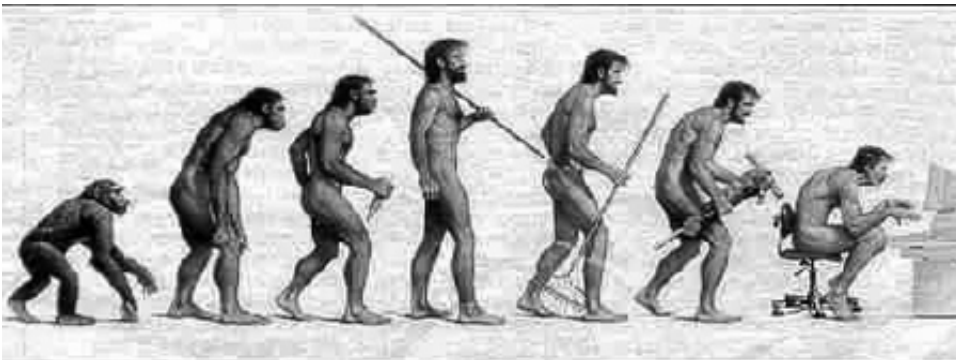
Figure 17. This image is a parody of a well-known image depicting evolution

---

[214] Rudy Zallinger's image showing a progression of figures from "proto apes" to "modern man" was originally published in the Time Life Series' *Early Man*. Francis Clark Howell, *Early Man*, *Life Nature Library* (New York,: Time, 1965). It has since been reproduced and parodied in countless ways, almost always without attribution.
[215] TFW lines 3-4
[216] TFW lines 6-8
[217] TFW line 9

Figure 18. The jumble of words (on the left) resolve to match the spoken line "Mad collective dream" (on the right).

Like these two non-photographic exceptions, the remaining images, all

photographs, also offer representations of the spoken words. Many of the Flash movie's

sections also include printed lines of the worded text. Thus a section with the voice-over

saying "An endless stream of people / move like ants from the freeway / cell phones,

pc's, and digital displays" contains a photograph of line lanes of one-way traffic while

the words "an endless stream" appear over the picture and then fade away.[218] While all of

the visually reproduced words appear in the same small, white, plain sans-serif font,

simple effects are used to provide movement and tie lines of words or sections of the

production together. For example, as Harrelson reads the line "And war is the biggest

money-maker of all" the text "War = $" fades into the upper left corner of a photograph

showing two fighter-jets in flight. That text remains on screen for the next image,

depicting a small group of soldiers watching a missile launch in the distance as Harrelson

reads the line "we all know missile envy only comes from being small."[219] Other text

moves across the screen or fades word by word into one-another. The words

"revolution," "evolution," and "solution" appear and rotate around an axis above a

---

[218] TFW lines 10-12, section 5
[219] TFW lines 23 and 24, sections 12 and 13.

photograph of several wind-turbines as Harrelson reads "You say you want a revolution / a communal evolution / to be part of the solution."[220]

<p style="text-align: center;">Soundbyte Resonance in "Thoughts From Within"</p>

The use of visual fragments of the spoken text, in compliment with the photographs, not only add coherence to segments of the production, they also highlight the soundbyte quality of the poem. These pieces of written text punctuate what Harrelson's even tone does not, providing emphasis on phrases like "a mad collective dream," "modified irradiated Big Mac," "strange change in the weather," and "living as loving." Combined in turn with powerful imagery, these soundbyte moments collectively provide strong resonance. One resonant moment combines Harrelson's voice saying "I feel like a run-on sentence / in a punctuation crazy world / and I see the world around me / like a mad collective dream," with the image of jumbled words resolving itself into the soundbyte phrase "a mad collective dream." Another moment punctuates the lines "like a genetically modified irradiated Big Mac / is somehow symbolic of food" with a giant fast food burger, so large the screen fails to contain it, while the words fade in one by one: "modified," "irradiated," "Big Mac" (Figure 19). Similarly, the spoken words "politicians and prostitutes" who "talk about the strange change in the weather" are accompanied by a photograph of a smog concealed city-scape. Harrelson's voice and identical printed words "living as loving" are punctuated with a photograph of smiling, ethnically diverse children grouped with arms draped over one-another (Figure 20).

---

[220] TFW lines 60-62, section 31

Figure 19. The irradiated Big Mac

Figure 20. Smiling children shown in "Thoughts From Within"

Each of these moments exemplify soundbyte resonance. These strong, multi-dimensional elements of rhetoric coalesce in the communicative encounter. The combination of spoken and printed words with a representative image as the resonant moment "living as loving," for example, offers the viewer an aphoristic articulation of

living (as loving), a byte of sound punctuated with a byte of worded text. The two reinforce each other, and are further articulated with a particular exemplar: the smiling, multi-ethnic children. Appealing to the discursively prevalent values of diversity, childhood innocence, and youthful bliss, this image evokes what the words describe—providing a collective resonance. This is the potential of soundbyte resonance in the setting of new media. Although there is a tendency for distraction and narrative fragmentation, new media texts like TFW can condense diffuse yet common discursive experiences into moments of resonance, the evoking of rhetorical force. The combination of spoken words, printed words, and images—when skillfully related—can produce strong rhetorical statements.

The soundbytes I am describing draw upon the viewers experience with the soundbyte culture by creating collective, resonant moments in an expected style. The pith of these statements align with the experience of the television viewer, the headline reader, and the web-surfer. In addition, these soundbytes match the technological characteristics of the medium. The hypertextual, multi-media rich internet communication form is well suited to delivering resonant, forceful, and, yes, short messages. So TFW contains a series of interconnected moments of soundbyte resonance that draw on the technologically compelled style of contemporary communication. Another aspect of the soundbytes in TFW, however, also draws upon the *content* of the soundbyte culture.[221]

"In Money We Trust," a slogan borrowed and reworded, the missing "God" implicating a capitalist-centered society for forsaking its spiritual history, is a resonant soundbyte for its pith and depth, but also because of its familiarity. In the Flash

---

[221] I do not mean to suggest a clear bifurcation of form and content here. I see form *as* content, with no clear distinction between the two.

presentation, the written words "Money" and "Trust" slide across the screen over a photograph of anxious stock-traders forcefully jostling for position on the market floor, Harrelson reads the lines "'In Money We Trust,' / we'll find happiness." The moment plays Money against Trust as a familiar slogan resonates in our mind, with a parallel tension between Money and God. The image of stock-traders, a human condensation of capitalistic greed, provides punctuation. The discursive elements evoked from the memory of the viewer—a national slogan, spirituality, "the market"—collide with the rhetoric of the moment—Harrelson's mutation of the slogan, the tension between Trust and Money, Money and God, greed and happiness. This is the opportunity a new media soundbyte generates for shifting consciousness. Of course, there is no guarantee in any single moment of potential, but a text like TFW provides many opportunities.

Some opportunities for a resonant soundbyte to shift consciousness are created by aligning soundbytes and the communication context of new media with pithy statements and punctuated, evocative images. For example, TFW contains the resonant moment provided by the combination of a soundbyte, "the room that they call living," with the image of an entranced family staring blankly at the glow of a television. Other opportunities draw upon the experiences of the audience within the soundbyte culture, taking common phrases like "the man behind the curtain"—a reference so frequently used its cultural resonance goes well beyond the *Wizard of Oz* origination—and adding an image showing a collection of corporate logos, each recognizable in themselves, cluttered along a retail strip, itself a familiar image (Figure 21). From the obvious Beatles' reference ("You say you want a revolution") to creatively expressive turns of phrase ("a communal evolution") to an in-between of the untraceable yet familiar ("part

of the solution"), soundbyte resonance pulls together elements that function in alignment with the content, style, and technology of the circumstances of communication.

Figure 21. Corporate logos by the roadside in "Thoughts From Within"

Celebrity Resonance in "Thoughts From Within"

Like soundbyte resonance, celebrity resonance functions through appeals to the prevalent discursive experiences of its viewer by aligning with the characteristics of prominent forms of communication and by the production of potential rhetorical forces. Living in the celebrity world, where discourse regularly conflates the life and the product, entertainment and politics, interactions with a celebrity's voice create a general expectation for authoritative delivery. Although there is an ambiguity characteristic of celebrity discourse, the use of a celebrity voice maintains one consistency: authority. Whether as spokesperson, promoter of self and product, or as political activist, the celebrity maintains the role of the expert in cultural expectations. These expectations

exist as rhetorical parameters in play when a viewer encounters TFW. Harrelson's voice meets expectations by providing complementary rhetoric, a rhetoric of celebrity expertise. The rhetorical elements present within TFW's Flash presentation function to direct the celebrity expectations toward Harrelson's politics. Since politics and entertainment are also within the realm of celebrity expectation, the repulsing force of a patronizing lecture are tempered by the viewer's desire for insight on the celebrity life.[222]

I have discussed above that the soundbyte culture favors individual moments of resonance. I have also made clear that the individual moment of resonance extends beyond itself as forces come into play in the communicative encounter. Evocations of discursive experiences are joined with cultural expectations to interact with the rhetorical elements of the text. This is, for example, how resonant reversal functions. I should be clear to state, however, that there are no distinct boundaries of text and non-text. This is, in fact, precisely what allows for resonance to function so well in contemporary communication. So far I have discussed the breaking of boundaries between an identifiable text and technology, discourse, and culture. The same is also true within a text. The moments of resonance, although often distinct or distinguishable, do not stand autonomously within the text in either the sense that they are separable from discourse or in the sense that they are separate from the identifiable text. Fragments of texts, like the soundbytes discussed above, are capable of rhetorical force not because they stand alone, but because they operate as moments within the circumstances of communicative encounters—be the circumstances technological, discursive, or textual. The resonant moment stands as an identifiable element within the discursively positioned text, which is

---

[222] Simonson similarly argues the effectiveness of celebrity campaigns by PETA. Peter Simonson, "Social Noise and Segmented Rhythms: News, Entertainment, and Celebrity in the Crusade for Animal Rights,"

itself encountered within the overlapping characteristics of technology, communication, and culture. The viewer exists within the circumstances of communicative encounters, and the viewer's interactions are a product of those circumstances.

So far I have discussed some of TFW's moments and how they interact with the characteristics of new media and culture. I turn now to the rhetoric of the identifiable text, as the viewer encounters resonant moments within the sweep of TFW. Viewers, after all, may be living in a world of fragmentation and distraction, but they are also conditioned by the norms of narrative structure. There is no either/or—fragments *or* narratives—but a playful tension between the two. This is evident by the use of the celebrity expert voice and the generation of potential resonant moments in TFW. Even the title, "Thoughts From Within," suggests both a unity of expert opinion, assuming viewers would have interest in a set of thoughts produced in poetic form, reproduced in digital media, as well as value of the multiple "thoughts" that occur "within" the mind of the celebrity expert. This presumption continues with the first moment of the production as Harrelson reads the lines "I sometimes feel like an alien creature / for which there is no earthly explanation." The line "I sometimes feel like an alien creature" is punctuated through visual display of the words and the photograph of Harrelson, surrounded by smoke, with a strong light in the background (Figure 22). The smoke and light are suggestive of alien encounters in science fiction films like Stephen Spielberg's classic *Close Encounters of the Third Kind* (Figure 23). The image is also suggestive of Harrelson's well known activism for hemp and marijuana legalization, as the smoke appears to have emanated from Harrelson himself. Harrelson's image complements the subject of the first line of the poem "I"—also Harrelson. As a narrative opening, this

moment sets Harrelson apart from the world, as a visitor from above, with "no earthly explanation." Positioned as different, and otherworldly, Harrelson's perspective is that of the objective outsider, the alien creature that we know from movies is beyond our comprehension, deity like.

Figure 22. Harrelson is shown in smoke and light in "Thoughts From Within"
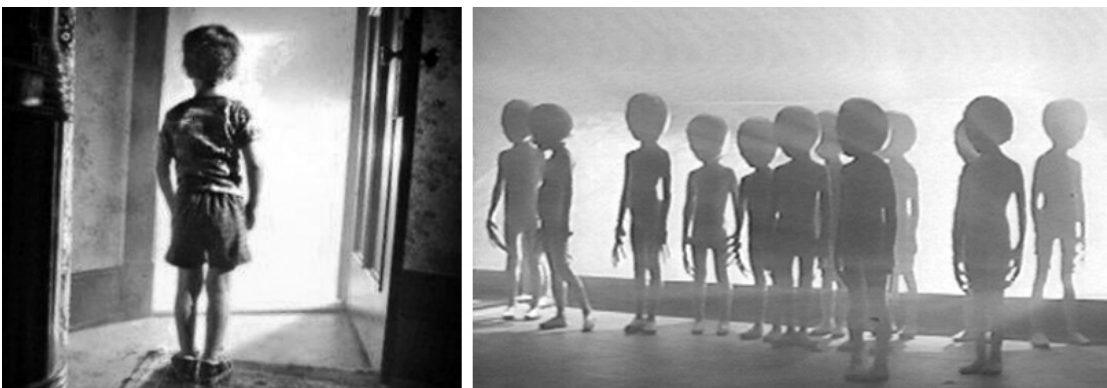

Figure 23. Two scenes from Close Encounters of the Third Kind (1977) showing alien lights

The narrative structure of the text separates Harrelson (the expert) and the viewer from a demonized other. As a poem, the narrative structure begins in the first person, with four "I"s and one "my" in the first stanza. The next two stanzas switch to the collective, with two uses of "we" and one "us" in the third stanza, one "I," one "everybody," and one "us" in the forth stanza. The forth stanza also includes the beginning of a bifurcation between this collective "we" and "they," represented by "government," "politicians" and "the man behind the curtain pulling the strings." In the fifth stanza Harrelson reinvigorates his position of expert, casting himself in opposition to "a billion people sitting watching their TV" as the one who sits "on the grass under a tree." The sixth stanza switches back to confirm the enemy, "they: "the earth rapers / like Monsanto and Dupont." In the seventh stanza Harrelson returns to the development of a collective, an "us," guided by the expert to "imagine" when "God was nature." In the final stanza, Harrelson speaks directly to the viewer, now a member of his collective, challenging: "Do you dare." Five uses of "you" and one "your" occur in the first six lines of this final stanza. On the final line Harrelson's expert persona returns to declare "Maybe I'll be seeing you around."

Within this narrative structure of celebrity expertise there are three clear opportunities for a deep celebrity resonance. These coincide with Harrelson's three most prominent spoken moments of expert authority in the first, fifth, and eighth stanzas when he adopts the first person voice. Breaking the poem into the individual lines which correspond more faithfully to the 32 images in the production, we find lines one and two corresponding to image number one of Harrelson in smoke and light. Second, lines 40 and 41 in the fifth stanza, "and since there is no loving room / I sit on the grass under a

tree," corresponds to image number 21, a photograph of Harrelson, in profile, sitting

shirtless in the lotus position on the grass under a tree (Figure 24). Here the moment

compliments the narrative but also visa versa, as the flow of rhetorical forces predisposes

the viewer to consider Harrelson as expert. The moment, with its Buddha-like image,

entertains the viewer with an image of the celebrity life, politicizes with a celebrity

authority, and fulfills the expectation of a resonant moment between Harrelson, the "I"

and "us" the viewer. Finally, in the closing line and image of the production, Harrelson

offers a clear enticement into celebrity entertainment/politics. Not only does Harrelson

lead the repeated reference to the individual "you" with the spoken "maybe I'll be seeing

you around," but he is similarly pictured in casual clothes, on the street, shaking hands in

a small crowd (Figure 25). The implication here is obvious, meet his challenge "to be part

of the solution" and you can meet the celebrity. In a culture of idealized celebrity life, the

face-to-face moment is the ultimate enticement. Harrelson plays on the celebrity culture

by offering himself as enticement to political activism.

Figure 24. Harrelson in the lotus position in "Thoughts From Within"

Figure 25. Harrelson Shakes Hands in "Thoughts From Within"

On the circumstances of new media communicative encounters.

The circumstances of communicative encounter include the discursive experiences of the viewer, the elements of the text, and the technological characteristics of the media in practice. Each moment of an encounter is a possibility for shifting consciousness. In this chapter I have explored a theory of resonance as a rhetorical appeal that aligns with the circumstances of communication in new media. New media's technological characteristics of digitalization, hypertextual networking, and productivity alter the communicative event, immersing the viewer in speed and volume. Resonance is an approach to studying textual elements based on the immersive analyses of DeLuca, Schwartz, and other electronic media scholars. This approach argues that evocation of discursive experiences is more effective than attempts to engage on deliberative grounds. This position is substantiated by the rhizomatic dissemination of new media texts, which is averse to deliberative engagement.

Each of the two case studies offers insight into resonance as a rhetorical appeal and as an alignment with communicative circumstances. In *The Meatrix* allusions to common discursive elements, a cultural resonance, provided the immersed viewer

experiential grounding on which to interrogate the text. Since the communicative circumstances of new media separate texts from deliberative discourses, viewers must rely on the diffuse elements of cultural experience in their interactions with texts. Allusions to a prominent cultural artifact such as *The Matrix* become welcome signposts in such circumstances, drawing the viewer's attention. In addition, the use of cultural resonance as a basis for contradiction, resonant reversal, provides activist rhetors the opportunity to shift consciousness.

The second case study continues to demonstrate the interrelation between media technologies, discourse, and the circumstances of communicative encounter. The rhetorical appeal associated with the resonance of the celebrity expert ties discursive experience to the circumstances of communication by aligning the expectations of discursive experience with textual elements. Soundbyte resonance also aligns discursive experiences in the soundbyte culture with the text. Soundbyte culture and resonance further connect the technological characteristics that promote pith and aphorism to the style of contemporary discourse and the communicative encounter. "Thoughts From Within" condenses diffuse discursive experiences into moments of resonance by layering the spoken, printed, and visual elements of the new media text. From the moment to moment rhetorical encounter to the identifiable text to experience in discourse, resonance in various forms has the capacity to generate rhetorical force, a shift in consciousness, by aligning technology, text, and viewer.

This approach to new media communicative encounters locates the possibility for activism in shifts of consciousness generated as a derivative force of the mediated interaction between text and viewer. Resonance functions by drawing on the

commonalities of discursive experiences. In the next chapter, however, I will consider the

possibility for resonance beyond discursive experience, at the surface.

CHAPTER FOUR:

IMAGE RESONANCE

Excerpts Worded and Imagistic

Today the scene and the mirror have given way to a screen and a network.

There is no longer any transcendence or depth, but only the immanent

surface of operations unfolding, the smooth and functional surface of

communication…the surrounding universe and our very bodies are

becoming monitoring screens.

      Jean Baudrillard, *The Ecstasy of Communication*, 12

And behind the paparazzi there are the media, and behind the media, us.

All of us: we whose desires shape the media; we who are the medium, the

network and the conducting current. There are no longer either actors or

spectators; all are immersed in the same reality, in the same revolving

responsibility, in a single impersonal destiny which is merely the

fulfillment of a collective desire.

      Jean Baudrillard, *Impossible Exchange*, 138

Figure 26. LeonardoDicaprio.com

I begin this chapter by arguing that there are equal rhetorical qualities in each of the three excerpts above (Two from Baudrillard and Fig 26). This is an argument about the "pictorial turn,"[223] "rhetoric of the image,"[224] "visual rhetoric,"[225] and "image events."[226] The argument centers on defining the image as a unit of communicated meaning. So, in the examples above, the image from Leonardo DiCaprio's website is argued to have a rhetorical quality equal to the two worded excerpts. The image is capable of exerting rhetorical force, and that force can be interpreted through analysis. This is the assumption driving the analysis of resonance in *The Meatrix* and "Thoughts From Within."

In accordance with the theory of resonance discussed in the previous chapter, an analysis of the image above would concentrate on the discourse of DiCaprio's fame, the celebrity culture, and cultural resonance. DiCaprio is an A-list movie star given a position of expert via the contemporary celebrity culture. Placed in conjunction with scenic nature—the resonant images of the coral reef, the rainforest, the great ape, and the

[223] W. J. Thomas Mitchell, *Iconology: Image, Text, Ideology* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1986), W. J. Thomas Mitchell, *Picture Theory: Essays on Verbal and Visual Representation* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994).
[224] This is the title of a chapter in Roland Barthes and Stephen Heath, *Image, Music, Text* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1977), 32-51.
[225] Finnegan, *Picturing Poverty: Print Culture and Fsa Photographs*, xii, Robert Hariman and John Lucaites, "Public Identity and Collective Memory in U.S. Iconic Photography: The Image of 'Accidental Napalm'," *Critical Studies in Mass Communication* 20, no. 1 (2003): 36.
[226] DeLuca, *Image Politics: The New Rhetoric of Environmental Activism*. Foss also refers to the "visual age," Sonja Foss, "Rhetoric and the Visual Image: A Resource Unit," *Communication Education* 31 (1982): 55. Foss also discusses "visual imagery" Foss, "Visual Imagery as Communication (Review Essay)," 85.

mountain valley—DiCaprio's photograph lends celebrity authority to the most salient

environmental causes in contemporary discourse. Further analysis could argue that the

use of a gorilla in particular draws upon the primate as an alternative hero in our culture's

narratives, both fictional and nonfictional.[227] The frequent film and television remakes of

the "King Kong" story alone substantiate this argument.[228] Evidence of the primate-

hero's resonance is abundant. Consider the impact of a single example from fiction

literature, Daniel Quinn's *Ishmael*.[229] This book, with its gorilla-hero as title character, is

the inspiration for reading clubs (including a mention on the Oprah Winfrey Show's

segment on books), websites and internet discussion groups, the Pearl Jam song "Do the

Evolution," and the major motion picture *Instinct*.[230] Similarly the "real life" gorilla-hero

Koko, known for her use of sign language, makes frequent appearances in documentaries,

feature news segments, and was the inspiration for the role of Amy, the sign-using gorilla

in the film *Congo*.[231] DiCaprio, in fact, has met with Koko and speaks on behalf of the

Diane Fossey Gorilla Fund worldwide campaign for gorilla friendly technology.

Exemplifying the resonance of cultural gorilla experience, DiCaprio noted that "very

profound things come from this gorilla."[232]

---

[227] Donna Jeanne Haraway, *Primate Visions: Gender, Race, and Nature in the World of Modern Science* (New York: Routledge, 1989).

[228] Jules Bass and Arthur Rankin, "King Kong [Tv-Series]," (American Broadcasting Company (ABC), 1966), Merian Cooper and Ernest Schoedsack, "King Kong," (RKO Radio Pictures, 1933), John Guillermin, "King Kong," (Paramount Pictures, 1976), John Guillermin, "King Kong Lives," (De Laurentiis Entertainment Group (DEG), 1986), Peter Jackson, "King Kong," (Universal Pictures, 2005), Paul Leder, "Ape: The New King Kong," (CFP Inc., 1976), Ernest Schoedsack, "The Son of Kong," (RKO Radio Pictures, 1933).

[229] Daniel Quinn, *Ishmael: A Novel* (New York: Bantam/Turner Book, 1992).

[230] Pearl Jam, *Yield* (SONY, 1998), Jon Turteltaub, "Instinct," (Spyglass Entertainment, 1999).

[231] Frank Marshall, "Congo," (Paramount Pictures, 1995).

[232] Leonardo DiCaprio and Sir Arthur C Clarke, *Yahoo! Webchat Transcript* (2001 [cited March 2006]); available from http://www.dianfossey.org/news/leo_arthur.html. As an example of Koko's profound nature, DiCaprio cited Koko's response when asked for the meaning of life: "Polite people. People help good." It should be noted, however, that Koko's handler, Penny Patterson—who is currently mired in legal battles related to alleged sexual harassment of former employees who claim to have been coerced into showing

I continue this chapter, however, by troubling the underlying principles of this argument—and the type of analysis it engenders. This troubling is not a move against the "pictorial turn," the visual, or the image. It is a problemitizing of meaning as a general principle in the postmodern world of communication. This is not an argument that the words in the excerpts above have meaning and the image does not, but that all meaning is a fleeting myth. Words and images are both signs in a an ever-differentiating system, the Derridian "differance."[233]

Baudrillard challenges the depth of meaning with the surface of pure simulation. Analysis of discursive forces acting on the subject is pointless in a world of surface, collective desire, and the body as a screen. The speed of image dissemination in the digital world disallows interpretation based on experience. If we are the screen, as Baudrillard suggests, do images do anything? If they do, how do we study the rhetorical force of surface? These are the questions I hope to explore in this chapter.

Taking Baudrillard's challenge seriously, my succeeding argument reconsiders resonance through image resonance. A counterpart to the resonance of experience, image resonance draws on the necessity to project on the singular screens of postmodernity. Even as surface the image maintains a rhetorical force, though that force is admittedly beyond clear description. I offer image resonance as an approach to the image beyond meaning. Analysis of images from an environmentalist website, www.LeonardoDiCaprio.org, illustrate—both figuratively and literally—the possibility

---

their breasts to appease Koko's nipple fetish, interprets the sign for nipple as people. In standard sign, then, Koko could be read as saying "Polite nipple. Nipple help good." Penny Patterson, *Koko's First Interspecies Web Chat: Transcript* (1998 [cited February 2006]); available from http://www.koko.org/world/talk_aol.html, May Wong, "Famed Gorilla in Sex Lawsuit: Did Koko Want a Peep Show?," *USA Today*, February 19 2005.

[233] Jacques Derrida, *Of Grammatology*, 1st American ed. (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1976).

for rhetorical critique when we move from the notion of representation of meaning to image projection.

Visual Rhetoric and Image Analysis

The stimuli we receive has continually shifted toward the visual in the era of electronic and now digital media forms. As such, consideration of mediated rhetorical activity in contemporary culture is remiss to ignore the impact of the image. Thankfully, a selection of rhetorical, cultural, and philosophical scholars have paid enough attention to images that a spectrum of theory and criticism has developed, encompassing perspectives ranging from the iconoclast to iconolator.[234] A brief review of the spectrum of image theory and criticism reveals some key questions to address before considering the Baudrillardian problem of meaning, or lack thereof.

Indeed, one sign of a visual turn in contemporary communication is the concurrent rise in scholars' discussion of images. Beginning in the early 1980s, scholarship described as 'image rhetoric', 'visual rhetoric', 'visual imagery' and the like, built a corpus full enough to describe some patterns within it.[235] Much of this scholarship could be described as falling into one of three categories: ambiguity, antipathy, and rhetorical significance. There are, of course, a vast number of scholars who don't

---

[234] Finnegan and Jiyeon, ""Sighting" The Public: Iconoclasm and Public Sphere Theory."

[235] This review focuses on communication scholarship, and moves subsequently to discuss cultural studies, art history and philosophical literatures. Within communication scholarship, see: Foss, "Rhetoric and the Visual Image: A Resource Unit.", Kathleen Hall Jamieson, *Eloquence in an Electronic Age: The Transformation of Political Speechmaking* (New York: Oxford Univerisy Press, 1988), Martin Medhurst, "*Hiroshima, Mon Amour*: From Iconography to Rhetoric," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 68, no. 4 (1982), Medhurst and Desousa, "Political Cartoons as Rhetorical Form: A Taxonomy of Graphic Discourse.", Lester Olson, "Benjamin Franklin's Pictoral Representations of the British Colonies in America: A Study in Rhetorical Iconology," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 73 (1987), Lester Olson, "Portraits in Praise of a People: A Rhetorical Analysis of Norman Rockwell's Icons in Franklin D. Roosevelt's "Four Freedoms" Campaign," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 69 (1983).

consider the image at all, preferring to remain in the realm of spoken and printed words, or even studying imagistic media like television with little or no attention to visual elements.

The first category of scholarship that does consider the visual component of rhetoric discusses images as ambiguous, subject to various interpretations based primarily on context. Lester Olsen, for example, pointed explicitly at the ambiguous use of religious and political imagery in Norman Rockwell's "Four Freedoms" posters, arguing that they served "a deliberative function that was amplified by the slogans on the posters" and other associated texts.[236] Almost all of the ambiguity scholarship argues, either implicitly or explicitly, that the context which provides interpretive direction to an image is the worded context. Skow and Dionisopoulos exemplify this approach in discussing images of the "Burning Monk." Their analysis was designed to show "the role of discursive rhetoric for providing a context—and thus a rhetorical meaning—for certain visual images."[237] Similar arguments are made by Edwards and Winkler,[238] and Condit.[239] A sub-category of this scholarship focuses on the circulation of texts in public discourse, but does so either exclusively through contextual reading or by examining

---

[236] Olson, "Portraits in Praise of a People: A Rhetorical Analysis of Norman Rockwell's Icons in Franklin D. Roosevelt's "Four Freedoms" Campaign." Olsen repeats this finding in a later article where he finds of Benjamin Franklin's commemorative medals that "At the heart of rhetorical iconology are the ambiguities of appeals." Olson, "Benjamin Franklin's Pictoral Representations of the British Colonies in America: A Study in Rhetorical Iconology," 118.

[237] Lisa Skow and George Dionisopoulos, "A Struggle to Contextualize: Photographic Images: American Print Media and The "Burning Monk"," *Communication Quarterly* 45, no. 4 (1997).

[238] Edwards and Winkler, "Representative Form and the Visual Ideograph: The Iwo Jima Image in Editorial Cartoons."

[239] Condit Celeste Michelle Condit, "Constructing Visions of the Fetus and Freedom: Rhetoric and Image," in *Decoding Abortion Rhetoric: Communicating Social Change* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1990).

patterns of distribution. In this category I would include the work of Finnegan[240] as well as Hariman and Lucaites.[241] Finnegan's study of magazine circulation of depression-era photographs, for example, concludes that "the study of images must remain grounded in the materiality of their rhetorical circulation."[242] Hariman and Lucaites studies of iconic photographs in circulation similarly focus on distribution and context. They argue that "visual images are complex and unstable articulations, particularly as they circulate across topics, media, and texts, and thus are open to successive reconstruction."[243]

While I readily agree with the finding that images are slippery and influenced by context, the problem with the word/image binary is its implied assumption that words are *not* ambiguous, slippery, or dependent on context for interpretive direction. Whatever one might think about poststructural theory, it is difficult to defend any proposition that particular words or worded texts have fixed meaning. While images are often ambiguous and contextually interpreted, the word/image dichotomy is inordinate. As for the emphasis on circulation study, this is again a pure dependence on the contexts of image use, with little allowance for the rhetorical force of the images themselves. Would these scholars also argue that an address by Lincoln or Kennedy, as Condit says of images, "*DO NOT ARGUE propositions*" but require that the "rhetoric" be "supplied"?[244]

---

[240] Finnegan, *Picturing Poverty: Print Culture and Fsa Photographs*, Finnegan, "Recognizing Lincoln: Image Vernaculars in Nineteenth-Century Visual Culture.", Finnegan, "Social Engineering, Visual Politics, and the New Deal: Fsa Photography in Survey Graphic."
[241] Robert Hariman and John Lucaites, "Performing Civic Identity: The Iconic Photograph of the Flag Raising on Iwo Jima," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 88, no. 4 (2002), Hariman and Lucaites, "Public Identity and Collective Memory in U.S. Iconic Photography: The Image of 'Accidental Napalm'."
[242] Finnegan, *Picturing Poverty: Print Culture and Fsa Photographs*, 224.
[243] Hariman and Lucaites, "Public Identity and Collective Memory in U.S. Iconic Photography: The Image of 'Accidental Napalm'," 37.
[244] Condit, "Constructing Visions of the Fetus and Freedom: Rhetoric and Image," 85, original emphasis (all caps and italics). Condit argues that images require verbal supplement.

A second category of visual scholarship adds moral condemnation to ambiguity, an often virulent antipathy. Even those scholars who clearly understand the role visuality has in attracting public attention are often quick to point out its failings as a rhetorical form. Kathleen Jamieson, in a book length study of electronic communication, argues:

> Because visual images are more quickly comprehended and more readily retained than verbal ones, increasingly it is what television news elects to show visually, not what it says verbally, that stands for the events it reports… in general, visual dramatization can increase the immediacy and resonance of a synoptic phrase but rarely can stand as an effective argument in its own right.[245]

This type of analysis perceives the visual turn in communication practice as directly opposed to democratic participation, public discourse, and eloquence. Frentz and Rushing, for example, decry the visual spectacle integrated into the film, *The Matrix*, arguing that the film's value is lost in its "spectacular effects."[246] They conclude that the "mythic insights into the postmodern condition come wrapped in visual images of spectacle that deny the very insights the narrative is trying to convey."[247] I respond to this position in two ways: the first response is an extension of the above argument, noting that words and images are not the dichotomy some would have us believe. Second, I would point out that whether a scholar *prefers* worded rhetoric or visual rhetoric, the condition of the communication context is undeniably increasing in visuality, and should be considered for its possibilities and functions, as well as its downfalls.

---

[245] Jamieson, *Eloquence in an Electronic Age: The Transformation of Political Speechmaking*, 114 and 16.
[246] Thomas S. Frentz and Janice Hocker Rushing, ""Mother Isn't Quite Herself Today:" Myth and Spectacle in *the Matrix*," *Critical Studies in Mass Communication* 19, no. 1 (2002).
[247] Ibid.: 67.

Finally, a third category of visual scholarship, though less prominent than the former two, generally accepts visual rhetoric *as* rhetoric and attempts to consider use, function, and application in communicative practice. Of particular note in this area is DeLuca, who not only considers images in his book, but also theorizes the notion of the public screen[248] and the historical impact of photography on environmental rhetoric.[249] This scholarship is not an acceptance of images as inherently positive, only recognition that visual rhetoric is a large and important part of the communication landscape and should be studied without preconceived notions of visual inferiority. A central theme in this category of literature has been the concept of the spectacle. The spectacle, a concept most often associated with Guy Debord, is a loose, descriptive term for image-centered public events. Debord writes:

> The whole life of those societies in which modern conditions of production prevail presents itself is an immense accumulation of spectacles. All that once was directly lived has become mere representation... The spectacle is not a collection of images; rather, it is a social relationship between people that is mediated by images.[250]

Although Debord's analysis of the spectacle is decidedly negative for its hegemonic power, several communication scholars point to spectacle as a newer function of democratic deliberation. Gurevitch and Kavoori write that "in an age when audiences are increasingly fragmented, television spectacles create a unified audience" which "allow for the emergence into public discourse of perspectives, frames of reference that are not

---

[248] DeLuca and Peeples, "From Public Sphere to Public Screen: Democracy, Activism, and The "Violence" Of Seattle."

[249] DeLuca and Demo, "Imaging Nature: Watkins, Yosemite, and the Birth of Environmentalism."

[250] Guy Debord, *Society of the Spectacle* (Detroit: Black & Red, 1973), 12.

usually present."[251] Gronbeck similarly argues that "television gives the viewing public a chance to oversee the spectacle, to participate."[252]

Baudrillard's Challenge

Baudrillard does not enter into this conversation among scholars of visual communication, he exists outside of it. Perhaps this is for the best. Consideration of Baudrillard's perspective on images is deeply troubling to a spectrum of theory and criticism based in notions of context, worded deliberation, and/or a unified audience. It is equally troubling to the activist, who seeks to express and argue with the intensity of depthful meaning. Baudrillard challenges context with surface, deliberation with simulation, and the public with immediate and individual response. Baudrillard challenges meaning as unattainable and argues that intensity comes in the form of speed. He analogizes the communicative world to the uncertainty principle of physics, Heisenberg's famous postulate stating that we can know the speed or position of a particle but never both at the same time. According to Baudrillard, this "also applies to the impossibility of evaluating both the reality and the meaning of an event as it appears in the information media."[253] Specifically, Baudrillard argues that we can either "master meaning, and appearance escapes us; or the meaning escapes, and appearances are

---

[251] Gurevitch and Kavoori, "Television Spectacles as Politics," 416-17.

[252] Gronbeck, "Rhetoric, Ethics, and Telespectacles in the Post-Everything Age," 220. Hariman and Lucaites have a similar position, arguing that "the daily stream of images…define the public through an act of common spectatorship," a phrase used in two different articles: Hariman and Lucaites, "Performing Civic Identity: The Iconic Photograph of the Flag Raising on Iwo Jima.", Hariman and Lucaites, "Public Identity and Collective Memory in U.S. Iconic Photography: The Image of 'Accidental Napalm'."

[253] Jean Baudrillard, *Impossible Exchange* (London: VERSO, 2001), 19.

saved." However, since we are now immersed in a world of appearances, "things are

becoming further and further removed from their meaning."[254]

To engage Baudrillard's claim that meaning has disappeared in a world of

appearances, it is useful to begin with his well-known theories of simulation. For

Baudrillard, "it is no longer a question of imitation, nor duplication, nor even parody. It is

a question of substituting the signs of the real for the real."[255] Baudrillard traces the

history of signs/images through successive stages of reflecting reality, masking reality,

masking the absence of reality, and finally, in our current state, simulation, where the

image "has no relation to any reality whatsoever: it is its own pure simulacrum."[256] This

is the "simulacra of simulation, founded on information, the model, the cybernetic

game—total operationality, hyperreality, aim of total control" where "there is no real,

there is no imaginary except at a certain distance."[257] The difference between real and

model have collapsed, imploded, so that what is left is the hyperreal, a simulation of

reality that is more real then reality. This is the contemporary condition of our society.

The information age replaced the tension between reality and appearance with a reality of

appearance.

In Baudrillard's more recent work he writes that this state of simulation is

intensified by the speed and ubiquity of the "virtual" and the "screen." Baudrillard writes:

> The sphere of the real is itself no longer exchangeable for the sphere of the
>
> sign. As with floating currencies, the relationship between the two is
>
> growing undecipherable, and the rate at which they exchange increasingly

---

[254] Ibid.

[255] Jean Baudrillard, *Simulacra and Simulation*, trans. Sheila Faria Glaser (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1994), 2.

[256] Ibid., 6.

random. Both are becoming speculative, each in its own space. Reality is growing increasingly technical and efficient; everything that can be done is being done, though without any longer meaning anything. And the metalanguages of reality (the human and social sciences, technical and operational languages) are also developing eccentrically, after the fashion of their objects. As for the sign, it is passing into the pure speculation and simulation of the virtual world, the world of the total screen, where the same uncertainty hovers over the real and 'virtual reality' once they go their separate ways. The real no longer has any force as sign, and signs no longer have any force of meaning.[258]

Simulation bears no necessary relationship to the real in a world of rapid exchange of sign and reality. Virtual reality similarly moves from real to simulation, so that the sign in a virtual world is twice removed from any relationship with the real. The sign of the real has no correlation, and virtual has no correlation, so the sign, the image, in the virtual, has no force toward meaning.

In a study of rhetorical activism, the implications of considering a disconnect between the force of the sign and meaning is more than disturbing, it is a calamity. Baudrillard sees the rise of new media as a final break from the real, "never again intended to meet up with the real world."[259] "The Internet thinks me. The virtual thinks me," he writes, "For that parallel world has no relation to this one. It is an artificial transcription of it, a total echoing of it, but it does not reflect it."[260] The "digital program-

---

[257] Ibid., 121.
[258] Baudrillard, *Impossible Exchange*, 5.
[259] Ibid., 15.
[260] Ibid.

sign" moves the simulation to new levels of abstraction, far from even the play of signs and the real. "At this level the question of signs, of their rational destination, their real or imaginary, their repression, their deviation, the illusion they create or that which they conceal, or the parallel meanings—all of that is erased."[261] And for Baudrillard, the emergence of the digital is not on the horizon, it envelopes us. "Digitality is with us. It is that which haunts all the messages, all the signs of our societies."[262] The implication of the new media, the virtual reality, is an infection of the system of signs, taking us further away from signified meaning.

Undoubtedly, Baudrillard's theorization of communication distresses the modes of perceiving rhetorical force in the world of new media. How can we study rhetoric if there is no connection between signs and meaning? In the following analysis of a new media text, LeonardoDiCaprio.org, I hope to answer this question by working through the problems at the level of the image. In this criticism, there is no relation to the prior experience or knowledge of the viewer, since meaning is erased and all experience is immediate and surface. Rather than despairing over the losses of meaning and depth, however, I suggest that opportunities remain for the examination of rhetorical possibility. In addition, images on this environmentally centered website also suggest that the location of activism can move into the stream of images.

LeonardoDiCaprio.org

Leonardo DiCaprio is one of the most recognizable movie actors in the world. Winner of a Golden Globe and multiple Oscar nominee, DiCaprio has starred in some of

---

[261] Jean Baudrillard, *Simulations* (New York: Semiotext(e), Inc., 1983), 104.
[262] Ibid., 115.

the most celebrated (*The Aviator, Gangs of New York, The Basketball Diaries, What's Eating Gilbert Grape, This Boy's Life*) and financially successful (*Catch Me If You Can, Titanic*) films of the last two decades. *Titanic*, starring DiCaprio, won 11 Oscars (including Best Director and Best Film) and set records for domestic and international gross. In at least two of his recent films he earned 20 million dollars for his work. DiCaprio, however, splits his time between his career as an actor and his pursuit of environmental activism, much of which involves the world wide web. Along with the sponsorship of the National Resource Defense Council's "Leonardo DiCaprio e-Activism Computer Zone" and associations with internet activism projects like the "Global Warming Virtual March on Washington." DiCaprio's own website, like his time, is split between the standard celebrity fare (LeonardoDiCaprio.com) and environmental advocacy (LeonardoDiCaprio.org).

Self-referenced as the "eco-site," LeonardoDiCaprio.org (hereafter DiCaprio.org) was created in 2000 as part of the Leonardo DiCaprio Foundation. "The Foundation," according to the website, "places particular emphasis on the issues of global warming, alternative and renewable energy sources, and the preservation of the planet's amazing biodiversity." The website identifies the purpose of the site as "to reach, inform, and entertain a wider global audience about these issues."[263] DiCaprio.org is a slick, high-end and strongly visual website produced by DiCaprio's Birken Interactive Studios and the Tree Media Group, a for-profit internet and film production company specializing in "projects that promote civil society and disseminate progressive messages and ideas."[264]

---

[263] LeonardoDiCaprio.org, *About Us* ([cited March 2006]); available from www.leonardodicaprio.org/aboutus/index.htm.
[264] Tree Media Group, *History*.

Much of the press and PR surrounding DiCaprio.org highlights successive releases of two Flash movies: "Global Warming" and "Water Planet." Both movies were created by Tree Media and feature the "spoken word" performance of DiCaprio. Accompanying DiCaprio's prosaic descriptions of environmental devastation and need for political action are series of intricate photo, symbol, and word combinations that appear, morph and fade. The two films are teeming with stimuli, from ambient music to descriptive language to hundreds of images intricately patterned together. DiCaprio is now extending the "Global Warming" Flash movie into a feature length film, "11th Hour." DiCaprio is working with Tree Media founders Lelia Conners Peterson and Nadia Conners to write, produce, and narrate the film. Poker-playing legend Doyle Branson is one of the film's primary financers.[265]

And yet this contextual information matters little in a world of surface, appearance, and speed. The encounter of viewer and website does not follow the forms of reasoned discourse so highly regarded by the public sphere—there is no public sphere. The encounter doesn't fit within the theory of resonance described in the previous chapter either if surface and speed limit the possibility for previous experiences to resonate with textual elements. This is, in fact, precisely why I have chosen DiCaprio.org as a case study. Much like the communication situation described by Baudrillard, DiCaprio.org is also primarily the simulation of politics, a surface without depth. Although the layout and design of DiCaprio.org conforms to the highest of standards of web image, and the site appears to contain all of the elements of a robust environmental advocacy, the site is only that: image and appearance.

---

[265] Associated Press, "Dicaprio to Produce Environmental Film," *ABC News*, December 6 2005.

The whole of DiCaprio.org is an integration of image-laden design and issue-centered hypertext. DiCaprio.org condenses activist rhetoric on issues of global warming, fresh water, biodiversity, oceans, sustainability and the "Bush record" of anti-environmental policy. Additionally, the hypertextual qualities of DiCaprio.org strongly channel its audience to sources outside its domain site. Included in this category are links through an "environmental calendar," "guest quote," "take action" and "get informed" highlights, and an extensive list of choices linked under the heading "what you can do."

However, each of the issue sections featured on the site—global warming, fresh water, biodiversity, oceans, sustainability, and the "Bush record"—contain almost no original content. Instead, all of these issue sections are previewed with what could be called, at best, a blurb, followed by a list of hypertext links to other, more substantial, websites. Take, for example, the incredibly complex and controversial issues of global warming and biodiversity. DiCaprio.org boils each of these issues down to less than 100 words. While my previous assertions that the soundbyte culture and hypertextual communication environment favor pith, there is little in the way of aphorism or prosaic language in these summaries. Here is DiCaprio.org's content regarding biodiversity:

> Over millions of years, plant and animal species have evolved, creating an intricate web of life unimaginable in variation and complexity. In the last hundred years, due to human civilization, natural habitats have been destroyed or forever altered, causing a mass extinction not seen since the dinosaurs. "If present environmental trends continue, we could lose half the species of plants and animals on Earth by the end of the century," says

famed biologist Edward O. Wilson. The devastating loss of biodiversity is

speeding up, find out what you can do to help preserve natural systems.[266]

"Find out what you can do" in this blurb, as well as comparable statements like "Read on

to find out more about global warming," refer the viewer to lists of hyperlinks to other

organizations such as The National Resource Defense Council (www.savebiogems.org)

and Amazon Watch (www.Amazonwatch.org). Some of the links are inactive

(www.ancienttrees.org) and others lead to more lists of hyperlinks

(www.globalstewards.org), but most lead the viewer to other organization homepages. A

focus on leading to organization homepages, as opposed to content pages, where detailed

information on topic areas might be offered, leaves DiCaprio.org in the role of

intermediary, rather than source of information or advocacy.

Other features of the site are similarly shallow in content. The prominently

displayed "Guest Quote," for example, hadn't changed for five months during the

research for this project.[267] The "Environmental Calendar" contained only one entry on

March 7, 2006: "Nov 28 - Dec 9 - United Nations Climate Change Conference,

Canada"—that would be November and December of 2005, three months out of date.

The "Highlights" section of the front page provides two specific issue descriptions in

blurb form followed by hyperlinks, again to outside organizations. One "Highlight,"

under the sub-heading "Get Informed," linked the following blurb to a website of further

links on the issue of extinction: "Human beings are currently causing the greatest mass

extinction of species since the extinction of the dinosaurs 65 million years ago. If present

---

[266] LeonardoDiCaprio.org, *Biodiversity* ([cited March 2006]); available from
http://www.leonardodicaprio.org/whatsimportant/biodiversity.htm.

trends continue one half of all species of life on earth will be extinct in 100 years."[268]

This simplified description certainly represents the issue it refers to, but it provides little

in the way of either reasoned discourse or resonance. Additionally, while writing this

chapter, the content sections of three of the five main pages lost all coherency due to an

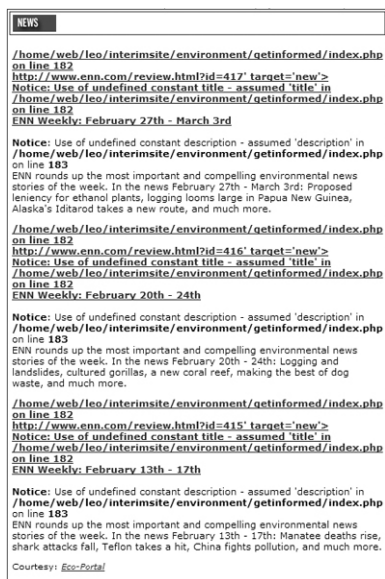error in the way content was retrieved from other organization websites (Figure 27).[269]

Figure 27. Errors in the website

What DiCaprio.org does contain are carefully crafted (and reliably present)

images. In one sense the entire site is an image, a surface. Each of the main pages—

"Home," "What's Important," "What You Can Do," "Get Informed," and "About Us"—

is an image of a website, proper in design and set off accordingly by the edges of the

---

[267] LeonardoDiCaprio.org was downloaded on October 27, 2005 and March 1, 2006. The quote had not changed online as of March 7, 2006**: "**'Humans are more sensitive to Earth changes than many other species, and they belong on the top of the endangered species list' - www.world-food-project.org.**"**
[268] LeonardoDiCaprio.org, *Homepage* ([cited March 1 and March 7 2006]); available from www.leonardodicaprio.org.
[269] This glitch began on the site on March 7, 2006 and has continued for several weeks. Michael Moore, an internet design specialist, described this as "a syntax error with the PHP script that generates the page." What is seen on the page is the error code being displayed along with the hypertext for the page. Moore

screen (Figure 28). Each of these pages-as-images have similar design elements as well. The design theme for the entire site could be described as boxes, as each page features various square and rectangle sections often subdivided into smaller boxes (Figure 29). Boxed shapes are nothing out of the ordinary in design (print or web-based), of course, but the DiCaprio site actually emphasizes the boxed look. This is accomplished with the addition of two artistic box-collages included in the design of each page. On the "Home" page, for example, one of the box collages frames the left-hand column with a rectangular patchwork of blue and green tinged squares—each square containing either green images of macro-focused plant foliage or blue images of what appear to be tree-branches in silhouette. This design is reflected in the page's second box collage, a square that sits in the lower right corner of the page. This collage features a photograph of DiCaprio looking intensely toward the viewer. The image is divided into two squares on the right, one tinged green, and one rectangle on the left, tinged blue with a silhouette obscuring the right side of DiCaprio's face. These collages carry the design of the page, drawing the eye and framing the other elements on the screen. The rectangular collage frames the bottom of the left column, while images representing the websites two flash movies, "Global Warming" and "Water Planet," frame the top of column (each in distinct rectangular boxes). The square collage anchors the right column, taking the lower right quadrant of a larger, subdivided square, which is the lower half of the rectangular right column. The entire page thus dividing itself into proportional rectangles and squares with a base in the squares of the collages. The collages also create a contrast with the word-based boxes. Contrast both in the sense that the worded boxes create less visual interest,

noted that it would be "trivial to keep those errors from being printed out." Michael Moore, e-mail exchange with the author, March 14, 2006.

but also in the sense that the collages and other image boxes are noticeably fuller in content than the word-based boxes. White space dominates many of the word boxes throughout the site, while the image boxes fill the space.

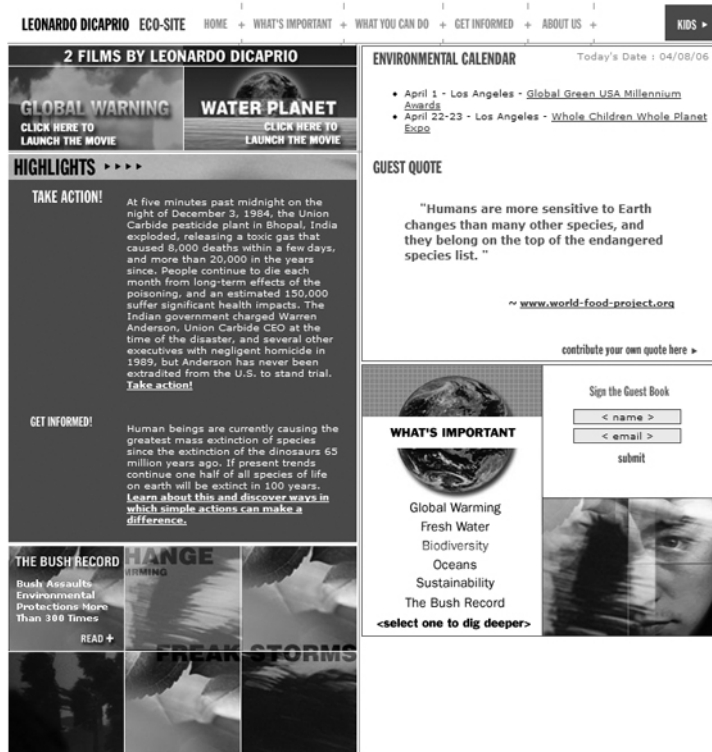**Figure 28. Dicaprio.org shown in a browser screen**

Figure 29. The box design evident on the home page.

The other main pages of the site are similarly formatted with image collages and other boxes. In fact, other than the homepage, all of the main pages are designed identically. Each page is divided into three columns, one thin column on the left with a list of sub-page links anchored by the smaller collage, one wide column of dispersed text and hyperlinks, and one wide column containing only the larger collage (Figure 30). The small collage in the lower left corner of the page is the same on all but one of the pages ("About Us"), while the large collage on the right is unique to each page. All of the collages are vertical rectangles divided into squares and rectangles. Other than the rather plain image of a palm tree on the "About Us" page, each collage on these pages is composed of several photographs or diagrams with occasional, overlapping word-images. The collages are divided into their component squares and rectangles by clearly defined white lines.

Figure 30. The layout of each main page is similar to the "What's Important" page shown here.

Finally, DiCaprio.org's two flash movies, "Global Warming," and "Water

Planet," are also visually full but sparse in verbal depth. Both movies feature a series of

images, word-images, and music with a voice-over statement by DiCaprio. These films

are, in that sense, similar to Woody Harrelson's "Thought's From Within" movie—in

fact, all three of the films were co-produced by Tree Media. There are two overt

differences to make note of, however. First, DiCaprio's voiceover does not have the bite,

nor the prosaic rhythm of Harrelson's. In "Water Planet," for example, DiCaprio begins

by saying:

> Consider this, we live on a water planet. Through the millennia the water
>
> cycle has supported all life--shaping weather, seasons and climate;
>
> providing habitats for most of the world's living things. And most of them,

including us, are almost entirely made up of water. Now consider this:

water is a finite substance, a limited resource. Only a tiny fraction of the

earth's water is fresh. It supports everything from agriculture and

sanitation to aquatic ecosystems like rivers and streams. Water falls

unevenly across the planet, while much of it is locked up in glaciers,

permanent snowcover, ice, and permafrost. Water is also stuck

underground, very deep in the earth and hard to reach. To make matters

worse, water is being threatened by pollution, overpopulation, climate

change, mismanagement, and war.

Both of DiCaprio's Flash movies are narrated with this type of bland description,

with little tonal variation by DiCaprio to elevate it. The second difference regards

the image quality of the site generally. Although Harrelson's video is constructed

of the same types of elements as DiCaprio's, the DiCaprio pieces have much

higher production values. The images are cleaner, with color filters and other

enhancements giving them a polished style. There are also many more images,

fading in and out of each other in layers. The films make use of the same box

scheme as the website, placing images within boxes that are themselves divided

into discernable boxes. Pieces of images disappear and reappear, providing a

sense of deep visual immersion and speed.

As a composite, DiCaprio.org exemplifies the characteristics of new media and

the qualities of simulation, offering a good example for a study based in environmental

activism in the contemporary moment. As a new media text, DiCaprio.org is centered on

the hypertextual, providing a bulk of contact in the form of linkages. The site also makes

use of a host of converging digital technologies, including Flash, hypertext, and digital image manipulation. As a simulation, the site offers the appearance of a meaningful clearinghouse of environmental advocacy, but it is little more than appearance. The question we must ask, however, is whether or not this simulation is still rhetorically significant—beyond the significance of its superficiality. After all, if this is the direction our communicative world is headed, if not mired within, then the possibilities for rhetorical force within its parameters are no small matter.

Image Resonance

Roland Barthes interpretive position is often cited in the consideration of photographic images. Two arguments Barthes makes about photographs are particularly useful for the study of rhetorical force in an image world. First, Barthes argues that we are culturally inclined to suppress the signs within a photograph with the denotation of worded text.[270] This argument speaks at once to the force of images, which must necessarily be suppressed by a rational, logocentric culture, and to the deep textuality of images—that they have the capability of interpretation at the level of sign or denotated meaning.[271] The second argument is that "The photograph possesses an elemental force" beyond the signs we normally ascribe to it.[272] Such a force is a place to begin if we are to discuss images outside the strictures of meaning—connotatted or denotatted.

---

[270] Barthes and Heath, *Image, Music, Text*, 32-51.
[271] This is a significant simplification of Barthes argument, where he argues that these levels of interpretation also include iconicity and linguistic messages. Ibid.
[272] Roland Barthes, *Camera Lucida: Reflections on Photography*, 1st American ed. (New York: Hill and Wang, 1981), 89.

Barthes study of photographs begins with an "attraction I felt for certain photographs,"[273] photographs that "animate" him, lead him to adventure, in that they advene (bring something from outside).[274] He identifies three forces of photographic images. First, there is "studium," "what I feel about these photographs derives from an average affect, almost from a certain training."[275] Studium creates "polite interest" and "is the order of liking not loving; it mobilizes a half desire."[276] Photographs are often culturally significant and therefore interesting in a political/historical way—which speaks to the contextual paradigm of image theory. "The second element will break (or punctuate) the studium."[277] According to Barthes, the punctum "rises from the scene, shoots out of it like an arrow, and pierces me."[278] He adds, "A photograph's punctum is that accident which pricks me (but also bruises me, is poignant to me)."[279] This is a force beyond cultural context, a force active on an individual basis—based in individual discursive experiences. Finally, Barthes provides an enigmatic description of a "*shared hallucination*,"[280] an immanent force alternately related as "madness,"[281] "a strange drug," "the pangs of love," "pity,"[282] and, ultimately, "ecstasy."[283] Society strives "to generalize, to gregarize, banalize"[284] the photograph in attempt to "tame" it, "to temper

---

[273] Ibid., 18.
[274] Ibid., 18-20.
[275] Ibid., 26.
[276] Ibid., 27.
[277] Ibid., 26.
[278] Ibid.
[279] Ibid., 27.
[280] Ibid., 115 (original emphasis).
[281] Ibid.
[282] Ibid., 116.
[283] Ibid., 119.
[284] Ibid., 118.

the madness."[285] The society of the image, especially in the United States, is precisely an attempt to tame through "empirical habits" concludes Barthes.

The idea of madness or ecstasy offers a glimpse of forceful possibility in the meaningless image. For photography, Baudrillard prefers to speak in terms of "the gaze." He writes that "The photographic gaze neither probes nor analyzes a 'reality'; it settles 'literally' on the surface of things and illustrates their emergence in the form of fragments, for a very short spell of time – to be followed immediately by the moment of their disappearance."[286] So the madness or the gaze are descriptive terms for forces that can engage the viewer despite the speed and simulation of communication. Of course, in practice, simply identifying that there is some thing that we cannot fully grasp doesn't tell us much about how the forces function. It does, however, support the effort to analyze the surface of images; it tells us that there is something there.

I use the term image resonance as a categorization of the rhetorical forces present in the image which can function at the level of surface or simulation. Image resonance is a compliment and a challenge to the resonance discussed in the previous chapter. It is a compliment because it allows us to consider a theory of rhetorical force on two planes: the plane of interaction between discursive forces, textual forces, and experiential forces and the plane of immediacy, surface, and the immersive image culture of simulation. It is also a challenge because it takes seriously the problem posed by Baudrillard: that meaning is lost in the simulated world of appearances. Image resonance, then, is the derivative force created by the interaction of viewer and image removed from the depth of discursive forces. Instead of the forces brought to bear by cultural discourse and

---

[285] Ibid., 117.

individual experiences within discourses, the viewing experience is limited to the viewing of the image and in the circumstances of the viewing.

To study the forces of surface, the image resonance, we must reveal where those forces can be found. The problem with such a task is the individual character of the viewing experience. The punctum of an image is an ineffable quality singular to the viewer. How then, do we trace the force of an individual interaction? Baudrillard suggests that there are some images that generate social force. What others have called spectacles, Baudrillard generally refers to as an event. The event, according to Baudrillard, is the means to transfix our desire to an exchange in the system of information. He writes that "the media is a gigantic machine for producing the event as sign, as value exchangeable on the universal market of ideology, of the star system, of catastrophe, and so on."[287] The event fulfills "an immense desire" held across society, a desire created by the lack of the real in our information centered system of exchange.[288] Baudrillard says:

> We dream of senseless events which free us from this tyranny of meaning, and from always being constrained to seek out the equivalence between effects and causes. We live in terror of both excess of meaning and total meaninglessness. Hence the hold which excessive events have on us, events which are to the banal context of social and personal life what the excess of signifier is to language in Levi-Strauss's theory: namely, that

---

[286] Baudrillard, *Impossible Exchange*, 141. Baudrillard also refers to Barthes' "puntum" in this discussion, 140

[287] Ibid., 132.

[288] Ibid., 133.

which grounds it as symbolic function, beyond equivalences of meaning.
[289]

An event, like the spectacular death of Princess Diana, combines real and simulation in a moment of excess. "And we are not passive spectators of this fatal episode, but full-blown actors in it," says Baudrillard.[290] The "collective will" of public desires drives the system of events, and it shows us the force of an image.[291] The force we see is a collective effect on the public: shock, dismay, outrage, glory, penance. Ultimately, these events are only simulations of real events, packaged by the media system in the form of images. The effects are real, but only in the sense of an exchange between simulated event and simulated response.

This view toward the effect of spectacular images on large audiences is also the approach DeLuca takes in his study of "image events" and the "public screen." This approach maintains that the powerful images of protestors risking their lives in tree-sits or confrontations with military-clad police disrupt the public senses with their innate rhetorical force, "the shock of laughter that shatters."[292] While this approach to the study of images opens the way for understanding the effects of the spectacle, I would argue that the bias toward the spectacle or the mass-communicated public event counters the characteristics of immersion and speed so prevalent in the image world. The spectacle is not the norm but the exception. This is why it is so desirable to the public, because it breaks the immersion, the speed of image simulation. A study of the spectacle is valuable for the purpose of understanding breaks in the norm, but it remains an anomaly. This is

---

[289] Ibid., 134.
[290] Ibid., 137.
[291] Ibid.
[292] DeLuca, *Image Politics: The New Rhetoric of Environmental Activism*, 52.

problematic in a study of new media and advocacy for two reasons. First, it relies on the capability to reach the mass audience. Image events are possible only through subversion of news-media frames and the staging of spectacular happenings. While this speaks to the possibilities of the electronic age, it is a difficult task in itself and becoming remote as media convergence crosses the path of digital reproduction. In other words, the image event as model doesn't offer a complete picture of the new media setting. Second, as an anomaly, the focus on the image event, the spectacle, doesn't address the force of images in their everyday occurrences.

Image resonance, then, considers the moment of resonant interaction on the micro-social scale, the individual viewer in a cacophony of images. This is increasingly the situation of communication, not the public as a mass but an isolated individual, a single screen of hypertextual production not a public screen of mass dissemination. Image resonance, the force of interaction between the everyday image stream and the individual, single screen, allows for a study of environmental advocacy in new media without turning to a study of anomaly. The single screen still aligns with Baudrillard, who describes "the disappearance of the public sphere" in the world of immersive communication. He writes that "the theatre of the social and of politics are progressively being reduced to a shapeless, multiheaded body. Advertising in its new version is no longer the baroque, utopian scenario ecstatic over objects and consumption, but rather the effect of the omnipresent visibility of corporations, trade marks, PR men, social dialogue and the virtues of communication."[293] With the internet and other digital technology, Baudrillard recognizes, with great dramatic lift, "*the final solution, the definitive*

---

[293] Jean Baudrillard and Sylvère Lotringer, *The Ecstasy of Communication* (Brooklyn: Autonomedia, 1988), 19.

equivalent: Virtual Reality."[294] In this virtual world of "screens and new technologies, the modern individual becomes a fractal subject."[295] We are the screen, the images project on us.

The circumstances of image immersion, of surface and simulation, becomes the site of communication. In this setting, however, reflection is lost, both in the sense of thought (to reflect upon) and representation (the reflection of).[296] Instead, there is immediacy, as each image requires immediate response at the surface, and there is no time for depth, for reflection in thought or re-presentation. On this Baudrillard follows McLuhan's position that the mediated environment conditions the response. Baudrillard writes that:

> No contemplation is possible. The images fragment perception into
> successive sequences, into stimuli toward which there can be only
> instantaneous response, yes or no—the limit of an abbreviated reaction.
> Film no longer allows you to question. It questions you, and directly. It is
> in this sense that the modern media call for, according to McLuhan, a
> greater degree of immediate participation, an incessant response, a total
> plasticity.[297]

The cacophony of images leads to a reversal of roles, the image-object interprets us, we project the images. Rather than the forces of our experience reflecting or refracting the forces of images as we contemplate them, the images are projected on us as our perception is continually reconfigured in immediate moments of image encounter. This is

---

[294] Baudrillard, *Impossible Exchange*, 14.
[295] Ibid., 47.
[296] Baudrillard, *Simulacra and Simulation*, 6. This is Baudrillard's position in describing the "successive phases of the image" from "reflection of a profound reality" through simulacrum.

the "fractal subject" of the new media screen. Each image encounter rearticulates the projected individual screen, so that there is continual redirection.

The Question of Analysis, The Problem of Activism

All of this talk of screens and "the frenzy of the image"[298] still leaves the question of analysis: How do we discuss rhetorical force in everyday images? In order to remain in the paradigm of surface, with the condition of immediate, non-contemplative response, analysis of images must also remain on the surface. This does not, however, mean that rhetorical forces are undecipherable. They are simply more diffuse than those of the spectacle. Even in the moment of immediacy there is a moment. Even when reflection is turned toward projection, image resonance posits the derivation of force. Rather than discursive experiences interacting with rhetorical elements of the image, immediacy and surface turn the moment toward the characteristics of technology and communicative circumstance. The technological characteristics of ubiquity, digitality, production, hypertextual networking, and screens, along with the speed and volume of the immersive new media encounter, remain as the central interpretive resources. Analysis must necessarily follow the interpretive possibility of encounter by focusing on the interaction of technology, circumstances of viewing, and image surface.

The second question that remains for the purposes of this study is one of agency: Is there a possibility for activism in a surface world of images? In other words, if meaning is removed can images be used to advocate? In short, I argue that yes, images can be used to advocate even if meaning is removed. The longer explanation returns to

---

[297] Baudrillard, *Simulations*, 119.
[298] Baudrillard and Lotringer, *The Ecstasy of Communication*, 35.

consider Baudrillard, but also requires a true perspectival change toward thinking in terms of a world of surface and speed. Baudrillard makes the point that meaning is not, as is often assumed in the enlightenment perspective on liberation,[299] the route to revolution but, instead, the desire for meaning is the locus of control in a post-production economy. Consequently, Baudrillard writes that "the current argument of the system is to maximize speech, the maximum production of meaning. Thus the strategic resistance is that of the refusal of meaning and of the spoken word."[300] He is strongly critical of the movements of resistance that continue to battle the system for meaning, arguing that:

> All the movements that only play on liberation, emancipation, on the resurrection of a subject of history, of the group, of the word based on 'consciousness raising', indeed a 'raising of the unconscious' of subjects and of the masses, do not see that they are going in the direction of the system, whose imperative today is precisely the overproduction and regeneration of meaning and of speech.[301]

The system of information production, the replacement of maximization of labor, generates its power over through the desire for meaning, which is a simulation of liberation. In the place of meaning, Baudrillard encourages play. He argues that "If we could accept the meaninglessness of the world, then we could play with forms, appearances and our impulses, without worrying about their ultimate destination."[302]

Images can have rhetorical force in a world of surface, and we can study those forces with advocacy in mind. In terms of a theory of image resonance, I offer the

---

[299] This position is critiqued aptly by Foucault. Michel Foucault, "What Is Enlightenment," in *The Foucault Reader*, ed. Paul Rabinow (New York: Pantheon Books, 1984).
[300] Baudrillard, *Simulacra and Simulation*, 85.
[301] Ibid., 86.

following three resonant categories as an approach to image analysis. First, there are the

surface elements of the image, rhetorical possibilities derived from elements of design,

elements calling forth immediate response, and elements that pull forth the impulsive

desire for excess, madness or ecstasy of imagery. Second, there is projection, alignment

of an image with the individual screen. Finally, there is the possibility for play between

the image and projection, technology, or circumstance—Baudrillard's play on form,

appearances, and impulses.

Image Resonance in DiCaprio.org

A study of images from DiCaprio.org shows how the surface forces of an image

can function in the new media environment. Elements of the image, projection, and play

interact with the technical characteristics and communicative circumstances to generate a

derivative force, an image resonance. The following examples do not attempt to read the

meaning of the image but to demonstrate what can function at the surface. I am arguing

here that DiCaprio.org functions with rhetorical force as an environmental advocate, not

because of its depth but through a rhetorical play in the concatenation of images it

presents the viewer.

The square collage shown on the "home" page of DiCaprio.org, for example,

shows a set of divided boxes containing the image of DiCaprio partially obscured (Figure

31). Elements of the image surface begin with the design, not only the boxed form but the

composition of the image as well. The cool palette of green, blue, and grey hues

saturating the image squares, for example, break the image into simple parts, with the

---

[302] Baudrillard, *Impossible Exchange*, 128.

wash of calm colors to ease the eye's reception.[303] These colors also set apart the jagged negative space, the void, of the overlapping tree limb. This void, in turn, contrasts in form and placement the eye of DiCaprio, a strong visual element staring into the eye of the viewer. As an image, a surface of immediate reception, these design elements, along with the subject of the image, DiCaprio's face, call for a response. Since this response is on the surface, an immediate, non-contemplative response, the cultural figurations of celebrity, DiCaprio's work as an actor and advocate, and the context of the image in environmental advocacy are not primary factors for interpretation. Only the surface elements and the technological and communicative characteristics remain fully present in the fleeting moment of the new media image.
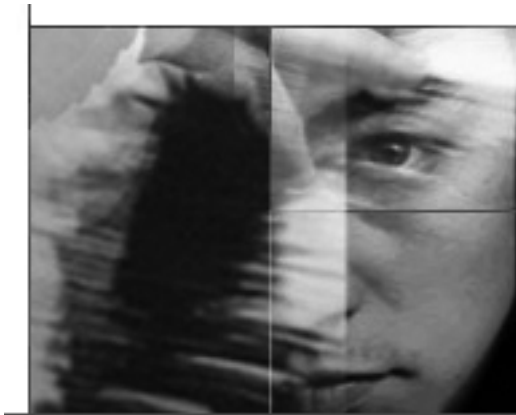
Figure 31. A square collage on the Dicaprio.org Home Page

One response called forth in glancing at this collage is the comfort of pleasing design. Elements of style here offer the viewer an ease of eye that aligns with the necessity of the glance within the speed of image streaming. In addition, the heavy production evident in the image—broken into boxes, tinted, layered—aligns with the

---

[303] Gerald J. Gorn et al., "Waiting for the Web: How Screen Color Affects Time Perception," *Journal of Marketing Research (JMR)* 41, no. 2 (2004).

digitality of new media technology, a predisposition for ease of manipulation. Another response derives from the image interacting with a viewer's communicative environment: the negative space offered by the image creates visual interest, a void in the immersive normality of images. Finally, we can consider the image's excess, a madness that provides openings for play and desire. While I would not suggest that we can gauge the individual reactions to excess, there are often elements with the surface of an image that we can identify as sites for possible excess. This is an analysis of the image, and not the reaction to it. This image presents a powerful point of potential excess, that of DiCaprio's gazing eye. The word gazing here is the key to the moment, since it runs counter to the glance of the viewer. This is not, however, a simple matter of contradiction. Rather, the poignancy of this image lies in the desire for the gaze, the mind tired of the repetition of surface glances desiring the meaningful gaze.

Projection is derived from the alignment of image and screen, engendering individual projection. In the DiCaprio square, there is a strong sense of the screen found repeating in the image. First, there is the box form, mimicking the shape of the screen and its artificial boundaries. Also, the image has a whitish stripe through its center, giving the impression of a reflection, as if light were bouncing from the image's inferred screen. As a projection, the clear marking of the image as a screen fosters the viewer's incorporation of the image into the single screen. Within a stream of images, the viewer cannot incorporate every image encountered to the single screen, even at the level of immediate response. The setting of an image *as* a screen, therefore, promotes its incorporation into the process of fractal identity.

Finally, the potential for advocacy comes in the form of play—play on form, appearance and impulse. Several of the image's elements I have already mentioned double as forces of play. In form, the image plays on its own placement within a screen by mimicking the screen. The appearance of negative space, a void in the image, is a play on the norm of total immersion in images. Then there is the play on our impulses, the gaze emanating from the image plays on our own glance at the image. While an activist response, particularly one of environmental advocacy, may not be clear, we should recall that play is diffuse in the stream of everyday images. If there is potential for shifts in environmental consciousness it is not necessarily to be found within a single image. Revealing the potential for activism in image resonance, we must look at a group of images.

The next few images for analysis also come from Diccaprio.org, but I should be clear in noting that bracketing any "set" of images is only a convention for convenience. The images used here were chosen for their representative qualities, qualities found repeatedly in images throughout the site. While we can assume that a viewer would be exposed to several, if not most, of the images discussed, the hypertextual quality of new media communication, and within DiCaprio.org in particular, de-emphasizes any boundaries for image viewing. That being said, the experience of a viewer in new media settings is not completely random either.[304] A viewer comes to a website with the

---

[304] Quantitative study of internet use has frequently focused on time spent on individual webpages and site-domains. These studies find that web users time spent on individual sites reflect usage patterns, design elements, and functionality of the site. Generally, internet use is not completely random, as the "surfing" metaphor might imply, but has a grounding base in the format of the website. A user moves from site to site, spending time on each site. The amount of time is variable on the above mentioned factors, but a pattern of site based use remains. See, for example: Randolph E. Bucklin and Catarina Sismeiro, "A Model of Web Site Browsing Behavior Estimated on Clickstream Data," *Journal of Marketing Research (JMR)* 40, no. 3 (2003), Pradeep K. Korgaonkar and Lori D. Wolin, "A Multivariate Analysis of Web Usage,"

expectation of some comprehensible form, and even a cursory experience with that site should expose the viewer to a series of images, possibly a series like the following.

A rectangular collage created from four photographs split into six square boxes on the "about us" page contains photographs of a macro-focused pink flower, the base of a tree in a forest, a mountain vista, and a giant waterfall viewed from above (Figure 32). The image as a whole suggests the aesthetic pleasure of nature in various forms: delicacy, grandeur, comfort. These sublime images interact with the technical characteristic of production as many images are consolidated into a single, encompassing unit. This consolidation also intersects with the communicative circumstance of immersion, a natural world encompassed within a single image. The possibility for excess exists in the sublime as well. Projection is evident, as with most of images on DiCaprio.org, in the use of boxes as screens. In this case some photographs are divided by the rigid uniformity of the squares. In addition, the variation in photographic form speak to both projection and play; In this image we find photographs close up and wide, from above and below, within the landscape (forest) and from a distance. The extremes in scale play on the screen as a technological equivalent-maker: offering the minute flower with the same design-weight as the mountain vista. There is also a play in the placement of the photographs, as the three upper photographs are poised to fall into the sinking hole of the waterfall. Here we find the activist possibility of playing with the nature/technological screen divide, as well as the consumption of nature.

Figure 32. Images of nature in a rectangular collage

The large collage featured on the "Get Informed" page presents a greater variety of image forms within the rectangular borders (Figure 33). The six squares in this image contain a screenshot of the NDRC website, a cropped photograph of Earth, a section of a thermometer with an earth drawing layered above it, a drawn depiction of atmospheric properties, and a partial reproduction of a *Mother Jones* magazine cover (itself featuring the photographic reproduction of a tree). In the context of a page dedicated to providing environmental news updates, an interpretation of this image based in meaning would refer to the obvious juxtaposition of information sources and images related to environmental issues like global warming. As a surface, however, the response to the image is similar but subtle. The design of the collage maintains two repetitive themes: earth and screen. Again, the boxes infer the screen, but we also find a detail of a screen, the webpage, and the detail of a magazine cover, which is also a screen.[305] The photograph of the earth is a cropped version of the most reproduced image in the public

domain, the "Whole Earth" photograph taken in 1971. This icon of Earth is reflected in the drawn version laid atop the thermometer, and again in the drawing of atmospheric properties. The Whole Earth image itself has been discussed in several forums for its inherent properties as an image.[306] These inherent properties, or surface elements, combine with discursive experience (including rhetorics of the Cold War, sublimity, ecological sensitivity) to generate its iconicity. As a surface the image maintains the surface properties, including rich coloration of deep blue, white and black and the motion and three dimensionality of the swirling clouds. Intersecting with the viewing experience of speed and ubiquity, the earth image pushes the envelope of motion and worldly encompassment. Played against the simplified drawings—each removed of the rich coloration and cloud patterns—the earth is *projected* as endlessly reproducible. The screen and earth elements of this image, then, are at play as the earth is offered on the screen and as a screen, allowing the image to simplify and mutate the earth for its purposes.

---

[305] DeLuca and Peeples argue that contemporary design and technological features of newspapers and magazines place them in the category of screen. DeLuca and Peeples, "From Public Sphere to Public Screen: Democracy, Activism, and The "Violence" Of Seattle."

[306] Denis Cosgrove, *Apollo's Eye: A Cartographic Genealogy of the Earth in the Western Imagination* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001), Denis Cosgrove, "Contested Global Visions: One-World, Whole-Earth, and the Apollo Space Photographs," *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 84, no. 2 (1994). Cosgrove writes that "examination of the image's composition and content suggests a density and an aesthetic harmony that are remarkable in a photograph taken almost at whim. Undoubtedly, these artistic qualities have played a significant, if little noted, role in the photograph's dissemination and reception" (1994, 276).

Figure 33. Large Collage from DiCaprio.org's "Get Informed" page.

Of course, the setting of these images in collages doesn't restrict the eye to viewing the whole collage. As in the case of the Whole Earth image, there are points of visual interest that can draw our vision away from encompassing units. For example, in the collage featured on the "What's Important" page, the whole of the collage could also be broken into component images, each filling one of the square boxes (Figure 34). The upper right corner of the collage, for example, contains a split image with a shimmering drop of oil on the left and an oil-drilling rig silhouetted by the sun on the right (Figure 35). This too is a composite of two photographs, and could be viewed independently. As a single image, the qualities of the two individual photographs combine to derive response. The photograph of the oil is a study in surface, an image aligned with the world of surface. The photograph of the drilling rig, on the other hand, is a moving part, a mechanized technology that contrasts itself to the digitality of new media. Together, the

two images—one silhouette bathed in light and the other a reflection with dark background—are ready-made projections. As play, however, there is another mediation that should be considered. This is not just an image, but also an active page element and an interactive hyperlink. Passing the computer cursor over the image adds a strong red hue to the otherwise neutral image. When the red hue is active, a mouse-click activates a hyperlink to the sub-page on "oil dependency."[307] The active technology, changing the hue of the image, is a rather blunt play on the human association between the color red and danger. As an interactive hyperlink, there is the further play on the surface qualities of the image, a suggestion that interactivity with the image offers depth in intertextuality. The activist possibilities in such an experience revolve around the highlighting of danger and the play of depth and surface.

---

[307] LeonardoDiCaprio.org, *Oil Dependency* ([cited March 2006]); available from www.leonardodicaprio.org/whatsimportant/oildependency.htm.

Figure 34. Large Collage from Dicaprio.org's "What's Important" page.

Figure 35. One box from the collage.

Taken together, the four images discussed above provide a momentary glimpse of the image stream. Including the images contained in the two flash movie presentations, these four images are a minute portion of the website's images. In the daily experience of a new media viewer, this minute quality is exponentially amplified. These are but moments in an endless cacophony of surface. That being said, it is clear that there are

forces to be derived even in the single moments of surface interaction. When considered in groups these images provide not just a few moments of surface, but a barrage of diffuse resonance. Within these images we find playful resonance that mimics the screen, contrasts void and immersion, seduces with the gaze, creates equivalence despite grand natural scale, sweeps nature into a vortex, shows the meaningless reproducibility of the Earth on the screen and as a screen, and positions the viewer interactively at the intersection of a dangerous surface and simulated depth.

I will not attempt to offer some theme or unified reading of these images, for that is not the function of image resonance. Rather, image resonance is a continual fractalization of the single screen. Each image presents its elemental surface, engenders some degree of projection on the screen, and maintains possibility for a play on the viewing encounter itself. It is possible, then, that the articulation of the world does not occur in rational debate, argument, and consideration of meaning, but in the continual motion of the individual screen in a stream of rhetorically forceful images. Rhetoric itself is considered anew in this surface view of the new media situation. That does not preclude activism, however, just a reconsideration of its application. The anomalous image event remains a powerful tool, but the new media screen favors the stream of everyday images. Since there is rhetorical possibility in these images, as seen in the images discussed here, there is not just potential in production of these images, but the necessity to move with the communicative and technological changes.

Another Surface

This chapter endeavored a response to Baudrillard's challenge, to determine the function of rhetorical forces in a surface world of streaming images. In way of a conclusion, I provide a final surface reading in light of Baudrillard's provoking thoughts. Much of this chapter has grappled with what most scholars would call theory, with the interspersion of analysis or criticism that grounds to the content of the study (new media environmental advocacy). This mass of theory is necessitated by the relatively underdeveloped makeup of new media criticism in general and perspectives on postmodern/poststructural analysis in particular. In fact, even the theory of image resonance I have presented here remains largely unrefined, due in part to the need for some clarity in the discussion ranging from Baudrillard, new media, environmental advocacy, image analysis, to the case study. Still, the offering of "conclusions" seems out of place in such a cursory discussion. Rather, I think it may be instructive to offer another analysis, one more surface considered.

First, however, in accord with the theoretical mass provided in this chapter, I present one more fragment of writing from Baudrillard. This concluding remark in his book *Impossible Exchange* is a set of theorems for the world of images. This is his response to asking "what is the point of theory?" which he categorizes as "an asymmetrical duel between the world and thought." He writes:

> Always bearing in mind the three basic theorems:
>
> • The world was given to us as something enigmatic and
> unintelligible, and the task of thought is to make it, if possible,
> even more enigmatic and unintelligible.

- Since the world is evolving towards a frenzied state of affairs, we have to take a frenzied view of it

- The player must never be bigger than the game itself, nor the theorist bigger than theory, nor theory bigger than the world itself.[308]

Baudrillard's triumvirate of theorems provide a basis for theoretical analysis of the simulated world. As we reach the limits of enlightenment liberation, there is no choice but to move beyond limits altogether. As the communicative environment shifts beyond meaning, critical theory must account for such shifts. As theorists, our role is to "maximize" the systems of analysis, to "duplicate the world," Baudrillard says, by "showing that this world cannot be as it is without this exchange of theory."[309]

This final intersection of world (in image) and theory (extended from Baudrillard) returns to our first image in this chapter, the portal to DiCaprio's two websites, LeonardoDiCaprio.com and LeonardoDiCaprio.org. The featured image on this page has already been read through the perspective of meaning. A surface reading is not a stripping of force but the underscoring of the forces most prevalent in viewing. The surface of this image, like so many on the DiCaprio.org website, is designed with a box theme (Figure 36). Here the design elements create the feel of a gradient, moving from the occasionally blue-splashed grey-scale images on the left to a rich spectrum of colors on the right. This gradient is repeated below the series of boxes with various abstract design elements shifting from muted grays to light greens and then blues. The boxed images themselves are also gradated, each of the boxes on the left contain only

---

[308] Baudrillard, *Impossible Exchange*, 151.
[309] Ibid., 149-50.

indecipherable design elements—all but the one containing the posed, black and white

headshot of DiCaprio. On the right side the images are photographs of natural scenery,

each a classic image of natural settings—all but the full color headshot of a gorilla.

Figure 36. This image acts as a gateway to both DiCaprio.org and DiCaprio.com

The screens within this image, the boxes of photographic and design content, both

connect and divide, separating through a gradient the technical sphere of communicative

space from the sublime sphere of natural imagery. The response at the level of the image

is provoked by the design of the gradient, cool to warm, abstract to (the appearance of)

real, human to nonhuman. Yet the image is a continuum and not an opposition. Clearly

merging the image are the mirrored images of human and animal, DiCaprio and the

Gorilla. Both of these photographs sit one box from the end of the gradient and each

subject gazes wistfully inward. Neither looks to the viewer, however, but across and out

of the screen. An uncertain triangulation erupts from the surface as the two gazes move

out from the screen and the glance of the viewer moves inward. The immersion here is in

play as no one element of the image sees each of the other two. DiCaprio looks at

nothing, as does the ape, and the viewer's eye can look to one or the other, or vaguely at

neither from a distance. The screen is disrupted, the enigmatic bifurcation of human and

nonhuman worlds is made more enigmatic as the unintelligible new media image is made

more unintelligible by the inability to respond to the gazes facing the viewer. A frenzied

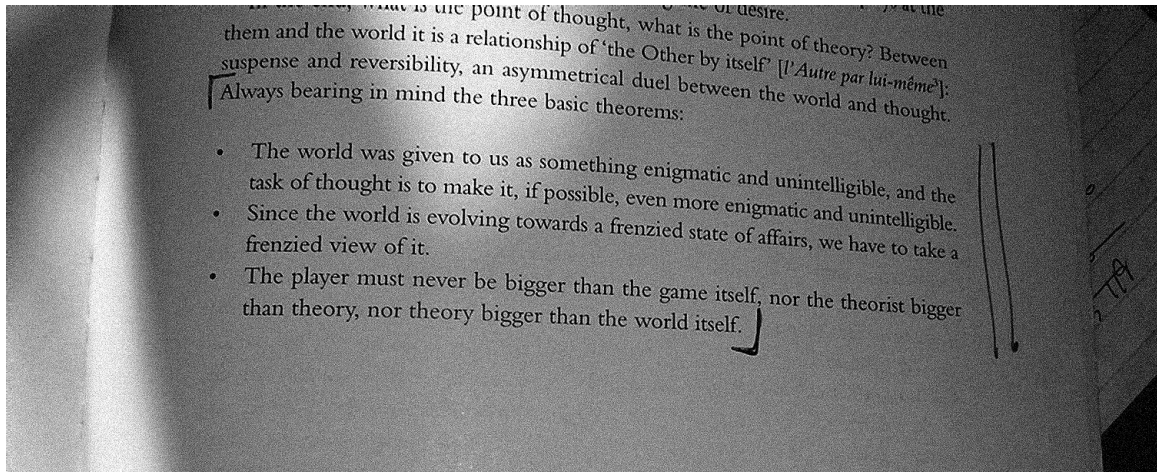view is all that sees, the world is bigger than the image, the theory, the theorist (Figure

37).

Figure 37. Baudrillard's Theorems as Image and Screen.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSIONS: DIFFUSING THE EVENT

Category – Milieu – Systems

The philosophy of communication is exhausted in the search for a

universal liberal opinion as consensus, in which we find again the cynical

perceptions and affectations of the capitalist himself.

-Deleuze and Guattari 1994, 146

Aristotle was fond of categorization, so fond in fact, that I hold him personally

responsible for the taxonomical basis of science and Western thought. Noted

environmental philosopher J. Baird Callicott also laments the enduring impact of

Aristotle's philosophy, which "represented the environment as both discontinuous with

and at the service to man."[310] Such a philosophy, Callicott writes, "orders the living

landscape somewhat like an automobile-parts warehouse is ordered."[311] Environmental

philosophers lament this system of categorical order because it denigrates the ecological

worldview, the science and philosophies of interconnection, monism, and systemic

holism. By continually breaking apart, naming and labeling in an atomistic frenzy to find

the *Truth* of all individual things, humans have long-neglected the relationships between

---

[310] Callicott, *Earth's Insights: A Multicultural Survey of Ecological Ethics from the Mediterranean Basin to the Australian Outback*, 29. By "man," Callicott most likely refers to humans, though an Aristotelian perspective might prefer the gendered term.
[311] Ibid.

what they categorically partition. In this criticism Norwegian ecophilsopher Arne Naess and French poststructuralists Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari find common ground in turning toward "milieu." For Naess, the influential ecocentrist who coined the concept and term "Deep Ecology," milieu is used synonymously with the word environment, both terms defined as the organic and inorganic surroundings of interacting organisms.[312] Thinking in terms of our milieu, Naess centers on the experiential relationships we have with environments like 'home' or 'wilderness.' If we can begin to appreciate our relationship *within* the places we inhabit, he argues, we are more likely to act in ecologically responsible ways, protecting our surroundings as we would protect ourselves. Deleuze and Guattari similarly invoke milieu—in French defined both as surroundings and middle. The milieu is where action occurs, the *middle* where forces of chaos meet and find rhythm, the multiplicity of surroundings where "not only does the living thing pass from one milieu to another, but the mileus pass into one another."[313] Deleuze and Guattari base their investigations of events, forces, rhizomes, and even language on replacing the primacy of determinate objects with contingency. Thus are "concepts" meant to be active, creating connections between, rather than reactive, labeling the world as it has already been ordered.

There are two ironies I am compelled to identify in admonishing Aristotle's categorical legacy. The first irony lies in another inheritance from Aristotle, the study of rhetoric—the basis for this project. While philosophy is often quipped to footnote Plato, the study of rhetoric can similarly be traced to Aristotle's *Rhetoric*,[314] where he defines

---

[312] Naess and Rothenberg, *Ecology, Community, and Lifestyle: Outline of an Ecosophy*, 36.
[313] Deleuze and Guattari, *Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, 313.
[314] Of course, just as Plato's supremacy can be challenged so too Aristotle's, particularly since Plato's *Pheadrus* outlines positions on rhetoric and his *Gorgias* responds to the rhetorical position of the Sophists.

the term as "the faculty of observing in any given case the available means of persuasion."[315] Aristotle's faculty of observation, of course, relied on various systems of categorization, including oratorical, persuasive, and inventive (*topoi*) taxonomies. This categorization in the study of rhetoric exposes the second irony, that of my seemingly pervasive use of categorization throughout this study. I have categorized the characteristics of new media technology, categorized the components of the communicative encounter, and categorized various forms of rhetorical appeal in new media.

These categorizations and tepid continuations of Aristotelian study, however, might appear underdeveloped in some areas of this study. Particularly, I have spent much effort examining the "rhetoric of environmental activism" without once parsing out the incredible diversity within that term. First, environmentalism is in no way a unified worldview. Deep ecology, ecofeminism, animal rights, wilderness preservation, bioregionalism, social ecology, and ecocentric are but a few of the descriptive terms that lead to wide variations in the concept of environmentalism. Within these distinctions are further divisions based on the proper means of advocacy, including categories such as conservationist, preservationist, political activist, radical activist, social activist, wilderness, urban, rural, corporate, sustainable, local, global. In terms of rhetoric, all of these categories, none of which are fixed, many of which overlap, lead to a vast spectrum of rhetorical appeal, form, and strategy. This is apparent in the case studies I use. *The Meatrix* combines animal rights with sustainability, human health concern, and pollution while taking a primarily consumer-oriented strategy. Woody Harrelson appropriates his

---

Nevertheless, Aristotle's engagement of rhetoric presents a middle-ground between Plato's denigration and the Sophists relativism that stands as the model for rhetorical study through the 1960s.

celebrity ethos as a rhetorical means to the ends of lifestyle promotion, although simultaneously including direct action and political change in his rhetoric. Leonardo DiCaprio focuses on global issues like climate change and resource depletion, combining public relations and imagistic rhetorical strategies. The lack of parsing and designation throughout this dissertation should not be seen as a lack of interest in the diversity of rhetoric within the broad category of environmentalism,[316] but as a necessary constant for comparison. While studying the rhetoric of environmentalism by sub-categorization would be helpful in analyzing the function of various worldviews and rhetorical strategies, in this case an amalgamated category was used to study the relationship between activist rhetoric and media technology.

In sum, the categorization of rhetoric into individual parts is useful to some ends, but study of the milieu, the relationships both within and between, requires viewing the part *and* the whole. The same is true of the broad category of technology I refer to as new media. While I admittedly focus on one sub-category of new media, the internet, even this sub-categorization can easily be divided into innumerable pieces (Including: the web, email, IRC (chats), file-sharing, and network databases) or overlapped with other sub-categories through convergence (cell phones, for example, are capable of all of the aforementioned). The categorization of new media, for that matter, can be subverted through the remediation discussed in chapter one. Still, viewing the commonalities of the category new media, even when primarily focused on the internet, allows for broader consideration of technological changes and rhetoric. Such a broad categorization, though,

---

[315] Aristotle *Rhetoric* 2.2.1356a

[316] Nor should this be seen as an implicit advocacy for unification of environmentalism, on the contrary, I believe that the diversity of perspective and strategy are the generative basis for widespread changes in consciousness.

still requires a perspective of relationships—milieu. This is the reason for developing analyses that look beyond the technology or the rhetorical text, moving toward a relational view of discursive expectations and inter-mediated dissemination. While these approaches focus on the relationships between, there is also the necessity to study the relationships within. In this vein I have tried to reflect on the social and technological circumstances of the communicative encounter. In other words, I am interested in the relationships *between* the categories of environmentalism, rhetoric, and new media as well as *within* the moment of the rhetorical event as all three of these categories intersect.

The same dual perspective of categories and relationships informs the theories of rhizome and resonance developed in this project. In each case, the general concept— rhizome or resonance—is divided into component concepts—rhizomatic lines of segmentarity, molecular lines, and lines of flight as well as cultural resonance, resonant reversal, soundbyte resonance, celebrity resonance, and image resonance. These designations are in no way meant as an exhaustive or static catalogue, however. Rather, these concepts, as Deleuze, Guattari and Nietzsche would endorse, are situated contingently—they are derived from and relate most definitively to the case studies discussed. This does not mean that soundbyte resonance, for example, is limited to the Woody Harrelson's environmental rhetoric. I think it is plain that within a soundbyte culture, stylistic alignment resonates with the aphoristically inclined viewer. Concepts are contingently created but free of categorical limitation.

Fritjof Capra attempts to recover Aristotle's reputation among environmental philosophers by positioning his corpus of thinking within a counter-tradition of systemic holism. Aristotle did categorize the attributes of substance and form, but he also argued

that they were two equal sides of a process.[317] Capra writes that "From Pythagoras to

Aristotle, to Goethe, and to organismic biologists, there is a continuous intellectual

tradition that struggles with the understanding of pattern, realizing that it is crucial to the

understanding of living from."[318] Systems thinking, Capra's designation for holistic

perspectives within an "ecological paradigm," are based on "connectedness,

relationships, context"[319] and must involve the "ability to shift one's attention back and

forth between systems' levels…systems nesting within other systems."[320] The

dissertation I have written is both endorsement and example of a holistic, systemic

approach to rhetoric, with focus on the particular but mapped within relationships,

context, milieu. In this final chapter I offer a recounting of the project's particulars

through connections and systemic levels. The systems I consider include media

technology, rhetorical communication, and environmental activism.

Characteristics of New Media

Technology should not be thought of only as mechanical or material

advancements, but also the associated changes in the social perspectives that influence

practices. The group of media technologies commonly referred to as "new media" are

thus a combination of hardware, software, and associated changes in communicative

practices and circumstances. In terms of the categorical particulars, the underlying

coding, digitalization, is primary because it allows for cross-media convergences of

---

[317] Fritjof Capra, *The Web of Life: A New Scientific Understanding of Living Systems* (New York: Anchor Books, 1996), 18-19. See also, Fritjof Capra, "Systems Theory and the New Paradigm," in *Ecology*, ed. Carolyn Merchant, *Key Concepts in Critical Theory* (Newark: Humanities Press, 1994).
[318] Capra, *The Web of Life: A New Scientific Understanding of Living Systems*, 157.
[319] Ibid., 29.
[320] Ibid., 37.

technologies and is the basis for other new media characteristics like hypertextual interactivity and network interconnection. Digitalization allows for interrelated media technologies (convergence) and interconnections between texts and across media forms (hypertext). Hypertext's base in digital universality produces unprecedented rapidity, changing in fundamental ways the communicative encounter. In addition, the speed of linking information to or within a text allows for an expanded ability for creation of texts made from other texts: interactivity. New media technologies favor tactile experiences, a hypertextual interactivity, that increases the viewer's possible encounters and limits the authorial connection between authorship and text. The digital base system of program and content, media and text, also allows the users and texts in new media environments to develop complicated interconnected networks. The homogeneity of underlying code and speed of transmission have allowed for the production of vast, often transitory networks of users, information, and technologies for transmission. Added to the characteristic categories of digitalization, hypertext, interactivity, and networking, the increased presence of new media technology and forms in cultural practice, the characteristic of ubiquity, adds new media to the list of technologies having significant impacts on communication.

These technologies operate in conjunction to change media practices. Marshall, for example, describes a shift in the audience to text relationship from active to interactive.[321] Hypertextual interactivity promotes what Deleuze and Guattari refer to as "diversity of becoming," becoming in the sense of creating difference. The attributes of new media in practice encourages the repetition of difference in each hypertextually produced communication event. In addition, these events are disseminated on the internet

through the interconnections of digital networks. In such circumstances, authority shifts from that of the producer, or author, to the association of multiple social networks. In these circumstances, I argue that Deleuze and Guattari's rhizomatic metaphor is a useful concept for considering new media dissemination.

Through rhizomatic mapping of *The Meatrix* several additional characteristics of the communicative circumstance are confirmed. First, the speed of textual production leads to a corollary characteristic of rapid textual uptake. Rhizomatic growth in a context of rapid production consequently requires rapidity in the event of rhetorical encounter. Second, the volume created by textual productivity conjoins with the diverse and intricate patterning of network dissemination to dissociate texts from deliberative discourse. These emergent characteristics of speed and deliberative dissociation themselves combine to alter the communicative circumstances by favoring the content of texts and more generalized discursive experiences over deliberation.

Another perspective on the condition of the communicative encounter extends theories of *immersion* from electronic media to new media—increasing its properties of speed and volume. The speed and volume of textual encounters result in a streaming of media information, with the viewer immersed in the stream. In such conditions, the rhetorical event has been fundamentally altered by technological advances and media practices. In such a case new forms of rhetorical appeal present themselves as more appropriate alignments with communicative circumstances. It is through the study of the technological milieu that we come to this understanding, though it requires a further engagement with the system of rhetorical appeal to fully appreciate how these new media characteristics are functioning.

---

[321] Marshall, *New Media Cultures*. See discussion in Chapter Two.

The Rhetorical Event

In systemic terms, I have referred to the milieu for rhetorical events as the circumstances of communicative encounters. This contingent perspective on rhetoric agues that the forces of interpretation present in the moment of encounter can derive from three overlapping systems: the viewer's previous experiences in discourse, textual elements, and the technological characteristics of media practice. The moment of the rhetorical event is also capable of generating an interpretive outcome, alternatively described as a derivative force or shift in consciousness. The study of technological implications on the circumstances of communicative encounters are thus intricately tied to the system of rhetorical encounter.

Two general changes in the milieu of rhetorical events are indicated by the rhizome perspective on new media dissemination. First, there is a dissociation from deliberative discourse. Second, there is the immersive condition of viewing practice, the speed and volume of production and uptake. Together, these altered communicative circumstances shift the propensities of the rhetorical moment toward diffuse fragments of discourse and away from the specifics of public deliberation and authority. As a result, the rhetorical elements of the text take on more significance, since a discursive dissociation limits the signposts for interpretation. As a means of studying these circumstances I forward a general theory of resonance, wherein rhetorical elements are patterned to "evoke" the diffuse but prominent elements of common discursive experiences.

Two initial case studies, *The Meatrix* and Woody Harrelson's "Thoughts From Within," move between the levels of textual elements and diffuse elements of discourse to categorize several forms of resonance operating in environmental texts online. Resonant reversal, for example, juxtaposes allusions to prominent elements of cultural resonance with contradictory messages. *The Meatrix* draws attention to the text through references to cultural markers and challenges perception through contradiction. In the second case study the resonance of the celebrity expert coincides with soundbyte resonance to also engage consciousness. Here the mass-mediated discourse of celebrity provides insight to the resonant use of Harrelson's position as expert. In addition, the circumstances of rhetorical encounter are further categorized as a soundbyte culture, wherein pith and aphorism are favored stylistically. The flash movie production of "Thoughts From Within" layers spoken words, printed text, and visual elements to punctuate the evocations of general resonant experiences.

Taking the technological categorization of immersion to its endpoint, I also argue it necessary to consider the circumstances of communication within a perspective of imminence and surface. Baudrillard's imagistic reading of a simulated world challenges the idea that interpretation is based in recalling discursive experience, even diffuse experience. As a counterpart to resonance, image resonance seeks to understand the rhetorical event in circumstances removed from the discursive influence on interpretation, leaving only the text and the circumstances of its viewing—based in technological media practice. Image resonance thus adds the means to conceptualize rhetoric on a second level, or milieu. Added to resonance of evocation, image resonance

allows for rhetorical criticism at both the level of discursive experience and immanent surface.

The case study in image resonance, DiCaprio.org, demonstrated how rhetorical force is possible in surface interactions. Elements of the image, including the engendering of projection and the introduction of play, interact with the technological characteristics of new media to generate derivative force. Every image in a stream of immersion presents its elemental surface and maintains the possibility for conscious interaction. Calling forth projection and reaction, rather than reflection or consideration, on an individualized screen, each image has the possibility to derive a shift in consciousness at the minutest level—a continual fractalization of consciousness.

Diffuse Environmental Activism?

What then is the lesson to be learned for environmental activism? How do I answer the question I pose in my introductory chapter: How are environmental advocates adapting their rhetoric to new media formats? First, is it necessary to say that I do see environmental advocates as adapting to new media. While perhaps much environmental advocacy remains explicitly dominated by mass-media rhetorical appeal, the case studies in this project to show differentiation. In other words, whether strategic or conscious or driven by technological and rhetorical determinism, new forms of rhetorical appeal are appearing in environmental texts. This leads to a second point, that new rhetorical opportunities will exist whether or not they are prescribed or strategically applied. The consequences for adaptation may very well include forms of cooptation or, at least, investment in the dominant systems of communication. Nevertheless, as the

circumstances of communicative encounter shift, so too shift the opportunities for conscious engagement.

In the opening pages of this dissertation I offer two examples of environmental rhetoric. The first was labeled, by its producers, an "event." A sensational advertisement in mass-distributed media is said to have produced a great shift in politics, advocacy, and environmental consciousness. This event, however, is qualified by the innumerable texts proliferate in common discourse, the diffuse. The event, I argue, activated the diffuse—thus, activism. In the second case I recount a relatively obscure set of moments in my experience with the internet: a Blog; a browser plug-in; a commercial website alteration. These diffuse moments are not generalized discourse, but individualized experiences in a stream of immersive images. Am I really prepared to argue that these innocuous moments are the future of environmental activism?

To this question I respond by returning to the systemic perspective, the overlapping levels or milieu of technology, rhetoric, and environmentalism. It would be laughable to suggest that mass-mediated events are pointless in the digital age. On the contrary, the electronic age remains the central experiential circumstance for rhetoric, and desire for the excess of mass-mediated events remains publicly pre-eminent. The shift in technological characteristics taking place in digital formats is not only perceptible online, however. Remediation occurs in both directions, with digital characteristics infecting mass-media as well as the reverse. The interconnected nature of the digital and the electronic are moving the broad experiences of rhetorical events further into characteristics of immersion and discursive dissociation. The mass-media event is becoming a simulation of a simulation, an occurrence of such regularity as to be

understood for what it is: a controllable simulation. Mass protests and spectacular advertisements are the simulation of deliberation, as world trade organizations and federal agencies continue to make decisions in their own interests. Nevertheless, these events are moments of activation, and remain possibilities for conscious change—the force of the event has just been diffused by the proliferation of texts, the deepening of immersion.

In the state of immersion, the micropolitical text, *The Meatrix* and "Thoughts From Within," are elevated to conscious-shifting activism. They remain diffuse, more diffuse even than the diffused mass-media event, but the circumstances of new media communication elevate their rhetorical possibility. As the circumstances of communicative encounter shift toward textual elements and discursive commonality, the diffuse rhetorical text gains power. So it is that environmental activism can continue to work toward change of consciousness through the diffuse, perhaps more so. As the diffusion of mass-media events continues, there is more and more force in the diffuse, to the point that micropolitical texts become the means of conscious articulation, the place of activation. What happens, however, in the state of total diffusion, Baudrillard's utter surface? The images discussed from DiCpario.org are not micropolitical, yet they have rhetorical force. These images are not engaging consciousness but projecting on a minute fractalizing individual screen. In this circumstance, I would describe these images as some form of minute micropolitical texts—the *nanopolitical* surface. The nanopolitical, like the micropolitical, gains activist power as the circumstances of rhetorical encounter shift toward surface.

From a systems perspective, the categorizations of mass-mediated event, diffuse micropolitical text, and nanopolitical surface, are functionally nonsensical in isolation. Only through their interconnection are they truly insightful. The rhetoric of environmental activism is therefore adapting to new media formats by systemically maintaining mass-mediated strategies, experimenting in micropolitical new media texts, and lighting upon nanopolitical surface. The between and middle in these cases will determine the direction of the larger system of environmental rhetoric (and, perhaps, the environment, though no direct connection can truly be presented). Between levels of events and diffusion and diffusion and surface are the possibilities for conscious change. In the milieu of communicative circumstance are the origins of new rhetorical appeals.

Finally, this study can also be viewed as a microcosmical analysis of a much broader milieu. Here I am referring to the system within a system previewed in the title of this dissertation: Environmentalism on the Web: Political Activism in the Age of New Media. The microcosm of online environmental activism provides a perspective on the shifting rhetoric of political activism generally. Following a few caveats, then, I feel compelled to offer some judgment regarding the relative values of the political event, the micropolitical diffuse, and the nanopolitical surface as bases for activist rhetorical strategies. First, it should already be clear that there is no break between the political event and the micropolitically diffuse any more than there is a necessary either/or between micro and nano-political rhetoric. Strategies focused on political events utilize diffuse micro-political elements but also set themselves in the mindset of cultural discourse, becoming available as resonant resources for future rhetorical appeals, both event-based and diffuse. Although nanopolitical rhetoric or surface resonance does not

draw upon the events and diffuse markers of contemporary culture the way resonant strategies can, there is nevertheless a synergy that can be accorded to all rhetoric, wherein interconnected levels of activism have rhetorical force on the interconnected levels of articulated human perception. For example, the soundbyte resonance of Woody Harrelson's "Thoughts From Within" operates in overlapping systems of discourse along with the surface resonance of DiCaprio.org and the media events possible through *The New York Times*. Second, a judgment of these rhetorical appeals—event, diffuse, and surface—can only faithfully be offered relative to the material discussed in this project. Still, I would offer that the preceding discussions point to necessarily adjusting rhetorical strategy to meet the changing conditions of communicative experience. I would therefore suggest political activists shift from event-centered activism of diffuse rhetoric (as in the case of the Sierra Club's Grand Canyon strategy discussed in chapter one) to a strategy centered on rhizomatic dissemination of diffuse yet resonant rhetoric. In addition, activist rhetors need to begin paying careful attention to the rhetorical possibilities of surface. As the communicative circumstance continues to gain imagistic momentum, so too does the value of surface, visuality, design, image resonance, etc.

The systems approach not only advocates understanding rhetoric and politics in interactive systems and levels, but also encourages adaptation to change. An activist must adapt to the communicative circumstances like any other being in any environment (set of systems). Failure to adapt leaves the activist vulnerable, not only to obsolescence but to predation by competitors—and possible extinction from the system. Adaptation, or becoming difference (as Deleuze and Guattari would say), *is* existence. When a being ceases to adapt (become different) they relinquish life. Rhetoric alone does not

demonstrate the vitality of a political advocate, for stagnant rhetoric soon fades lifelessly into the din of background chatter. Rather, political vitality is demonstrated by the *force* of rhetoric, the compulsion to shift human perception and material manifestation—the sweeping reconfiguration of discursive systems to align with activist desires.

REFERENCES

Aitchison, Jean, and Diana Lewis, eds. *New Media Language*. London: Routledge, 2003.

Allan, Stuart, Barbara Adam, and Cynthia Carter. *Environmental Risks and the Media*. London ; New York: Routledge, 1999.

American Museum of the Moving Image. 2006. Daisy Girl. In *The Living Room Candidate*, http://livingroomcandidate.movingimage.us/election/index.php?nav_action=election&nav_subaction=D&campaign_id=168. (accessed March 1, 2006).

Anderson, Alison. *Media, Culture and the Environment*. New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 1997.

Angus, Ian H. *Primal Scenes of Communication: Communication, Consumerism, and Social Movements*. Albany: State University of New York Press, 2000.

Apple Matters. 2005. Does Bill Gates Have the Prescription for Apple's Market Share Blues? In, http://www.applematters.com/index.php/section/comments/does_bill_gates_have_the_prescription_for_apples_market_share_blues/. (accessed March 10, 2006).

Asen, Robert. "The Multiple Mr. Dewey: Multiple Publics and Permeable Borders in John Dewey's Theory of the Public Sphere." *Argumentation & Advocacy* 39, no. 3 (2003): 174.

Asen, Robert, and Daniel C. Brouwer. *Counterpublics and the State*. Albany: State
University of New York Press, 2001.

———. "Introduction: John Dewey and the Public Sphere." *Argumentation & Advocacy*
39, no. 3 (2003): 157.

Associated Press. "Actor Makes 1,500-Mile Trek to L.A. To Save the World." *Associated
Press State and Local Wire*, April 12 2001.

———. "Dicaprio to Produce Environmental Film." *ABC News*, December 6 2005.

———. "Woody Harrelson's Long, Strange Trip." *CNN.com*, March 10 2003.

Barthes, Roland. *Camera Lucida: Reflections on Photography*. 1st American ed. New
York: Hill and Wang, 1981.

Barthes, Roland, and Stephen Heath. *Image, Music, Text*. New York: Hill and Wang,
1977.

Bass, Jules, and Arthur Rankin. "King Kong [Tv-Series]." American Broadcasting
Company (ABC), 1966.

Baudrillard, Jean. *Impossible Exchange*. London: VERSO, 2001.

———. *Simulacra and Simulation*. Translated by Sheila Faria Glaser. Ann Arbor:
University of Michigan Press, 1994.

———. *Simulations*. New York: Semiotext(e), Inc., 1983.

Baudrillard, Jean, and Sylvère Lotringer. *The Ecstasy of Communication*. Brooklyn:
Autonomedia, 1988.

Belasco, Jessica. "Animal-Rights Animation." *Milwaukee Journal Sentinal*, February 9
2004, 4E.

———. "Web Site Feuls Debate over Beef Supply." *San Antonio Express-News*, January 9 2004.

Berry, Thomas. *The Great Work*. New York: Random House, 1999.

Biesecker, Barbara. "Rethinking the Rhetorical Situation from within the Thematic of Differance." *Philosophy and Rhetoric* 22 (1989): 110-30.

Blumler, Jay. "The New Media and Our Political Communication Discontents: Democratizing Cyberspace." *Information, Communication & Society* 4, no. 1 (2001): 1-13.

Bolter, J. David, and Richard A. Grusin. *Remediation: Understanding New Media*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1999.

Bosso, Christopher. "Environmental Groups in the New Political Landscape." In *Environmental Policy*, edited by Norman J. Vig and Michael E. Kraft, 55-76. Washington: CQ Press, 2000.

Bostdorff, Denise. "Making Light of James Watt: A Burkean Approach to the Form and Attitude of Political Cartoons." In *Rhetorical Dimensions in Media: A Critical Casebook*, edited by Martin Medhurst and Thomas Benson, 196-215. Dubuque: Kendall/Hunt Publishing, 1991.

Bove, Paul. "Discourse." In *Critical Terms for Literary Study*, edited by Frank Lentricchia and Thomas McLaughlin, 50-65. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990.

Bruner, Michael, and Max Oelschlaeger. "Rhetoric, Environmentalism, and Environmental Ethics." *Environmental Ethics* 16, no. Winter (1994): 377-96.

Bucklin, Randolph E., and Catarina Sismeiro. "A Model of Web Site Browsing Behavior Estimated on Clickstream Data." *Journal of Marketing Research (JMR)* 40, no. 3 (2003): 249-67.

Burr, Vivien. *An Introduction to Social Constructionism*. London: Routledge, 1995.

Butler, Judith. "Contingent Foundations: Feminism and the Question of 'Postmodernism'." In *Feminists Theorize the Political*, edited by Judith Butler and Joan W Scott. New York: Routledge, 1992.

Callicot, J. Baird. "Environmental Philosophy Is Environmental Activism: The Most Radical and Effective Kind." In *Environmental Philosophy & Environmental Activism*, edited by Don Marrietta and Lester Embree, 19-36. Maryland: Rowman and Littlefirld Publishers, 1995.

Callicott, J. Baird. *Beyond the Land Ethic : More Essays in Environmental Philosophy*, *Suny Series in Philosophy and Biology*. Albany, N.Y.: State University of New York Press, 1999.

———. *Earth's Insights: A Multicultural Survey of Ecological Ethics from the Mediterranean Basin to the Australian Outback*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994.

———. *In Defense of the Land Ethic : Essays in Environmental Philosophy*, *Suny Series in Philosophy and Biology*. Albany, N.Y.: State University of New York Press, 1989.

Cantrill, James G. "Percieving Environmental Discourse: The Cognitive Playground." In *The Symbolic Earth: Discourse and Our Creation of the Environment*, edited by

James G. Cantrill and Christine L. Oravec. Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1996.

Cantrill, James G., and Christine L. Oravec. *The Symbolic Earth : Discourse and Our Creation of the Environment*. Lexington, Ky.: University Press of Kentucky, 1996.

Capra, Fritjof. "Systems Theory and the New Paradigm." In *Ecology*, edited by Carolyn Merchant, 334-41. Newark: Humanities Press, 1994.

———. *The Web of Life: A New Scientific Understanding of Living Systems*. New York: Anchor Books, 1996.

Carson, Rachel. *Silent Spring*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1962.

Cassidy, Marsha. "Cyberspace Meets Domestic Space: Personal Computers, Women's Work, and the Gendered Territories of the Family Home." *Critical Studies in Media Communication* 18, no. 1 (2001): 44-65.

Ceccarelli, Leah. "Polysemy: Multiple Meanings in Rhetorical Criticism." *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 84, no. 4 (1998): 395-415.

Chambers, Nicky, Craig Simmons, and Mathis Wackernagel. *Sharing Nature's Interest: Ecological Footprints as an Indicator of Sustainability*. London: Earthscan, 2000.

Cinema-L listserv. 2003. Meatrix? In, American University, http://listserv.american.edu/cgi-bin/wa?A2=ind0311b&L=cinema-l&T=0&F=&S=&P=885 (accessed January 15, 2005).

Clark, Gregory, S. Michael Halloran, and Allison Woodford. "Thomas Cole's Vision of 'Nature' and the Conquest Theme in American Culture." In *Green Culture:*

Environmental Rhetoric in Contemporary America, edited by Carl George Herndl and Stuart C. Brown, 261-80. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1996.

Condit, Celeste Michelle. "Constructing Visions of the Fetus and Freedom: Rhetoric and Image." In *Decoding Abortion Rhetoric: Communicating Social Change*, 79-95. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1990.

———. "Hegemony, Concordance, and Capitalism: Reply to Cloud." *Critical Studies in Mass Communication* 13 (1996): 382-84.

———. "The Rhetorical Limits of Polysemy." *Critical Studies in Mass Communication* 6, no. 2 (1989): 103-22.

Condron, Frank, ed. *How to Go Further: A Guide to Simple Organic Living*. Toronto: Warwick Publishing, 2005.

Cooper, Merian, and Ernest Schoedsack. "King Kong." RKO Radio Pictures, 1933.

Cosgrove, Denis. *Apollo's Eye: A Cartographic Genealogy of the Earth in the Western Imagination*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001.

———. "Contested Global Visions: One-World, Whole-Earth, and the Apollo Space Photographs." *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 84, no. 2 (1994): 270-94.

Cox, J. Robert. "Nature's 'Crisis Disciplines': Does Environmental Communication Have an Ethical Duty? (Keynote Address)." Paper presented at the Eighth Biennial Conference on Communication and the Environment, Jekyll Island, Georgia 2005.

Cramer, Phillip. *Deep Environmental Politics*. Connecticut: Preager, 1998.

D'Agostino, Bill. "Woody's Children: Former 'Cheers' Actor Lectures Stanford Students on the Benifits of Organic Living." *Palo Alto Weekly*, May 11 2001.

Darier, âEric. *Discourses of the Environment*. Oxford, UK ; Malden, Mass., USA: Blackwell, 1998.

———. "Foucault and the Environment: An Introduction." In *Discourses of the Environment*, edited by âEric Darier. Oxford: Blackwell, 1998.

Davis, Joel J. "The Effects of Message Framing on Response to Environmental Communications." In *Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly*, 285-99: Association for Education in Journalism & Mass Communication, 1995.

Debord, Guy. *Society of the Spectacle*. Detroit: Black & Red, 1973.

Deleuze, Gilles. *Negotiations, 1972-1990*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1995.

———. *Nietzsche and Philosophy*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1983.

Deleuze, Gilles, and Félix Guattari. *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*. New York: Viking Press, 1977.

———. *Nomadology: The War Machine*. New York: Semiotext(e), 1986.

———. *Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*. Translated by Brian Massumi. Minneapolis: University of Minneapolis Press, 1987.

———. *What Is Philosophy?* New York: Columbia University Press, 1994.

DeLuca, Kevin. *Image Politics: The New Rhetoric of Environmental Activism*, *Revisioning Rhetoric*. New York: Guilford Press, 1999.

DeLuca, Kevin, and Anne Teresa Demo. "Imaging Nature: Watkins, Yosemite, and the Birth of Environmentalism." *Critical Studies in Media Communication* 17, no. 3 (2000): 241-60.

DeLuca, Kevin Michael. *Image Politics : The New Rhetoric of Environmental Activism*, *Revisioning Rhetoric*. New York: Guilford Press, 1999.

DeLuca, Kevin, and Jennifer Peeples. "From Public Sphere to Public Screen: Democracy, Activism, and The "Violence" Of Seattle." *Critical Studies in Mass Communication* 19, no. 2 (2002): 125-51.

Derrida, Jacques. *Of Grammatology*. 1st American ed. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1976.

———. "Structure, Sign and Play in the Discourse of the Human Sciences." In *Writing and Difference*, 278-93. Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1978.

Desousa, Michael. "Symbolic Action and Pretended Insight: The Ayatollah Khomeini in U.S. Editorial Cartoons." In *Rhetorical Dimensions in Media: A Critical Casebook*, edited by Martin Medhurst and Thomas Benson, 216-44. Dubuque: Kendall/Hunt, 1991.

Dewey, John. *The Public and Its Problems*. New York: H. Holt and Company, 1927.

DiCaprio, Leonardo, and Sir Arthur C Clarke. 2001. Yahoo! Webchat Transcript. In, http://www.dianfossey.org/news/leo_arthur.html. (accessed March, 2006).

Dicum, Gregory. "Walking the Talk: Woody Harrelson's Sustainable Life." *SF Gate*, July 20 2005.

Dow, Bonnie J. *Prime-Time Feminism: Television, Media Culture, and the Women's Movement since 1970*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1996.

Drengson, Alan. "Some Fundamentals of Ecophilosophy as Ecocentric Inquiry." *The Trumpeter* 13, no. 3 (1996): http //www.icaa.org/iuicode?6.13.13.11.

———. "Termonology of the Deep Ecology Movement." *The Trumpeter* 13, no. 3 (1996): http //www.icaa.org/iuicode?6.13.3.1.

Dryzek, John. "Green Reason: Communicative Ethics for the Biosphere." In *Postmodern Environmental Ethics*, edited by Max Oelschlaeger, 101-20. Albany: SUNY Press, 1995.

———. *The Politics of the Earth: Environmental Discourses*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997.

Dunwoody, Sharon, and Robert Griffin. "Journalistic Strategies for Reporting Long-Term Environmental Issues: A Case Study of Three Superfund Sites." In *The Mass Media and Environmental Issues*, edited by Anders Hansen, 22-50. London: Leicester University Press, 1993.

Eckersley, Robyn. *Environmentalism and Political Theory: Toward an Ecocentric Approach*, *Suny Series in Environmental Public Policy*. Albany: State University of New York Press, 1992.

Edwards, David. "Can We Trust the Media on the Environment?" *Ecologist* 30, no. 4 (2000): 22.

Edwards, Janis, and Carol Winkler. "Representative Form and the Visual Ideograph: The Iwo Jima Image in Editorial Cartoons." *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 83, no. 3 (1997): 289-310.

Everett, Anna, and John Thornton Caldwell. *New Media: Theories and Practices of Digitextuality*. New York: Routledge, 2003.

Evernden, Neil. *The Natural Alien*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1985.

Finnegan, Cara A. *Picturing Poverty: Print Culture and Fsa Photographs*. Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 2003.

———. "Recognizing Lincoln: Image Vernaculars in Nineteenth-Century Visual Culture." *Rhetoric & Public Affairs* 8, no. 1 (2005): 31-57.

———. "Social Engineering, Visual Politics, and the New Deal: Fsa Photography in Survey Graphic." *Rhetoric & Public Affairs* 3, no. 3 (2000): 333-62.

———. "Television as Historian." *Review of Communication* 3, no. 2 (2003): 153-57.

Finnegan, Cara A., and Kang Jiyeon. ""Sighting" The Public: Iconoclasm and Public Sphere Theory." *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 90, no. 4 (2004): 377-402.

Fischer, Paul. "The Return of Woody Harrelson." *Film Monthly*, September 15 2005.

Flanagin, Andrew, Wendy Farinola, and Miriam Metzger. "The Technical Code of the Internet/World Wide Web." *Critical Studies in Media Communication* 17, no. 4 (2000): 409-28.

Flew, Terry. *New Media: An Introduction*. South Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 2002.

Foss, Sonja. "Ambiguity as Persuasion: The Vietnam Veterans Memorial." *Communication Quarterly* 34, no. 3 (1986): 326-40.

———. "Rhetoric and the Visual Image: A Resource Unit." *Communication Education* 31 (1982): 55-66.

———. "Visual Imagery as Communication (Review Essay)." *Text and Performance Quarterly* 12 (1992): 85-96.

Foucault, Michel. "The Ethics of Concern of the Self as a Practice of Freedom." In *Ethics: Subjectivity and Truth*, edited by Paul Rabinow, 281-301. New York: The New Press, 1997.

———. *The History of Sexuality. Volume 1: An Introduction*. Translated by Robert
Harley. New York: Vintage Books, 1978.

———. "What Is Enlightenment." In *The Foucault Reader*, edited by Paul Rabinow, 32-
50. New York: Pantheon Books, 1984.

Fox, Warwick. "The Deep Ecology-Ecofeminism Debate and Its Parallels."
Environmental Ethics 11, no. 1 (1989): 5-25.

Fox, Warwick. *Toward a Transpersonal Ecology: Developing New Foundations for
Environmentalism*. Albany: State University of New York Press, 1990.

Fraser, Benson P., and William J. Brown. "Media, Celebrities, and Social Influence:
Identification with Elvis Presley." *Mass Communication & Society* 5, no. 2
(2002): 183-206.

Fraser, Nancy. "Rethinking the Public Sphere: A Contribution to the Critique of Actually
Existing Democracy." In *Habermas and the Public Sphere*, edited by Craig
Calhoun, 109-41. Cambridge: MIT Press, 1992.

FreeRangeGraphics.com. 2004. Flash Movies. In,
www.freerangegraphics.com/flash/flash3.html. (accessed May 29, 2004).

———. "The Meatrix Transcript." 2003.

Frentz, Thomas S., and Janice Hocker Rushing. ""Mother Isn't Quite Herself Today:"
Myth and Spectacle in *the Matrix*." *Critical Studies in Mass Communication* 19,
no. 1 (2002): 64-86.

Fursich, Elfriede, and Melinda Robins. "Africa.Com: The Self-Representation of Sub-
Saharan Nations on the World Wide Web." *Critical Studies in Media
Communication* 19, no. 2 (2000): 190-211.

Gamson, Joshua. "The Assembly Line of Greatness: Celebrity in Twentieth-Century America." *Critical Studies in Mass Communication* 9, no. 1 (1992): 1.

———. *Claims to Fame: Celebrity in Contemporary America*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994.

Gellerman, Bruce. "The Meatrix." In *Living on Earth*. USA: National Public Radio, 2003.

Gilman, Jonnie. "Gett'in in the Bus with Woody Harrelson." *Natural Choice Directory*, October 30 2004.

Global Resource Action Center, GRACE. "Organizational Documentation (Provided by Grace Staff)." New York, NY, 2005.

Godin, Seth. 2003. The Meatrix. In, http://sethgodin.typepad.com/seths_blog/2003/11/the_meatrix.html. (accessed January 15, 2005).

Goldhammer, Gary, and Linda Zimmer. 2004. Enter the Marketing Meatrix. In, MarketingProfs.com, www.marketingprofs.com/4/zimmer2.asp. (accessed January 28, 2004).

———. 2004. Fresh Eye for the Marketing Guy. In, MarketingProfs.com, http://www.marketingprofs.com/zimmer1.asp. (accessed May 30, 2004).

Goodnight, G. Thomas. "The Personal, Technical, and Public Spheres of Argument: A Speculative Inquiry into the Art of Public Deliberation." *Journal of the American Forensic Association* 18 (1982): 214-27.

Gorn, Gerald J., Amitava Chattopadhyay, Jaideep Sengupta, and Shashank Tripathi. "Waiting for the Web: How Screen Color Affects Time Perception." *Journal of Marketing Research (JMR)* 41, no. 2 (2004): 215-25.

Gronbeck, Bruce. "Rhetoric, Ethics, and Telespectacles in the Post-Everything Age." In
*Postmodern Representations: Truth, Power, and Mimesis in the Human Sciences
and Public Culture*, edited by Richard Harvey Brown, 216-38. Chicago:
University of Illinois Press, 1995.

Guillermin, John. "King Kong." Paramount Pictures, 1976.

———. "King Kong Lives." De Laurentiis Entertainment Group (DEG), 1986.

Gurevitch, Michael, and Anandam Kavoori. "Television Spectacles as Politics."
Communication Monographs 59 (1992): 415-26.

Habermas, Jürgen. "New Social Movements." *Telos* 49 (1981): 33-37.

———. "The Public Sphere: An Encyclopedia Article." In *Staat Und Politik*, edited by
Fischer Lexicon, 220-26. Frankfurt: Frankfurt and Main, 1964.

———. *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category
of Bourgeois Society*, *Studies in Contemporary German Social Thought*.
Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1989.

———. *Strukturwandel Der Öffentlichkeit; Untersuchungen Zu Einer Kategorie Der
Bürgerlichen Gesellscahft*. Neuwied,: H. Luchterhand, 1962.

———. *Theory and Practice*. London: Heinemann, 1974.

Hansen, Anders. *The Mass Media and Environmental Issues*. Leicester ; New York
New York: Leicester University Press ;
Distributed exclusively in the USA and Canada by St. Martin's Press, 1993.

Hansen, Mark B. N. *New Philosophy for New Media*. Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press,
2004.

Haraway, Donna Jeanne. *Primate Visions: Gender, Race, and Nature in the World of Modern Science*. New York: Routledge, 1989.

Hardy-Short, Dayle C., and C. Brant Short. "Fire, Death, and Rebirth: A Metaphoric Analysis of the 1988 Yellowstone Fire Debate." *Western Journal of Communication* 59, no. 2 (1995): 103-25.

Hariman, Robert, and John Lucaites. "Performing Civic Identity: The Iconic Photograph of the Flag Raising on Iwo Jima." *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 88, no. 4 (2002): 363-92.

———. "Public Identity and Collective Memory in U.S. Iconic Photography: The Image of 'Accidental Napalm'." *Critical Studies in Mass Communication* 20, no. 1 (2003): 35-66.

Harré, Rom, Jens Brockmeier, and Peter Mühlhäuser. *Greenspeak : A Study of Environmental Discourse*. Thousand Oaks, Calif.: Sage Publications, 1999.

"Harrelson." *Headline News*, May 8 2001.

Harries, Dan. *The New Media Book*. London: British Film Institute, 2002.

Herndl, Carl George, and Stuart C. Brown. *Green Culture : Environmental Rhetoric in Contemporary America*. Madison, Wis.: University of Wisconsin Press, 1996.

Herring, Susan. "Slouching toward the Ordinary: Current Trends in Computer-Mediated Communication." *New Media & Society* 6, no. 1 (2004): 26-36.

Higgins, Mike. "Q the Interview: Woody Harrelson." *Independent*, July 28 2002, 3.

Hocks, Mary E., and Michelle R. Kendrick. *Eloquent Images: Word and Image in the Age of New Media*. Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2003.

Hollett, Michael. "Woody." *Now Toronto*, August 28 - September 3 2003.

Howell, Francis Clark. *Early Man*, *Life Nature Library*. New York,: Time, 1965.

Howell, Peter. "Go Further." *Toronto Star*, August 31 2003, D01.

Innis, Harold Adams. *The Bias of Communication*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1951.

———. *Empire and Communications*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1950.

Jackson, Peter. "King Kong." Universal Pictures, 2005.

Jacobie, Ken. 2006. Voice Yourself Forum Post January 29 - Oops. In, www.voiceyourself.com/forums. (accessed February, 2006).

Jamieson, Kathleen Hall. *Eloquence in an Electronic Age: The Transformation of Political Speechmaking*. New York: Oxford Univerisy Press, 1988.

jasonjl. 2006. Voice Yourself Forum Post January 28 - Re:Fr Woody. In, www.voiceyourself.com/forums. (accessed February, 2006).

JimBlog. 2005. Blog Post November 19. In,   JimBlog.net. (accessed March, 2006).

Jones, Jeffrey P. *Entertaining Politics: New Political Television and Civic Culture*, *Communication, Media, and Politics*. Lanham, Md.: Rowman & Littlefield, 2005.

Jordan, John. "(Ad)Dressing the Body in Online Shopping Sites." *Critical Studies in Media Communication* 20, no. 3 (2003): 248-68.

Kahn, Richard, and Douglas Kellner. "New Media and Internet Activism: From the 'Battle of Seattle' to Blogging." *New Media & Society* 6, no. 1 (2004): 87-95.

Karlberg, Micheal. "News and Conflicts: How Adversarial News Frame Limit Public Understanding of Environmental Issues." *Alternatives Journal* (1997): 22-28.

Katz, Eric. "Against the Inevitability of Anthropocentrism." In *Beneath the Surface: Critical Essays Ua the Phllosophv of Deep Ecology*, edited by Andrew Lights Eric Katz and David Rothenberg, 17-42. Cambridge: MIT Press, 2000.

Katz, Eric, Andrew Light, and David Rothenberg. "Deep Ecology as Philosophy." In *Beneath the Surface: Critical Essays in the Philosophy of Deep Ecology*, edited by Eric Katz, Andrew Light and David Rothenberg, ix-xxiv. Cambridge: MIT Press, 2000.

Killingsworth, M. Jimmie, and Jacqueline S. Palmer. *Ecospeak : Rhetoric and Environmental Politics in America*. Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1992.

———. "Millennial Ecology: The Apocalyptic Narrative from *Silent Spring* to *Global Warming*." In *Green Culture: Environmental Rhetoric in Contemporary America*, edited by Carl George Herndl and Stuart C. Brown, 21-45. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1996.

Kittler, Friedrich A. *Gramophone, Film, Typewriter*. Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1999.

Korgaonkar, Pradeep K., and Lori D. Wolin. "A Multivariate Analysis of Web Usage." *Journal of Advertising Research* 39, no. 2 (1999): 53.

Kutner, Laurie. "Environmental Activism and the Internet." *Electronic Green Journal*, no. 12 (2000): 1-8.

Lambert, Rowena. "Woody Harrelson Speaks for Simply Organic Living." *Daily Nexus*, May 17 2001.

Lange, Jonathan I. "The Logic of Competing Information Campaigns: Conflict over Old

    Growth and the Spotted Owl." *Communication Monographs* 60, no. 3 (1993):

    239.

———. "Refusal to Compromise: The Case of Earth First!" *Western Journal of Speech*

    Communication (1990): 473-94.

Lawler, James. "Ecocentric Ethics." *Free Inquiry* 13, no. 2 (1993): 16-17.

Leder, Paul. "Ape: The New King Kong." CFP Inc., 1976.

Leonardi, Paul. "Problematizing "New Media": Culturally Based Perceptions of Cell

    Phones, Computers, and the Internet among United States Latinos." *Critical*

    Studies in Media Communication 20, no. 2 (2003): 160-79.

LeonardoDiCaprio.org. About Us. In,   www.leonardodicaprio.org/aboutus/index.htm.

    (accessed March, 2006).

———. Biodiversity. In,

    http://www.leonardodicaprio.org/whatsimportant/biodiversity.htm. (accessed

    March, 2006).

———. Homepage. In,   www.leonardodicaprio.org. (accessed March 1 and March 7,

    2006).

———. Oil Dependency. In,

    www.leonardodicaprio.org/whatsimportant/oildependency.htm. (accessed March,

    2006).

Lewis, Tania. "Embodied Experts: Robert Hughes, Cultural Studies and the Celebrity

    Intellectual." *Continuum: Journal of Media & Cultural Studies* 15, no. 2 (2001):

    233-47.

Lievrouw, Leah A., and Sonia M. Livingstone. *Handbook of New Media: Social Shaping and Consequences of Icts*. London: SAGE, 2002.

Light, Andrew, and Jonathan M. Smith. *Space, Place, and Environmental Ethics*. Lanham: Roman & Littlefield Publishers, 1997.

Liskey, Tom. "Advocacy Group Grills Meat Industry in Net Parody." *Arkansas Democrat-Gazette*, January 4 2004, 55.

Lister, Martin, Jon Dovey, Seth Giddings, Iain Grant, and Kieran Kelly. *New Media: A Critical Introduction*. London: Routledge, 2002.

Long, Thomas L. "Plague of Pariahs: Aids 'Zines and the Rhetoric of Transgression." *Journal of Communication Inquiry* 24, no. 4 (2000): 401.

Lundstrum, Jim. "Meaty Spoof: 'the Meatrix' Makes Its Point with Takeoff of 'the Matrix'." *The Post Crescent*, December 7 2003, D1.

Mann, Ron. "Go Further." Chum Television, 2003.

Marshall, Frank. "Congo." Paramount Pictures, 1995.

Marshall, P. David. *Celebrity and Power: Fame in Contemporary Culture*. Minneapolis, Minn.: University of Minnesota Press, 1997.

———. *New Media Cultures*, *Cultural Studies in Practice*. London: Oxford University Press, 2004.

Matheson, Whitney. 2004. Reader Clicks: Barbie Lobster, Hidden Songs and More. In *Hip Clicks*, USA Today, www.usatoday.com/life/columnist/hipclicks/2004-01-08-hip-friday_x.htm. (accessed January 8, 2004).

McGee, Michael Calvin. "In Search of 'the People': A Rhetorical Alternative." *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 61 (1975): 235-49.

———. "Text, Context, and the Fragmentation of Contemporary Culture." In *Contemporary Rhetorical Theory*, edited by John Louis Lucaites, Celeste Michelle Condit and Sally Caudill, 65-78. New York: Guilford, 1999.

McGee, Michael Calvin, and Carol Corbin. *Rhetoric in Postmodern America : Conversations with Michael Calvin Mcgee*, *Revisioning Rhetoric*. New York: Guilford Press, 1998.

McKerrow, Raymie. "Critical Rhetoric and the Possibility of the Subject." In *The Critical Turn: Rhetoric and Philosophy in Postmodern Discourse*, edited by Ian Angus and Lenore Langsdorf, 51-67. Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1993.

———. "Critical Rhetoric: Theory and Practice." *Communication Monographs* 56 (1989): 91-111.

McLuhan, Marshall. *The Gutenberg Galaxy; the Making of Typographic Man*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1962.

———. *Understanding Media; the Extensions of Man*. 1st ed. New York,: McGraw-Hill, 1964.

McLuhan, Marshall, and Quentin Fiore. *The Medium Is the Massage*. New York,: Bantam Books, 1967.

"'Meatrix' Revolting." *The Seatlle Post-Intelligencer*, November 15 2003, E1.

Medhurst, Martin. "*Hiroshima, Mon Amour*: From Iconography to Rhetoric." *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 68, no. 4 (1982): 345-70.

Medhurst, Martin, and Michael Desousa. "Political Cartoons as Rhetorical Form: A Taxonomy of Graphic Discourse." *Communication Monographs* 48 (1981): 197-236.

meisner, mark. "Knowing Nature through the Media: An Examination of Mainstream Print and Television Representations of the Non-Human World." Paper presented at the Conference on Communication and the Environment, Silver Falls Conference Center, Sublimity, Oregon, July 20 2003.

Meisner, Mark. 2005. What Is Environmental Communication. In *Environmental Communication Network*, http://www.esf.edu/ecn/whatisec.htm. (accessed September 23, 2005).

Meister, Mark, and Phyllis M. Japp. *Enviropop : Studies in Environmental Rhetoric and Popular Culture*. Westport, Conn.: Praeger, 2002.

Merchant, Carolyn. *The Columbia Guide to American Environmental History*, *The Columbia Guides to American History and Cultures*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2002.

———. *Major Problems in American Environmental History : Documents and Essays*, *Major Problems in American History Series*. Lexington, Mass.: D.C. Heath, 1993.

———. *Major Problems in American Environmental History: Documents and Essays*. Lexington, Mass.: D.C. Heath, 1993.

———. *Radical Ecology: The Search for a Livable World*. New York: Routledge, 1992.

MetaFilter. 2004. Blog Post August 20. In, MetaFilter.com. (accessed March, 2006).

Mickelson, Sig. *From Whistle Stop to Sound Bite: Four Decades of Politics and Television*. New York: Praeger, 1989.

Mitchell, W. J. Thomas. *Iconology: Image, Text, Ideology*. Chicago: University of
    Chicago Press, 1986.

———. *Picture Theory: Essays on Verbal and Visual Representation*. Chicago:
    University of Chicago Press, 1994.

Mitra, Ananda. "Diasporic Web Sites: Ingroup and Outgroup Discourse." *Critical Studies
    in Mass Communication* 14 (1997): 158-81.

Moore, Mark P. "Making Sense of Salmon: Synecdoche and Irony in a Natural Resource
    Crisis." In *Western Journal of Communication*, 74: Western States
    Communication Association, 2003.

Movie Gazette Forum. 2003. The Meatrix. In, http://www.movie-
    gazette.com/discussions/topic.asp?TOPIC_ID=24. (accessed January 21, 2005).

Muir, Star A., and Thomas Lee Veenendall. *Earthtalk : Communication Empowerment
    for Environmental Action*, *Praeger Series in Political Communication,*. Westport,
    Conn.: Praeger, 1996.

Murphy, John. "Critical Rhetoric as Political Discourse." *Argumentation and Advocacy*
    32, no. 1 (1995): 1-20.

Myerson, George, and Yvonne Rydin. *The Language of Environment : A New Rhetoric*.
    London: UCL Press, 1996.

Naess, Arne. "The Deep Ecological Movement: Some Philosophical Aspects." In
    Environmental Philosophy: From Animal Rights to Radical Ecology, edited by
    Michael E. Zimmerman, J. Baird Callicot, George Sessions and John Clark, 193-
    211. Upper Sadle River: Prentice Hall, 1998.

Naess, Arne, and David Rothenberg. *Ecology, Community, and Lifestyle: Outline of an Ecosophy*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1989.

Nash, Bruce. 2004. Box Office History for Matrix Movies. In *The Numbers*, The Numbers, http://www.the-numbers.com/movies/series/Matrix.php. (accessed June 1, 2004).

Nash, Roderick. *The Rights of Nature: A History of Environmental Ethics*, *History of American Thought and Culture*. Madison, Wis.: University of Wisconsin Press, 1989.

———. *Wilderness and the American Mind*. 3rd ed. New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1982.

Neuzil, Mark, and William Kovarik. *Mass Media and Environmental Conflict: America's Green Crusades*. Thousand Oaks: Sage, 1996.

Nietzsche, Friedrich Wilhelm. *The Portable Nietzsche*. New York: Penguin Books, 1976.

North, Michael. "The Public as Sculpture: From Heavenly City to Mass Ornament." In *Art and the Public Sphere*, edited by W.J.T. Mitchell, 9-28. Chicago: Univeristy of Chicago Press, 1990.

Oelschlaeger, Max. *The Wilderness Condition: Essays on Environment and Civilization*. San Francisco: Sierra Club Books, 1992.

———, ed. *Postmodern Environmental Ethics*. Albany: State University of New York Press, 1995.

Olsen, Lester. "Benjamin Franklin's Commemorative Medal *Libertas Americana*: A Study in Rhetorical Iconology." *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 9 (1990): 23-45.

Olson, Lester. "Benjamin Franklin's Pictoral Representations of the British Colonies in America: A Study in Rhetorical Iconology." *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 73 (1987): 18-42.

———. "Portraits in Praise of a People: A Rhetorical Analysis of Norman Rockwell's Icons in Franklin D. Roosevelt's "Four Freedoms" Campaign." *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 69 (1983): 15-24.

Ouzounian, Richard. "Acting out Angels and Devils." *Toronto Star*, September 6 2004, E01.

Owens, Lynn, and L. Kendall Palmer. "Making the News: Anarchist Counter-Public Relations on the World Wide Web." *Critical Studies in Media Communication* 20, no. 4 (2003): 335-61.

Patterson, James, and Myria Allen. "Accounting for Your Actions: How Stakeholders Respond to the Strategic Communication of Environmental Activist Organizations." *Journal of Applied Communication Research* 25 (1997): 293-316.

Patterson, Penny. 1998. Koko's First Interspecies Web Chat: Transcript. In, http://www.koko.org/world/talk_aol.html. (accessed February, 2006).

Paxton, Mark. "Gone Fishin': A Framing Analysis of the Fight over a Small Town's City Seal." In *Journal of Media & Religion*, 43-55: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 2004.

Pearl Jam. *Yield*: SONY, 1998.

Pearson, Byron E. *Still the Wild River Runs: Congress, the Sierra Club, and the Fight to Save Grand Canyon*. Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2002.

People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals, PETA. 2005. Features. In, www.peta.org/feat/meatrix. (accessed January 15, 2005).

Peters, John Durham. *Speaking into the Air: A History of the Idea of Communication*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999.

Peterson, Markus J., M. Nils Peterson, and Tarla Rai Peterson. "Embracing the Paradoxical in Environmental Decision-Making." In *Finding Our Way(S) in Environmental Communication: Proceedings of the Seventh Biennial Conference on Communication and the Environment*, edited by Gregg B. Walker and William J. Kinsella, 52-61. Corvallis: Department of Speech Communication, Oregon State University, 2005.

Peterson, Tarla Rai. "Environmental Communication: Tales of Life on Earth." *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 84, no. 3 (1998): 371.

———. *Green Talk in the White House : The Rhetorical Presidency Encounters Ecology*. 1st ed, *Presidential Rhetoric Series ; No. 11*. College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 2004.

———. *Green Talk in the White House: The Rhetorical Presidency Encounters Ecology*, *Presidential Rhetoric Series ; No. 11*. College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 2004.

———. "The Meek Shall Inherit the Mountains: A Dramatistic Criticism of Grand Teton National Park's Interpretive Program." In *Central States Speech Journal*, 121-33, 1988.

———. "The Rhetorical Construction of Institutional Authority in a Senate Subcommittee Hearing on Wilderness Legislation." In *Western Journal of Speech*

Communication: WJSC, 259-76: Western States Communication Association, 1988.

———. *Sharing the Earth : The Rhetoric of Sustainable Development*, *Studies in Rhetoric/Communication*. Columbia, S.C.: University of South Carolina Press, 1997.

———. *Sharing the Earth: The Rhetoric of Sustainable Development*, *Studies in Rhetoric/Communication*. Columbia, S.C.: University of South Carolina Press, 1997.

———. "The Will to Conservation: A Burkeian Analysis of Dust Bowl Rhetoric and American Farming Motives." In *Southern Speech Communication Journal*, 1-21, 1986.

Peterson, Tarla Ray, and Cristi Choat Horton. "Rooted in the Soil: How Understanding the Perspectives of Landowners Can Enhance the Management of Environmental Disputes." *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 81, no. 2 (1995): 139-66.

Pezzullo, Phaedra. "Resisting 'National Breast Cancer Awareness Month': The Rhetoric of Counterpublics and Their Cultural Performances." *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 89, no. 4 (2003): 345-65.

Phillips, Kendall. "The Spaces of Public Dissension: Reconsidering the Public Sphere." *Communication Monographs* 63 (1996).

Pickerill, Jenny. "Spreading the Green Word? Using the Internet for Environmental Campaigning." *ECOS* 21, no. 1 (2000): www.greenchannel.com/banc/ecosarta/arts21_1/ecosart2.htm.

Plumwood, Val. "Androcentrism and Anthropocentrism: Parallels and Politics." In *Ecofeminism: Women, Culture, Nature*, edited by Karen Warren. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1997.

———. *Environmental Culture : The Ecological Crisis of Reason*, *Environmental Philosophies Series*. New York: Routledge, 2001.

Price, Jennifer. *Flight Maps: Adventures with Nature in Modern America*. New York: Basic Books, 1999.

Quinn, Daniel. *Ishmael: A Novel*. New York: Bantam/Turner Book, 1992.

Razee, Alan. "Problems and Prospects for Articulating a Vision in Dam Removal Rhetoric." Paper presented at the Conference on Communication and Environment (COCE), Silver Falls, Oregon, July 2003.

Retzinger, Jean. "Cultivating the Agrarian Myth in Hollywood Films." In *Enviropop: Studies in Environmental Rhetoric and Popular Culture*, edited by Mark Meister and Phyllis Japp, 45-62. Westport, Conn.: Preager, 2002.

Roddick, Anita. 2005. February 2 Blog Post. In,   AnitaRoddick.com. (accessed March 2006.

Rodman, John. "Four Forms of Ecological Consciousness Reconsidered." In *Environmental Ethics, 2nd Ed.*, edited by Richard Botzler and Susan Armstrong, 422-25. Boston: McGrawHill, 1998.

Rowe, Jonathan. "From Political Ad Man to Nightclub Comic." *Christian Science Monitor*, August 21 1989, 10.

Russomano, Joseph, and Stephen Everett. "Candidate Sound Bites: Too Much Concern over Length?" *Journal of Broadcasting and Electronic Media* 39, no. 3 (1995).

Sale, Kirkpatrick, and Eric Foner. *The Green Revolution the American Environmental Movement 1962-1992*. New York: Hill and Wang, 1993.

Sale, Kirkpatrick. *Human Scale*. New York: Coward McCann & Geoghegan, 1980.

Schlechtweg, Harold. "Media Frames and Environmental Discourse: The Case of 'Focus: Logjam'." In *The Symbolic Earth*, edited by James G. Cantrill and Christine L. Oravec. Kentucky: University of Kentucky, 1996.

Schneider, Steven. "The Web as an Object of Study." *New Media & Society* 6, no. 1 (2004): 114-22.

Schoedsack, Ernest. "The Son of Kong." RKO Radio Pictures, 1933.

Schwartz, Tony. *The Responsive Chord*. Garden City, N.Y.: Anchor Press, 1973.

Schwarze, Steve. "Economic Arguments in Forest Conservation Rhetoric: Fire Recovery, "Wise Use" And Environmental Justice in the West." 2004.

Sessions, George. "Ecocentrism and the Anthropocentric Detour." In *Ecology*, edited by Carolyn Merchant, 140-51. NJ: Atlantic Highlands, 1994.

Shanahan, James, and Katherine McComas. *Nature Stories : Depictions of the Environment and Their Effects*, *The Hampton Press Communication Series*. Cresskill, NJ: Hampton Press, 1998.

Shefrin, Elana. "Lord of the Rings, Star Wars, and Participatory Fandom: Mapping New Congruencies between the Internet and Media Entertainment Culture." *Critical Studies in Media Communication* 21, no. 3 (2004): 261-81.

Short, Brant. "Earth First! And the Rhetoric of Moral Confrontation." *Communications Studies* (1991): 172-88.

Silver, David. "Internet/Cyberculture/Digital Culture/New Media/Fill-in-the-Blank Studies." *New Media & Society* 6, no. 1 (2004): 55-64.

Simonson, Peter. "Social Noise and Segmented Rhythms: News, Entertainment, and Celebrity in the Crusade for Animal Rights." *Communication Review* 4, no. 3 (2001): 399.

Skow, Lisa, and George Dionisopoulos. "A Struggle to Contextualize: Photographic Images: American Print Media and The "Burning Monk"." *Communication Quarterly* 45, no. 4 (1997): 393-409.

Slayden, David, and Rita Kirk Whillock. *Soundbite Culture: The Death of Discourse in a Wired World*. Thousand Oaks, Calif.: Sage Publications, 1999.

Smith, Joe. *The Daily Globe : Environmental Change, the Public and the Media*. London: Earthscan, 2000.

Spretnak, Charlene. "Critical and Constructive Contributions of Ecofeminism." In *Worldviews on Ecology*, edited by Peter Tucker and Evelyn Grim, 181-89. Philadelphia: Bucknell Press, 1993.

———. *The Resurgence of the Real : Body, Nature, and Place in a Hypermodern World*. Reading: Addison-Wesley, 1997.

St. Pierre, Elizabeth Adams. "Poststructural Feminism in Education: An Overview." *Qualitative Studies in Education* 13, no. 5 (2000): 477-515.

Staff. "Meatrix Film Highlights Crisis Facing Farming." *Western Mail*, December 1 2003, 20.

Stephens, Mitchell. *The Rise of the Image, the Fall of the Word*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1998.

Stevenson, Reed. "Consumers Flock to Web for Mad Cow Information." *Reuters*, January 11 2004.

Superior Oil and Gas. 2006. Superior Oil and Gas Co. Announces an Agreement to Acquire Williams Equipment Company of Oklahoma City, Ok. In, Primezone Newswire, http://www.primezone.com/newsroom/news.html?ref=rss&d=95723. (accessed March 16, 2006).

Sutter, Paul. "What Can U.S. Environmental Historians Learn from Non-U.S. Environmental Histiography?" *Environmental History* 8 (2003): 109-29.

The Macmedic. 2003. The Meatrix. In, http://www.themacmedic.us/archives/000253.html. (accessed January 15, 2005).

Thomashow, Mitchell. *Bringing the Biosphere Home: Learning to Percieve Global Environmental Change*. Cambridge: MIT, 2002.

———. *Ecological Identity: Becoming a Reflective Environmentalist*. Cambridge: MIT Press, 1995.

Tree Media Group. Featured Site: Woody Harrelson's Thoughts from Within. In, http://www.treemedia.com/projects_mmedia.php?site=voiceyourselfmm. (accessed February, 2006).

———. History. In, http://www.treemedia.com/history.htm. (accessed February 5, 2006).

Turteltaub, Jon. "Instinct." Spyglass Entertainment, 1999.

USAToday. 2003. Web Guide: Hot Sites: What Is the Meatrix? In, www.usatoday.com/tech/webguide/front.htm. (accessed November 5, 2003).

Van Aeist, Peter, and Stefaan Walgrave. "New Media, New Movements? The Role of the

    Internet in Shaping the 'Anti-Globalization' Movement." *Information,*

    Communication & Society 5, no. 4 (2002): 465-93.

VoiceYourself.org. Mission. In,

    http://voiceyourself.com/14_contactus/14_mission.php. (accessed February,

    2006).

———. Thoughts from within (Flash). In,

    http://voiceyourself.com/03_thoughtsfromwithin/03_movie.php. (accessed

    February, 2006).

———. Thoughts from within (Woody Speaks out). In,

    http://voiceyourself.com/03_thoughtsfromwithin/03_poem.php. (accessed

    February, 2006).

———. Thoughts from within Main. In,

    voiceyourself.com/03_thoughtsfromwithin/03_main.php. (accessed February,

    2006).

———. "Voice Yourself Homepage." Internet Archive, 2001.

———. Who We Are. In,   http://voiceyourself.com/14_contactus/14_whoweare.php.

    (accessed February 10, 2006).

Wachowski, Andy, and Larry Wachowski. "The Matrix." Warner Studios, 1999.

Wackernagel, Mathis, and William E. Rees. *Our Ecological Footprint: Reducing Human*

    Impact on the Earth. Gabriola Island, BC: New Society Publishers, 1996.

Waddell, Craig. *Landmark Essays on Rhetoric and the Environment*, *Landmark Essays ;*

    V. 12. Mahwah, N.J.: Hermagoras Press, 1998.

Wark, McKenzie. *Celebrities, Culture and Cyberspace: The Light on the Hill in a Postmodern World*. Sydney: Pluto Press Australia, 1999.

Warner, Michael. *Publics and Counterpublics*. New York: Zone Books, 2002.

———. "Publics and Counterpublics (Abbreviated Version)." *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 88, no. 4 (2002): 413-25.

Warnick, Barbara. "Masculinizing the Feminine: Inventing Women on Line Ca. 1997." *Critical Studies in Mass Communication* 16 (1999): 1-19.

Watkinson, John. *Convergence in Broadcast and Communications Media: The Fundamentals of Audio, Video, Data Processing, and Communications Technologies*. Boston, MA: Focal Press, 2001.

Wellman, Barry. "The Three Ages of Internet Studies: Ten, Five and Zero Years Ago." *New Media & Society* 6, no. 1 (2004): 123-29.

Weston, Anthony. "Berfore Environmental Ethics." *Environmental Ethics* 14, no. 4 (1992).

———. "Non-Anthropocentrism in a Thoughoughly Anthropocentrised World." *The Trumpeter* 8, no. 3 (1991): http //www.icaa.org/iuicode?6.8.3.1.

Wolfe, Dylan. "The Common Erasure of Space and Nature: Communication as a Bridge between the Discourses of Designed Space and Ecocentred Identity." *The Trumpeter* 19, no. 3 (2003): 46-66.

———. "Critical Ecorhetoric: Theoretical Explorations of Critical Rhetoric and Ecocentric Thought." Paper presented at the Conference on Communication and the Environment, Silver Falls 2003.

———. "Media Frames Earth First!: Interpretation, Construction, and Alignment in Frame Analysis." Paper presented at the NCA Conference, New Orleans 2002.

Wong, May. "Famed Gorilla in Sex Lawsuit: Did Koko Want a Peep Show?" *USA Today*, February 19 2005.

"Woody Harrelson, Furthering the Cause." *Washington Post*, November 5 2004, T41.

Worster, Donald. *The Ends of the Earth: Perspectives on Modern Environmental History*, *Studies in Environment and History*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988.

———. *Nature's Economy: A History of Ecological Ideas*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994.

———. "Transformations of the Earth: Toward an Agroecological Perspective in History." *Journal of American History* 76, no. 4 (1990): 1087-147.

———. *The Wealth of Nature: Environmental History and the Ecological Imagination*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1993.

Young-Hoon, Park, and Peter S. Fader. "Modeling Browsing Behavior at Multiple Websites." *Marketing Science* 23, no. 3 (2004): 280-303.

APPENDIX A

Full Text of Woody Harrelson's "Thoughts From Within"

THOUGHTS FROM WITHIN

I sometimes feel like an alien creature
for which there is no earthly explanation
Sure I have human form
walking erect and opposing digits,
but my mind is upside down.
I feel like a run-on sentence
in a punctuation crazy world.
and I see the world around me
like a mad collective dream.

An endless stream of people
move like ants from the freeway
cell phones, pc's, and digital displays
"In Money We Trust,"
we'll find happiness
the prevailing attitude;
like a genetically modified irradiated Big Mac
is somehow symbolic of food.

Morality is legislated
prisons over-populated
religion is incorporated
the profit-motive has permeated all activity
we pay our government to let us park on the street
And war is the biggest money-maker of all
we all know missile envy only comes from being small.

Politicians and prostitutes
are comfortable together
I wonder if they talk about the strange change in the weather.
This government was founded by, of, and for the people
but everybody feels it
like a giant open sore
they don't represent us anymore

And blaming the President for the country's woes
is like yelling at a puppet
for the way it sings
Who's the man behind the curtain pulling the strings?

A billion people sitting watching their TV
in the room that they call living
but as for me
I see living as loving
and since there is no loving room
I sit on the grass under a tree
dreaming of the way things used to be
Pre-Industrial Revolution
which of course is before the rivers and oceans, and skies were polluted

before Parkinson's, and mad cows
and all the convoluted cacophony of bad ideas
like skyscrapers, and tree paper, and earth rapers
like Monsanto and Dupont had their way
as they continue to today.

This was Pre-us
back when the buffalo roamed
and the Indian's home
was the forest, and God was nature
and heaven was here and now
Can you imagine clean water, food, and air
living in community with animals and people who care?

Do you dare to feel responsible for every dollar you lay down
are you going to make the rich man richer
or are you going to stand your ground
You say you want a revolution
a communal evolution
to be a part of the solution
maybe I'll be seeing you around.
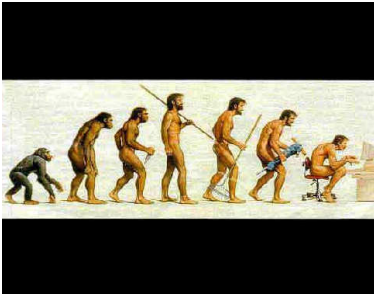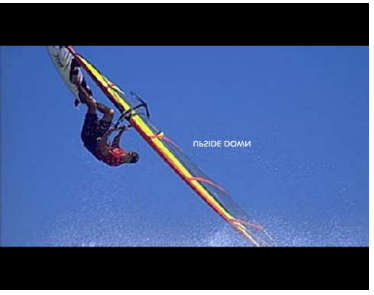
      -Woody Harrelson[322]

---

[322] Available in all of the following: Condron, ed., *How to Go Further: A Guide to Simple Organic Living*, 234-35, Ron Mann, "Go Further," (Chum Television, 2003), VoiceYourself.org, *Thoughts from within (Woody Speaks out)* ([cited February 2006]); available from http://voiceyourself.com/03_thoughtsfromwithin/03_poem.php.

APPENDIX B:

"Thoughts From Within" Annotated Table

Table 1. Corresponding Lines, Sections, Words, and Images for "Thoughts From Within."

Lines	Section	Words	Images
1-2	1	I sometimes feel like an alien creature for which there is no earthly explanation	

3-4	2	Sure I have human form walking erect and opposing digits,	
5	3	but my mind is upside down.	
9	4	I feel like a run-on sentence in a punctuation crazy world. and I see the world around me like a mad collective dream.	

10-12	5	An endless stream of people move like ants from the freeway cell phones, pc's, and digital displays	
13-15	6	"In Money We Trust," we'll find happiness	
16	7	the prevailing attitude;	

17-18	8	like a genetically modified irradiated Big Mac is somehow symbolic of food.	
19-21	9	Morality is legislated prisons over-populated religion is incorporated	
22	10	the profit-motive has permeated all activity	

23	11	we pay our government to let us park on the street	
24	12	And war is the biggest money-maker of all	
25	13	we all know missile envy only comes from being small.	

26-28	14	Politicians and prostitutes are comfortable together I wonder if they talk about the strange change in the weather.	
29-30	15	This government was founded by, of, and for the people but everybody feels it	
31-32	16	like a giant open sore they don't represent us anymore	

33-35	17	And blaming the President for the country's woes is like yelling at a puppet for the way it sings	
36	18	Who's the man behind the curtain pulling the strings?	
37-39	19	A billion people sitting watching their TV in the room that they call living but as for me	

40	20	I see living as loving	
41-42	21	and since there is no loving room I sit on the grass under a tree	
43-44	22	dreaming of the way things used to be Pre-Industrial Revolution	

45-46	23	which of course is before the rivers and oceans, and skies were polluted before Parkinson's, and mad cows	
47-48	24	and all the convoluted cacophony of bad ideas like skyscrapers, and tree paper, and earth rapers	
49-50	25	like Monsanto and Dupont had their way as they continue to today.	

51-54	26	This was Pre-us back when the buffalo roamed and the Indian's home was the forest, and God was nature	
55-56	27	and heaven was here and now Can you imagine clean water, food, and air	
57	28	living in community with animals and people who care?	

58-59	29	Do you dare to feel responsible for every dollar you lay down are you going to make the rich man richer	
60	30	or are you going to stand your ground	
61-63	31	You say you want a revolution a communal evolution to be a part of the solution	

64	32	maybe I'll be seeing you around.	
	33	(No Spoken Words)[323]	