

MOVING THE COMMON SENSORIUM: A RHETORIC OF SOCIAL MOVEMENTS AND PATHÊ

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TIMOTHY TRIER JENSEN, M.A.

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DISSERTATION COMMITTEE:

PROFESSOR WENDY S. HESFORD, ADVISOR

PROFESSOR EVONNE K. HALASEK

PROFESSOR AMY SHUMAN

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ABSTRACT

This project seeks a more precise account of and language for what Daniel Gross calls the “[emotional] contours of a dynamic social field” and what Martin Heidegger, in referring to Aristotle’s account of *pathē*, labels “the everydayness of Being with one another.” Although such phrases point toward theoretically fecund ground, they also indicate the terminological difficulty encountered at the intersection of rhetoric, *pathē*, and structures of the social. The *common sensorium*, theorized as an affective and emotional analogue to common sense, is advanced as a concept to help elucidate the dynamics occurring at this intersection. Whereas common sense refers to the tacit logics of everyday living, the common sensorium refers to a cultural ambient of emotional norms.

In order to examine the contours of the common sensorium, I turn to social movements, which I argue are primarily attempts to shift collective affective and emotional orientations—in other words, attempts to *move the common sensorium*. The analysis of each chapter is organized around an apposite *ideograph*—a key term or slogan particularly potent in binding, defining, and mobilizing collectivities. Specifically, I perform rhetorical analyses of <eco-friendly>, <local>, and <occupy>. Chapter One, “What Moves in a Social Movement,” establishes the project’s methodology and argues that the ideograph can be rendered more conceptually

robust and valuable to critics when integrated with insights from affect theory and critical emotion studies. Chapter Two, “A Rhetoric of Collective Guilt: Atonement and the Environmental Movement’s Development,” demonstrates how <eco-friendly> rhetorics present a ready-made guilt-redemption cycle. By positioning individual consumer acts as the solution for ecological ills, the desire to join collectivities of resistance and striving against political powers is significantly attenuated. Chapter Three, “Local Food’s Affective Advocacy,” reveals how Local Food movement rhetorics predominantly seek to sensitize others to the “feltness” of food and its contexts, thereby overcoming the numbness instilled through commodification. I introduce the notion of *affective advocacy* to identify this rhetorical strategy, one that places the body and its material dynamics as a primary locus for enacting social change. Chapter Four, “Occupy Anger,” explores the multiple valences of <occupy> within the context of Occupy Wall Street rhetorics and argues that because Occupy Wall Street rhetorics never coalesced around a single demand—as their model movement of Egypt’s Tahrir Square did—the movement’s collective anger never achieved resolution.

Moving the Common Sensorium: A Rhetoric of Social Movements and Pathē contributes to the rhetorical theorization of how historical events, cultural institutions, and social practices are shaped through affect and emotion, and in turn, how they shape the very conditions of possibility for pathē.

DEDICATION

To Genevieve Critel,
colleague for life

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VITA

June 11, 1980.....	Born—Toledo, Ohio
2003.....	B.A. English, Miami University, Oxford, Ohio
2008.....	M.A. English (Rhetoric, Composition, & Literacy), The Ohio State University, Columbus, Ohio
2006 – 2012.....	Graduate Administrative and Teaching Associate, English, The Ohio State University
2012 – present.....	Graduate Instructional Consultant, University Center for the Advancement of Teaching, The Ohio State University

PUBLICATIONS

“On the Emotional Terrain of Neoliberalism,” *The Journal of Aesthetics & Protest*, 8.1 (2011): 231-38.

“Staging the Beijing Olympics: Intersecting Human Rights & Economic Development Narratives,” with Wendy S. Hesford, in *The Megarhetorics of Global Development*. ed. Rebecca Dingo and Blake Scott (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2011), 121-146.

“Language and Limitations: Toward a New Praxis of Public Intellectualism,” with Kathryn B. Comer, in *Global Academe: The Location of Public Intellectual Discourse*, ed. Karyn Hollis and Silvia Nagy-Zekmi (New York City: Palgrave MacMillan Press, 2011), 135-150.

FIELDS OF STUDY

Major Field: English

Specialization: Rhetoric, Composition, and Literacy Studies

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
Abstract.....	ii
Dedication.....	iv
Acknowledgements.....	v
Vita.....	vii
List of Figures.....	xi
Preface.....	xii
Chapters	
Introduction: Case for the Common Sensorium.....	1
Introduction.....	1
Glossary Interlude.....	7
<i>Stimmung</i> as Affective Atmosphere.....	12
Common Sensorium as Analogue.....	18
Outline of Chapters.....	26
1. What Moves in a Social Movement.....	
Introduction.....	29
Irrational Foundations.....	33
Rereading Foundations in <i>Readings on the Rhetoric of Social Protest</i>	38
Movements of Ideographic Orientation.....	47
Movements of Emotions.....	56
Movements of Terminology.....	61
2. A Rhetoric of Collective Guilt:	
Atonement and the Environmental Movement's Development.....	68
Introduction.....	68
“To Contain the Emergence”.....	73
Toward Guilt and Away From Indignation.....	80
Collective Guilt and Recalibration of the Guilt-Redemption Cycle.....	86
Agency in Collective Guilt.....	94
Guilt in the Common Sensorium.....	97

3. Local Food's Affective Advocacy	102
Introduction.....	102
Commodification and Reclamation of the Real.....	109
Situating Affective Advocacy.....	115
The Affective Intelligence of Taste.....	121
Expanding and Enlivening Taste.....	125
Pedagogies of Taste.....	130
Relational Proximity.....	137
A Rare Moral Arena: Looking Back in Looking Forward.....	142
4. Occupy Anger.....	150
Introduction.....	150
Occupy Definition.....	155
Premediating Occupy.....	161
Occupy Metonymy.....	167
Call for the Common Sensorium.....	171
Occupy Anger.....	174
Windows and Channels.....	183
Direct Actions of Compassion.....	190
Postscript: Looking Back; Looking Forward.....	194
Summary.....	194
Suggestions for Future Research.....	198
References.....	200
Appendix: Data Charts for Chapter Two.....	207

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1: <i>Adbusters's</i> poster calling for Occupy Wall Street.....	163
Figure 2: Google N-Gram comparing publication references of “environmentally friendly” and “environmental movement.”.....	207
Figure 3: Google Insight chart comparing Internet searches for “environmental movement,” “environmentally friendly” and “eco-friendly.”.....	208

PREFACE

It would be a mistake to think this culture clearcuts only forests. It clearcuts our psyche as well. It would be a mistake to think it dams only rivers. We ourselves are dammed (and damned) by it as well. It would be a mistake to think it creates dead zones only in the ocean. It creates dead zones in our hearts and minds. It would be a mistake to think it fragments only our habitat. We, too, are fragmented, split off, shredded, rent, torn.

—Derrick Jensen, *Endgame, Vol. II*

OF AFFECTIVE AND RATIONAL ORIGINS

Derrick Jensen, a leading voice in the Environmental movement, is known for closing his letters and emails with a signature line: "with love and rage."¹ The phrase encapsulates what drives so many of those I have met who consider themselves connected to the Environmental movement in some capacity, and work toward, even if in small, seemingly insignificant ways, a healthier natural environment and a sustainable relationship with that which gives them life. Love is at the core of their environmental activism: love for the sounds of wind whispering through tree leaves;

¹ Derrick Jensen has published over fifteen books on resistance to environmental atrocities and writes regularly for several journals at the forefront of the Environmental movement, including *Orion*, *Audubon*, and *The Sun Magazine*. His being named one of *Utne Reader's* "50 Visionaries Who Are Changing Your World" in 2008 is further evidence of his influence within the Environmental movement.

love for the feel of a local stream on their skin or tongue; love for the way different vistas conjure awe as one takes in a mountain sunset or prairie sunrise; love for the land that bears food; and love for others with whom we share this planet, including the animals, insects and other non-humans.

Complementing this love, increasingly so, are feelings of rage, feelings of intense anger at the exploitation, degradation, and toxification of our natural environment. I use the term “complement” here precisely because rage is born out of love. When we perceive our objects of love to have been disrespected in a severe manner, we rage. Martha Nussbaum notes the close connection between love and rage in her study of Aristotle, writing, “[n]ow we know the deepest reason why the Aristotelian cannot say, ‘I shall have love in my life, but I shall get rid of murderous rage.’ It is because it is love itself that rages [. . .].”² For those who love forests, clean rivers, food-bearing soil, and a diverse wildlife, there is plenty to rage about. Just as I began initial research for this project, for example, yet another subspecies of tiger was declared extinct in the wild. A handful of the South China tiger remain in captivity, but as a result of the captivity they suffer from a depression so severe they will not breed. Scientists must dose them with Viagra to induce mating. If this subspecies goes completely extinct, it will join the Caspian tiger, Bali tiger, and Javan tiger, all of which have all been vanquished in the past hundred years. The state of California has openly acknowledged that without immediate action (mostly on the dams that block rivers), wild salmon will go extinct in the next few decades. The

² Martha Nussbaum, *The Therapy of Desire: Theory and Practice in Hellenistic Ethics* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994), 458.

United Nations reports that just under a quarter of the world's mammals face extinction within 30 years, with the biggest pressures a result of habitat destruction from industrial logging, road building, and the leveling of forests for cattle grazing. 90% of the ocean's large fish have been farmed out of existence. The amount of plastic trash in the oceans has increased one-hundred-fold over the past during the last 40 years, creating what scientists call the "Great Pacific Garbage Patch" where the ocean's currents converge. The patch is slightly larger than the state of Texas. Indeed, there is plenty to feel rage about if one loves the oceans, the forest, rivers, or the wild creatures that inhabit them.

Love and rage, as Jensen's closing signature suggests, are critical components of the Environmental movement, just as they were in the Civil Rights movement, the Women's Liberation movement, and numerous other social movements. Love, rage, and a whole complex of other affective and emotional forces are acute factors in the birth, development and impact of social movement rhetorics. It follows, then, that if one is to understand how such movements function, how various movement rhetorics attempt to persuade and toward what ends, and why those rhetorics succeed or fail, then such passions must be taken into analytical account. This project is a continuation of this logic, and a rational response to what I see as a necessary step for moving the study of social movement rhetorics forward.

This project is also an emotional response, as it was an overwhelming frustration that led me here. More accurately, of course, it was much more than only frustration, but rather a chaotic amalgam of forces, registered upon my body and my

daily thoughts. As many of us do, I suspect, I was despairing at how, collectively, humans are relating to that which gives them life—and I mean that quite literally, in the sense of water, air, and sustenance. To me it was quite clear that the dominant economic model whose fundamental logic demands perpetual growth on a finite planet has some logical flaws, to put it lightly. I felt deeply and thought deeply over what I perceive as an undeniable truth: collectively, humans have put the health of an economic model above the environmental health of the planet. The logic of an abstract model—a theory in the strictest sense: a way of seeing—has inculcated so many that it is cloaking the environmental devastation happening all around.³

This knot of frustration over our collective shortsightedness, guilt over not being smart enough to develop more effective responses to such apparent ecocide, collective guilt over being part of a group participating in the exploitation of non-humans and the natural world we share, the love I have for so many in that group, the wonder the natural world inspires in me so effortlessly, the admiration I have for other species, the anger I have at those who cowardly seek illusory wealth at the expense of so much else, the camaraderie I feel with those who seek justice against such exploitations, the feelings of fear that we are too late to stem the tide of loss, the hope I have that it is not too late, and the anxiety produced when all these forces and attachments collide at once—these emotional and affective relations have led me to this project.

³ The word theory is derived from the Greek word *theoria*, which means “contemplation, speculation, [or] a looking at.” The Greek term is a combination of *thea*, “a view,” with *horan*, meaning “to see.” When I invoke “theory,” then, it is roughly synonymous with “way of seeing the world.”

Just as our economic model propels an exploitative extraction and reshaping of our natural environment, our collective emotional and affective environment is also being shaped—violently, systematically—to serve the interests of capital. When these territories of desire and imagination are stolen, ravaged, and toxified it becomes that much easier for the theft and destruction of natural landscapes to go uncontested, unnoticed. This project is an attempt to understand that process more clearly, so that intervention can occur in more effective ways.

INTRODUCTION

CASE FOR THE COMMON SENSORIUM

Madness is rare in the individual – but with groups, parties, peoples, and ages it is the rule.

—Friedrich Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil*

What moves us, what makes us feel, is also that which holds us in place, or gives us a dwelling place. Hence movement does not cut the body off from the 'where' of its inhabitation, but connects bodies to other bodies: attachment of others.

—Sara Ahmed, *The Cultural Politics of Emotion*

INTRODUCTION

“It is not an accident,” insists Martin Heidegger in *Being and Time*, “that the earliest systematic Interpretation of affect that has come down to us is not treated in the framework of ‘psychology.’”⁴ Aristotle’s most thorough investigation of affect and emotion, Heidegger reminds us, is situated in the *Rhetoric*. He suggests,

⁴ Martin Heidegger, *Sein und Zeit (Being and Time)*, trans. Neomarius Verlag (New York: Harper & Row Publishers, Inc., 1962), 178.

thereby, that rhetoric is the privileged hermeneutic for analyzing *pathē*—passion collectively and culturally considered—rather than psychology or philosophy. Through his reading of Aristotle, Heidegger stresses that *pathē* are an essential element of how we relate to one another and move through the world; as such, they form the very foundation for rhetorical possibilities: “[*pathē*] are the ground out of which speaking arises, and which what has been spoken or expressed grows back into.”⁵ “Contrary to the traditional orientation,” Heidegger contends, “according to which rhetoric is conceived as the kind of thing we ‘learn in school’, this work of Aristotle must be taken as the first systematic hermeneutic of the everydayness of Being with one another.”⁶ Despite the social, existential, and rhetorical importance of *pathē*, “[i]nterpretation of the affective life in general has been able to make scarcely one forward step worthy of mention since Aristotle.”⁷

The past several years of scholarship, however, has seen a turn toward interpreting the affective life in general. Scholarship in the humanities, social sciences, and medical sciences over the past two decades has demonstrated increasing interest in the body’s capacities to affect and to be affected, the forces felt in our relations with others, with objects and with technologies, and the role of emotion in all areas of our lives, from unconscious habit to conscious thought.⁸

⁵ Martin Heidegger, *Grundbegriffe der aristotelischen Philosophie (Basic Concepts of Aristotelian Philosophy)*, trans. Robert D. Metcalf and Mark B. Tanzer (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2009), 176.

⁶ Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 178.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 178.

⁸ It is not possible to mark a precise moment at which the “affective turn” began; that said, Eve Sedgwick’s work on Silvan Tomkins’s theory of differential affects, along with Gilles

Collectively, this maturing body of inquiry has come to be known as “affect theory” and/or “critical emotion studies.” *Moving the Common Sensorium: A Rhetoric of Social Movements and Pathē* contributes to this growing field with a specifically rhetorical approach, and in doing so, echoes Heidegger’s admonition that it is no accident the critical study of affect and emotion has its roots deeply intertwined with the study of rhetoric.

In this sense, then, my project aligns with what Daniel Gross calls “a new rhetoric of the passions,”⁹ which I characterize as having a two-fold aim: 1) demonstrate the explanatory power of existing rhetorical principles and bringing corresponding methodologies to bear on the common questions of affect and emotion; 2) catalyze fresh theoretical exploration of pathos within rhetoric studies, and in particular, pathos collectively considered—*pathē*—and its social dimensions. In other words, a new rhetoric of passions seeks to illustrate rhetoric’s viability for other disciplines studying affect and emotion, as well as generate a resurgence of interest around *pathē* within the discipline.

Despite the ongoing, heavy citation of Aristotle’s *Rhetoric* in publications on affect and emotion across a wide range of disciplines, Gross rightly notes that, “[r]arely, however, do scholars in either the human sciences or the humanities appeal adequately to the rhetorical tradition for insight into emotions, despite the

Deleuze’s late work on Baruch Spinoza’s *affectus* serve as key catalysts for this “turn” in the humanities.

⁹ Daniel M. Gross, *The Secret History of Emotion: From Aristotle’s Rhetoric to Modern Brain Science* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2006), 8. Gross claims that this new rhetoric of passions is “analogous to the new rhetoric of tropes introduced by Paul de Man and other deconstructionists in the 1970s.”

fact that rhetoric was the first and remains the richest, resource for such inquiry.”¹⁰ I would add, however, that by virtue of being “the first” area to systematically study the passions, rhetoric’s relationship to *pathē* has taken many twists and turns over the course of twenty-five hundred years and consequently, such historical richness can make it difficult to “appeal adequately to,” as Gross puts it. I am less inclined, therefore, to hold scholars outside of rhetoric responsible for inadequate probing of our discipline’s resources for explaining affect and emotion. Instead, I believe it befalls the contemporary rhetorician interested in these everyday flows of feeling—from bodily intensities of relation (affect) to their narrativized accounts (emotion)—to consider the existing disciplinary resources available, and transpose any insights into sophisticated contemporary theories for explaining how individuals and collectives are moved through *pathē* to belief and behavior.

One of the prime areas where rhetoric’s history can combine with recent critical theory to offer constructive critique is on the social, collective dimensions of affect and emotion. As Heidegger declares, Aristotle’s account of the passions “must be taken as the first systematic hermeneutic of the everydayness of Being with one another.”¹¹ Here, the study of affect and emotion is unequivocally framed as a study of social relations. Foregrounding *pathē* as within culture, rather than within an individual, runs counter to theories of emotion that have prevailed in the wake of Descartes, which have tended to psychologize emotion at the level of the singular body. Gross describes the shift as one where emotions “once treated by everybody

¹⁰ Ibid., 9.

¹¹ Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 178.

as externalized forms of currency and worldly investments [got] sucked, as it were, into the brain.”¹² Consequently, assumptions of interiority have accompanied emotion into the 21st century, where emotions are generated from within oneself as a result of their particular psychological disposition, are subjectively possessed and remain “within” unless or until expressed outwardly. Such a view of emotions cannot adequately address the questions at the core of this project: What are the ways in which we are culturally entrained to experience certain emotions toward certain objects rather than others? How can we identify and analyze the social pedagogies that implicitly instruct one how to express emotions in rhetorically sanctioned ways? How does a dominant cultural discourse help structure what one is even allowed to feel towards?

Theories of emotion and affect that begin from the site of the individual body and remain localized there limit us from seeing the ways in which historical events, cultural institutions, and social practices are shaped through emotion, but also, in turn, *shape the very conditions for emotional possibilities*. And if we assume that such events, institutions and practices are not inevitable, but rather constructed and constituted through the use of rhetoric, then rhetorical analysis must play a critical role in developing theories that explain how pathē function at a collective, cultural level. As Gross writes, “Emotions are the contours of a dynamic social field manifest in what’s imagined and forgotten, what’s praised and blamed, what’s sanctioned and

¹² Ibid., 8

silenced.”¹³ This project seeks to give greater clarity to the rhetorical forces that establish such emotional contours of a social field, as well as the inverse—the emotional forces that shape the social contours of our rhetoric. What is needed to understand and articulate the circulation of such forces are useful conceptual tools and effective terminologies to analyze and discuss the collective, social dimension of *pathē* as integral to all rhetorical encounters.

To these ends, this project seeks a more precise account of and language for what Gross calls the “[emotional] contours of a dynamic social field” and what Heidegger, in referring to Aristotle’s account of *pathē*, labels “the everydayness of Being with one another.” Although such phrases point us toward theoretically fecund ground, they also indicate the terminological difficulty we encounter at the intersection of rhetoric, *pathē*, and structures of the social. To elucidate the dynamics occurring at this intersection, then, I advance the concept *the common sensorium*, an affective and emotional analogue to common sense.¹⁴ For reasons I will explicate in fuller detail over the course of this project, the common sensorium provides a name and a frame for what I perceive to be a gap in rhetorical theory.

Whereas common sense refers to the tacit logics of everyday living, the common sensorium refers to a cultural ambient of emotional norms. Put differently, the sense in our contemporary use of “common sense” is taken as that which is

¹³ Ibid., 15.

¹⁴ I use analogue here in the sense that the common sensorium and common sense share similar structural characteristics, but are distinct in terms of elemental composition. Although analogue may be used to indicate an identical match, it is used here to instead suggest only a parallel relationship.

“rationally sound,” as in “that makes sense.” If we conceive of this “sense that we hold in common” in a phenomenological and physiological manner, we get the common sensorium, a cultural ambient of emotional norms.

In order to examine the contours of the common sensorium, I turn to social movements, which I argue are primarily attempts to shift collective affective and emotional orientations—in other words, attempts to *move the common sensorium*. In doing so, I am connecting rhetoric’s long-held association of emotion with movement—as *animi perturbations*, or “stirrings of the soul,” for instance—with the movement in “social movement.”¹⁵ In a similar way to when one says, “I was very moved by it,” in reference to a film or other piece of art, I am approaching social movements as shifts in emotional and affective orientations, simply at a macro-scale. Indeed, “emotion” and “movement” share the same etymological root, derived from the Latin *emovere*, meaning to “stir or disturb into motion.” In making the case for the common sensorium, I proceed by first further conceptualizing its parameters, rationale, and theoretical influences, and then move to articulate its benefit to the field of rhetorical studies. I conclude with an outline of each chapter.

GLOSSARY INTERLUDE

¹⁵ Aristotle and Cicero, for example, both discuss pathē within frameworks of motion. “[I]n order to realize the full power and science of rhetoric, which are all found in *pathos* rather than *ēthos* or *logos*,” writes Lawrence Green of Cicero’s approach to pathē, “the *rhētōr* needs to understand all such movements of the soul (*omnes animorum motus*; *De oratore* 1.17).”

As I am arguing for a precise account of and language for the sociality of pathē, I find it important to provide a brief glossary of key terms before moving further. The vernacular surrounding pathē includes many terms—emotion, affect, feeling, sentiment, passion, and mood, for example—whose meanings overlap to a certain degree and thus invite use as synonyms. Add to this the myriad disciplines researching them, including literary studies, history, philosophy, psychology, psychiatry, sociology, cognitive science, and neurobiology, and you have grand potential for confusion. Using such terms interchangeably limits the arguments that can be made with them. At the other end of the spectrum, however, is a fantasy of definitional purity, which presupposes each of these terms evoke such a distinct and exact set of meanings that it is of utmost concern to police their definitional boundaries across disciplines.

Neither of these approaches, I believe, promotes the conditions in which quality scholarship can emerge. A balanced approach is warranted here, where critical distinctions are given due attention, yet are accompanied with a recognition that the vocabulary of pathē, just like pathē, is thoroughly reticulated. My glossary, therefore, is not designed to cover all the connections of these terms and fields. Rather, I provide this portion so that the reader may have a sense of the theoretical lineages from which my terms are developed. Three terms in particular deserve clear contextualization from the outset: affect, emotion, and pathē. Though other terms will of course be introduced as the argument unfolds, the glossary is focused on these three.

I use *affect* to refer to the circulating energetics between bodies and their environment. More specifically, I see affect as circulating power that 1) modifies bodies (increasing, diminishing, helping or hindering their capacities) and 2) brings them together into relation. The first part of this definition points to the influence of Baruch Spinoza on my understanding of affect; from this starting position I add a second point in order to emphasize affect's role in the building, bending, and breaking of social relations.¹⁶ Such a conceptualization frames affect as an *exchange* or event whose effects are felt through the body, rather than a thing that can be contained, possessed, or fully controlled.

Our physiological reactions can be considered a registry of affective forces, as Ben Highmore poetically describes:

Affect gives you away; the telltale heart; my clammy hands; the note of anger in your voice; the sparkle of glee in their eyes. You may protest your innocence, but we both know, don't we, that who you *really* are, or *what* you really are, is going to be found in the pumping of your blood, the quantity and quality of your perspiration, the breathless anticipation in your throat, the way you can't stop yourself from grinning, the glassy sheen of your eyes. Affect is the cuckoo in the nest; the fifth columnists out to undermine you; your personal polygraph machine.¹⁷

Highmore's prose artfully highlights a degree of autonomy in affect that I believe is important, as it situates the individual within a circulating entanglement of forces that often seems to exceed one's control. Silvan Tomkins, whose work on affect has

¹⁶ Specifically, Spinoza writes that affect animates "modification of the body by which the power of the body itself is increased, diminished, helped, or hindered, together with the idea of these modifications." *Ethics* (New York: Hafner Publishing, 1949), 149.

¹⁷ Ben Highmore, "Bitter After Taste: Affect, Food, and Social Aesthetics," in *The Affect Theory Reader*, ed. Melissa Gregg and Gregory J. Seigworth (Duram: Duke University Press, 2010), 118.

been popularized within the humanities through Eve Sedgwick, also argues that affects are most productively understood in terms of “assemblages,” or networks of intensities with various nodes of attachment, in contradistinction to models that presume a mind/body dichotomy.¹⁸ Affects circulate, then, but they also become attached in relation to objects, with object being broadly understood here, including ideas, routines, or even other affects.¹⁹

I use *emotion* to refer to the labels ascribed to recurring patterns of affect and the narratives that are used to understand and shape such experience. Rather than draw a hard distinction between affect and emotion, I see them operating along an continuum, with emotions having more cognitive processing and discursive shaping attached, and affect operating as largely extra-symbolic modulations of the body.²⁰ As Jonathan Flatley writes, “we might distinguish emotions as the result of the inevitable interaction of affects with thoughts, ideas, belief, habits, instincts, and other affects.”²¹ Similarly, Brian Massumi suggests that emotions are qualifications of experienced intensities, narrativized over time and crafted through cultural and political—and I would add historical—contexts.²² However, I do not mean to

¹⁸ Silvan Tomkins, “What Are Affects,” in *Shame and Its Sisters: A Silvan Tomkins Reader*, ed. Even Kosofsky Sedgwick and Adam Frank (Duram: Duke University Press, 1995): 33-74.

¹⁹ Such attachments can be deep, but should not be mistaken for fixed. Tomkins emphasizes the fluid relationships of affects and objects, suggesting that our affective attachments shift and slide across objects, provoking difficulties for determining the causal relationships of affective attachment: “The object may evoke the affect, or the affect find the object.”

²⁰ Diane Davis, for example, situates affect in *Inessential Solidarity* as “the condition for symbolic action,” or put even more succinctly, “affectability.”

²¹ Jonathan Flatley, *Affective Mapping: Melancholia and the Politics of Modernism* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2008), 18.

²² Brian Massumi, *Parables for the Virtual: Movement, Affect, Sensation* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2002), 25. Though Massumi goes on to argue that affect does not have

suggest that affect is to be associated strictly with the body and the same for emotion with the mind, thus replicating several precarious binaries (of which affect may be helpful in thinking our way through and away from). There is plenty of interplay among affect, discourse, emotion and reason. Discourse mediates affect; affect mediates discourse.²³

Finally, I use *pathē* to refer to all affects and emotions collectively.²⁴ My use of *pathē*, instead of *pathos*, is intended to emphasize emotions as plurality, yet retain reference to and respecting the diversity of passions. *Pathos* refers to the general category of emotion; by using *pathē*, I am signaling my investment in theorizing emotions as a multiplicity, at a collective level. In other words, I am interested in how specific emotions contribute to, emerge from, and generally relate to a specific culture's pathētic resources, regulations and rituals. The unified plurality that the term *pathē* suggests, as opposed to *pathos*, best indicates this research agenda. To clarify what I mean by "a specific culture's pathētic resources, regulations and rituals," necessitates a turn to the common sensorium.

Perhaps the best way to initially illustrate the common sensorium and its

narratives and is not crafted through cultural context, I find his demarcation too aggressive, foreclosing investigation of how affect is, if not shaped, at least steered in cultural contexts.

²³ Kenneth Burke argues a similar approach with regard to rationality (instead of emotion-as-narrativization) and affect when he writes in *Permanence and Change*, "[i]n noting that the rational is shaped by the affective, psychoanalysts did great service—but too often the discovery led them to underrate the fact that, once the rational has arisen and taken form, it brings forward demands of its own, and guides us as to what the affective response should be. [. . .] Thus, even though one may grant that the original formative factors of the rational are affective, one cannot jump to the conclusion that henceforth all rational manifestations must be considered as a mere phosphorescent glow arising above the affective" (149).

²⁴ For stylistic and pragmatic purposes I use "passions" to refer to a combination—but not a collapse—of affect and emotion.

contribution to rhetorical theory is through comparison and contrast with similar, but ultimately distinct theoretical categories. I begin by reviewing Heidegger's concept of *Stimmung*, most frequently translated as "attunement" and "mood," which he develops in connection with Aristotle's writings on pathē. Of special interest to me, however, is Heidegger's indication that moods—and by extension, the experience, interpretation, and expression of them—are culturally and historically contingent. I use this concept as a point of reference in advancing a notion of pathē that is social, rhetorical, and historical in its composition. I follow this comparison of Heidegger with a reflection on the common sensorium's analogous relationship with common sense. Through these two points of reference I am better able to articulate critical elements of the common sensorium.

STIMMUNG AS AFFECTIVE ATMOSPHERE

In *Being and Time* Heidegger declares Aristotle's account of pathē in the *Rhetoric*, "the first systematic hermeneutic of the everydayness of Being with one another."²⁵ Immediately following this assertion he writes,

Publicness, as the kind of Being which belongs to the "they," not only has in general its own way of having a mood, but needs moods and 'makes' them for itself. It is into such a mood and out of such a mood that the orator speaks. He must understand the possibilities of moods in order to arouse them and guide them aright.

In this passage Heidegger presents us with a conceptualization of pathē that is thoroughly collective, neither belonging to nor controlled by any single individual,

²⁵ Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 178.

but rather connected to a social “they.” He indicates that these social moods are more than the sum of their parts, operating apart from and in a different way than we understand our more local, personal moods, when he writes that *Stimmung* has “its own way of having a mood.” In doing so, Heidegger puts forth a critical proposition: pathē function in a different capacity at a collective level than they do at the level of the individual. Nietzsche alludes to the same phenomenon in the aphorism included as an epigraph for this chapter. “Madness,” he writes, “is rare in the individual – but with groups, parties, peoples, and ages it is the rule.”²⁶ Exploring and explaining how pathē operate at a collective, social level is an area with which rhetorical theory has yet to engage fully, and is an area to which this project hopes to contribute. Outlining the similarities and differences between Heidegger’s *Stimmung*—what might be understood as a cultural “affective atmosphere”—and the common sensorium is a productive starting point.

The “mood” of “publicness” in this passage is a translation of *Stimmung*, which is also frequently translated as “attunement,” with the German etymology of *Stimmung* referring back to “tuning” in the sense that a musical instrument is tuned. Both translations are helpful for a close reading. In particular, Heidegger notes that rhetors move *in* to moods, characterizing mood as enveloping, rather than as an element possessed by an individual. Our colloquial use of mood suggests the same, as it is common to hear one say, “I’m just in a mood,” whereas emotions are most

²⁶ Friedrich Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil: Prelude to a Philosophy of the Future*, trans. Marion Faber (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 156.

often referenced as statements of being and possession, such as, “I *am* sad.”²⁷ As Jonathan Flatley succinctly puts it, “[m]oods are not in us; we are in them; they go through us.”²⁸

Heidegger also notes, however, that one also slips *out* of moods, in a manner similar to an instrument falling out of tune. “As the tuning of an instrument suggests,” writes Hans Gumbrecht, “specific moods and atmospheres are experienced on a continuum, like musical scales. They present themselves to us as nuances that challenge our powers of discernment and description, as well as the potential of language to capture them.”²⁹ In other words, one is “tuned” in and out of alignment with a culture’s affective atmosphere.³⁰ We are never not in a mood, however, just as an instrument that is not tuned to a culturally agreed upon pattern nevertheless still produces a tone.

As *Stimmung* emerges in large measure through Heidegger’s reading of Aristotle, there are deep connections to issues of rhetoric, and how an audience’s passions may be shifted into the “right frame of mind,” as Aristotle puts it.³¹

²⁷ The notable exception of colloquial use here is “love,” as it is common to say, “I am *in* love.” The relative uniqueness of this can be demonstrated by swapping out love with a different emotion, like, “I am in anger” or “we are in guilt” and recognizing how such phrasing suddenly seems awkward.

²⁸ Flatley, *Affective Mapping*, 22.

²⁹ Hans Gumbrecht, *Atmosphere, Mood, Stimmung: On a Hidden Potential of Literature* (Palo Alto: Stanford University Press, 2012), 4.

³⁰ I find that auditory terms are often better at conveying the processes of affect, in contrast to visual metaphors, for example. The common sensorium is strategically defined, then, as a cultural *ambient* emotional norms, to suggest as a correlate the sounds that fill our everyday experience, yet fade to the back as indistinct noise. Like the buzz of a kitchen refrigerator, the common sensorium fades from notice precisely because it is constant, ambient.

³¹ Aristotle, *Rhetoric*, trans. W. Rhys Roberts (New York: McGraw-Hill, Inc., 1984), 90 (1378a).

Heidegger writes that, “[an orator] must understand the possibilities of moods in order to arouse them and guide them aright.”³² Understanding that affect and emotion fundamentally shape what we see and how we see it is an essential component of a rhetorical perspective, as Aristotle noted in Book II of the *Rhetoric*: “[w]hen people are feeling friendly and placable, they think one sort of thing; when they are feeling angry or hostile, they think either something totally different or the same thing with a different intensity.”³³ The fact that moods persuade our judgment and evaluation gains additional exigency under Heidegger, since one is *never not* in a mood. It is a simply a fundamental element of existence.

Like *Stimmung*, the common sensorium provides a name and a frame for articulating how pathē is structured through specific historical contexts. *Stimmung* directs us more toward an ontology of mood, wherein, Heidegger writes, “a mood in each case is already there [. . .] like an atmosphere in which we first immerse ourselves in each case and which then attunes us through and through.”³⁴ The common sensorium, in contrast, directs attention toward particular cultural patterns of affective attachment and emotional orientations that develop and evolve over time.³⁵

The distinction between *Stimmung* and the common sensorium can perhaps

³² Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 178.

³³ Aristotle, *Rhetoric*, 91 (1378a).

³⁴ Martin Heidegger, *Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics: World, Finitude, Solitude* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1995), 67.

³⁵ I use the phrase “affective and emotional orientations” to denote the felt states of bodily intensity and mood that animate *potential trajectories* of behavior and motive (eg. attraction and aversion and concomitant action).

best be articulated through metaphors of weather. Whereas Heidegger's *Stimmung* is translated as "atmosphere," the common sensorium is more like *climate*, in that it refers to patterns that have developed over time, are relatively stable, and structure our daily encounters, but often in ways that are unseen. Atmosphere is a useful metaphor for mood because it highlights how we are always in conditions of weather. Closely related to atmosphere and yet critically different, climate refers to a composite of prevailing patterns. The common sensorium, then, is to climate as our everyday emotional experiences are akin to the daily navigation of weather. Although we are constantly connected to the patterns of climate, these patterns are only partially revealed through our daily experience—the fact that it is raining today does not negate the existence of a region's arid climate.

More specifically, the concept offers a prism useful in articulating the structuring of emotional norms and their historical developing, affording rhetorical theory additional terminology for explaining how one's personal experience of guilt, shame, or anger has been influenced through a collective shaping over time, and in doing so suggests that one's personal situation may be one symptom of what is experienced more broadly, across collectives, communities, or whole nations. The common sensorium provokes us to consider the historical conditioning that shapes the experience of a particular emotion. For example, one might ask, how long has one's environmentally related guilt over driving an SUV been in the making? How has our contemporary understanding of guilt and its relationship to personal action been shaped culturally and historically? How have social pedagogies of passion

defined the parameters in which we digest and respond to such guilt?

Sara Ahmed, writing in *The Cultural Politics of Emotion*, similarly argues that, “emotions accumulate over time, as a form of affective value.”³⁶ The common sensorium gives a name to that accumulation; and as the name indicates, it focuses on what has been made common. Drawing on Judith Butler, Ahmed articulates the consequences of becoming culturally common when she writes, “it is through the repetition of norms that worlds materialise, and that ‘boundary, fixity and surface’ are produced. Such norms appear as forms of life only through the concealment of the work of this repetition.”³⁷ For example, as a phrase like “tree-hugger” gets repeated within public spheres to derogatorily describe environmentalists, an emotional and affective orientation is also propelled alongside it, one that situates the tree as an object for which one should not express affection, thereby establishing an emotional boundary between subjects and trees. This process of repetition and accumulation is what Butler would refer to as “the reiterative and citational practice by which discourse produces the effects that it names.”³⁸ With enough reiteration, a phrase like “tree-hugger” becomes accepted as an expression of normative

³⁶ Sara Ahmed, *The Cultural Politics of Emotion* (New York: Routledge, 2004), 11.

³⁷ Ibid., 12. Ahmed similarly argues for drawing such emotional structures and histories out of erasure: “In particular, I examine how different ‘figures’ get stuck together, and how sticking is dependent on past histories of association that often ‘work’ through concealment.” In the section on ideographic analysis I show how Ahmed’s methodology—which looks at how affects “stick” and “slide” on and across specific terms—is particularly adaptable to McGee’s conception of the ideograph, and when combined, the produce a powerful analytic for rhetoric.

³⁸ Judith Butler, “Bodies that Matter,” in *Feminist Theory and the Body: A Reader*, eds. Janet Price and Margrit Shildrick (New York: Routledge, 1999): 236

emotional values and affective orientations—what I am calling the common sensorium.

Two important points are also to be made here: First, by virtue of becoming the norm, common affective attachments and emotional orientations often fade from view, thereby escaping analytical attention; second, although they are cultural constructions, when such investments become normalized, they can feel fixed and permanent. This also diminishes the inclination toward analysis, as the feeling of fixity tends to move one away from their social construction and toward a view that suggests they are permanent features (of nature, biology, etc.) and outside the realm of agency. Heidegger also remarks on this process, writing that, "[it is in fact] precisely those attunements to which we pay no heed at all, the attunements we least observe, those attunements which attune us in such a way that we feel as though there is not attunement there at all, as though we were not attuned in any way at all—those attunements are the most powerful."³⁹ Attaching a name to the cultural ambient of emotional norms is a critical step toward drawing these forces into the light of analysis.

COMMON SENSORIUM AS ANALOGUE

Many scholars have recognized that common sense plays a critical role in building and buttressing the status quo, by virtue of being “so obvious” that its logics

³⁹ Heidegger, *Metaphysics*, 68. Hegel makes a similar, though more generic claim in the *Phenomenology of Spirit*: “[t]he familiar, precisely because it is familiar, is for that reason unknown.”

are taken for granted and rendered tacit. Sophia Rosenfeld notes, for example, that legal scholars are increasingly calling attention to the “internalized norms” of common sense, which, they argue, are “often more efficient than state coercion in the controlling of behavior or the creation of social solidarity.”⁴⁰ Although common sense is a rich concept for investigating how the status quo is built and maintained, the strong connotations of cognitive reasoning evoked by the phrase lead very few to think of “sense” in a phenomenological or physiological vein, as in “sensory apparatus.” This project seeks to draw attention to how the collectively configured forces of affect and emotion achieve similar normalizing social structures. The common sensorium encourages interrogation of what happens when we consider common sense from this latter perspective, examining a critical blind-spot in its conceptual evolution, one that has obscured the role of our physiological senses, the affective currents that flow through them, and the emotional accounts we subsequently narrativize.

Common sense is seen as the capacity for elementary judgment applied to everyday affairs, the consequences of which are so elemental, in fact, that they appear as self-evident. Common sense appears as enthymematic in aura, establishing equivalencies and leaving the consequences unspoken. As Lauren Berlant explains, “[such logics] govern by standing for common sense, by providing a tacit or seemingly foundational sense of scale and appropriateness for collective

⁴⁰ Sophia Rosenfeld, *Common Sense: A Political History* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2011), 14.

life.”⁴¹ Just as with the common sensorium, its persuasive power is its normalcy, which conceals far more than it reveals. Indeed, this power what makes these categories so provocative, productive and often frustrating areas to venture into; they exude ontological overtones that suggest they are unchangeable, a that’s-just-the-way-it-is naturalness from which they garner enormous credibility, for if something is innate, it cannot be argued with—only dealt with. Both categories, then, largely operate in the background, quietly orienting behavior.

The persuasive power of common sense can be demonstrated by examining how it currently functions in relation to capitalism. David Harvey begins his tract, *A Brief History of Neoliberalism*, with the contention that the current instantiation of capitalism has, “pervasive effects on ways of thought to the point where it has become incorporated into the common-sense way many of us interpret, live in, and understand the world.”⁴² Jason Read makes a similar argument in his essay, “A Genealogy of Homo-economicus: Neoliberalism and the Production of Subjectivity,” writing that, “It is not the structure of the economy that is extended across society, but the subject of economic thinking, its implicit anthropology.”⁴³ In other words, neoliberalism reproduces itself by promoting marketplace rationalities as the most credible, if not the only valid means of logic for twenty-first century living. The logic of profit, exchange, and self-interested economic competition, has become the near

⁴¹ Lauren Berlant, interview with Earl McCabe, “Depressive Realism: An Interview with Lauren Berlant,” *Hypocrite Reader*, 5 (2011): 3.

⁴² David Harvey, *A Brief History of Neoliberalism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 3.

⁴³ Jason Read, “A Genealogy of Homo-economicus: Neoliberalism and the Production of Subjectivity,” *Foucault Studies*, No. 6 (2009): 25.

equivalent of common sense. Or, as DJ Quik put it succinctly in 1995, rapping, “if it don’t make dollars, it don’t make sense.”⁴⁴

Our contemporary understanding of common sense, however, comes with connotations and assumptions that limit the fullness of these critiques. Namely, common sense has been aligned with rational thought to the degree it obscures the affective and emotional dynamics at work along side and in conjunction with it, those forces that animate common sense, but also are not entirely bound to it. The status quo is entrenched not only through a common economic logic, but also a common sensorium, which we neglect to our detriment. Neoliberalism entrains us to experience certain emotions over others, suggests rules for their expression, and shapes what one is allowed to feel for. With more robust conceptual terminology and analytical tools, rhetoricians will be able to produce more insightful critique on how pathē operate at a collective level, illuminating how, in this case, the emotional pedagogies of neoliberalism are linked to everyday acts.

Theorists outside of rhetoric are indeed beginning to survey the affective and emotional flows of neoliberalism: Jodi Dean argues that neoliberalism “establishes [the] possibilities through which we narrate our relation to enjoyment”⁴⁵; Barbara Ehrenreich maintains that neoliberalism demands an affective labor of cheerfulness, “because the key to getting a job in today’s corporate world is not knowing things or

⁴⁴ DJ Quik, “Dollaz + Sense,” track 10, *Safe + Sound*, Skip Sailor Recordings, 1995, compact disc. So Lido.

⁴⁵ Jodi Dean, *Democracy and Other Neoliberal Fantasies: Communicative Capitalism and Left Politics* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2009), 62.

having skills or experience, but having a positive attitude”⁴⁶; Lauren Berlant notes that for the first time, the US is not waging war on a people or nation, but on an affective state⁴⁷; Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri suggest that the neoliberal privileging of immaterial production over (but not against) material commodities amplifies the importance of affective labor and emotional intelligence.⁴⁸ Rhetorical criticism can add productive insights to this list, I argue, especially if perspectives of *pathē* are expanded and extended in theorizing their collective dynamics. For example, in Chapter Two I reveal how collective guilt was strategically deployed in marketing by bottling manufacturers in an effort to protect profit, even at the expense of environmental health.

The common sensorium helps illuminate a blind sport created by the strong ties that have developed between common sense and rationality.⁴⁹ It is in part, then, a corrective feature needed to reintroduce the senses after our contemporary usage of common sense fused multiple, often contradictory historical threads, but abandoned the body’s role in shaping social knowledge and common perceptions. It offers critics a means to label the way the way collectivities are bound through

⁴⁶ Barbara Ehrenreich, “Smile or Die,” RSA Animate Transcript, <http://www.thersa.org>.

⁴⁷ Lauren Berlant, “The Epistemology of State Emotion,” in *Dissent in Dangerous Times*, ed. Austin Sarat (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 2005), 46-78.

⁴⁸ Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, *Multitude: War and Democracy in the Age of Empire* (New York: The Penguin Press, 2004).

⁴⁹ Despite the hegemonic leanings of common sense and the common sensorium, ruptures, resistance and contradictions affect both spheres. Just as common sense is shaped by the dominant culture’s economic structures and mediascapes, the common sensorium gets shaped as well. “The sensorium,” writes Catherine Jones writes in “The Mediated Sensorium,” “is at any historical moment shifting, contingent, dynamic, and *alive*” (8).

affective and emotional dispositions. Our prevailing notion of common sense cannot account for the ways that we are encouraged to experience particular emotions, the ways that we learn culturally sanctioned forms of expression, or the manner in which affective atmospheres are constructed to render populations more tolerant of or even welcome to certain practices and policies of government and corporate entities.⁵⁰

I envision the common sensorium as a concept that recognizes the role of affect and emotion in forming collectivities and the identifications that sustain and mobilize them, and yet refuses to privilege that role against rationality, nor even necessarily above it. The close relationship between the terms “sense” and “sensorium” gestures toward this symbiotic relationship, as Caroline Jones suggests in her essay “The Mediated Sensorium,” writing, “[the] set of [sensorial] experiences [auditory, olfactory, tactile, visual, etc.] can be called a *sensorium*: the subject’s way of coordinating all of the body’s perceptual and proprioceptive signals as well as the changing sensory envelope of the self.”⁵¹ The common sensorium directs our critical attention toward an *embodied* knowledge and considers the body’s senses as essential components in the process of meaning-making. As an affective and

⁵⁰ The normalization of one’s sensorium—the composition of one’s sum phenomenal perception—can be observed by comparing how different cultures divide, hierarchize and value the senses. David Howes notes in *Sensual Relations: Engaging the Senses in Culture and Social Theory*, for example, that in Russian psychological and medical textbooks “touch” is almost always referenced first, “in contrast to American psychology textbooks which always begin with sight” (12). Our affective and emotional perceptions are not simply biological hard-wirings, but amalgamations forged through biological, cultural, and rhetorical forces.

⁵¹ Caroline Jones, “The Mediated Sensorium,” in *Sensorium: Embodied Experience, Technology, and Contemporary Art*, ed. Caroline Jones (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2006): 8.

emotional analogue to common sense, the concept helps bring the cultural backdrop of pathētic norms that shape the attitudes and actions of publics into analytical view.

In making the case for the common sensorium, I am not suggesting I have made any type of discovery. Awareness of and attempts to theorize affect and emotion at a collective level are as old as Aristotle, and yet continue to struggle for traction within rhetorical theory for various reasons. Rachel Riedner, for example, suggests that public sphere theory can be adjusted to include the animating forces of affect and emotion for better analysis of social movements.⁵² Public sphere theory certainly comes with a different set of connotative and theoretical baggage than that of common sense. Its theoretical antecedents lead one to psychoanalysis and Marxism, two traditions whose dismissive views of rhetoric require of the critic substantial recuperative contextualization, which detracts from the effort of explaining how collectives are mobilized into being. Theoretical antecedents for the common sensorium, however, lead one back to rhetoricians like Cicero, Quintillian and Aristotle. Moreover, the common sensorium has rich connections to the rhetorical category of commonplace (*loci communis*), and evokes a familiarity that makes entry into its use slightly easier, or at least less daunting. The issue, as it regularly is with rhetoric, is in the particularities of word choice, how different terms reveal different elements and textures of similar terrain of thought. These factors, I contend, make it a viable candidate for further catalyzing the exploration of

⁵² Rachel Riedner, "In(ter)ventions of Global Democracy: An Analysis of the Rhetorics of the A-16 World Bank/IMF Protests in Washington, DC," *Rhetoric Review*, 25.4 (2006): 408-426.

collective affect and emotion through a rhetorical lens.

Rhetorician Jenny Rice deserves special mention in this effort, as she has contributed sustained and rigorous scholarship that brings issues of affect to bear on rhetorical theory, and adapts rhetorical principles and methodologies to enable an account for a more nuanced view of pathē. In particular, Rice uses the phrase “affective ecologies” to aid in reconfiguring notions of the rhetorical situation. The concept of rhetorical ecologies, she argues, is a more productive lens than the rhetorical situation (as theorized by Lloyd Bitzer and Richard Vatz), because it acknowledges the “network of lived practical consciousness or structures of feeling” that permeate all rhetorical situations.⁵³ Rice’s use of Raymond Williams’s “structure of feeling” and her use of “affective ecologies” are constructive terms and provide rhetoricians with a more robust terminology for discussing pathē.

I am proposing the common sensorium as a concept that complements—rather than competes with—such terms. Though all terms facilitate discussion on the sociality of pathē, each stresses different elements of that sociality. Williams’s “structure of feeling,” for instance, emphasizes an affective experience that is “emergent or pre-emergent,” in the sense that it is more fleeting and nascent than feelings encountered through “more formal concepts of ‘world-view’ or ‘ideology.’”⁵⁴ The common sensorium, in contrast, labels the collected emotional norms that develop alongside and reproduce those dominant cultural systems. My point here in

⁵³ Jennifer Edbauer Rice, “Unframing Models of Public Distribution: From Rhetorical Situation to Rhetorical Ecologies,” *Rhetoric Society Quarterly*, 35.4 (2005): 5.

⁵⁴ Raymond Williams, *Marxism and Literature* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977), 132.

conclusion, however, is to stress that the common sensorium I propose is a complementary concept for rhetorical theory, not one that subsumes or replaces existing categories.

OUTLINE OF CHAPTERS

In the chapters that follow, I explore how social movement rhetorics operate on and within a common sensorium across three sites: the Environmental Movement, the Local Food movement, and Occupy Wall Street. I organize the analysis in each chapter around an apposite ideograph—a key term or slogan particularly potent in binding, defining, and mobilizing collectivities. Specifically, I perform rhetorical analyses of <eco-friendly>, <local>, and <occupy>.⁵⁵ Indeed, my choice of social movements is grounded in the way each of the corresponding ideographs has demonstrated significant impact on everyday discourse. My ambition with this project is to provide a deeper sense of how our personal experiences are activated in measure by larger social structures, develop a conceptual hub from which rhetoric studies can reexamine pathē with the common sensorium, and implement a reimagined methodology—ideographic analysis—for rhetorical theory and social movement studies more broadly.

In Chapter One, “What Moves in a Social Movement,” I elaborate on my claim that social movements are primarily attempts to move the common sensorium; they

⁵⁵ When a term or phrase is intended to be read explicitly as an ideograph, it is signified hereafter with carrots, e.g. <eco-friendly>, following the traditional notation for ideographs.

do so, I argue, by challenging and rearticulating *ideographic* structures. I situate my investigation within the development of social movement rhetoric scholarship by reviewing the anthology, *Readings on the Rhetoric of Social Protest*, illustrating how pathē are characterized on one hand as a contagion that overrides rational thinking, and on the other hand, as instrumental tools of the rational individual. With this backdrop of the field, I argue that the ideograph can be rendered more conceptually robust and valuable to critics when integrated with insights from affect theory and critical emotion studies. The force and vitality of the ideograph, I propose, are in the affective attachments it engenders—and importantly, orients.

In Chapter Two, “A Rhetoric of Collective Guilt: Atonement and the Environmental Movement’s Development,” I argue that <eco-friendly> rhetorics evoke a ready-made guilt-redemption cycle. My analysis is anchored in a reading of “The Crying Indian,” an influential Public Service Announcement in 1971 that operates as a harbinger of a rhetorical strategy of collective guilt that proliferates in its wake, and I demonstrate how corporations have sought to evoke this emotion in an effort to contain Environmental movement political pressure. By positioning individual consumer acts as the solution for ecological ills, the desire to join collectivities of resistance striving against dominant political powers is significantly attenuated.

In Chapter Three, “Local Food’s Affective Advocacy,” I reveal how Local Food movement rhetorics predominantly seek to sensitize others to the “feltness” of food and its contexts, thereby overcoming the numbness instilled by commodification. I

introduce the notion of *affective advocacy* to identify this rhetorical strategy, one that places the body and its material dynamics as a primary locus for enacting social change. In tracing the narrative structures and rhetorical appeals across three film documentaries on the movement, I demonstrate how Local Food advocates expand the category of *taste* well beyond sensations of the mouth. The chapter exposes how food—as an object of affective attachment—shifts in the common sensorium of the second half of the 20th century, alongside the rise of industrial agriculture.

Chapter Four, “Occupy Anger,” explores the multiple valences of <occupy> within the context of Occupy Wall Street rhetorics. In particular, I contend that the definitional ambiguities and cultural connotations of “occupy” are precisely what make the term so rhetorically rich. From my analysis of movement rhetorics emerges an emphasis on anger and its temporal dimensions. Drawing on Aristotle, I show how collective anger has a definite window of time through which it can animate and persuade. Because Occupy Wall Street rhetorics never coalesced around a single demand—as their model movement of Egypt’s Tahrir Square did—this anger does not achieve resolution.

In the Postscript, “Looking Back; Looking Forward,” I provide a reflective summary of the analytical ground that has been covered. I conclude by suggesting two possible scholarly areas where the common sensorium may be further developed.

CHAPTER 1

WHAT MOVES IN A SOCIAL MOVEMENT

[R]ather than trying to create a theory about the use of communication in social movements, we probably are better off exploiting the uniqueness of our subject matter by making a rhetorical theory of movement.

—Michael Calvin McGee, “‘Social Movement’: Phenomenon or Meaning?”

Affect does not reside in an object or sign, but is an affect of the circulation between objects and signs. Some signs, that is, increase in affective value as an effect of the movement between signs: the more they circulate, the more affective they become, and the more they appear to “contain” affect.

—Sara Ahmed, “Affective Economies”

INTRODUCTION

In “Unframing Models of Public Distribution,” Jenny Rice calls on rhetoricians to develop methodologies that can more adequately account for how rhetorics move, writing, “if we are to explore how rhetoric circulates in a ‘practical consciousness of a present kind, in a living and interrelating continuity,’ as Raymond

Williams puts it, we need a model that allows us to discuss such movement.”⁵⁶ I concur with the rationale guiding Rice’s challenge and submit the common sensorium as a contribution to such a rhetorical theory, one that emphasizes the movement of rhetoric. “Emotion” and “movement,” after all, share the same etymological root derived from the Latin *emovere*, meaning to “stir or disturb into motion.” This natural linkage is highlighted with the common sensorium, as my approach to pathē is grounded in Aristotle and the foundations of rhetorical theory, which make a strong connection between emotion and movement—as *animi perturbations*, or “stirrings of the soul.”

In addition to emphasizing the movement of rhetoric, the common sensorium also helps to elucidate social movement rhetorics. Unlike many popular conceptions of social movements, which theorize movements as collectivities of people, I instead approach social movements as collectivities of discourse. In other words, social movements do not use rhetoric—they *are* rhetoric. Social movements, as Kevin DeLuca phrases it, “[are] empirically present in the public discourse or rhetoric used to describe ‘reality,’” and consequently, can be analyzed through permutations in that cultural rhetoric.⁵⁷ When this approach is paired with an epistemic, constitutive notion of rhetoric—in which ways of being and knowing are simultaneously

⁵⁶ Rice, “Unframing Models of Public Distribution,” 13. I would slightly amend Rice’s call, by adding “models” in order to emphasize that multiple methodologies, much like the rhetorical ecologies she argues for, can thrive in networks that allow for diversity.

⁵⁷ Kevin DeLuca, *Image Politics: The New Rhetoric of Environmental Activism* (New York: The Guilford Press, 1999), 36.

described, discovered, and produced through rhetoric—social movements are challenges to way social reality is rhetorically constructed.

Social movement rhetorics also reveal, however, “the very public nature of emotions, and the emotive nature of publics,” to borrow a phrase from Sara Ahmed.⁵⁸ I argue that social movements are primarily attempts to shift collective affective and emotional orientations—in other words, attempts to *move the common sensorium*—via the rhetorics that define, frame, and sustain them. More specifically, I argue that social movements shift social orientations by shifting *ideographic* structures. Michael Calvin McGee’s formulation of the ideograph—a rhetorical category developed to connote key terms in a society that are especially potent in structuring and catalyzing collective commitment—offers a rich methodology for studying social movements from a specifically rhetorical approach. He contends that, “[b]ecause there is a basic vocabulary of normative terms in any social-political system [. . .] we can prove ‘movement’ by observing changes in the ‘ideographic’ structures of social norm-systems.”⁵⁹ Social movements are manifest in the circulating rhetorics of a society, especially in the form of the ideograph. Analyzing the reframing of ideographic meanings and collective orientation toward them, then, is how a critic may trace “social movement.”

⁵⁸ Ahmed, *Cultural Politics*, 51.

⁵⁹ Michael Calvin McGee, “‘Social Movement’: Phenomenon or Meaning?” in *Readings on the Rhetoric of Social Protest*, 2nd edition, ed. Charles E. Morris III and Stephen Howard Browne (State College: Strata Publishing, Inc., 2006), 122. Article originally published in *Central States Speech Journal* 31 (1980): 233-244.

My aim in this chapter is to expand on my methodology, and also situate it within the trajectory of scholarship on social movement rhetoric. I begin by briefly sketching the broader arc of intellectual thought on emotion and collective protest that informs the foundations of contemporary scholarship and continues to exercise an influence on it. “[O]nce at the center of the study of protest,” Goodwin et al. note at the turn of the 21st century, emotions and affect “have led a shadow existence for the last three decades, with no place in the rationalistic, structural, and organizational models that dominate academic political analysis.”⁶⁰ To understand why pathē move from being a central concern in the scholarship of protest to the margins necessitates a brief discussion of crowd theory, which helped facilitate such a shift.

I then analyze the writings collected in *Readings on the Rhetoric of Social Protest*, paying attention to how critics perceive and articulate the role of pathē in animating publics, influencing group behavior, and conditioning social movement rhetorics. This anthology is the dominant collection of the field’s contribution to rhetorical theory and social movement studies, and, currently in its third edition, has effectively canonized the pieces therein. Analysis of *Readings on the Rhetoric of Protest* reveals an overcorrection of sorts to the crowd theory so prevalent in the sociological models that rhetoricians initially adopted. I contend that although pathē are no longer viewed suspiciously—like a contagion that overwhelms one’s

⁶⁰ Jeff Goodwin, James Jasper, and Francesca Polleta, “The Return of the Repressed: The Fall and Rise of Emotions in Social Movement Theory,” *Mobilization* 5.1 (2001): 65.

rational capacities, as they are configured in crowd theory—they disappear, in a sense, into the shadow of rationality. Rhetoricians establishing the field of social movement study swerve toward another extreme, in other words, framing protestors as generating and orienting collective emotion instrumentally toward specific, rational ends.

The ideographic methodology I propose steers attention to the rhetorical foundations and pathētic dynamics of social movements. Such an approach is needed, I affirm, because “while the last two decades have witnessed a slow turn in sociology to a discursive if not rhetorical vision of social movements, rhetorical theory has imported a traditional sociological approach that emphasizes organizations and resources at the expense of rhetoric.”⁶¹ In presenting this methodology, I demonstrate how ideographs are affective catalysts and guides for emotional orientation that simultaneously constitute and reflect a culture’s matrix of social and political norms through language.

IRRATIONAL FOUNDATIONS

Daniel Gross, writing in *The Secret History of Emotion*, argues that in the wake of a 17th-century turn to empiricism and the rationalist influence of Rene Descartes, “emotions that were once treated by everybody as externalized forms of currency and worldly investments [got] sucked, as it were, into the brain.”⁶² A number of

⁶¹ DeLuca, *Image Politics*, 27.

⁶² Gross, *Secret History*, 8.

consequences flow from theorizing emotion at the level of the individual body, whether psychobiologically, where explanations of emotions are regularly reduced to chemical reactions, or psychologically, where emotions get coded as internally forged, sublimated, or repressed. Gross, along with a significant number other critics, have put forth strong critiques of dominant theories that have tended to psychologize pathē at the level of the individual body. Many who resist this individuation also point to the impact of psychoanalysis, which, as Lauren Berlant argues, “is a liberal discourse, in that its recourse to the individual requires a model of the abstract, universal, or structurally determined individual, who is inevitably organized and disorganized in a certain way by the encounter with desire.”⁶³

Under such frameworks, emotion is figured as coming from within one’s self and then expressed outwardly, as an emanation from the body; consequently, “solving problems [of emotion and desire] is the individual’s responsibility,” as Berlant notes. When emotion is framed as a psychological state of mind and the individual becomes the locus for emotional agency and accountability, attention to the social dimensions of emotion wanes. As a result, we become less aware of the ways in which our cultural environment shapes possible interpretations of emotions, how our mediascapes influence what becomes an object for emotional attachment, and how social norms are established through and buttressed by affective and emotional forces.

⁶³ Lauren Berlant, *Desire/Love* (Brooklyn: Punctum, 2012), 16.

Although psychological theories through much of the 20th century largely approach emotions through the lens of the individual subject, this is not to suggest that emotions are not discussed with relation to collectives and social spheres. In fact, emotions play a prominent role in theories of collective political action issuing from sociology and political science up through the 1960s, with much of the credit getting traced back to Gustave LeBon's social psychology of crowd behavior. LeBon begins *The Crowd: A Study of the Popular Mind*, first published in 1895, on a strident note:

The whole of the common characteristics with which heredity endows the individuals of a race constitute the genius of the race. When, however, a certain number of these individuals are gathered together in a crowd for purposes of action, observation proves that, from the mere fact of their being assembled, there result certain new psychological characteristics, which are added to the racial characteristics and differ from them at times to a very considerable degree. Organised crowds have always played an important part in the life of peoples, but this part has never been of such moment as at present. The substitution of the unconscious action of crowds for the conscious activity of individuals is one of the principal characteristics of the present age.⁶⁴

LeBon's theory, at its core, is straightforward: when enough people are gathered together, unconscious motives of "the crowd" develop and spread like contagion, overriding an individual's primary mode of being—rationality. Put differently, a crowd is a highly emotional and therefore highly irrational unit comprised of otherwise rational individuals, so although emotions are analyzed as operating collectively and in social spheres, the individual remains the center of focus.

⁶⁴ Gustave LeBon, preface to *The Crowd: A Study of the Popular Mind* (New York: Macmillan, 1896), online at <http://etext.virginia.edu/toc/modeng/public/BonCrow.html>.

In LeBon's crowd theory, a "collective mind" is formed, which is "[g]iven to exaggeration in its feelings" and is "only impressed by excessive sentiments."⁶⁵ As little as half a dozen people can constitute a crowd, but also "an entire nation, though there may be no visible agglomeration, may become a crowd."⁶⁶ Indeed, one does not necessarily need to be in proximity to the initial crowd to feel its influence; "contagion may be felt from a distance," as was the case, LeBon avers, with the revolutionary movement of 1848, which, "after breaking out in Paris, spread rapidly over a great part of Europe and shook a number of thrones."⁶⁷

LeBon's writings are worthy of extended citation for the incredible influence they exhibited in the 20th century, which went well beyond academic circulation in the theoretical shaping of collective emotion. Adolf Hitler and Benito Mussolini, for example, are reported to have studied LeBon carefully.⁶⁸ Theodore Roosevelt also read and was influenced by LeBon, as were other American political figures in the first half of the 20th century.⁶⁹ Sigmund Freud takes LeBon's theory of the

⁶⁵ Ibid., 51.

⁶⁶ Ibid., 173.

⁶⁷ Ibid., 114.

⁶⁸ Hitler's section on war propaganda in *Mein Kampf* aligns closely with LeBon's theory presented in *The Crowd*, which was translated into German in 1908. Hitler writes, for instance, "The people in their overwhelming majority are so feminine by nature and attitude that sober reasoning determines their thoughts and actions far less than emotion and feeling. And this sentiment is not complicated, but very simple and all of a piece." Mussolini allegedly kept a copy of LeBon's *The Crowd* in his bedside table, according to Alex Steiner in "Marxism Without Its Head or Heart."

⁶⁹ See *PR! A Social History of Spin* (New York: Basic Books, 1996). Although LeBon's influence peaked politically in the first half of the 20th century, his ideas are certainly still in circulation. Political pundit Ann Coulter, for example, has recently written that the strategies of the Democratic Party can "all [be] explained by mass psychology, diagnosed more than a century ago by the French psychologist Gustave LeBon, on whose work much of

“unconscious collective mind” as a starting point in *Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego*.⁷⁰ Freud extends the theory by questioning what causes one to be susceptible to crowd contagion. He argues that, “groups have never thirsted after truth. They demand illusions, and cannot do with them [. . .] [and] this predominance of the life of phantasy and of the illusion born of an unfulfilled wish is the ruling factor in the psychology of neuroses.”⁷¹

Unsurprisingly, LeBon’s academic popularity with sociologists, especially those in the then-emerging field of mass media, combined with Freud’s theorizations, set the stage for social movement theorists to view emotion with severe skepticism, if not outright dismissal. Scholars following LeBon argued that “crowds short-circuit symbolic communication,”⁷² while those leaning more toward Freudian analysis argued that protestors were psychologically predisposed toward joining mass movements, suggesting they were variously “narcissistic, latently homosexual, oral dependent, or anal retentive.”⁷³ Of the two dominant approaches involving emotion, then, one claims mass movements are emotional and irrational

my own book [*Demonic: How the Liberal Mob is Endangering America*] is based.” *The Daily Caller*, August 15, 2012.

⁷⁰ Edward Bernays, Freud’s nephew, drew heavily upon *Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego* in developing advertising campaigns. Bernays was a primary figure in developing “Public Relations,” a term coined by Bernays, but one which he disliked in comparison to “propaganda,” which had negative connotations because of its association with Nazi Germany. His conception of collective emotion is aligned with LeBon and Freud, as can be seen throughout his in/famous work, *Propaganda*, in which he writes, “If we understand the mechanism and motives of the group mind, it is now possible to control and regiment the masses.”

⁷¹ Sigmund Freud, *Group Psychology*. (1922; Bartleby, 2010), chap. II, par. 29-30, <http://www.bartleby.com/290/2.html>.

⁷² Herben Blumer, “Collective Behavior,” qtd. in Goodwin et al., “Return,” 66.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, 67.

mobs, and the other frames protestors as deviants and psychologically deficient. Neither approach illuminates what the common sensorium points to: How specific emotions contribute to, emerge from, and generally relate to a specific culture's pathêtic resources, norms and rituals.

REREADING FOUNDATIONS IN *READINGS ON THE RHETORIC OF SOCIAL PROTEST*

Richard Gregg's essay, "The Ego-Function of the Rhetoric of Protest," located in the privileged "Foundations" section of *Readings on the Rhetoric of Social Protest*, exhibits a strong Freudian influence. At the time Gregg's essay is published in 1971, several scholars were grappling with the challenges social movement rhetoric issued to traditional modes of rhetorical analysis. Although Leland Griffin first attempts a specifically rhetorical reading of social movements in 1952, the field did not see noticeable publishing activity until the late sixties and early seventies. Social movements of the time put the existing rhetorical paradigm, one anchored in a rational, single-orator approach, into sharp relief with the "rhetoric of the streets." As Richard Jensen notes, "[m]ost theories were based on the assumption that discourse was rational, but much dissent in the 1960s was not rational," or at least not rational in the ways scholars were used to treating the category.⁷⁴

Gregg's essay is a productive point of departure for analyzing the ways in which the canonized pieces of social movement rhetoric studies have characterized

⁷⁴ Richard J. Jensen, "Evolving Protest Rhetoric: From the 1960s to the 1990s," *Rhetoric Review* 20.1 (2001): 28.

emotion, in particular its collective and social dimensions, because the argument reveals a field in transition. On one hand, Gregg's essay demonstrates a willingness to expand the purview of traditional rhetorical analysis with the study of non-rational symbolic action. On the other hand, it does so with the ultimate aim of retaining the discipline's priority and principles of rationality. "The Ego-Function of the Rhetoric of Protest" furthermore suggests that a Freudian psychology of collective emotion, itself based in LeBon's crowd theory, appears at the time as the most viable theory available for those interested in exploring the non-rational elements of social movement rhetoric.

"[T]he rhetoric of protest," argues Gregg, "would 'logically' seem to be aimed at those in power or positions of authority," and that, "[t]he usual view of rhetorical communication expects the entreaties, appeals, arguments, and exhortations" to speak to its audiences' capacities for "basic reasoning."⁷⁵ For Gregg, approaching protest movements of the 1960s and '70s with a traditional rubric of rhetorical reasoning will only leave a scholar dazed and confused. Because "[r]hetoric, as we usually understand it, seems to flee the scene," he argues, a new framework is needed to explain what is occurring:

I shall argue that the primary appeal of the rhetoric of protest is to the protestors themselves, who feel the need for psychological refurbishing and affirmation. Spokesmen for protest movements also become surrogates for others who share their intimate feelings of inadequacy [. . .] for what is at stake is not the nature of the rhetorical claims or the sense and probity of

⁷⁵ Richard Gregg, "The Ego-Function of the Rhetoric of Protest," in *Readings*, eds. Charles Morris III and Stephen Browne, 2nd edition (State College: Strata, 2006).

appeals and arguments for their own sakes, but just the fact that the rhetoric must be verbalized in order for one's self-hood to be realized.⁷⁶

Rather than question the "usual view" of rhetorical rationality, Gregg firmly places protesters outside of it, contending that neither rationality nor rhetoric in any substantial sense are really at play here. Gregg's qualification of "just the fact that the rhetoric must be verbalized in order for one's self-hood to be realized," frames protesters as utterly destitute of identity and self apart from the movement rhetorics they speak, and simultaneously indicates with the "*just*" that even this is not worthy of real consideration. Although Gregg concludes his article by cautioning against simplistic dismissal of protest rhetoric as emotional and irrational, his ultimate purpose is to "understand and explain the non-logical aspects of argument" so that they could be overcome and replaced by "the rational elements, which we hope to make paramount."⁷⁷

The recognition that rhetoric's approach to rationality was in need of reevaluation, especially with regard to evolving protest rhetoric, is echoed throughout the field's early pieces. In "The Rhetoric of Confrontation," for example, Robert Scott and Donald Smith claim that, "[e]ven if the presuppositions of civility and rationality underlying the old rhetoric are sound, they can no longer be treated as self-evident."⁷⁸ Scott and Smith head in the opposite direction of Gregg, suggesting a reevaluation of what reasonable discourse actually entails for their era. "A rhetorical theory suitable to our age," they write, "must take into account the

⁷⁶ Ibid., 47-48.

⁷⁷ Richard Gregg, "Rationality and Evidence," *Rostrum* (1966): 8-10.

⁷⁸ Robert L. Scott and Donald K. Smith, in *Readings*, 33.

charge that civility and decorum serve as masks for the preservation of injustice.”⁷⁹

Unlike Gregg, who seeks to expand the boundaries of rhetorical analysis by inviting analysis of non-rational discourse, while preserving its instrumental use in promotion of rational discourse under its traditional parameters, Scott and Smith argue for an expansion of the category of reasonable rhetoric.

Franklyn Haiman’s essay, “The Rhetoric of the Streets: Some Legal and Ethical Considerations,” similarly argues for reconsideration of what constitutes rational discourse. Haiman’s article is one of the very few pieces in *Readings on the Rhetoric of Social Protest* to even use the term “emotion.”⁸⁰ He does so, however, in the context of complaint, addressing the recurring criticism that social movement rhetoric falls outside the “rationality of discourse,” and the “resort to emotional appeals.”⁸¹ Haiman admits that the rhetorical forms in question here—sloganeering, folk singing, draft-card burning—“hardly passes muster by the standards of rational discourse.” He concludes with a statement worth quoting in full:

Perhaps the best one can do is to avoid the blithe presumption that the channels of rational communication are open to any and all who wish to make use of them and attempt, instead, a careful assessment of the power structure of the situation. To whatever extent one finds an imbalance of power and a concomitant unwillingness on the part of the holders of power to engage in genuine dialogue, he may be less harsh in his judgment of those who seek to redress the balance through non-rational strategies of persuasion.⁸²

⁷⁹ Ibid., 33.

⁸⁰ There are only fourteen uses of the term “emotion” in the anthology.

⁸¹ Franklyn S. Haiman, in *Readings*, 17.

⁸² Ibid., 27.

Haiman, like Scott and Smith, acknowledges the non-rational, passionate rhetorics, and emotional entanglements that social movements present; the choice of theoretical direction, however, is to reframe (or reemphasize) rational communication as restricted in access and overdetermined by asymmetrical power relations. Haiman goes further, however, suggesting that rational and non-rational strategies act in relative proportion to one another, so that those who are increasingly denied the “channels of rational communication” are concomitantly pushed to adopt non-rational means.

Another essay in the “Foundations” section similarly acknowledges that non-rational strategies are legitimate forms of rhetorical response, but they are also indications that protesters are desperate and believe they have no recourse to rational debate. Theodore Otto Windt, Jr.’s, “The Diatribe: Last Resort for Protest,” seeks to explain the perceived profanities and absurdities of radical protest rhetorics through a case study of the Yippies, led by Abbie Hoffman. “While respectable critics continue a rational rhetoric of protest,” he writes, “some young people used obscenities to describe their outrage and frustrations.”⁸³ Windt suggests that such language was a consciously calculated, rational decision, arrived at only *after* realizing a “mistake lay in their belief that reasoned academic discourse in the tradition of pragmatic liberalism would be respected and change Johnson’s Vietnam policy.” Without reasoned debate as an option, “[p]rotestors realized that

⁸³ Theodore Otto Windt, Jr. in *Readings*, 58.

new forums and new forms would have to be created.”⁸⁴ In such a formulation, non-rational rhetorics are legitimized only by measure of their inverse relationship to reasoned discourse; the underlying logic is that one uses non-rational rhetoric *only if* options for civil debate have been exhausted.

For example, Windt’s essay includes three of the fourteen total mentions of “emotion” in the anthology, with two appearing in a quoted passage of Ken Kesey: “[D]on’t just describe an emotion, but arouse it, make them experience it, by manipulating the symbol of the emotion.” Although such a rich, provocative quotation is ripe for a rhetorical analysis focused on emotional appeal, Windt frames it as strictly instrumental, aimed at getting “people who had never examined their reasons for responding as they had toward these symbols.”⁸⁵ Whereas emotion in LeBon’s theory engulfs and overrides rational capacities, here the opposite seems to be the case: emotional appeals occur as a result of, and ultimately in service to, rational rhetoric. In both, however, emotion is rendered subservient to rationality.

Analysis of the “Foundations” section in *Readings on the Rhetoric of Protest*, then, reveals an overcorrection to previous scholarly conceptions of social movements. When rhetoricians begin approaching social movements as a site of unique and challenging symbolic activity, and look to the field of sociology for theoretical guidance, they find an interpretation of movements heavily influenced

⁸⁴ Ibid., 59.

⁸⁵ Ibid., 68.

by crowd theory and Freudian group psychology.⁸⁶ This influence can be readily seen, as is demonstrated, with Gregg's essay. Although the other essays share with Gregg a recognition that social movements compel reconsideration of the field's top priorities and the methodologies it promotes, they call specifically for an expansion of rhetorical rationality—a cautious one, albeit—rather than a dismissal of protesters as emotional, which is to say, irrational. The pattern that emerges across these essays—Scott and Smith, Haiman, and Windt—swerves away from theories of mob mentality and psychologically deficient protesters. In short, the “irrationality” previously equated with emotion gets reframed in these essays as “non-rational.” Protestors are no longer assumed to have their cognitive capacities hijacked by collective emotion, but rather, quite to the contrary, they generate and orient collective emotion instrumentally toward specific ends. As Haiman suggests, protesters are “those who seek to redress the balance [of power] through non-rational strategies of persuasion.” Although emotions are no longer viewed suspiciously as a contagion that overwhelms the individual, they disappear, in a sense, into the long shadow cast by a privileged rationality.

I would propose that there are two significant reasons for such a shift. First, in the movements of the 1960s and '70s universities are hotbeds of protest, with campus demonstrations and the issues of those demonstrations carrying over into classroom conversation. Many scholars were sympathetic to the causes highlighted

⁸⁶ Herbert Simons also drew from sociology in developing his theory and definition of social movements. Simons's interest in identifying a generic form of movements, rather than analysis of specific rhetorical acts of resistance or protest, steered him more toward a sociology of organizational communication and infrastructure.

through the movement rhetorics that circulated throughout university life; it is improbable that scholars who found identification with the aims of movement rhetorics or at the very least, perceived legitimacy in the critical questions being raised, would categorize themselves as having their rational capacities commandeered by an emotional contagion of the crowd, or even being on the brink of such a shanghai. Another reason, though likely to a lesser extent, is that social movements themselves had to be established as a legitimate area of scholarly inquiry. Operating within an academic heritage that encouraged analysis of classic speeches by single-orators, early scholars of social movement rhetoric were taking a risk in their choice of study. Suggesting that the unusual acts associated with movement rhetoric were simply rationality-by-other-means, scholars stood to gain more academic capital.

This pattern prefigures the turn movement studies more generally would take in the coming years. The 1970s sees the emergence of “resource-mobilization.” Replacing the pathological theories that previously dominated, “sociologists turned to rational-actor and organizational models, shifting from the motivational ‘why’ to strategic ‘how’ questions,” with emphasis turning to “the previously unrecognized political capacities of protesters.”⁸⁷ Although rhetoric studies certainly displays this shift in attention from “why” to “how,” debates within the discipline gravitate most clearly toward the “what” of social movements as the 1970s drew to conclusion. In 1979 scholars gather for a conference organized to “evaluate previous research on

⁸⁷ Goodwin et al., “Return of the Repressed,” 70.

social movements and propose directions for future research.”⁸⁸ From this conference emerged distinct divergences on what specifically was rhetorical about social movements, how to read social movements rhetorically, and how to address the challenges they provoke for the rhetorical tradition. And in 1980, the *Central States Speech Journal* published an issue showcasing the leading voices from that seminar. Essays from this collection comprise the “Competing Perspectives” section of *Readings on the Rhetoric of Protest*, and remain essential touchstones within the study of social movement rhetoric, including McGee’s essay, “‘Social Movement’: Phenomenon or Meaning?”⁸⁹

Following the lively debates in the early 1980s, however, the focus on social movements within rhetoric tapers suddenly and significantly, to the degree that Stephen Lucas declares the field “moribund” in 1988.⁹⁰ Indeed, out of the thirty-five essays collected in *Readings on the Rhetoric of Social Protest*, only two are published between the years of 1981 and 1989.⁹¹ Attention to social movements from rhetoricians increases slowly and steadily throughout the 1990s, however, the

⁸⁸ Richard Jensen, “Evolving Protest Rhetoric,” 28.

⁸⁹ With the exception of Malcom O. Sillars’s essay, “Defining Movements Rhetorically: Casting the Widest Net,” the “Competing Perspectives” section contains six essays, five of them selected from the 1980 (30.1) issue of *Central States Speech Journal*, including McGee’s “‘Social Movement’: Phenomenon or Meaning?”, Zarefsky’s “A Skeptical View of Movement Studies,” Lucas’s, “Coming to Terms with Movement Studies,” Andrews’s, “History and Theory in the Study of the Rhetoric of Social Movements,” and Stewart’s, “A Functional Approach to the Rhetoric of Social Movements.”

⁹⁰ Stephen E. Lucas, “The Renaissance of American Public Address: Text and Context in Rhetorical Criticism,” *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 75 (1988): 241–260.

⁹¹ They are Randall Lake’s, “Enacting Red Power: The Consummatory Function in Native American Protest Rhetoric” (1983) and Celeste Condit Railsback’s, “The Contemporary American Abortion Controversy: Stages in the Argument” (1984).

scholarship trends once again toward sociological models, which in this case emphasize organizational and resource-mobilization methodologies that diminish the central role of rhetoric. McGee's admonition that serves as the epigraph for this chapter, therefore, remains just as relevant and pressing: "[R]ather than trying to create a theory about the use of communication *in* social movements, we probably are better off exploiting the uniqueness of our subject matter by making a rhetorical theory *of* movement."⁹²

MOVEMENTS OF IDEOGRAPHIC ORIENTATION

"Human beings," McGee claims, "are 'conditioned,' not directly to belief and behavior, but to a vocabulary of concepts that function as guides, warrants, reasons, or excuses for behavior and belief."⁹³ Within this conditioning vocabulary, ideographs are key terms for inducing and structuring social commitment—or social control, depending on the perspective of agency. In McGee's words, an ideograph is "a high-order abstraction representing collective commitment to a particular but equivocal and ill-defined normative goal."⁹⁴ This brief, but dense definition brings together several key attributes of the ideograph; briefly outlining these elements will provide some parameters that can then be used to show how subsequent scholarship has taken on the concept. First, as a "high-order

⁹² McGee, "Social Movement, Phenomenon or Meaning?" 122.

⁹³ McGee, "The 'Ideograph,'" 6.

⁹⁴ Michael Calvin McGee, "The 'Ideograph': A Link Between Rhetoric and Ideology," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 66 (1980): 5.

abstraction,” ideographs do not refer to existing objects in the world, but rather concepts with no direct referent, such as <equality>, <liberty>, or <progress>. (No one has ever seen equality strutting up the driveway, McGee jokingly notes.) Second, the ideograph’s ability to affect and enforce group identification is its central definitive function. Finally, ideographs are deployed as if they are technical terms whose specificity of meaning can be assumed. McGee maintains we are conditioned to believe that ideographs have “obvious meaning, a behaviorally directive self-evidence,” but upon inspection, they are remarkably flexible in definition.⁹⁵ What makes <freedom> such a powerful term is less its truth-value or philosophical import, but rather, the fact that it invokes participation in a shared social structure.

Rhetoricians have made frequent use of the ideograph and have analyzed in great detail many social-structuring terms that may seem ordinary, but are actually cultural catalysts. Condit and Lucaites, who identify McGee as one of their generation’s “most important intellectual leaders,”⁹⁶ offer a book-length exegesis of <equality>,⁹⁷ for example, while Dana Cloud has used the concept to investigate the <clash of civilizations>.⁹⁸ Scholars using the ideograph as an analytical lens have investigated such diverse terms as <competency>, <victim>, <family values>, and

⁹⁵ Ibid., 6.

⁹⁶ Celeste Condit, John Lucaites, and Sally Caudill, eds., introduction to *Contemporary Rhetorical Theory: a Reader* (New York: Guilford, 1999), 12.

⁹⁷ Celeste Condit and John Lucaites, *Crafting Equality: America’s Anglo-African Word* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993).

⁹⁸ Dana Cloud, “To Veil the Threat of Terror’: Afghan Women and the ‘Clash of Civilizations’ in the Imagery of U.S. War on Terrorism,” *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 90 (2004): 285–306.

<progress>. Critics have also suggested that the ideograph offers insights on how iconic images function, either by indexing certain ideographs in their representation or transforming objects themselves into ideographs (such as the cigarette). And the ideograph has been extended well beyond the one-term verbal realm that McGee outlines when Hugh Miller argues that the self in postmodern culture is best read as an “ideographic individual.”⁹⁹

Despite the myriad critical applications, most analyses privilege an ideograph’s historical record and chronological trajectory, or what McGee refers to as its “diachronic” component. This is how the ideograph has expanded and contracted in meaning and use over time, and analysis of its diachronic dimension ideally yields “a culture-specific and relatively precise ‘grammar’ of one public motive,” McGee writes. Even the most complete diachronic analysis, however, “leaves little but an exhaustive lexicon understood etymologically,” he warns, “and no ideally precise explanation of how ideographs function *presently*.”¹⁰⁰ How an ideograph functions presently is referred to as its synchronic dimension.

Drawing from Kenneth Burke’s terminology, McGee aligns diachronic analysis with a “grammar” of public motive, while a synchronic reading seeks to capture its “rhetoric.” So, where a diachronic surveys the formal shape of the ideograph, tracing the outlines of past usages in order to provide a grammar, a synchronic analysis is interested in illuminating its persuasive power, the animating

⁹⁹ Hugh Miller, “The Ideographic Individual,” *Administrative Theory and Praxis* 26.4 (2004): 569-488.

¹⁰⁰ McGee, “The ‘Ideograph,’” 12.

energy that gives the ideograph its normative strength, for “in real discourse, and in public consciousness, [ideographs] are *forces*.”¹⁰¹ Toward the conclusion of his essay, McGee writes that the “situationally-defined synchronic structure” of an ideograph is always embedded within “ideograph clusters” and is “constantly reorganizing itself to accommodate specific circumstances while maintaining its fundamental consonance and unity.”¹⁰² All ideographs are connected to each other in some form or another, he indicates, and their relational links shift in producing a particular historical context’s “dominant ideology.”¹⁰³ These few claims constitute the most direct discussion about an ideograph’s synchronic structure, offering the critic who is looking to perform such a reading rather scarce resources.

Yet this shift in relational structures is precisely what is of utmost importance to a rhetorician of social movements, which challenge dominant ideologies by contesting the way ideographic clusters are configured. There are scant and subtle indications that McGee may actually privilege the synchronic structure of ideographic analysis, as if to suggest to critics that explaining how ideographs function in their current milieu will offer more leverage for social change than the diachronic aspects. The amount of text dedicated to discussion about diachronic analysis in McGee’s essay, however, indisputably outweighs that of synchronic. Leaving scholars with little guide as to how to analyze an ideograph’s

¹⁰¹ Ibid., 12.

¹⁰² Ibid., 14.

¹⁰³ Ibid., 15, 16.

rhetorical force and how that force shifts with historical contexts and social pressures, it is little wonder that diachronic/historical analyses have proliferated.¹⁰⁴

DeLuca rightly notes that the “neglect of the synchronic structure [and] the linking of ideographs” in rhetorical criticism, “is not accidental but rather points to a certain lacuna in McGee’s theorizing of ideographs.”¹⁰⁵ “[A]lthough McGee tentatively employs the vague notions of connector, circumstance, contradiction, dynamic consonance [. . .] and myth,” he writes, in order to explain “what conditions enable groups to challenge or even change a particular linking of ideographs [within] the hegemonic discourse,” theoretical supplementation is needed.¹⁰⁶ Explaining how ideographs emerge in public discourse and how they may be challenged requires a richer theoretical vocabulary for their synchronic dimensions beyond what McGee can offer. For DeLuca, this vocabulary can be found in the discursive theory of Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe, who stress contingency in the linking of discursive elements.

In connecting McGee to Laclau and Mouffe, DeLuca aims to place emphasis on an ideograph’s mutability, reframing it as a site of contestation instead of a relatively unassailable element of historical hegemony. In doing so, he draws attention to its synchronic structure—how it operates as a *force* within everyday

¹⁰⁴ I do not mean to give any suggestion here that the two structuring elements of ideographic criticism are in competition with one another, nor that a scholar must make a decision between the two—as McGee notes in the conclusion, a thorough description of any ideograph will contain both accounts. My outlining of these two elements is necessary for understanding how the ideograph has been adopted and deployed by critics in rhetoric studies, and how it might be reread in order to offer fresh insights in future criticism.

¹⁰⁵ DeLuca, *Image Politics*, 37.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, 37.

discourse. DeLuca calls for critical frameworks and vocabularies that can explain (and possibly predict) how ideographs actually get changed: “[W]e 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 or discourse.”¹⁰⁷ This project similarly seeks to understand social movements as rhetorical forms with an ideographic methodology, while recognizing the need for fleshing out the ideograph’s explanatory power through theoretical supplementation. Although Laclau and Mouffe’s emphasis on linguistic contingency offers a gratifying route for exploring how ideographs are challenged and reshaped through a variety of activist acts, I argue that the ideograph can be rendered more conceptually robust and valuable to critics when integrated with insights from affect theory and critical emotion studies.

In his essay introducing the ideograph, McGee claims that “in real discourse, and in public consciousness, [ideographs] are *forces*.”¹⁰⁸ He echoes this in a later piece, writing that, “[v]ertical [diachronic] meanings give [ideographs] some stability, in its historical precedents, while horizontal [synchronic] meanings give it *vitality*.”¹⁰⁹ The potency of these terms—*forces*, *vitality*—and the fact McGee labels them under “rhetoric,” whereas the diachronic is tagged as “formal” and categorized as a “grammar,” offer compelling reason to explore the ideograph along affective and emotional lines. McGee, after all, encourages critics to situate rhetoric

¹⁰⁷ Ibid., 45.

¹⁰⁸ McGee, “The ‘Ideograph,’” 12.

¹⁰⁹ McGee, “Ideograph” *Encyclopedia of Rhetoric*, ed. Thomas Sloane (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001): 378. Italics mine.

phenomenologically, and to theorize its materiality not as a distinct object, but rather “as a palpable and undeniable social and political *force*.”¹¹⁰ He insists on going beyond a representational understanding of rhetoric to one that foregrounds its mediating capacities and its role in shaping human relations and forming collective life. “[F]rom a materialist’s perspective,” he writes, “[rhetoric is] the social equivalent of a verb in a sentence,” and is the animating force of social bodies.¹¹¹

Although McGee never mentions emotion in the first essay outlining the ideograph, he does indeed use it once later in his career, when defining the term in the *Encyclopedia of Rhetoric*: “[the ideograph is] a figurative, often one-term summary, a *synecdochē* of all the arguments, narratives, deep emotions, fearful

¹¹⁰ Barbara Biesecker and John Lucaites, eds., introduction to *Rhetoric, Materiality, & Politics* (New York: Peter Lang, 2009), 3. Italics mine. Though McGee certainly positions the ideograph as a tool for rhetorical materialism, this “materialism” blurs two sets of materialist meaning. The first is informed by Marxism and refers to the relationship of language and the means of economic production and wealth distribution. Historical materialism in a Marxist vein presumes that language and capitalism are not just associated, but more often than not mutually supportive: discourse gets shaped so that it further entrenches the economic means of production, which keeps elites in power. The other sense of materialism to be gleaned here is rhetoric’s physical attributes: how discourse impacts, flows through, and is emitted from bodies. This formulation of materialist rhetoric is an integral component to the ideograph; its value, I argue, is depreciated when the majority of ideographic readings are anchored in diachronicity, resulting in a form of historical criticism aligned with representationality and, thus, beyond the text, toward a hidden teleology or intrinsic meaning that is ultimately operating apart from discourse.

¹¹¹ Michael Calvin McGee, “A Materialist’s Conception of Rhetoric,” in *Materiality & Politics*, 21. When McGee penned these words in 1970 he was explicitly sounding the call for rhetoricians to turn toward materialism, which was a virtually untouched field of thought. As he notes, “[w]ith the possible exception of Kenneth Burke, no one I know of has attempted formally to advance a material theory of rhetoric.” McGee suspects that the imposing nature of the task is what has kept critics from venturing toward it, “for in many ways the world of traditional rhetorical theory would have to be turned upside-down.” Though much has been written about rhetoric’s materiality since then, especially under the influence of post-structuralism, representational theories of rhetoric have remained the epistemological foundation of rhetorical theory, I would argue, and this tradition has yet to be up-ended.

commitments, and dangerous actions that resulted in the political structuration of the English speaking world.”¹¹² McGee’s use of emotion here is particularly interesting—and not just because it is the only time he uses the term when writing on the ideograph. The very fact that McGee chose to qualify the inclusion of emotion with “deep” suggests that the emotion he is referencing may be of a different sort than what is typically conceived. And yet, in this context, “deep emotions” can be read several ways. It could be referencing the emotional force of “deeply held” convictions, or gesturing toward those emotions that have strong affective resonance, like anger or love; or it could be “deep” in the sense of being *foundational*—emotions that do not always reveal themselves on the surface, yet have a profound influence as a result of being ingrained.

I believe this phrase, “deep emotions,” can be better understood when read in the light of a claim McGee makes when distinguishing the ideograph from Burke’s “Ultimate” or “God” terms. Unlike Burke’s conceptions, McGee writes that with the ideograph, “attention is called to the *social*, rather than rational or ethical, functions of a particular vocabulary.”¹¹³ McGee’s tripartite of *rational*, *ethical*, and *social* echoes the three pillars of persuasive appeal set forth by Aristotle and subsequently rendered endemic to rhetorical studies: *logos*, *ethos*, and *pathos*. There is a rough equivalency evident in McGee’s claim, correlating the social with pathos. I suggest that this correlation, in conjunction with his emphasis on the *lived experience* of rhetoric (in contradistinction to representational theories), encourages one to read

¹¹² McGee, *Encyclopedia*, 378.

¹¹³ McGee, “The ‘Ideograph,’” 9. Italics mine.

the “deep emotions” provoked by the ideograph as profoundly collective in nature, and yet experienced through the flesh of the individual body.

McGee stresses that the ideograph’s import is to be found in its daily usage—“what we might call ‘social’ or ‘material’”—distinguishing it from “an *idea* [or what might be called] ‘pure thought.’”¹¹⁴ These emphases on the social and material should be read alongside his repeated use of *force* and *vitality*, which impel considerations of the physical body’s capacity to be affect and be affected by rhetoric. The force and vitality of the ideograph, I’m suggesting, are in the affective attachments it engenders—and importantly, orients. This evidence, marshaled together with the central focus on collectivities and mass consciousness in the ideograph’s theorization, entreats us to conjoin rhetorical and affective/emotional considerations of the physical body with the body politic.

My argument is that there is not one single methodology, nor a single neat set of theoretical terms, but rather a robust area of study that can be productively tied to the ideograph. Although an indispensable tool for rhetorical criticism, the ideograph is nevertheless lacking in synchronic theorization—that is, how ideographs come into being, endure, and provoke collective identification. Whereas DeLuca draws on Laclau and Mouffe to flesh out the synchronic, I advocate establishing an elective affinity between affect theory and critical emotion studies with the ideograph more generally, allowing for a multiplicity of critical tools and

¹¹⁴ Ibid., 9.

methodologies to prosper. This will allow for ideographic scholarship to grow alongside and in partnership with the flourishing of affective and emotional studies.

MOVEMENTS OF EMOTION

An elective affinity between scholars of affect and emotion and rhetoricians interested in the structuration of collectives can be advanced by looking for where overlaps already exist. For example, in her study of the sociality of emotion, Sara Ahmed asks, “[h]ow do emotions work to align some subjects with some others and against other others? How do emotions move between bodies?”¹¹⁵ Ahmed is similarly interested in a methodology and theoretical vocabulary that links concrete articulations of discourse to the creation and mobilization of collectivities.

In her focus on the intersection of bodies, language, and materiality, Ahmed builds a critical vocabulary that echoes Laclau and Mouffe (and by extension, DeLuca’s work on the ideograph), using “attachment” as a key term for how bodies and language interact contingently, in a fashion similar to the linking of discursive elements in Laclau and Mouffe’s theory of articulation. It is Laclau and Mouffe’s emphasis on contingency—the linking and de-linking of discursive figures in an ever-evolving field of social meaning—that DeLuca is drawn to for supplementing ideographic analysis, as McGee provides little to understand how ideographs are challenged and changed, or how new ones are invented.

¹¹⁵ Ahmed, “Affective Economies,” 117.

Ahmed is also interested in contingency, adding a unique twist to this line of research. She notes that “[t]he word ‘contingency’ has the same root in Latin as the word ‘contact’ (Latin: *contingere*: *con*, with; *tangere*, to touch). Contingency is linked in this way to the sociality of being ‘with’ others, of getting close enough to touch.”¹¹⁶ This focus on the materiality of discourse—the way rhetoric is felt upon the flesh and rhetorical constructions animate our actions—is one of several productive overlaps between Ahmed and McGee’s formulation of the ideograph. As Barbara Biesecker and John Lucaites note in the anthology, *Rhetoric, Materiality, & Politics*, McGee advances a “notion of subjectivity inflected toward the practical or material force” of living within “an economy of phenomenological experience.” He prescribed an understanding of rhetoric that was material, not “in the sense of a ‘thing’ like a rock or tree, but rather as a palpable and undeniable social and political force.”¹¹⁷ Their use of *palpable* is instructive here, for it directs us to the senses. Ahmed eloquently suggests the same: “*We need to remember the ‘press’ in an impression.*”¹¹⁸ In all of these formulations, rhetoric is poetically and pragmatically located at the level of skin and the felt experience of living within rhetorical climates.

I find Ahmed’s study of emotions particularly attractive not only for her emphasis on the ways in which bodies register and respond to rhetoric, but also for the way she employs a methodology that emphasizes *movement*. More specifically,

¹¹⁶ Ahmed, *Cultural Politics*, 28.

¹¹⁷ Biesecker and Lucaites, “Introduction,” *Rhetoric, Materiality, & Politics*, 3.

¹¹⁸ Ahmed, *Cultural Politics*, 6.

Ahmed sees emotions circulating in association with objects, signifiers, and figures of speech such as metaphors and metonymies, resulting in attachments of emotional intensities and language, which steer our identifications and behavior. In a methodological structure strikingly similar to McGee's, Ahmed proposes a dual axis for reading emotions, an axis on which they move sideways as well as backwards and forwards. The first axis refers to the attachment of emotions to figures—they *stick* and *slide* sideways between signs and objects.¹¹⁹ What sticks, though, is affected by what has stuck in “longer histories of articulation.”¹²⁰ Emotion slides sideways between figures, “as well as backwards, by reopening past associations,” and so what sticks “is bound up with the ‘absent presence’ of historicity.”¹²¹ Ahmed's dual-structure methodology not only aligns well with McGee's, it also offers a sense of dynamic fluidity to the more staid use of synchronic and diachronic.

Ahmed's theorization of circulation and surfaces also proves helpful for moving critics away from a conceptualization of the ideograph as *container* of meaning. McGee has been criticized, justifiably to a degree, for characterizing the ideograph as a container of sorts that “harbors an interior dimension” filled with

¹¹⁹ The same “sideways” process is described by Laclau and Mouffe as the process of articulation and disarticulation, whereby discursive elements are linked together into “chains of equivalence,” which, although always contingent, are strengthened and entrenched through repetition.

¹²⁰ Ahmed, *Cultural Politics*, 1.

¹²¹ Ibid., 45. The influence of psychoanalytic theory on Ahmed's thought indicate that the movement of backward and forward is linked with memory, repression, and sublimation. What sticks in the present, then, may exist for reasons submerged in cultural memory in ways that remain unknowable to analysis.

ideological content.¹²² Davi Johnson makes the case that by using the term “container” along with container metaphors (such as pregnancy), McGee lends the ideograph to a rhetorical theory of representation, as what is deemed important by critics is the content *inside* the container that must be discovered through interpretative unpacking, a theory that is ultimately at odds with McGee’s materialism.¹²³ I align myself with Johnson and DeLuca in seeking to displace these container connotations for more dynamic terms that can better emphasize the ideograph’s circulation in everyday usage and rhetoric’s materiality.¹²⁴

Certain terms, Ahmed argues, “increase in affective value as an effect of the movement between signs: the more they circulate, the more affective they become, and the more they *appear* to ‘contain’ affect.”¹²⁵ An ideograph that has become

¹²² Davi Johnson, “Mapping the Meme: A Geographical Approach to Materialist Rhetorical Criticism,” *Communication and Critical/Cultural Studies* 4 (2007): 34. Johnson skillfully reads the lot of McGee’s metaphors: “[By saying the] ideograph is ‘more pregnant’ than any proposition could ever be and constitutes a ‘building block’ of social ideology,” he situates the ideograph more within a realm of representation. “The metaphor of pregnancy, for instance, indicates that the ideograph *bears* something (content) inside of its material body.”

¹²³ *Ibid.*, 27.

¹²⁴ I would also point out that issues of “possession” and “containment” are also akin to normative notions of emotion, assumptions that obscure how emotions function at the collective level and are shaped through our social spheres. Ahmed convincingly demonstrates how emotion is almost always discussed in either an “inside-out” or “outside-in” paradigm. “The everyday language of emotion is based on the presumption of interiority,” she argues, which contributes to a transmission model, where one has feelings which then can move outward towards objects or others, or the crowd has emotions that I get drawn in to or infected by. Two conceptual byproducts result: first, emotion is something that can be possessed, like property; and secondly, boundaries of inside and outside get naturalized and reified. In contradistinction to these views, Ahmed contends that these very boundaries are the *effect* of emotional circulations, giving us only the perception of inside, outside, and containment.

¹²⁵ Ahmed, “Affective Economies,” 120. Italics mine.

endemic to a society's base values and institutional ideals, then, will very much *appear to contain* stable meaning *and* affective value, but it is only an effect of its continued circulation. The consequence of this for analysis, I would argue, is that our attention should be steered away from any methodology resembling depth hermeneutics to one that focuses on the "sticky" associations, the synchronic attachments and discursive linkages surrounding the ideograph.

Given these theoretical overlaps and emphases, what does it mean for how one performs an analysis when seeking to understand the affective and emotional dynamics of ideographs and their role in shaping collectives? McGee indicates that ideographic analysis necessitates identifying the "groups or clusters of words radiating" from the ideograph, while also taking heed of the warning that an ideograph's force is not grounded in logic.¹²⁶ Where McGee leaves off, I pick up with Ahmed, who in analyzing the emotionality of texts, pays particular attention to "how different [rhetorical] 'figures' get stuck together." The rhetorical choices that name and perform feeling do not "simply exist before the utterance, but [become] 'real' as an effect, shaping different kinds of actions and orientations."¹²⁷ For social movement analysis, I am concerned with how affects and emotionalities attached to an ideograph shift, thereby recalibrating collective commitment to the degree a tipping point in what McGee calls the "public consciousness" is reached.

¹²⁶ McGee, "The 'Ideograph,'" 13. McGee continues, noting, "[e]ach term would be a connector, modifier, specifier, or contrary for those fundamental historical commitments, giving them a meaning a unity *easily mistaken for logic*." Italics mine.

¹²⁷ Ahmed, *Cultural Politics*, 13.

It is our emotional orientations, after all—how one feels toward others and objects, and even oneself—that aligns one with certain collectivities and not others; these boundaries, the “skin of the collective,” Ahmed notes, “paradoxically ‘[take] shape’ only as an effect of such alignments.”¹²⁸ The “we” of a social movement, in other words, is an effect produced through affective attachment and emotional alignment. The boundaries one may perceive of a “we” and by extension, a separate “them,” are often reified precisely because of the intensities of emotional experience. The separation between “us” and “them” itself becomes an object for feeling, one that others can share in and rally around. This rhetorical and emotional account of social movements illuminates how, in many theories and especially earlier accounts, assumptions of social movement “members” operating *within* the movement may have felt relatively evident. A theoretical approach that emphasizes rhetoric and emotion, however, can frame these boundaries as embodied constructions that indeed feel very real, without having to treat those boundaries as objectively empirical entities.

MOVEMENTS OF TERMINOLOGY

As selections—and therefore, simultaneously reflections and deflections—of lived realities, the terms chosen for discussing the collective forms and social dynamics of emotion and affect have significant impact for how we recognize, interpret and theorize them. As I have argued, the recent history of emotion

¹²⁸ Ibid., 54.

theories have predominantly located them as coming from within the body, generated by the individual and possessed by that subject until expressed outwardly. When considered from a viewpoint of collectivity, however, emotions are mysteriously given status as a “contagion,” an ethereal force that can override the rationality of many individuals and seduce them into a unified “collective mind,” as LeBon and others have expressed it. Given such uneven theoretical terrain through which conceptions of pathē have traveled, the terms and phrases used to denote and describe them deserve scrutiny. As I argued in the introduction, this project aims at a more precise account of and language for what Daniel Gross calls the “[emotional] contours of a dynamic social field” and what Heidegger, in referring to Aristotle’s account of pathē, labels “the everydayness of Being with one another.” In this final section, then, I argue that while the initial theorization of the ideograph points us toward rich territory, McGee’s various iterations of “mass consciousness” could be productively replaced with the common sensorium.

The sheer variation of terms McGee uses in reference to the intersection of rhetoric, pathē, and structures of the social, coupled with an uncharacteristic lack of rhetorical analysis applied to their choice, indicate theoretical ambiguity, if not anxiety. McGee writes, for example, that one “can prove [social] ‘movement’ by observing changes in the ‘ideographic’ structures of *social norm-systems*.”¹²⁹ Later,

¹²⁹ Michael Calvin McGee, “Social Movement: Phenomenon or Meaning,” *Central States Speech Journal* 31 (1980): 243.

he uses “public motive” in referencing what ideographs reveal.¹³⁰ Elsewhere he writes that, “[t]he concept ‘ideograph’ is meant to be purely descriptive of an essentially social human condition.” The most frequently used terms by McGee, and by extension with DeLuca, however, are variations of “mass consciousness.” For instance, alongside “mass consciousness,” McGee and DeLuca varyingly use “public consciousness,” “human consciousness,” “collective consciousness,” and “social consciousness of a society.”

McGee is indeed fundamentally concerned with this issue of collective consciousness, as the introduction of his essay makes plain. “We are presented,” he writes, “with a brute, undeniable phenomenon: Human beings in collectivity behave and think differently than human beings in isolation. The collectivity is said to ‘have a mind of its own’ distinct from the individual qua individual.”¹³¹ He begins by noting that Kenneth Burke announced his preference for “philosophy of myth” over and against the then-prevalent category of “ideology” for “explain[ing] the phenomenon of ‘public’ or ‘mass consciousness.’” Both are attempting to describe the existence of a social organism, McGee writes, and even though the two terms are often positioned as alternatives, both terms are couched in arguments that, although they allege its existence, find a mass consciousness to be fundamentally false. Ideology brings with it Marxist connotations which frame such consciousness as a ruse, a system of beliefs installed by the ruling class to benefit them at the expense

¹³⁰ McGee, “The ‘Ideograph,’” 4. McGee maintains that the diachronic dimension of an ideograph yields “a culture-specific and relatively precise ‘grammar’ of one public motive.”

¹³¹ McGee, “The ‘Ideograph,’” 2.

and exploitation of the workers. Philosophy of myth is tied to Burke and symbolist arguments that suggest humans have a natural tendency to experience events through poetic and dramatic frameworks. Both terms nevertheless advance the notion of a collective consciousness that mediates between individuals and socially constructed belief, even if they disagree on how to respond to the illusion.

McGee attempts to reconcile these two camps through the concept of the ideograph, arguing that both are necessary for a “[theoretical] model which neither denies human capacity to control ‘power’ through the manipulation of symbols nor begs Marx’s essential questions regarding the influence of ‘power’ on creating and maintaining political consciousness.” Such a mass consciousness, McGee argues, must be “empirically manifested in the language which communicates it” and thus he directs us toward the ideograph as a way to describe and evaluate it. The power of mass consciousness, in other words, is the power of rhetoric, as “[h]uman beings are ‘conditioned,’ not directly to belief or behavior, but to a vocabulary of concepts that function as guides, warrants, reasons, or excuses for behavior and belief.”¹³² Where rhetorical scholarship has miscalculated and been led astray, McGee argues, is in regarding “the rhetoric of control as a species of argumentation and thereby assumed that the fundamental unit of analysis in such rhetoric is an integrated set-series of propositions.”¹³³ As I argued in the previous section, trying to understand fully how ideographs function and are registered in patterns of public belief through a lens that focuses only on the rational is a misguided approach, and propose

¹³² Ibid., 6.

¹³³ Ibid., 6.

instead the creation of an elective affinity between ideographic analysis and critical emotion studies and affect theory.

It is important to point out that McGee is clearly anxious about the ontological connotations of “mass consciousness” in the same way he is about “social movements,” and he situates both squarely in the rhetorical and as the conceptual products of public discourse that are particularly susceptible to reification. This move subsequently turns them into objects that move “out there” and operate separate from us as individuals. McGee reflects this anxiety in several passages. He adds, for instance, the qualifier, “[i]f a mass consciousness exists at all” to one of his central claims.¹³⁴ And just before that he describes mass consciousness as a “trick-of-the-mind which deludes us into believing that we ‘think’ with/through/for a ‘society’ to which we ‘belong.’”¹³⁵ McGee is concerned about treating society itself a social movement, with people who “belong,” which is to say, are on the “inside” and “outside.” Although he tackles the issue head-on with social movements, he does not do the same for “mass consciousness.”

The phrase “mass consciousness” invites problematic connotations. Western intellectual traditions—whether philosophic, scientific, or religious—have tended to locate consciousness within the individual, as something possessed by each subject in much the same way as emotion is configured. Adding “mass” to “consciousness” does not alter its connotations of singularity. Furthermore, western traditions have assigned “consciousness” as an activity and/or byproduct of the brain. Take

¹³⁴ Ibid., 5.

¹³⁵ Ibid., 5.

McGee's remark, for instance, that "[t]he collectivity is said to 'have a mind of its own,'" as well as LeBon's insistence that crowds develop a "collective mind" that has "mental unity." The problem with adding "mass" to "consciousness" or speaking of a "collective mind" is indeed that we are invited to envision a singular and unified entity that has properties of an individual body, and thinks and feels along similar lines. The term "mass consciousness" and its variations of "public" or "social consciousness" produce interpretive dissonance because as consciousness is associated with the workings of the mind, it is placed in juxtaposition and in relative antinomy with emotion and feelings of the body, and yet, "mass consciousness" has been theorized as rudimentary in its cognition and faulted for being driven by base emotion.

Given the connotative limitations of the phrase "mass consciousness," its conceptual connections to orthodox Marxism, and the fact that replacing "mass" with "public," "human" or "social" does not do away with any of its principal problems, a new term is needed for rhetorical critics to use in denoting the way ideographs are registered socially. With the ideograph, it has been shown, "attention is called to the *social*, rather than rational or ethical, functions of a particular vocabulary," and this "social" is productively, implicitly correlated with pathos. Given the sum of arguments I have laid out that highlight the natural connections between the ideograph and affect and emotion, I would reword this statement to read: with ideographic analysis, attention is called to the affective

attachments and narratives of emotion that ideographs engender and how these social pathē orient behavior in conjunction with a particular vocabulary.

In short, ideographs are affective catalysts and guides for emotional orientation that simultaneously constitute and reflect a culture's matrix of social and political norms through language. McGee's struggle with terminology for the collective consciousness he wants to link with the ideograph indicates an impoverished vocabulary for speaking about emotion in a collective, social sense. The theoretical ambiguity that results demonstrates the need for a rhetorical category that accounts for the ways in which social pathē accrue and align in particular patterns and ultimately, come to be interpreted and lived as normative. Rather than a "public consciousness," which steers associations towards cognition and a mind/body dualism, this category would highlight the phenomenological experience of social norms and its processes. The common sensorium, I argue, is a rhetorical category that can fulfill this role, providing a name and a frame for articulating how pathē are structured through specific historical contexts.

CHAPTER 2

A RHETORIC OF COLLECTIVE GUILT:

ATONEMENT AND THE ENVIRONMENTAL MOVEMENT'S DEVELOPMENT

The "scapegoat principle" (as used by priesthoods and rhetoricians, and as studied by anthropologists and theorists of political behavior) is certainly involved here. And it should obviously have a prominent place in any terminology of social motivations, even if we were but reviewing what is generally known about it.

—Kenneth Burke, *Permanence and Change*

If you drive a car, you own part of this spill.

—US Coast Guard Captain Ed Stanton,
BP/Deepwater Horizon oil spill press conference

INTRODUCTION

Lying on my hotel bed during a recent stay at a Travelodge was a green laminate card with a cartoon bear holding a check list: “__ Re-use the Towels; __ Re-use the Bedsheets; __ Save the Planet!” I read the card while drinking from a bottle of water, the label of which asks, “Did you notice this bottle has an Eco-Slim cap? It contains 20% less plastic than our previous cap.” Below it is a recycling symbol and

the declaration, “We can all make a difference. Please recycle.” On my computer screen is an email that below the signature reads in green lettering, “Please consider the environment before printing this email.” One does not need to look hard to find everyday examples of our increased attention to environmental impact. At each turn it seems, we encounter invocations to “Go Green” and be more “Eco-friendly.” How are we to understand something as trivial as a yogurt cup promising epic and heroic action through its mere purchase as it assures us we can “*Help Save the Planet*”?

This constellation of “eco-friendly” rhetorics is now a familiar component of the contemporary vernacular, continually gesturing toward the Environmental movement’s influence on the culture’s discursive and emotional spheres. These rhetorics are so prevalent, in fact, that they have arguably eclipsed the Environmental movement itself. A search on Google N-Gram, an application that charts usage patterns across millions of publications, reveals that since 2004 there have been more references to “environmentally friendly” than there have been to the actual Environmental movement.¹³⁶ Internet searches for “Environmental movement” have also been on a steady decline in the past decade; meanwhile, searches containing “eco-friendly” have exploded, with the top searches being closely aligned with commodities like clothing, bags, and furniture.¹³⁷ This transformation in rhetorical activity—from a focus on the Environmental movement to qualifying actions and objects as “eco-friendly”—invites interrogation, given the

¹³⁶ See Fig. 2 in Appendix.

¹³⁷ See Fig. 3 in Appendix.

high stakes of continuing environmental devastation and the role eco-friendly rhetorics play in shaping our relation to that devastation. What does such a shift reveal to us about the Environmental movement's rhetorical evolution and implications, and what lessons can we extrapolate to understand the common sensorium that these rhetorics operate within and on?

I argue in this chapter that eco-friendly rhetorics such as those referenced above reify notions that individual consumers and their domestic habits are the frontline for social change. From this central principle flows an emphasis on consumption management—the ways in which environmental improvements can be achieved through wise purchasing, use, and disposal of market goods and services. To point out that eco-friendly rhetorics encourage individuals to see consumption as a powerful means of agency, if not the preeminent pathway, is not exactly a ground breaking claim, I readily acknowledge. When we approach the ideograph <eco-friendly> and its related rhetorics using lenses from critical emotion studies and affect theory, however, the persuasive power is illuminated in a fresh light. The emotional invocation of *friendliness* indicates part of its strong affective orientations, but I argue that the motivational loci of this rhetorical strategy involve deeper emotional processes of guilt and atonement. What makes it of particular interest to rhetoric studies, however, is the specific form of guilt being evoked. *Collective guilt*—the experience of distress or remorse felt by an individual when a group identified with causes harm—plays a fundamental role in the success of eco-friendly rhetorics as a strategy of social movement containment.

My aims in this chapter, then, are threefold: to define and clarify the rhetorical implications of collective guilt by contrasting it with other emotions; to contextualize the deployment and emotional digestion of collective guilt within our culture's common sensorium; and finally, demonstrate its relevance to the Environmental movement. To do so, I look back to the origins of the social movement, well before the phrase "eco-friendly" entered everyday circulation. Specifically, I ground my analysis in the iconic "Crying Indian" Public Service Announcement, wherein a single tear trickles down a Native American's cheek in reaction to the pollution he sees everywhere.¹³⁸ Despite its sheen of progressive environmentalism, the PSA strategically redirects the onus of responsibility for litter on to the consumer, and obscures the role of industrial production, economic motive and corporate culpability with regards to environmental devastation. The germinal seeds of eco-friendly acts and attitudes can be unearthed through the Crying Indian PSA, and rhetorical analysis helps illustrate the unique motivational valences of collective guilt that drive their persuasive power.

What is at stake here for the rhetoric of social movements is the recognition of how, paradoxically, collective guilt can be deployed in a manner that actually undermines the potential and desire for collective action. *Collective guilt, in other words, can be a powerful individualizing force.* The television spot demands attention precisely because it introduced an effective, efficient means by which

¹³⁸ "The Crying Indian," PSA (1971), prod. Keep America Beautiful Inc., The Ad Council, and Marsteller Advertising. Video available online: <http://archive.org/details/KeepAmericaBeautifulcryingNativeAmerican>

public desire for changes in the industrial economy could be managed in a way that does not threaten potential financial profits. I contend that this rhetorical strain emerged and evolved as a *strategy of social movement containment*. As Charles Morris and Stephen Browne emphasize in their cornerstone anthology, *Readings on the Rhetoric of Social Protest*, “[we must] underscore the important lesson that protest movements cannot be understood independent of the rhetoric of those who resist challenges to established power.”¹³⁹ Eco-friendly rhetorics, I suggest, are born out of a corporate resistance to the challenges early Environmental movement rhetorics posed to established economic powers, and they helped catalyze a fresh wave of commodity consumption.

Perhaps most imperiling, I argue, are the emotional and affective dynamics eco-friendly rhetorics induce and propel, as they attenuate desire for collective political organization. Specifically, the guilt-emotions the PSA seeks to stoke—and which eco-friendly rhetorics help maintain—orient one toward acts of atonement, in effect redirecting and diffusing anger-emotions and the corresponding desire for retribution against corporate interests. The potential for collective action is thereby scattered into many acts of individual atonement, which are anchored in market-based solutions and consumption management techniques. My analysis of this particular guilt-atonement cycle leads me to revise the victimage model advanced by rhetorician Kenneth Burke. Unlike Burke’s model, wherein hard boundaries between a “we” and a scape-goat “they” are drawn, I demonstrate how this strategy

¹³⁹ Morris and Browne, Introduction to “Tactics of Control,” in *Readings on the Rhetoric of Social Protest* 2nd ed. (State College: Strata, 2006), 373.

actually aims at *broadening* the “we” and obfuscating responsible agents. This strategy is possible because of the unique characteristics of collective guilt.

In the chapter’s conclusion, I suggest that what makes collective guilt such a highly exploitable and rhetorically remarkable category of emotion, can be explained in measure through the common sensorium. The influence of classical liberalism on rhetorical constructs of America creates a dissonance that renders collective guilt more difficult to digest. The liberal tradition’s emphasis on individual responsibility and accountability, I contend, makes grappling with collective guilt more challenging precisely because of collective guilt’s foundation of identification with a group, rather than direct, personal involvement. We can see, then, how historical and cultural transformations over time create emotional norms that can impact everyday actions, even something as ostensibly banal as re-using one’s shower towel at a hotel.

“TO CONTAIN THE EMERGENCE”

In the 1950s, 1960s, and 1970s, corporate managers and government bureaucrats often tried to crush ecological protests, figuring that such direct strategies of political intervention rhetorically might roll back the symbolic assaults of troublesome ‘tree-hugging’ nature lovers by continuing to convince the general public that belching smokestacks still were signs of material progress and not the stigmata of industrial pollution.¹⁴⁰

So writes Timothy Luke in his book, *Ecocritique*, which charts shifts in corporate reactions to and relations with the Environmental movement in last half of the 20th

¹⁴⁰ Timothy Luke, *Ecocritique: Contesting the Politics of Nature, Economy and Culture* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997), 118.

century. As his comment suggests, in a booming post-war economy, corporations felt little need to be environmentally friendly—in public relations or actual practice—and their rhetorical responses to activist pressure reflected as much. As the 1960s came to a close, however, the Environmental movement, though certainly still fledgling, is a recognizable rhetorical entity; that is, people are speaking of and referring to its collected acts and attitudes *as a movement*. A 1970 Sierra Club Bulletin claims that, “The Environmental movement is coming to be more than a re-labeled Conservation Movement.”¹⁴¹ An activist 'zine, *Focus Midwest*, writes, “[t]here has been considerable concern in the peace movement about the booming Environmental movement. Some feel that this 'new' cause is siphoning off energy from the civil rights and peace movements.”¹⁴² Even the American Chemical Society took notice of the emerging movement, warning that, “[t]he Environmental movement is going to be a powerful force in the politics of this country for the foreseeable future.”¹⁴³

Riding a tide of rising environmental concern, “Earth Day” was launched in 1970 as a way to bring further attention to environmental issues and to teach others about the dangers imposed on them through degradation and toxification. Modeled on the “teach-ins” so prevalent in anti-Vietnam War demonstrations, the first “Earth Day” saw millions of participants across the United States, mostly on high school and college campuses. For many, this enormous display of organization and support

¹⁴¹ Sierra Club, xli.

¹⁴² *Focus Midwest*, 48.

¹⁴³ American Chemical Society, 461.

marked the moment when the Environmental movement emerged as a fully legitimate social movement.

Around this period a recognition emerged—unevenly but demonstrably—from corporate public relations circles that this social movement would prove a formidable force, worthy of a more robust strategy of response. “To contain the emergence of new, and perhaps more radical, measures of ecological transformation,” Luke writes, “the corporate-run circuits of mass consumption refunctioned the rhetoric of that faction in the ecology movement.”¹⁴⁴ The earliest example of this shift in corporate communication strategy can be seen, I argue, in the Crying Indian PSA. Its rhetorical structures and maneuvers invite inspection because of the amount of public attention it captured at a critical juncture in the Environmental movement’s development, its considerable influence on defining what are considered appropriate and laudable acts of environmentalism, and its continuing iconic status in the American imaginary.¹⁴⁵

The PSA begins with Native American “Iron Eyes Cody” steering a canoe down a misting river. As menacing music escalates, the camera pans out to reveal a heavily industrialized setting, with factory stacks heaving plumes of toxic smoke into the air. A voice-over begins speaking in grave tones as Cody disembarks upon a

¹⁴⁴ Luke, *Ecocritique*, 118.

¹⁴⁵ Many are familiar with this advertisement—even those who were too young to have seen its initial campaign—because of its continued circulation in our nation’s media ecology. Just a few of the many examples of enduring recognition in pop-culture include its parody in the *The Simpsons* 200th episode, an allusion in the enormously popular video game *World of Warcraft*, and references in numerous films including *Wayne’s World 2* and *Kingpin*, as well as in television sitcoms such as *Friends* and *Married...with Children*.

shore strewn with plastic bottles and cups: “Some people have a deep, abiding respect for the natural beauty that was once this country.” The camera’s focus shifts off of a close up of Cody’s profile to a four-lane highway in the background, crowded with cars. As a car passenger tosses a bag of fast food out the window the voice-over continues, “and some people don’t.” The bag bursts upon impact just in front of Cody’s moccasins, scattering half-eaten burgers, fries, containers and napkins across the concrete. Looking up from the debris, he turns his head directly at the camera’s gaze as a single tear peels off onto his cheek. The voice-over says sternly, “[p]eople start pollution. People can stop it.”

The Crying Indian PSA was released on the second annual Earth Day, 1971, with the explicit aim of having its message interfused with the publicity and positivity surrounding Earth Day activities. “The moment [of the ad’s promotional release] was auspicious,” notes Shepard Krech, “[as just] months before, between fifteen and twenty million people had assembled on Earth Day to create the groundswell for an Environmental movement unprecedented in scale and zeal.”¹⁴⁶ In this context, Krech points out, Iron Eyes Cody’s single tear quickly became an icon of environmental concern and poignant reminder for responsible waste management. Indeed, the spot aired to substantial acclaim nationwide, successfully suturing its message to the developing Environmental movement. *Ad Age* magazine ranks it as #50 in their “Top 100 Advertising Campaigns of the 20th Century,” while *Entertainment Weekly* placed it in a list of the “50 greatest commercials for all time”

¹⁴⁶ Shepard Krech, *The Ecological Indian: Myth and History* (New York: Norton, 1999), 15.

and *TV Guide* ranked it 16th in their “Fifty Greatest Commercials” list. Some twenty-seven years after the first appearance on screen across America, *The New York Times* referred to it as, “[o]ne of the best-known, most-honored commercials ever.”¹⁴⁷ Robert Cialdini notes, “[it] was widely thought to be so moving that many consider it perhaps the most effective public service announcement of all time,” thus often credited for bringing the subject of litter to the level of national attention.¹⁴⁸

Despite its measurable success, Cialdini, a psychologist and marketing analyst, uses the Crying Indian as a case study to demonstrate weaknesses in pro-environmental PSAs. “Although [the Crying Indian’s] message certainly elicits emotional reactions,” Cialdini and his colleagues conclude, “[there exists] a possible flaw in the message.” They demonstrate that because the spot carries with it “a subtext implying that littering is commonplace,” the ad is unsuccessful in generating “enduring [pro-environmental] attitude/behavior change.”¹⁴⁹ Though Cialdini and his colleagues present a compelling case, their assumptions prevent them from seeing that the ad’s success is precisely in that failure.

The goal of the ad is *not* to conclusively solve the problem of pollution or litter. It decidedly *does not* aim at mobilizing Americans to the extent that they question *why* there is litter in the first place, nor ask *where* the litter is coming from,

¹⁴⁷ Stuart Elliott, “An Environmental Campaign is Back by Popular Neglect,” *New York Times*, April 22, 1998.

¹⁴⁸ Robert Cialdini, Noah Goldstein, and Steve J. Martin, *Yes!: 50 Scientifically Proven Ways to be Persuasive* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2008), 19.

¹⁴⁹ Renee Bator and Robert Cialdini, “The Application of Persuasion Theory to the Development Of Effective Proenvironmental Public Service Announcements,” *Journal of Social Issues* 56.3 (2000): 531.

nor investigate *who* is profiting from it. Rather, its rhetorical strategy is designed to deflect attention away from corporate entities and *contain* public pressure for changes to the industrial economy.

There is an historical account of the Crying Indian and the organization responsible for it, Keep America Beautiful (KAB), that one will not hear amidst the din of praise. Contextualizing the PSA historically, socially, and environmentally helps to clarify motivations. As the 1950s began, refillable glass bottles were beginning to be overtaken by aluminum cans as the container of choice for soft drinks and beer. Initially marketed as convenient "throwaways," cans provided a sizable boost in sales for beverage bottling retailers, since they could now produce containers that had no deposit fee attached, as was the case with glass bottles. Nor did bottling companies have to concern themselves with the collection, cleaning, and reuse of their products; since cans were designed as one-time-use, an increase in production was necessary, resulting in higher profits. Though "disposable" cans were a boon to bottling and manufacturing industries, they quickly became the bane of local and state governments who had to deal with the explosion of litter that followed.

When the Vermont legislature began drafting a bill that banned non-reusable beer bottles, vested corporate leaders came together to respond to what they perceived as a threat to a revenue stream of grand potential. Recognizing that other states were looking to solve their own pollution issues—and that Vermont's legislation served as a clear model for curbing it at the source—these businessmen

set to the task of persuading policy makers and the public that pollution should be tackled in a different fashion. Keep America Beautiful was founded in 1953, the same year Vermont passed legislation outlawing non-refillable containers. The nation's first "bottle bill" was short lived, however. Lasting only four years on the books, the bill was met with a "non-renewal" decision after aggressive lobbying against it by industry. It would be another fifteen years before Vermont would pass another bottle bill.

As the 1950s wore on, concerns about the environment increased. Several factors contributed to this development, most notable among them a booming post-war economy that consumed large amounts of land for housing developments and raw materials for manufacturing, and increasing chemical applications in everyday life, as corporations translated war-related inventions to the consumer market. As the problems of litter, pollution and toxification increased, so too did corporate responses to them. KAB continued their work, partnering with the Ad Council in 1961 to produce an anti-litter campaign featuring "Suzy Spotless," a character that is credited with introducing the term "litterbug" to the American vernacular. A year later, Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring* is published, a book detailing the harmful effects of pesticides, especially DDT, that is frequently cited as a significant catalyst for raising environmental awareness. Within this atmosphere a social movement

around environmental protection, conservation, and stewardship begins fomenting.¹⁵⁰

By the late 1960s there existed palpable, mounting social and political pressure on corporations to account for their role in environmental degradation. In response KAB mounted their largest campaign yet. Burson-Marsteller, "the global public relations firm famous for its list of clients with environment-related publicity problems," began work on the Crying Indian spot pro-bono for KAB.¹⁵¹ This Madison Avenue marketing firm, incidentally, was also at the time working for the American Can Company, one of the largest manufacturers of tin cans. As a campaign financed by beverage bottling corporations and other vested parties, the goal was to lessen and contain public pressure on manufacturers to stop producing non-refillable bottles and more generally be held accountable for creating the products that create pollution.

TOWARD GUILT AND AWAY FROM INDIGNATION

¹⁵⁰ The environmental movement has many precursors and influences. My contextualization of the movement and prominent forces that compelled it into being is not to suggest that these are the only forces or that concern for environmental quality and vitality is unique to our time or region of the globe. Its immediate precursor, for example, can be found in the conservation movement, which began in the late 19th century in parts of Prussia and France, who altered their farming techniques to better conserve resources of the land for human use. In US history, the conservationist attitude is embodied by President Theodore Roosevelt, who set aside huge tracts of land with strict limitations on development.

¹⁵¹ Ginger Strand, "The Crying Indian," *Orion Magazine*, Nov./Dec. 2008, <http://www.orionmagazine.org/index.php/articles/article/3642/>

Knowing this origin story, the question of rhetorical success for the Crying Indian PSA is far more complicated than Cialidini and others suggest. A consumer culture increasingly defined by disposability promised substantial increases in profits. Its eradication was simply not an option for the companies behind KAB and others that stood to benefit handsomely from such a cultural transformation. Success in this campaign's purview means not just garnering broad attention, but achieving a very specific type of attention: one that does not question corporate involvement nor critically examine the broader picture of where waste comes from and why. How did these specific aims translate into practice? What identifications and associations does the Crying Indian PSA encourage its audience to make? What precisely are the appeals that resonated with so many Americans and why were they successful?

For having the sobriquet of "Iron Eyes," Cody's eyes reveal a substantial amount about his emotional disposition: the lids droop slightly at the outer corners, the inner corners are gently raised, eyes open and alert with a soft, but steady gaze. Unlike the culturally assumed physiological symptoms of anger—where lips, brow, and eye muscles tighten, the stare hardens and nostrils flare—Cody's face indicates sadness. Anger and sadness do indeed share common ground in our cultural milieu, as both result from a perceived loss or transgression. How these emotions differ in helping organize and orient subsequent action to the perceived loss, however, is significant. Anger tends to involve a heightened concern with the perceived cause of distress, and orients behavior toward acts of retribution. In contrast, sadness

involves heightened concern with the present circumstance and situational agencies that preclude causal attribution to specific people or parties.¹⁵² Psychology pioneer Hartvig Dahl characterizes anger as an "it" emotion that directs attention externally, toward people, events, or objects.¹⁵³ In contrast, Dahl frames sadness as a more passive, introspection-inducing emotion. Whereas anger motivates action aimed at "the source" of the cause, sadness tends to lead in the opposite direction, toward assessing the event's consequences.

One recent study analyzing emotional responses to the 9/11 terrorist attacks confirms this basic distinction. The report shows that "participants reflecting on their anger [when considering the attacks] generated more causal attributions than did those reflecting on their sadness." The pattern of thought that emerges from each emotion is critical to note and helps illuminate what kind of thoughts Cody's single tear would typically trigger. Researchers demonstrated that anger-induced reflection sparks desire for "actions targeting offenders, such as retaliation," whereas sadness prompts actions focused on victims and successive stages, "such as healing."¹⁵⁴ Put differently, *anger activates attributional thought*, triggering themes of justice and blame, whereas *sadness impels a fleshing out of victimage narratives* and motivates the search for reconciliation.

¹⁵² See D. Keltner and K. Edwards, "Beyond simple pessimism: Effects of Sadness and Anger on Social Perception," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 64 (1993): 740-752.

¹⁵³ Hartvig Dahl, "The Appetite Hypothesis of Emotion: A New Psychoanalytic Model of Motivation," in *Emotions in Personality and Psychopathology*, ed. Carroll E. Izard (New York: Plenum Press, 1979), 201-224.

¹⁵⁴ Deborah Small, Jennifer Lerner, and Baruch Fischhoff, "Emotion Priming and Attributions for Terrorism: Americans' Reactions in a National Field Experiment," *Political Psychology* 27.2 (2006): 290.

Leading up to the moment of Cody's tear is a narrative sequence of emotional priming. We are invited to perceive Cody as an individual who, at the outset of the ad, is in his supposedly natural environment, symbolizing oneness with nature, a poised and powerful man living in balance with his surroundings. Visually, the initial few shots suggest a serene atmosphere, but the ominous music building in the background indicates otherwise. A timpani drum sends out a salvo of deep booms, while a snare drum snaps a military-march beat softly in the background. As a set of horns come in further escalating the sense of tension to near-feverish pitch, the camera pans out to reveal Cody's setting: he is surrounded by the giant structures of industrialization, steering his canoe through what appears to be a shipping port. Steel skeletons, cargo containers, towering cranes, and factories up on the distant hillside fill part of the background. Most striking, however, is the imposing figure directly above Cody's canoe in the shot: a massive cargo tanker. The freighter gains in sheer immensity as the camera continues to pan out, making the canoe appear to be a speck of fragility and nostalgia in an environment of hardened steel and commanding size. Cody is visually subordinated to the iconic forms of industrialization, symbolically positioned as powerless against its overwhelming forces.

Our connection to Cody is meant to spike at this instant, since his atmosphere is clearly positioned as an antagonistic force, threatening and denaturalized. In a situation of lone, innocent, displaced man versus faceless factories fuming with pollution, we are wont to side with the human. The precipitous zoom out to show

an unexpected context—referred to as a "reveal shot" in film studies—combines with the suspenseful musical score to emphasize a dramatic juxtaposition between Cody and his symbolic surroundings. The reveal shot is followed by a sequence that visually overlaps these ideological polarities. Cody's silhouette, a nearly pure black figure with braids and jacket fringes dangling against a grey, noxious yellow-tinted background, becomes translucent as the background begins to show a factory-scape. The music reaches its crescendo at the beginning of the overlap, and all instruments transition into a unified, driving beat that conveys urgency and daring hazard.

It is important to note that ad's music and shot-placement position the climax of the ad at this moment—*not* when the trash hits Cody's feet or during the zoom in on the tear—as the climatic scene crystallizes the emotions that prime us for Cody's tear. The peak of intensity juxtaposes the traditionally dressed Native American paddling a canoe against a backdrop of looming, Cimmerian factories. A dissonance results from these two ideological polarities being placed in proximity, luring one toward remembering the (still somewhat fresh) history of their interaction. With the symbol of an industrial society being framed as a malevolent force, one is turned toward a negative history: broken treaties, stolen land, and genocide.

Though our ideal identification is steered toward Cody as protagonist, a much more familiar identification exists with the factory-scape and industrialized civilization, as it is our country's setting. The conflicting incongruity of identifications entices feelings of guilt to arise. It is "our" society that has supplanted the indigenous, who are presumed to be noble in their ecological

attitudes.¹⁵⁵ The history of this conquering is recounted in an instant as the camera zooms outward in the climatic reveal shot.

Having been encouraged to identify with Cody—on account of his role as central protagonist—the viewer is primed for an empathetic experience of sadness, which impels a fleshing out of the victimage narrative, wherein Cody is victim and we, the people, are the transgressor. In contrast to anger, where one tends to investigate and evaluate justice and blame more closely, sadness directs us to the victim, which in this case orients us toward the experience of guilt, since we are framed by association as responsible for Cody's condition. Guilt-emotions motivate one toward atonement for the wrongdoing in an effort to expunge the negative feelings; Cody's tear is geared ultimately toward fomenting guilt, which leads to one wanting to "heal" the situation instead of interrogate the *cause* of pollution. In brief, the tear orients us toward guilt and away from indignation. It orients us toward *reconciliation* and away from *retribution*.

¹⁵⁵ I place "our" in quotes to indicate that collective identity invoked in the juxtaposition sequence is not definitive. That is, the "we" that is formulated against the "them" has vague, scalable parameters. The "we" could be rather large, like, "members of industrial civilization" or otherwise diffuse, such as, "we're part of an imperializing force." Even though the word "America" has not been spoken yet at this point in the PSA, it is likely that such a scene coaxes a sense of national identity in many, if not most. I am not, of course, suggesting here that one consciously articulates such alignments in their thoughts. The positioning of identity and charting of associations happens quickly, often under the radar of conscious thought. The narrative tension produced through juxtaposition and anachronism, however, pulls its viewer into making a series of identifications, if not demands them, in order for the narrative to be interpreted in any capacity.

COLLECTIVE GUILT AND RECALIBRATION OF THE GUILT-REDEMPTION CYCLE

If one applies Burke's theory of victimage to the Crying Indian, the basic outline looks like this: bottling manufacturers and other vested corporations seek to "ritualistically cleanse themselves by loading the burden of their own iniquities" upon another entity, in this case the American consumer, who "performs the role of vicarious atonement."¹⁵⁶ The "iniquities" of creating environmentally toxic and wasteful materials in the search for profit are transferred to the consumer, who is framed as responsible for the product's eventual impact.

What makes this otherwise seemingly straightforward account so notable, however, is *how* the corporate interests "load the burden" onto us, the scapegoat, what gets *transformed* in the transfer, and how the guilt of being scapegoated orients subsequent behavior. The fulcrum that allows for all of this to occur is the specific invocation of *collective guilt*, as one did not personally make Cody sad, obviously; but more to the point, neither did they participate directly in the extermination of Native American cultures. The ad's skillful linkages and associations, however, attempt to place that last statement in doubt. And this is precisely what makes collective guilt so intriguing from a rhetorical perspective: the

¹⁵⁶ Kenneth Burke, *Permanence and Change: An Anatomy of Purpose*, 3rd ed. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984), 271.

channel through which it arises is primarily—and in some cases *only*—through one's identification with a group, not necessarily through one's direct actions.¹⁵⁷

Put succinctly, collective guilt refers to the experience of distress or remorse felt by an individual when a group identified with causes unjustifiable harm. One does not have to personally take part in the harmful actions to experience guilt for them. In fact, the element of direct action is frequently absent in situations involving collective guilt. Indeed, this is perhaps the most striking characteristic of collective guilt and should therefore be emphasized: it is not necessary for one to participate directly in the guilty actions in order to emotionally experience guilt for said actions.

Collective guilt is deployed with frequency in activist appeals because it draws on the personal connection one has with the group in question, whether it's ideological, financial, or activity-based. For example, an anti-war activist may remind you of the fact that over half of your tax dollars go toward military spending. *You* are directly contributing to the wars by helping fund the bombings that often kill just as many innocent civilians as they kill insurgents. *You* sponsor the war financially and so it follows that you are complicit in its crimes (or share in its glory, a pro-war advocate may point out), even though you personally have never committed any harm in combat. Though direct participation is not necessary to invoke collective guilt, some degree of contribution is often highlighted. A climate

¹⁵⁷ Edmund Burke famously said that, "You cannot indict a whole nation." This may be true at the level of the courts and objective guilt, though it certainly does not stop people from assigning guilt to whole nations, races, or other essentialized collectives.

activist may point out that by driving an SUV you are contributing to the depletion of the ozone layer and polar ice caps. Or an anti-littering commercial may suggest that by failing to properly dispose of your trash you're among those polluting the environment.

At first glance, Kenneth Burke's invocation of Original sin's secular equivalent—variously labeled categorical, tribal, dynastic, or inherited guilt—suggests considerable overlap with the concept of collective guilt, but there is an important distinction. In Burke's schematic, categorical guilt is socially infused, in both senses of the phrase: it is inherent to the social order itself, to begin with, and as a result, we find it permeating the rhetorics we learn from social institutions and interactions. Working from Samuel Coleridge's claim that the foundation of Christian faith lies in "[t]he two great moments [. . .] Original Sin and Redemption," Burke argues that this theological formula is mirrored throughout macro social structures and micro human relations. For Burke, the two-fold process of guilt and atonement "is the very centre of man's social motivation," and he makes it clear that "any scheme that shifts the attention to other motivational areas is a costly error, *except insofar as its insights can be brought back into the area of this central quandary.*"¹⁵⁸ Burke claims that simply by being a symbol-using animal born into a social structure driven by a craving for hierarchical order, one automatically inherits the sense of guilt endemic to the system. This is a *categorical* guilt, he

¹⁵⁸ Burke, *Permanence*, 285. Indeed, Burke defines a rhetorician's duty two pages earlier as being "[on the] watch always for ways of locating its possible secular equivalents."

writes, “intrinsic to the social order as such; and in this sense it is ‘inherited’ by all mankind, being ‘prior’ to any individual lapse into ‘actual sin,’”

Contrastingly, I use the common sensorium to emphasize *pathē* as historically contingent and culturally shaped. Although I agree with Burke that guilt is an enormously powerful motivating force, especially in countries heavily influenced by Christianity, I argue that emotional norms are never unalterable features of a social order, but are rather shaped, maintained, and revised through collective rhetorics and practices over time through what Lauren Berlant calls a “tangled cluster” of discursive practices.¹⁵⁹ Burke affirms categorical guilt to be an “*is*.” Importantly, it’s an “*is*” that implies the “*ought*” of categorical atonement. Whereas categorical guilt—a secular equivalent of the Christian original sin—is *ontological*, collective guilt necessarily falls into the *epistemological* realm. For collective guilt involves collective memory, the knowledge of past events and decisions, the awareness of social groupings, and most importantly, it involves one’s *identification* with a collective. Therefore, I approach collective guilt with an eye toward these contingent identifications that one must establish with a collective in order for the guilt to be actualized. My focus, then, is on how guilt is wielded in conjunction with environmental appeals by those who are primarily interested in financial profit rather than in a healthy, functioning ecology of life on earth.

Collective guilt’s unique constitution—where one’s identification with a group is the primary driver, not necessarily direct action—is also what makes

¹⁵⁹ Lauren Berlant, *The Queen of America Goes to Washington City: Essays on Sex and Citizenship* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1997), 5.

collective guilt so rhetorically exploitable. In shifting the iniquities of disposable containers to the public, the ad actually loads far greater burdens. The lone Native American set against a backdrop of immense factories spewing smoke connotes general histories of indigenous versus colonizing forces, as well as the more specific histories of Native Americans and the decline that followed their encounter with Europeans-turned-Americans. All these historical connotations orient the viewer toward a remarkably ponderous guilt that includes genocide, exploitation, and environmental devastation. The second half of the ad focuses increasingly on trash and its disposal, and the iniquities of litter, in brief, ride in on a tide of substantial collective guilt. The scapegoat's burden is not just roadside rubbish, but also the industrial and colonial forces that have disrespected the land and its original inhabitants.

From a Burkean perspective, lumping such a large swath of transgressions together as if they were equal and thereby collapsing distinctions between direct guilt and collective guilt is *mystification*. The PSA effectively constructs, as Burke would put it, "a fog of merger-terms" that conceals the ultimate motives of the corporate interests behind KAB. "If, when there is a quarrel over property," whether over its acquisition or in this instance, responsibility of disposal, "instead of confronting it squarely you begin [. . .] looking for remote kinds of metaphysical or

theological anguish and alienation embedded in the very essence of humanity,” Burke warns us, “you are blinded by a principle of ‘mystification.’”¹⁶⁰

For our purposes this translates as such: when the issue is who should be responsible for product packaging—those who produce it or those who touched it last—and you are confronted with the inherited collective guilt of an entire nation and its present sins resulting from a heavily industrialized means of production, you have been blinded by mystification. While you are pondering how to get rid of disquieting feelings, “empires are striving for *world markets*.”¹⁶¹

Though Burke’s victimage model is useful, the rhetorical strategy of collective guilt examined here requires a more nuanced reading. For example, in Burke’s scapegoating, the process by which one unloads their iniquities onto others is through a rhetoric involving strong distinction of “we” and “they.” By claiming that “they” are radically different and that it is “they” who make “us” impure, the stage is set for symbolic exile and cleansing. In the Crying Indian we can see a modified process: first, a relatively vague “we” is created; second, the present ill is framed as a result of prior individual consumer choice, invoking and personalizing a sense of agency requisite for feeling culpable; third, individual connection to the group is mystified through amplification.

Unlike Burke’s model, instead of drawing hard boundaries between “they” and “we,” this strategy actually aims at *broadening* the “we.” By first obfuscating the

¹⁶⁰ Kenneth Burke, *A Rhetoric of Motives* (Berkeley, University of California Press, 1969), 108.

¹⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 108.

proportionality of guilt, it can then safely be distributed equally amongst individual members. Consider again the water bottle's declaration from this essay's introduction: "We can all make a difference. Please recycle." I am enjoined into a diffuse "we" that is ostensibly seeking as a collective to improve our environmental conditions. Nevertheless, the appeal to recycle directs responsibility to me for a bottle produced of materials that will at minimum take five hundred years to breakdown. The sheer fact that this rhetorical situation is occurring some half a century after Keep America Beautiful formed to stymie enactment of "bottling bills" and persuade the public that disposable containers are their responsibility indicates quite clearly the power of the rhetorical strategy under analysis.

Another contemporary example will help to further illuminate the maneuvers outlined above. Before showing how this same process operates subtly in eco-friendly rhetorics, I wish to offer a brief example from the BP/Deepwater Horizon explosion in 2012 because each step is laid bare in exaggerated form. In a BP-sponsored press conference, US Coast Guard Captain Ed Stanton made the following remark: "[There are no perfect options for cleaning up the spill.] It's name your poison. Look, we're all guilty in this rummage. If you drive a car, you own part of this spill."¹⁶² The guilty "we" is expanded here to include anyone who drives a car.¹⁶³ The qualifying "if" that begins Stanton's last sentence intimates that driving

¹⁶² Kathy Lohr, "In Louisiana, BP Tries to Quell Fears Over Spill," *NPR*, May 13, 2010. <http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=126805557>.

¹⁶³ BP has relied on this strategy before, in the Prudhoe Bay oil spill of 2006. The company hired Peter Sandman, a well-known "risk communication" consultant, to dispel public outrage. Sandman administered a five-point plan based on "outrage factors": 1) Voluntary

is a voluntary option, while the 2nd person address of “you” individualizes and intensifies the agency in that choice.

One could hypothetically use statistics to determine just how much one car owner is responsible for their part of the spill and adjust the guilt accordingly. (The result would fall considerably right of the decimal point.) Any technical percentage of objective guilt, of course, entirely misses the rhetorical impact of such an argument. If one *feels* that their personal use of gasoline contributes to the demand for oil, thus spiking the call for increased supply, thus leading to more off-shore drilling, thus increasing the possibility for spills, their guilt will be gauged by how much they believe they could have and/or can still change that personal action. “I *could* drive less,” will always prove a far more powerful emotional rhetoric than any percentage breakdown of objective guilt. Just as with the Crying Indian, the aim is to redirect anger into guilt. Again, the rhetorical strategy is to replace emotions oriented toward retribution with those oriented toward reconciliation.

Risk. If you are able to convince the public they have voluntarily played a role in the incident, externally imposed risks can be downplayed; 2) Fair Risk. “The benefits of your product or service might greatly outweigh the risks,” Sandman suggests; 3) Familiar Risk. By making the risk seem familiar, the fear of it is diminished; 4) Risk Control. “A company can project these messages: ‘Butt out’ and ‘Stop worrying.’ But a public that has no control over a risk will do neither,” he writes. In other words, emphasize the control consumers have over the situation and their involvement with the situation; 5) Acknowledge Risk. Build credibility by acknowledging mistakes will be more effective than stonewalling. Though Sandman does not explicitly discuss guilt, it is essential to his model’s success. Consider, for example, that two of the five points aim at connecting the public’s agency to the incident, emphasizing consumer complicity. Just as with the Crying Indian, the aim is to redirect anger into guilt. Whereas one tends to investigate and evaluate justice and blame more closely in anger, feelings of guilt direct our efforts toward expunging the negativity. The strategy at work here is to replace emotions oriented toward retribution with those oriented toward reconciliation.

AGENCY IN COLLECTIVE GUILT

I bring attention to how consumer complicity is emphasized in these rhetorics because the potency of guilty feelings is linked to one's perceived agency. In contrast to shame, for example, guilt results from harmful behavior. One experiences guilt based on *how they act*, whereas one experiences shame based on *who they are*. These are not always clear and distinct categories; rather, we may perhaps best view them as polarities on a scale of controllability. According to Branscombe, et al:

[s]hame-inducing events do not necessarily involve any harm doing to others at all; people primarily feel shame for events that involve harm to the self's reputation or perceived competence. In contrast, the more that people feel that they personally could have exerted some control in preventing the perpetrator's harmful actions, the more likely they are to feel guilt, and such perceived control should be greater the more the perceiver is interdependently linked with the perpetrators.¹⁶⁴

Agency, in other words, serves as an excellent measurement for gauging a sense of guilt. Agency is frequently considered retrospectively in determining guilt ("Could my actions have changed things?"), and is therefore critical for the subsequent process of atonement. The more one was able to obviate the transgression and still did not act, the more potent the guilt to follow.

¹⁶⁴ Nyla Branscombe, Ben Slugoski, and Diane Kappen, "The Measurement of Collective Guilt: What It Is and What It is Not," in *Collective Guilt: International Perspectives*, eds. Branscombe and Doosje (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 29.

It follows that one's motivation to achieve atonement is often *proportional to their perceived agency* and therefore culpability to the violation. The more BP is able to connect your actions to the spill and induce corresponding levels of guilt, the more effort will be spent getting rid of those negative feelings and less energy put toward anger's trajectory toward retribution. The more opportunities one has to choose eco-friendly products or services, the more likely one is to feel an increased sense of agency over environmental devastation.

This disproportionality between agency and outcome highlights a curious aspect of collective guilt: the proportionality of one's contribution to the group's actions does not scale in the same fashion as it does when considering individual action. Since guilt at the individual level becomes more potent with higher levels of agency, one may already suspect that collective guilt complicates the matter, since an individual's control over a group's behavior is limited. As the group scales upward in size, this is especially so; the ability of one person to change the outcome of a nation's actions in war or affect its overall demand for oil, for example, is severely constrained. In collective guilt, one's agency is not judged in comparison to the overall size of the group, but is considered in relation to one's individual capacity to have done something. The scale and setting in determining individual agency within collective actions remains local, in other words.

These findings indicate that a critical factor in the effectiveness of the strategy seen initially in the PSA and later in eco-friendly rhetorics is that the offer *specific routes for atonement*. Collective guilt, after all, is very difficult to atone for;

guilt motivates us to rid the disquieting feelings through reconciliation with those we have harmed, but in collective guilt it is often the case that we do not have access to the victims (whether it be Native Americans, 19th century slaves, or an oil-slicked pelican). By pairing the inflamed feelings of collective guilt with specific, low-threshold acts of atonement these rhetorics point the way toward completion of the emotional cycle, channeling affective investment and orienting behavior in the process.¹⁶⁵

Similar to other examples considered thus far, I argue the ideograph <eco-friendly> also activates a sense of collective guilt; it is distinct from the others, however, in that it summons it in a more clandestine manner by tacitly acknowledging the existence of “*unfriendly*” practices. When presented with this choice one enters into an ethical situation. Choosing the “friendly” option frames one as virtuous, the other as transgressor. Unlike the Crying Indian’s rather conspicuous appeal to one’s sense of guilt, <eco-friendly> is far more subtle and refined in its dynamics of guilt. A veneer of benevolence masks the process of emotional orientation and one is invited to feel that they are simply “doing good” and making a positive contribution, rather than atoning for a guilt that has infiltrated one’s emotional registers.

<Eco-friendly> invokes for a ready-made guilt-redemption cycle, consistently stoking a low-lying sense of collective guilt that can be nearly simultaneously expunged. Importantly, that act of absolution—purchasing eco-friendly products

¹⁶⁵ The risk of Captain Stanton’s claim is that no act of atonement is proposed, leaving open the possibility for guilt to fester with unpredictable results.

and services—is configured for individualized actions. And it is here I would suggest the rhetorical might of <eco-friendly> and its associated rhetorics, and their ascension in our cultural vernacular: although they gain their animating power from an insinuation of collective guilt, their atonement can be reached through—and is directed toward—personal consumer habits.

What is at stake here for the rhetoric of social movements is the recognition of how, paradoxically, *collective guilt can be deployed in a manner that actually undermines the potential and desire for collective action*. Collective guilt, in other words, can be a powerful individualizing force. This may seem especially odd given the typical trajectory of the guilt-atonement process. As Deborah Tollefsen notes, whereas “[s]hame causes one to hide, to avoid others, to avoid interaction with those in whose eyes we have been shamed [. . .] [guilt] often results in an opening up to others.”¹⁶⁶ When these acts of atonement are anchored in market-based solutions, consumption management techniques, and ineffectual chores, the potential for collective action is scattered into many acts of individual atonement.¹⁶⁷

GUILT IN THE COMMON SENSORIUM

¹⁶⁶ Deborah Tollefsen, “The Rationality of Collective Guilt,” *Midwest Studies in Philosophy* 30.1 (2006): 224.

¹⁶⁷ Such actions are ineffectual in the sense that they do not solve but the problem in the least, but rather keep it safely hidden. Trash along the roadside is a visual reminder of all the products and packaging created and throwaway; when put in designated containers the problem is out of sight, out of mind. A connection may be made here between the organization’s name—Keep America *Beautiful*—and the goal to simply hide the pollution problem.

Thus far I have attempted to define and clarify the rhetorical implications of collective guilt by contrasting it with other emotions, such as anger and shame. In the process I tried to show how its rhetorical deployment has had a discernable impact on our everyday lives, and continues to do so. I have argued that collective guilt holds significant relevance to the Environmental movement, for its ability to contain and ultimately dissipate public desire for change into system-bolstering practices. Moreover, I indicated that collective guilt is a productive area for rhetoric studies to further explore given the important role identification plays in its formation, as well as for the sheer motivational force that guilt animates in us. In these final few pages I would like to offer reflection on how our common sensorium shapes our understanding and digestion of collective guilt, which necessarily entails going back one more step to examine what has shaped our common sensorium.

The tenets of classical liberalism have left a lasting impression on the formation of what Lauren Berlant calls our “National Symbolic”—a cluster of texts that construct national-public discussions—with the philosophical traditions of idealism and individualism converging to produce a view of society that places the sovereignty of the individual at its foundation.¹⁶⁸ “Liberalism argues for the centrality of a complex set of individual rights (e.g. property, conscience, religion, movement, press, speech, suffrage),” writes Alessandro Bonanno, “which emerged in opposition to premodern absolutism and dependency and later were embodied in

¹⁶⁸ Berlant, *Queen*, x.

modern citizenship.”¹⁶⁹ Also among these tenets is the notion that social injustice is primarily the result of attitudes and ideas. Oppression, it follows, is overcome through changing the minds of individuals through rational deliberation and moral suasion. Many contemporary activist tactics are oriented around these principles, which is understandable given that our country’s political ideology was largely founded with the values of classical liberalism in mind. Letter-writing campaigns, petitions, and a hopeful reliance on the legal system to address injustice are indicative of this philosophical tradition.

Situating the individual at the core of its social theories necessarily has implications for how guilt is digested, as the causes and solutions for victimage are dealt with at the level of individual volition. That is, a tradition emphasizing individual responsibility will naturally emphasize and legitimize a notion of guilt that best corresponds to that principle. Within liberalism’s tradition of *objective, individual* guilt, the focus is on one’s *being* guilty according to that person’s actions and motives only, not on *feelings* of guilt. Consequently, collective guilt—the feelings of disquietude caused by the harms committed by a group identified with—has an uneasy relationship within this tradition. This form of guilt appears rather illogical, since the individual’s actual, objective contribution to the harm done may be extremely low or in some cases non-existent. The liberal tradition’s elevation of individual responsibility causes dissonance when considering guilt that requires thinking of the individual foremost as a member of a group.

¹⁶⁹ Alessandro Bonanno, “Liberal Democracy in the Global Era,” *Agriculture and Human Values* 15 (1998): 223-242.

An opposing perspective to classical liberalism can be found in collectivist traditions, where the basic social unit is the group and organized political formations are the primary means for social change. Philosophically, then, the notion of collective guilt is more readily digestible within the tradition of collectivism, where members are encouraged to take on the guilt of others, to carry the responsibility of the group's actions even when they themselves were not personally involved. Likewise, harm committed against a member by someone outside the group may be viewed as an attack on all.

In our common sensorium, heavily shaped as it is by liberalism, collective guilt is rendered a perplexing emotion to digest from the beginning. The relative inscrutability of collective guilt within our emotional literacy marks it as an unstable and therefore exploitable emotion. The dissonance—both emotional and cognitive—encountered when interpreting and responding to appeals based in collective guilt can be attributed in large measure, I argue, to the common sensorium in which we are born and reared.

I have advanced the thesis that the rhetorical might of <eco-friendly> and corresponding rhetorics lies in their coupling of collective guilt with individualized atonement. These rhetorics quietly stir the motivating forces of guilt and then reconcile them through market-based solutions premised on rational choice. Offering atonement through such individualized action stands in stark contrast to appeals closely tied to social movement traditions, where organized political resistance is promoted as the appropriate response. Significantly, positioning

environmentally-friendly acts as the solution for ecological ills works to obviate the need for joining collectivities of resistance and striving against political powers. As I hope to have demonstrated, eco-friendly rhetorics vitiate affective potential for collective action by partitioning it into many isolated acts of individual atonement.

CHAPTER 3

LOCAL FOOD'S AFFECTIVE ADVOCACY

Food is the rare moral arena in which the ethical choice is generally the one more likely to make you groan with pleasure.

—Barbara Kingsolver, *Animal, Vegetable, Miracle*

[A] sense of place is far more unique and malleable; it defies such easy measurement (though it doesn't defy expression or feeling). Place remains part of, is comfortable within, the realm of the non-rational.

—Laura Delind, "Of Bodies, Place, and Culture:
Re-Situating Local Food"

The grapes that sit upon the supermarket shelves are mute; we cannot see the fingerprints of exploitation upon them.

—David Harvey, "Between Space and Time:
Reflections on the Geographical Imagination"

INTRODUCTION

The robust development of the Local Food movement over the past decade marks it as an alluring case study for exploring how social movements rhetorics attempt to shift ideographic orientations and with them, the common sensorium.

What rhetorics are provoking more people each year to invest—financially, emotionally, and intellectually—in local food and food awareness more generally? Evidence of rhetorical success seems increasingly apparent: farmers markets have grown extensively in both size and number over the past decade.¹⁷⁰ 2009 saw an increase in the number of small farming operations in America, reversing the near-century long trend of small farm decline. Community Supported Agriculture programs (CSAs), where customers pay at the beginning of a season to receive weekly shares of produce, are also rapidly rising—there are several thousand today, whereas in 1990 there were fifty. In 1986 there were two.¹⁷¹

Indeed, among the contemporary social movements one could identify as exerting discernible pressure on the shaping of our material and cultural spheres, the Local Food movement stands out for its steady, substantial rise in our collective mediascape. Books decrying the ills of an industrial food system are stalwarts on best-sellers lists, with Eric Schlosser's *Fast Food Nation* spending two years on *The New York Times*'s list and Michael Pollan's *The Omnivore's Dilemma* remaining there for over three years. These bestsellers are joined by a salvo of other popular books recently released about the politics of food and eating locally. Citing the significant "popularization of a trend in using locally grown ingredients [and] taking advantage of seasonally available foodstuffs," the Oxford English Dictionary even deemed

¹⁷⁰ The number of farmers markets has more than tripled in the past 15 years according to U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) 2010 publication of the National Directory of Farmers Markets. There are now more than 6,100 registered markets in operation around the country.

¹⁷¹ "Know Your Farmer, Know Your Food," <http://www.usda.gov/>.

“locavore”—a label for members of a movement that “encourages consumers to buy from farmers’ markets or even to grow or pick their own food, arguing that fresh, local products are more nutritious and taste better”—their “Word of the Year” in 2007.¹⁷² Food—as a topic—is on the tips of tongues everywhere.

To illuminate how the movement is attempting to move the common sensorium through the ideograph <local>, in this chapter I analyze three film documentaries that emerge from and are constitutive of the Local Food movement: *Ingredients: The Local Food movement Take Root* (2009), *Food Fight: Revolution Never Tasted So Good* (2009), and *Food Inc.* (2008). In analyzing the cluster of key terms, arguments, and attitudes that circulate around and inform the ideograph <local>, what emerges as salient is a rhetorical strategy that highlights the positive bodily experiences of eating locally. In particular, rhetorics of “taste” are central to each film, with taste positioned not merely as what the tongue experiences but rather as a wide spectrum of affective pleasure—an enlivening of the whole body. It is with this expanded understanding that taste is used as an access point for getting others interested in food and invested in the food movement, across class divides and despite its ostensible connotations with luxury.

This case study reveals how food—as an object of affective attachment and emotional investment—undergoes a significant shift in the common sensorium in the latter half of 20th century as a consequence of industrial farming practices and corresponding forms of marketing. The Local Food movement, I argue, is primarily

¹⁷² Oxford English Dictionary, “Word of the Year: Locavore,” <http://blog.oup.com/2007/11/locavore/>.

an attempt to shift collective affective and emotional orientations to where one's relationship with food is experienced with more reverence and with increased attention to the sensuous relationship it invites with one's body. In addition to detailing how rhetorics of taste invite such a relationship, my analysis also demonstrates how each film works to shape the definition and meaning of "food," attaching to it certain connotations while distinguishing it from foodstuffs that have been either heavily processed or commoditized. "Real" food is associated with flavor, taste, and a web of relationships that is to be respected. Whereas, in the last chapter's analysis of the Environmental movement, the form of guilt evoked by the Crying Indian PSA inhibits organized, collective action, the rhetorics of local food examined here catalyze an expansion of relationships and the creation of communities. Moreover, in stark contrast to the strategy of the Crying Indian PSA, these films seek to clarify the role of industrial production, economic motive and corporate culpability.

I see in these local food rhetorics a strategy that aims to attune others to "the way the sensual world greets the sensate body, and with the affective forces that are generated in such meetings."¹⁷³ This strategy does not focus so much on emotion—specific, narrativized, and transitory experiences of affect—as it does on the more general energies that circulate between bodies and are felt upon the body. It points to realm of feeling and experience that sits on the threshold of language, where moods and sensory stimuli and entangled memories lead away from

¹⁷³ Highmore, "Bitter," 121.

representational articulation and toward a bodily knowledge, an incorporated epistemology. This strategy privileges a *feltness* of food experience, positioning it as both a starting point for involvement with local food, as well as a foundation for sustained advocacy in favor of local food.

I introduce the notion of *affective advocacy* to identify this rhetorical strategy, one that places the body and its material dynamics as a primary locus for enacting social change.¹⁷⁴ The affective advocacy revealed through an analysis of Local Food movement rhetorics marks a shift from a strategy composed of primarily rational, instrumental and economic appeals, I argue, to one that emphasizes the affective, the non-rational, the embodied and the embedded. As a result, <local> becomes an increasingly established ideograph that both catalyzes and orients affect, triggering the associations generated by the surrounding discourses of taste and pleasure. I demonstrate how <local> connotes more about the relationships one develops around food and community, than it does about how many miles away one's food was grown; attempts to understand "local" by way of quantitative measure offer little insight into how the term has come to mobilize publics around food issues. If the strategy of affective advocacy continues to be effective, we will witness a paradigm shift in the food system that refocuses our attention and energies from commodity to community, and from price to place.

¹⁷⁴ As I explain in the section, "Situating Affective Advocacy," I use the term "advocacy" to emphasize the rhetorical labor that is primarily focused on *promoting alternatives* to the status quo, in contrast to "activism," which I suggest is focused on *critiquing and generating resistance* to the status quo. To be sure, these are complementary terms and refer to actions that often have significant overlap. It is intended, therefore as a soft distinction, used to emphasize overall rhetorical orientation social movement development.

The three documentaries I analyze constitute an archive of discourses attempting to reframe food perceptions and practices. Documentaries are a particularly rich source for culling social movement discourse, as the genre constitutes an increasingly visible and viable force in creating social change.¹⁷⁵ The rise (or rebirth) of the activist documentary has many contributing factors, significant among them though is the wide access that digital technologies afford.¹⁷⁶ From laptops in living rooms to large screening festivals, the documentaries being analyzed here are being viewed in multiple formats and contexts. As these films proliferate across screens, they also spread the discourses driving the movement.

This is especially true for the Local Food movement, which has made extensive use of the genre. *The Washington Post* even titled the summer of the 2009, “The Summer of Food Docs,” highlighting the “fresh batch of food documentaries

¹⁷⁵ To be clear, I am labeling these films as texts of activism and advocacy and reading them as such. I agree with Angela Aguayo, who argues that applying the descriptor of “activist” (and I would add, “advocacy”) to certain documentaries should be done with deliberation, as its connotations are significant. Aguayo’s four-pronged criteria for using the label, “activist documentary,” is useful for describing how I am positioning each film: “1) It functions to open up a space for collective political action; 2) it is connected in some way to an action focused social movement; and 3) it intervenes in the process of social change by facilitating action beyond mere consumption and elaboration of identity; 4) [it is] caught up into political discourse bigger than itself and circulate[s] among a variety of mediums.” The films under consideration perform each of these tasks (even though they also demonstrate that there is nothing “mere” regarding consumption). Aguayo, “Documentary Film/Video and Social Change: A Rhetorical Investigation of Dissent” (Ph.D. diss., University of Texas, Austin, 2008), 13.

¹⁷⁶ The genre has obviously shifted in its primary textual markets over time. As Angela Aguayo notes, the genre once denoted “observational, non-interventionist” films, whereas the contemporary genre is “becoming less explicitly objective, purposefully partisan and unquestionably controversial” (10).

[to] hit the big screen.”¹⁷⁷ In other words, these films are consciously contributing to the *movement* of the Local Food movement, unapologetically promoting local food, waging significant critiques of the institutional barriers that prevent its development, and promoting viable alternatives. We may assume, then, that producers have selected and edited together what they anticipate to be the most forceful arguments for persuading public opinion of the need to create alternative agricultural systems. These films are an effort to educate, but also to inspire, to move people emotionally to the importance of food, the precariousness of its current status, and the benefits (or necessities) of eating locally.¹⁷⁸

In the chapter’s conclusion, I explore implications my analysis may present for other social movements and the common sensorium. Although local food may be a “rare moral arena,” as Barbara Kingsolver puts it, where “the ethical choice is generally the one more likely to make you groan with pleasure,” the rhetorics that frame it as such may hold an lesson for activists, advocates, and academicians concerned with other justice causes; namely, for a social movement to evolve,

¹⁷⁷ Kim O’Donnel, “The Summer of Food Docs,” May 26, 2009.

<http://voices.washingtonpost.com/mighty-appetite/>

¹⁷⁸ In doing so, the vernacular of social activism courses throughout each film, framing food as a site for political action. For example, *Food Inc.* adopts the language of the democratic process, repeatedly claiming that we “vote three times a day with our forks.” Militant metaphors, a trope long favored by activists, are abundant in *Food Fight* (as the title demonstrates). In this film the Local Food movement is framed as a “culinary revolt” and “taste revolution,” invoking imagery of insurrection and guerrilla tactics. The point I wish to make here is that each film fosters a subjectivity of political agency in its viewers, situating audiences as either existing or potential members of a movement. They are calibrated attempts to motivate and mobilize others into *feeling* like something is happening—that a movement is afoot—urging viewers to play a contributing role in what they each deem “an awakening” of eating in America.

alternatives must be proposed alongside critique, and the affects that get attached to those alternatives are of critical importance.¹⁷⁹ Perhaps the only way to defeat a way of life geared primarily toward the health of an economic system—often at the expense of environmental, cultural, and physiological health—is to keep the focus centered on healthy affective pleasures.

COMMODIFICATION AND RECLAMATION OF THE REAL

An indistinguishable supermarket aisle is the first scene in both *Food Inc.* and *Food Fight*. Slow, panning shots of colorfully branded boxes and bags of processed foods situate us in an all too familiar point of view. The camera angles mimic the perspective of American food buyers, surveying the seemingly endless varieties available for consumption. Shots of packaged food products begin to overlap and dissolve into one another, emphasizing abundance, expansiveness, and possibilities. Against a backdrop of ominous music the voice over in *Food Fight* begins, “When we walk through the supermarket we're bombarded with choices: Fresh or frozen. Low fat or lots of fat. Cool ranch or nacho cheese.” Similarly, in *Food Inc.* we hear Michael Pollan’s voice accompany shots scanning stacks of meat and rows of potato chips: “The modern American supermarket has on average 47,000 products.”¹⁸⁰ All this diversity is an illusion, we are told. Those thousands of choices are mostly rearrangements of corn and soy; the pastoral images populating the packaging do

¹⁷⁹ Barbara Kingsolver, with Steven L. Hopp and Camille Kingsolver, *Animal, Vegetable, Miracle: A Year of Food Life* (New York: Harper Collins, 2007), 22.

¹⁸⁰ *Food Inc.*, dir. Robert Kenner (Los Angeles: Robert Kenner Films, 2008), DVD.

not coincide with the product's actual history; supermarkets even conceal the changing of the seasons, with tomatoes offered year round. The point-of-view shots help accentuate the point being articulated: our eyes deceive us.

All three films open with a similar rhetorical strategy—namely, that we as consumers have been deliberately duped into an unhealthy relationship with our food. A multi-layered veil has been constructed and maintained with vigilance by a handful of powerful interests, the films suggest. The result, we are told, is that an overwhelming majority of food purchases are done in a somnambulant state, with the populace being unaware of how their food is produced, where it is being produced, or who is producing it. This disempowering narrative is followed with a salvo of fearsome statements about the collective health. Pollan is featured immediately in both films, listing negative consequences: “The industrial food system is making us very sick. In many, many different ways. There is the obesity epidemic. There is diabetes. Four out of ten leading killers in this country are food-related chronic diseases.” The film *Ingredients* begins in similar fashion, with a voice over accompanying shots of crop-dusting planes and bulging bellies: “Health and environmental concerns, food safety and cost are all making headlines. We're unsure of what to eat, at a time when we're eating food so different than we ever have.” The rhetorical frame being established at the outset of each film is one of control. For the consumer, this initial frame is characterized by lack—in particular, lack of control over information, health, and food quality.

To answer the question of who *is* in control of the system, each film presents within the first ten minutes a condensed story of the past hundred years of food production. *Ingredients* and *Food Fight* trace America's food system from the beginning of the twentieth century, placing particular emphasis on WWII as a crucial pivot point. After war munitions factories switched to chemical fertilizers, farms started producing more than ever, modern agribusiness was born, and within a short time they argue, a few companies controlled the majority of food production.

This rapid consolidation is framed as a wresting of control (even if unintentional) from those eating the food, but also those on the front lines actually producing it—farms become factories and farmers become contract employees. As one interviewed farmer notes, “[a] conventional farmer today under current conditions is *forced* to do what he's doing.” *Food Inc.* tells a similar tale, highlighting fast food as a driving force. Eric Schlosser comments, “[w]hen McDonalds is the largest purchaser of ground beef in the United States and they want their hamburgers to taste everywhere exactly the same, they change how ground beef is produced.” Bringing a Fordist factory-mentality and obsession with efficiency to the supply side as well as the back-of-house preparation, fast food stressed uniformity and lowest-possible cost at all of food's various stages, contributing to a “monocrop” culture, where farms concentrate on growing a single food item *en masse*.

As mentioned, each film argues early on to the viewer that there exist deliberately concealing forces at work within our food chain. Eric Schlosser, for example, narrates at the beginning of *Food Inc.* that there is “this curtain that is

dropped between us and where our food is coming from. The industry doesn't want you to know the truth about what you're eating, because if you knew, you might not want to eat it." *Food Inc.* aims to lift this curtain, exposing the players, places, and processes involved in our most popular foodstuffs. In tracing the shrink-wrapped packages of boneless meat backwards to its origins, for instance, it reveals the heavily mechanized factories—not pastoral-idyllic farms—producing it. They perform, in other words, commodity chain analyses.

It is telling that Marxist political geographer David Harvey, an expert on the process of commodification, chooses food as his example when explaining the concept. Harvey will often ask students to trace the origins of all the elements involved in their last meal. The near impossible task proves his point that we frequently perform something as essential and intimate as eating, "without the slightest knowledge of the intricate geography of production and the myriad social relationships embedded in the system that puts it upon our table." The first step to understanding commodification is the acknowledgement that an informational veil exists, one that promotes consumption through obscuration. Harvey writes,

[m]arkets conceal social (and, we should add, geographical) information and relations. We cannot tell from looking at the commodity whether it has been produced by happy laborers working in a cooperative in Italy, grossly exploited laborers working under conditions of apartheid in South Africa, or wage laborers protected by adequate labor legislation and wage agreements in Sweden. The grapes that sit upon the supermarket shelves are mute; we cannot see the fingerprints of exploitation upon them.¹⁸¹

¹⁸¹ David Harvey, "Between Space and Time: Reflections on the Geographical Imagination," *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 80.3 (1990): 421.

What is stated clearly and forcefully here is that the processional narrative of food—how it was produced, by whom, and where from—is stripped from the product in commodification, allowing other narratives, those of marketing and retail, to be attached at a later stage.

I would argue that Harvey's continued use of food as an example in his pedagogy of commodification is far from flippant, but rather suggests that audiences find it compelling—that there is something in the transformation of food into a commodity that people find especially revealing. First, food's *everydayness* makes it a remarkable commonplace. We all eat. We all have personal relationships to certain foods. And we are all dependent upon food. Regardless of the audience's age, race, class, or gender, food is essential. Harvey's stylistic reliance on voice, touch, and sight in the last sentence, direct us to a sensory disconnect, represented through a limitation of voice, a deception of the eyes, and a general numbing of the body's ability to feel. He invokes our capacities to communicate, only to rhetorically disable them, creating a sense of isolation and deprivation. Food, Harvey suggests, has the potential to "speak to us," yet our culture has entrained us to mute this voice, and subsequently, we become affectively withdrawn from the sensuousness of food.¹⁸²

¹⁸² It is quite possible that Harvey is riffing on Marx, who argues in Volume 1 of *Capital*, that, "as soon as [a product] emerges as a commodity, it changes into a thing which transcends sensuousness," which also anchors the concept in a loss of feeling and connection. See: *Capital: A Critique of Political Economy* Vol. 1, trans. Ben Fowkes (New York: Penguin, 1990): 163.

I emphasize Harvey's metaphors of the body and sensory communication in part because they echo many of the arguments made within the three documentaries being reviewed. For example, in *Food Fight* one interviewee comments about industrialized foods, saying, "[n]othing had a *singing* taste. Nothing made you *feel* like you were part of the carrot or the carrot was part of you." Here taste is figured as a form of verbal expression that has the potential to form deep connections with the body. Similarly, *Food Inc.* begins with Michael Pollan's now-famous concept of the "notional tomato": "Now there are tomatoes all year 'round, grown half-way around the world, picked when it was green [and] ripened with ethylene gas. Although it looks like a tomato, it's kind of a notional tomato, I mean, it's the *idea* of a tomato." Our food has been abstracted, Pollan suggests. Shelves are now stocked with simulacra, expertly engineered to seduce the eye into a false reality. And the supermarket it's sold at is a hyperreality of sorts, where the turning of the seasons has little to no impact.

The "notional tomato" emerged as a catch phrase from *Food Inc.* and has been used by many others since as shorthand to refer to foodstuffs that have been heavily commoditized. It represents an end product that has been crafted to appear as attractive and authentic as possible. Again, it is suggested that the eyes are being deceived the most in the modern American supermarket. In *Food Fight*, for example, an interviewee discussing "convenience foods," notes that, "Americans didn't know what peas tasted like, or corn tasted like, or chicken tasted like, or eggs tasted like, because they had all these things that had sat around in a warehouse, or

been frozen and thawed and so on and so forth. Things came out of a freezer, they were in a convenient package, they were coming in portions. And it looked like food, and it had many aspects of food, but it didn't really have much flavor.” In both of these instances a rhetorical wedge is being driven between the food commonly sold at our supermarkets—that which does not appear to obey the laws of the seasons or subscribe to geographical limits—and an authentic alternative. The former is framed as a thing and the later is implicitly framed a *real* food. But the term “real” is never attached to the alternatives being proposed, whether it be organic or local.

This move, I would suggest, is a rhetorical reclamation of the word “food,” a strategy that posits the unspoken assumption that most of what’s sold in the supermarket does not really fall under the category of “food.” For example, Pollan remarks, “Once, food was all you could eat, but today there are lots of other edible foodlike substances in the supermarket.”⁶ In seeking to claim “food” as their term, these activists and critics connote the historical and rhetorical transformation that our food has recently taken (over the fifty years especially), suggesting that we are straying from what is real without ever saying so directly.

SITUATING AFFECTIVE ADVOCACY

Whereas commoditized food is framed as a numbed and numbing thing, local food is framed as a series of enlivening affective experiences. Commodification, in

short, decontextualizes and disembodies food. Analysis of the discourses culled for these films reveal food activists recontextualizing and reembodying it through a focus on the bodily pleasures of eating and communing through food. In what follows I examine a collection of tactics that place the body and its material dynamics as the primary locus for creating change in our food system. I view these tactics as part of an overarching rhetorical strategy I refer to as *affective advocacy*. In attuning others to what I would call the *feltness* of experience, affective advocacy privileges an incorporated knowledge—that is, ways of knowing which are based in the body’s power to affect and be affected. Such an approach draws attention to one’s ability to experience what Lauren Berlant calls “the body’s active presence to the intensities of the present.”¹⁸³

I explore the strategy and its implications through several discursive topoi established by the films: the affective intelligence of taste; the way taste is conceptually expanded and enlivened; pedagogies of taste and the focus on youth education; and finally, the feeling of being connected to the source of one’s food, or what I call “relational proximity.” My hope for this portion of the chapter is to illuminate some of the key rhetorical maneuvers accountable for making the Local Food movement such a visible, powerful force in the landscape of twenty-first century activism. The concept of affective advocacy is intended to identify ways in which activists attempt to sensitize others to an awareness of the body’s intelligence. In this case it entails looking at how food activists highlight taste,

¹⁸³ Lauren Berlant, “Intuitionists: History and the Affective Event,” *American Literary History* 20.4 (2008): 846.

sensory connectedness, pleasure, and the affective dimensions of communication in developing the movement.

I choose "affective advocacy" instead of "affective activism" in order to draw a slight distinction between two different, but not opposing, rhetorical avenues for social movement development. Advocacy, as I employ it here, refers to rhetorical labor that is primarily focused on *promoting alternatives* to the status quo. Although activism frequently involves such work, I frame it here as rhetorical labor focusing on *critiquing and generating resistance* to the status quo. These are complementary actions and terms with much overlap. My aim in making this soft distinction is to emphasize the rhetorical difference between promotion and resistance in social movement development. For a social movement to evolve, alternatives must eventually be posed and worked toward. As author and activist Naomi Klein observes, for example, "There's only so much protesting can accomplish...at a certain point, you have to talk about what you're fighting *for*."¹⁸⁴

What exactly the Local Food movement is fighting for (and against) is a question that has been increasingly pursued by both scholars and activists alike. Closer attention is being paid to the movement's trajectory, its rhetorical foundation, and its shortcomings, as it continues to gain traction in the collective consciousness. Critiques have been waged against the movement's supposed focus on creating change from within the marketplace, while others reveal a variation in

¹⁸⁴ *The Take*. dir. Avi Lewis, pro. Avi Lewis and Naomi Klein (Toronto, Canada, 2004), DVD.

and obscurity of what “counts” as local.¹⁸⁵ Much of the recent scholarship is dedicated to examining the economic appeals and possibilities of the movement. Perhaps with good reason, too: the market meltdown that began in 2008 and continued to worsen through 2009 coincided with, you may recall, what was dubbed “The Summer of Food Docs” by *The Washington Post*. Of course, documentaries were not the only visible sector of the movement—more books were published, more farmers’ markets were founded, more CSAs were funded, and in general local food discourse amplified itself for another year in a row. Whether the recession was a strong causal factor in piquing interest of how the movement continued to thrive or not, a swath of food movement scholarship nevertheless emerged.

Buying local has been prolifically pitched as an easy way to keep money circulating within one’s regional economy, stabilizing businesses against the fluctuations of international trade by becoming less dependent on it. Local food is frequently framed as a “good deal,” since it travelled less distance to be sold, resulting in it being fresher and more nutritionally dense—so even if it costs the same or slightly more as conventional products, you “get more” for your money. And with the recent release of a study showing that organic products (with the exception of potatoes) were actually cheaper at the local farmers’ market than at

¹⁸⁵ Cf. Julie Guthman, “Neoliberalism and the Making of Food Politics in California,” *Geoforum* 39.3 (2008): 1171-1183.

supermarkets, economic arguments in favor of local food are shown to be strong and getting stronger.¹⁸⁶

Cultural anthropologist Laura DeLind is among those who see the movement's leading arguments as narrowly focused on the economic, instrumental and rational appeals of local food. She claims that the "increasingly popular Local Food movement is propelled along by structural arguments," which attend most closely to the "quantifiable effects of local food."¹⁸⁷ DeLind asserts that in particular, there exists a heavy reliance on marketplace frameworks. According to many of rhetorical theory's most basic principles, forefronting solid economic arguments is theoretically the most persuasive way to spread the social movement, as they are made in a frame attributed high rationale value, and rationality itself is highly privileged. That is, if one concedes that the epistemology of capitalism is the dominant system, and that it heavily influences rationality—where decisions are judged in the language of the market and with an eye towards accumulating capital—it follows that arguments which adhere to the assumptions of capitalist exchange will presumably gain more traction than those that do not. Advocacy that frames its outcomes in the language of investment, efficiency, profits, savings, and economic stability draws from the most accepted commonplace of our period. In

¹⁸⁶ Jake Claro, "Northeastern Organic Farming Association of Vermont Pricing Study," <http://nofavt.org/>.

¹⁸⁷ Laura DeLind, "Of Bodies, Place, and Culture: Re-Situating Local Food," *Journal of Agricultural and Environmental Ethics* 19 (2006): 124.

short, commonsense is capitalist-sense and “you persuade a man [sic] only insofar as you can talk his language.”¹⁸⁸

DeLind argues, however, that a Local Food movement with a rhetorical core of marketplace language and logic “carr[ies] with it the seeds of its own destruction.”¹⁸⁹ Suturing the Local Food movement’s evolution to market rationality, she argues, continues the prevailing notion that food is just another commodity of the system, not a fundamental connection to the land that allows for and sustains life. The argument here is not that using economic appeals is an inherently unsound or immoral approach, or even that they shouldn’t play a significant role in evolving local food systems. Rather, DeLind suggests, they create a precarious rhetorical foundation for the movement to evolve from. What is needed is what she sees as missing or marginalized: a focus on the sensual and embodied connections to food and place, which generate what she calls “deep meaning” and “deep memory.” “The movement will not be—cannot be—sustained in any felt, practiced, or committed way,” she argues, “[until] local food advocates and activists—academics, practitioners, policy makers, farmer and consumer organizations—can learn to see, record, and argue for the value of the emotive, the cultural, the spiritual (collectively termed the nonrational, the embedded, the vernacular or the embodied) in support of local food.”¹⁹⁰ With this call for new

¹⁸⁸ Burke, *Rhetoric*, 55.

¹⁸⁹ DeLind, “Of Bodies,” 124.

¹⁹⁰ Ibid., 127.

rhetorical strategy in mind, I return to the documentaries, analyzing their countering of commodification.

THE AFFECTIVE INTELLIGENCE OF TASTE

The industrialization of our food system has resulted in a remarkable ability to produce large quantities of foods with far fewer hands on the farm. The consequences of this system, these films argue, have wrought far more trouble than solutions, however. Each film makes note that the industrialization and commodification of food has resulted in the toxification of our bodies, our land and our waters. Many argue that it pollutes our mindscape in addition to our landscape. The central organizing element in constructing the history of industrialized food, however, is the demise of *taste*. “We thought we had to industrialize everything, including how to grow vegetables, farm tomatoes, grow and raise cattle” one chef proclaims, “and all of a sudden we found out there’s no taste—you taste it and everything tastes like nothing.”¹⁹¹ Taste is configured as an important victim in these histories, sacrificed to the high altar of the marketplace for other benefits.

Many factors combined over a relatively short period of time to impact the taste of food: the importance of producing cheap calories for soldiers in WWII and Vietnam put the focus on quantity and portability; the centralization of production and the transitioning of small farms into large factories put the focus on uniformity

¹⁹¹ Wolfgang Puck, *Food Fight: Revolution Never Tasted So Good*, dir. Chris Taylor, prod. Alan Siegel (Santa Monica, CA, 2009), DVD.

and consistency in size; as more women enter the workforce in the later half of the twentieth century emphasis is placed on convenience in food preparation; the pervasive use of chemicals depreciates soil quality, which results in a depreciation of flavor; the increasing globalization of food trade dramatically increases the distances travelled between production, packaging, and sale. “The quality of our food is measured by how it will ship, rather than how it tastes,” one farmer declares.¹⁹² Maximizing taste, these discourses argue, is at best a secondary concern and in some cases, completely absent from consideration.

In lamenting its loss and arguing for its return, advocates configure taste in a variety of ways. One prominent configuration links pleasurable taste with rational decision making, via the body’s senses. In the opening scene of *Ingredients*, farmer Carol Boutard delivers the first lines of the documentary, “My journey with my husband and growing vegetables has been to recreate what we think is our due. Our taste buds are there for a reason—they’re there to guide us to nutrition. It’s not greed or gluttony to like the taste of food, it is a natural drive to nourish ourselves.” As the film’s introductory remark, Boutard’s comment takes us immediately to one of the most dominant assumptions about taste—that it tempts us into capital vices.¹⁹³ Boutard acknowledges these long-held, deeply ingrained negative

¹⁹² Bob Cannard, *Food Fight*.

¹⁹³ Pleasure derived from the taste of food has long been viewed as a site of anxiety, as it is a formidable challenger to one’s self-control. “There is only one other pleasure that matches food in this way,” argues John Coveney, “[and that] is sex. Indeed, it is no coincidence that for the ancient Greeks, pleasure from food and pleasure from sex were considered in much the same terms [. . .] Nor was it any coincidence that the early Christian fathers considered the

associations, but she counters by shifting the argument's terrain in several ways.

First, she reframes the issues from morality to biology. In doing so, she shifts from a prohibitive frame of vice, which emphasizes cognitive control over bodily desires, to one that privileges the intelligence of these bodily drives.

Boutard's argument sets a tone for how taste will be regarded through the remainder of *Ingredients*. On the biological evidence of the body's natural drive toward health, she links taste to nutrition. This association suggests that attuning oneself to the pleasure in taste and searching out the best tasting foods is ultimately a *rational* choice, though achieved through means typically considered *non-rational*: the physical senses and affective pleasures. The same biological argument is made in *Food Fight*, with urban farmer Erika Allen claiming, "We're designed to eat healthy, good, flavorful, delicious food. That's why we have taste buds. If we were just supposed to eat paste, we wouldn't have taste buds, right?" The effort to rhetorically link rationality to pleasure—and visa versa, linking pleasure with the body's deep rationality—is evident here, regardless of whether this is in the end a sound scientific argument. Just as with Boutard's remark, Allen is strategically undermining the perspective that pleasure in food is at foundation a danger to be kept in check, a temptation that leads one away into sickness. The foundation of experiencing flavor, they argue instead, is an innate drive toward nutrition *and* pleasure. The two are inextricable.

appetite for food to be *more harmful* and distracting than an appetite for sex in the quest for spirituality." John Coveney, *Food, Morals, and Meaning: The Pleasure and Anxiety of Eating* (New York: Routledge, 2000), vii. Italics mine.

These near identical statements seek to counter negative associations with the pleasures of taste, but perhaps more importantly they also undermine the dominant epistemology guiding many of today's food perspectives: *nutritionism*. Nutritionism is used within food activist circles to describe the ideology that results from nutritional science, which holds the premise that foods are essentially an aggregate of chemical constituents.¹⁹⁴ Nutritionism, to be clear, is an ideology—a set of pervasive assumptions that influences collective food practices—that is a cultural byproduct of western nutritional science which began gaining prestige during the industrial revolution. “In the nineteenth century,” John Coveney writes, “nutrition emerges as a science in which food was relieved of almost all of its aesthetic, sensual pleasures. Nutrition calculated, rationalized and allocated food for the purpose of nourishing the body on the basis of scientific reason.”¹⁹⁵ Bouchard and Allen's “taste bud” argument is clearly working to bring the sensuality of taste and nutrition back together, which have been separated by decades of nutritionism.

Not only are food activists trying to relink taste and nutrition, they are also attempting to prove that taste and affective pleasure are superior to the calculations

¹⁹⁴ Nutritionism is not equivalent to nutrition, nor the science of nutrition. It is a cultural mindset that has been normalized to the point of invisibility. Nutrition labels and health claims on packages of foods are prime examples. of nutritionism. Trends in food practices that focus heavily on a handful or even single component of food go hand in hand with nutritionism, such as the bygone Atkins diet, the current obsession with Trans Fats, or the sudden rise of Acai berries. Although nutritionism can be traced back to nutritional science, as an ideology it is promoted through the food industry, journalism, and the government, Pollan notes. Delinking taste from nutrition aides the commodification of food and thus increases profitability.

¹⁹⁵ Coveney, *Food*, 175.

of food science as guides to nourishing the body. Farmer and food activist Tom Philpott, for example, follows Erika Allen in *Food Fight* and expands taste beyond the taste buds: “[s]tudies show that the intensity of aromas and flavors from properly grown vegetables *are* stronger and [taste] goes hand in hand with nutrition.” Focusing on taste and being attentive to the pleasures of eating, then, is framed as a rational act. It configures taste, I would argue, as a form of affective intelligence. The body becomes the expert in this scenario, supplanting those claiming to be experts of nutritionism.¹⁹⁶

These examples reveal several assumptions food activists hold about our overall national disposition toward food: Taste has been subordinated in the commodification of food; taste and nutrition have largely been separated; and pleasures from eating are forces to be held in check. In opposition to such perspectives, these activists—and by proxy these films—advocate for making taste a central concern of food production, taking pleasure in taste, and finding nourishment through it. The narrative of food commodification is countered with a focus on taste as a site for empowerment and means to increased agency.

EXPANDING AND ENLIVENING TASTE

Although the more complex configuration of taste described above is emphasized, taste is also more simply associated with leisure and configured as a

¹⁹⁶ As Michael Pollan puts it, “We’re very confused about food [. . .] I mean, what other species needs experts to tell them how to eat?”

lost art to be regained. The voice-over of *Ingredients* notes, for example, “With the growth of farmer’s markets an alternative food system is being established. Heirloom varieties of vegetables and other foods normally missing in supermarkets are being reintroduced. People are returning to the pleasures of seasonal eating—the way our great-grandparents ate.” The pleasures of taste are framed here less as a respite from the frenzied pace of late capitalism and more as an active reclamation of tradition. Limiting oneself to what is ripe and in season is framed as a pleasurable experience, not as an obstacle to overcome in the pathway of “doing what’s right.”

The return to food practices of two generations ago is positioned as an exodus from the current culture of food convenience. “In the American culture in the second half of the twentieth century,” Tom Philpott says, “a lot of the simple pleasures of life were getting traded for convenience.”¹⁹⁷ Life’s “simple pleasures” are closely aligned with taste, which get jettisoned for packaged and processed foods. For instance, in *Food Fight* the voice-over mockingly asserts that, “Push button flavor was the greatest idea since sliced bread. So what if it tasted nothing like the real thing?” This question is immediately followed by chef Alice Waters, who exposes the argument behind “push button flavor”: “We were told that cooking was drudgery. We didn’t want to do that. We wanted to get fast food that’s all prepared [and] over there. But in fact, for me it’s so incredibly relaxing, it’s like [breathes in deeply] you’re opening up all of your senses, your nose, your eyes, your

¹⁹⁷ *Food Fight*.

ears, your hands [and] you're just *in* this food." Advertised away from more traditional eating practices—home cooking, growing food, eating with the seasons, etc.—and into a foodscape focused on speed and less on taste has its consequences, she advises.

Against drudgery Waters juxtaposes a description of *affective enlivening*. Her rapid listing of body parts points almost to a synaesthetic experience, where it is less about a single sensory organ than an experience of the body fully resonating in its environment, sensitizing to individual forces but without necessarily separating them from the whole. She uses "opening up," a phrase of exchange that welcomes stimuli to come *in*, and yet she finishes with the emphatic and poetic point that one is "just *in* this food," thus confusing the boundaries of where food and self start and stop, implying a circulation of affect. Food in this case is enveloping: it's in the air, filling the eyes, and pressing against the skin. There is a porousness to the body in her language, and its ability to fuse with food in a way that is beyond consumption and digestion is suggested. Her comment—edited so as to appear as a direct response to how taste and the "simple pleasures" have been victimized as a pair—echoes a line cited previously: "Nothing had a singing taste. Nothing made you feel like you were part of the carrot or the carrot was part of you." In both comments an affective enlivening leads to a blurring of boundaries that is desired and welcomed.

From the perspective of other activist rhetorical strategies, still, focusing heavily on the taste of food may seem peculiar. Given the severity of other food related issues—increasingly resistant e. coli strands from overuse of antibiotics, the

illegal and exploitative use of immigrant labor, the prevalence of genetically modified crops without labels stating as much, or the obesity epidemic, just to name a few—for the food movement to develop around the notion that “food should taste better” and “local foods tastes better,” could be seen as landing anywhere between misguided and elitist. To enter into the realm of taste as a strategy for food movement advocacy invites a host of troubling issues. First, a focus on taste can elicit strong connotations with luxury, with many seeing it as something only a privileged few have the opportunity to fixate on because more foundational needs are being met.¹⁹⁸

One may expect, then, that when the topic of low-income neighborhoods or “inner city food deserts” is introduced, that a strategy focusing on taste would shift toward strictly economic appeals or policy issues regarding structural change. And yet *Food Fight* and *Ingredients* show that advocates for local food rely on the appeal

¹⁹⁸ Indeed, the Local Food movement is regularly accused of being little more than a trend that is essentially about assuaging the guilt of a liberal middle-upper class, promoted by those who wish to smugly prove their own ethical purity and political sensitivity. Take *Financial Times* writer Richard Tomkins, who exemplifies this critique: “Once, you paid extra if you wanted only the best quality vegetables, carefully trimmed, thoroughly washed and properly packaged. Now, you pay extra if you want your vegetables authentically bruised, rotten and misshapen, covered in clods of earth, stuck on stalks or sprouting fronds.” Tomkins suggests the locavores are shopping for symbols of social status only, as the rational elements of food’s quality and visual attractiveness is missing in local food. These quality attributes are aligned with items mass produced for supermarkets, which means most likely imported for significant distances. Local food advocates would agree that quality and attractiveness are essential—but they would argue, I imagine, that our current food system relies heavily on the visual trickery to mask deficiencies in quality. For example, uniformity in size and shape is suggested by Tomkins to be a sign of quality. Local foods are “misshapen,” he says, which could easily be interpreted as “there is a diversity of size and shape in farmers’ market food.” Uniformity and consistency were pursued to increase profit, not taste and nutritional quality, these films convincingly demonstrate.

to taste just as much, if not even more so, when it comes to getting low-income areas involved in the movement. Erika Allen, for example, readily admits there exist elitist aspects to the Local Food movement, but dismisses them with tinctures of disdain in her voice. “We have kids who have never tasted a fresh tomato,” she notes, “and that’s who we’re trying to work with; we’re not trying to get them to only eat something with a certain amount of miles.” Allen continues, “[w]e have generations now that not only don’t how to grow food, but don’t even know what all the food tastes like.” Knowledge and interest in food begins with taste; her use of “don’t *even* know” indicates that it is a prerequisite for change in the food system.

Another urban gardener in Milwaukee notes similarly that he decided to open up his farm facility to the community “to introduce them to what a tomato really does taste like, what a cucumber tastes like, and what basil tastes like, or salad greens.” The implicit logic at work here is that the taste of quality food will catalyze the desire to take control of one’s food choices, to grow food for oneself and one’s community, or support those who do. Once the taste for nutritious food is established, it forms a positive trajectory, as a food activist notes in *Ingredients*: “[once people] plant and grow some item in their backyard [they will begin] to understand what quality really means [. . .] there’s really not much of an option to go backwards and I think we [will] start to reel away from processed foods.”

The strategy being showcased here, then, is to introduce the Local Food movement on the basis of taste—not politics, or environmental concerns, or corporate critique. Certainly this is not to suggest those issues are dismissed by

activists as unimportant or even of lesser importance than taste. Rather, what an analysis of these film sections dealing with low-income neighborhoods reveals is that taste is an *access point* that cuts across class divides for getting others interested and invested. We see taste configured as a low-threshold entry point to an alternative food system, as well as a catalyst that begins a chain reaction of desire and agency. The overarching rhetoric being confirmed here, I would suggest, is promotion through pleasure, rather than an ethics of avoidance. These strategies are remarkably absent of “do not,” in fact, as Allen’s dismissal of confining the Local Food movement to those only eating within a hundred mile radius. Interestingly, there is also an absent of “shoulds.” The approach suggests that if a taste for fresh, quality food and the affective pleasures that accompany it is assimilated through experience, there is little rhetorical need for telling someone what they should or should not eat.

PEDAGOGIES OF TASTE

Unsurprisingly, many discussions of taste bring the attention to the tongue. Anyone who has had a cold knows, however, that the ability to smell plays a crucial role in taste. And as Tom Philpott suggested earlier, the intensity of aromas is used to guide us towards nutrition. Taste is a multi-sensory experience, which may be centered in the mouth, but nevertheless brings the entire body and mind together in the search for nourishment and pleasure. “[T]he experience of eating,” Ben Highmore writes, “is also dependent on the haptic sensitivity of tongues and

mouths, on our olfactory abilities, and on sight and sound (the cacophany of crunching might actually be part of the ‘flavor’ of potato chips, for example).¹⁹⁹ It is in the experience of eating, he argues, that “[the] senses and affect bleed into one another.”

In this section I look at how youth food education attempts to establish a broader sense of what taste encompasses. *Ingredients* and *Food Fight* both dedicate significant screen time to highlighting new programs developed to teach school children about food. Youth education has become a vibrant sector the Local Food movement, helping spur an explosion of “Farm to School” programs and on-campus gardens that are integrated into the curriculum. There are now over 2,200 Farm to School programs operating across forty-eight states. This is up from just two in 1996.²⁰⁰ I see two main reasons for increased attention on youth education: first, as more evidence piles up that children and adolescents are uniquely at risk in a culture saturated with processed foods, parents are awakened to the foodscape their children are immersed in. All three documentaries specifically state that for the *first time* in American history, the generation born in the twenty-first century will have a shorter life expectancy than their parents. Type-2 diabetes in youth increased *ten-fold* in the US during the mid-1990s.²⁰¹ Obesity rates have doubled over the past three decades in preschool children (2-5 years old) and more than

¹⁹⁹ Highmore, “Bitter,” 120.

²⁰⁰ “Know Your Farmer, Know Your Food,” <http://www.usda.gov/>.

²⁰¹ Francine Kaufman, “Childhood Obesity: The Declining Health of America’s Next Generation.” Testimony before the U.S. Senate Subcommittee on Children and Families: July 16, 2008), 12.

tripled for children (6-11 years old).²⁰² These alarming statistics have brought attention to cafeterias across the nation, as well as opened up a conversation about how to address food literacy in the classroom.

Another reason is that food activists recognize teenagers, adolescents, and children will drive the future of the movement. Following the same line of logic exposed earlier—once you establish a taste for quality food it is difficult to return to processed food—then the earlier that taste can be developed the better. Food activists and school food program administrators, however, have come to realize that they are starting with a much lower level of food literacy than perhaps ever before in the country's history. In one video clip that went viral within the online local food community, for example, a chef is shown in a school classroom asking children to identify foods. An awkward question-and-answer session results in tomatoes labeled as potatoes, beets being called celery, and a sea of blank stares when asked about potatoes and eggplants. Though video's popularity was reached no doubt in part through some sensationalism, it does suggest that 1) youth education of food is site of growing attention and activity; 2) youth knowledge of food is far lower than it would need to be for the Local Food movement to be passed on to another generation. This cause for concern is evidenced by two of the documentaries directing our attention to school education programs, framing youth as the future of food.

²⁰² Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, "Childhood Obesity," <http://www.cdc.gov/obesity/childhood/index>.

Ingredients transitions to youth education with a montage that begins with a few slowly progressing piano chords and a voice over saying, “[t]his community around growing food is a very powerful thing.” Over a sentimental song we are shown shots of children picking blueberries, mothers holding babies up to smell flowers, and groups of kids running through fields. The message is evident: children are to play a significant role in the Local Food movement, either as motivation for adults to get involved or as participants themselves in furthering a food revolution. As the piano and cello fade out, we see a school bus traveling through a thick, early-morning fog. Next a troupe of children is shown walking through a leaf-strewn orchard as the farm manager says, “[a]lright, you all did a very good job walking down here quietly and using your ears and your eyes to check out what’s going on.” From the very beginning, the emphasis is on an attentive, embodied experience, using all of one’s senses to embed oneself in place.

Ingredients follows Cory Schrieber, head of the state of Oregon’s Farm to School program, on one of the field trips organized to take urban children out to farms. From what is shown, these field trips are heavily oriented toward an awakening of sensory perception. Activities focus on sights, smells, sounds, tastes, and the feeling on one’s body as it moves through the landscape. Schrieber sees this sensitizing process as a necessary component in food literacy. They are able to connect with food differently after “walking the ground, getting a sense of visibility, looking on a wider level, at the orchards, and the farm, and the sky, and the water. And then when they come in the field they get a sense of the quality of the [edible]

plants that are out here.” The documentary shows students squeamishly pulling vegetables out of the ground at first, but soon comfortably wiping chunks of dirt off and eating them before even standing up off the ground. Over these shots a voice-over states, “[t]here are studies that show that children are more likely to eat fruits and vegetables if they have played role in the growing and harvesting of those fruits and vegetables.” The eating experience—the very taste of those fruits and vegetables—is affected by the personal contexts of meaning and memory attached.

Food Fight highlights the “Edible Schoolyard” program, which was started with the goal of getting students “to learn about where their food comes from and sharing food as a community.” One program coordinator notes that to get students involved and excited about the garden, they must first bring them in “through food and through *taste*, seducing them into the project.” Though the use of seduction in this context might seem odd, it reveals a fallacious assumption at work in many food perspectives: if it’s healthy, it won’t taste good; if it tastes good, it must be bad for you. This is precisely the assumption these programs aim to seduce children away from and they are wagering that the pleasure of healthy, locally grown food is the best route for enticing them into a lifestyle characterized by high food literacy. *Food Fight* shows one of the Edible Schoolyard’s annual activities, where school children compare the taste of corn grown in the school’s garden with an ear purchased from the supermarket down the road. The conventional corn is described as “like plastic,” “tasteless,” and “harder.” The corn grown they grew is “sweet,” “juicy,” “more yellow,” and “flavorful.” The camera zooms in at one point on one child as his

face contorts while chewing the conventional corn; through a subtle grimace he begins, “This is...” before pausing and further furrowing his brow, “*nasty*.”

The Edible Schoolyard claims to “teach kids to think critically about the food choices they are making.” Similar to the Farm to School program, they expand childrens’ approach to taste by first connecting them to the growing process and a sense of place, emphasizing immersion through sensory participation. On the Edible Schoolyard’s website, they specifically mention that students gain an understanding in “[h]ow to use all five senses to create a whole [food] experience.” Here too we see affective enlivening as a pedagogical strategy, provoking an understanding of food and its environmental, political, and social consequences by beginning with the body’s affects. This is particularly evident when one considers the list of “Student Outcomes” in the Edible Schoolyard’s Mission Statement.²⁰³ Of seven total bullet points, the first three begin with “*a sense*”: “a sense of ownership and accomplishment; a sense of curiosity and wonder; a sense of place.” These outcomes, I would argue, are affect-oriented. They point to ways of being where the body is heightened in a generalized way, where one feels more—indeed, feels alive.

The outcome of “sense of place” is especially relevant for this chapter’s study, as it points to a way of knowing and being that is extremely difficult to verbalize or rationalize. As a pedagogical outcome, “a sense of place” is nearly impossible to quantify, track, or hold teachers accountable for. DeLind argues that place “defies easy measurement (though it doesn’t defy expression or feeling)” and that place

²⁰³ *The Edible Schoolyard Project*, <http://www.edibleschoolyard.org/mission-goals>.

“remains part of, is comfortable within, the realm of the non-rational.”²⁰⁴ A sense of place is the circulating exchange of energy between environment and self, an affective relation which reaches a poignant moment in eating. We are, in a very real sense, bringing place into the body with each bite. If Feuerbach is correct and we are what we eat—to a large extent, at least—then our consumption of placeless food commodities translates to ourselves feeling placeless²⁷. “We become known for our capacity to act as the receptacles of abstracted and detached values,” in eating food-turned-commodity, “rather than well-placed and localized citizens,” DeLind asserts.²⁰⁵ The Edible Schoolyard project suggests that place can be taught through food education, that food can be taught through taste education, and that taste education involves full sensory participation—an affective enlivening that sensitizes one to the energetic exchange between environment and self.

The youth education programs highlighted by these documentaries suggest that the Local Food movement’s strategy of affective advocacy is being used across age demographics, just as the films’ sections on low-income communities suggested affective advocacy is not a class-based approach. In addition to this point on age, as well as increased confirmation that affective advocacy is a central rhetorical approach to propelling the food movement, I take from these depictions of youth food education two main points: first, that the taste of food is being situated within a larger field of affective relations. That is, the experience of flavor is being promoted

²⁰⁴ DeLind, “Of Bodies,” 141.

²⁰⁵ Ibid., 125.

in conjunction with and through an attention to the bodily acts of chewing and smelling, seeing and hearing. The meanings and memories of place are depicted as important to quality youth food education, where a sense of embeddedness is stimulated through concentration of the body's senses. Secondly, I take away the point that youth education is a site where the Local Food movement is leveraging its power. I am compelled not necessarily just by the fact that both films broach the issue of youth education, but rather that they dedicate such significant screen time to the topic. When we view these documentaries as instructive and motivational tools of a social movement, the attention given to this topic indicates to viewers that youth education is a strategic location to get involved.

RELATIONAL PROXIMITY

Having looked first at how taste is configured and then moving to youth education, I wish to now turn to the last topoi for consideration, relational proximity. An admittedly clunky phrase, it refers to the ability to communicate with those who grow the food you eat, measured in terms of the quality and ease of access. The films emphasize the social bonds that are generated when the distance between grower, item grown, and consumer is shortened or even entirely collapsed. But this distance is not to be measured primarily or even strictly by quantitative means. "Local," these films demonstrate, is far less about eating within a certain radius of miles than it is about the relationships that one develops around the context of food, indicating that a qualitative approach is more productive for

understanding what is intimated by “local.” Moreover, my analysis suggests that it is less important for someone to *actually* speak with the farmers who raise their food, than is the assured knowledge that one can, *if* one wants to.

Towards the end of *Food Fight* a series of food activists offer encouraging and hopeful words about the Local Food movement. If we listen carefully to the endorsement of farmers’ markets given by Marion Nestle, author of the widely-cited book *Food Politics* and prominent figure within the Local Food movement, we see that it relational promixity that is important: “The locally grown food movement is about several things. It’s about getting better food and fresher food and not having thousands of miles of transportation involved, but it’s also about community [. . .] I like the idea of knowing the people who are growing my food, and I love the idea I can go visit the farm and see it myself.”²⁰⁶ Liking or loving *the idea* of something is quite different than liking or loving that thing directly—we do not know whether Nestle actually likes the people who are growing her food, but we do know that she likes the idea of knowing them. Specifically, what she enjoys is the knowledge that if she wanted to, she could contact those people directly. The value she ascribes to the situation is that pathway to communication, information, and accountability exists at all.

This point, I believe, is affirmed when she further qualifies the statement with amplification and specification: “I *love* the idea I can go visit the farm.” Visiting the farm, learning about the various processes and witnessing some of the practices

²⁰⁶ Marion Nestle in *Food Fight*.

is clearly a high quality of access. Ease of access could be measured in how many people would have to be spoken to in order to reach the person actually doing the farming. With large agriculture or food production corporations, ease and quality of access is certainly more difficult and in the vast majority of cases, I'm willing to wager, simply nonexistent. As examples from *Food Inc.* illustrate, corporations sensitive to their image frequently bar access to their facilities. A chicken farmer contracted with Tyson, the biggest meat-packing company in the history of the world, said that he would allow the film crew inside his chicken houses, but "after multiple visits by Tyson representatives, he changed his mind."²⁰⁷ After asking dozens of Tyson Corp. contracted chicken farmers for access and being denied, producers of *Food Inc.* did find one who allowed videographers to record footage of her houses. She was released from her contract following the movie. With large food corporations the distance between grower, item grown, and consumer is often overwhelmingly enormous.

Nestle's statement on local food, I would argue, is representative of many of those who support local food, but may not necessarily self-identify as participants in the movement. Feeling closer to the source of one's food because you are simply *able* to interact with the grower is for many both a reassuring and enlivening process. One CSA farmer suggests that the language of the market is marginalized by appreciation and excitement of the produce: "[i]t just feels like you're giving them food and they're really excited about it. There's no, 'Why are your carrots ten cents higher than the other person's carrots?' It's just like, 'Here are these beautiful

²⁰⁷ *Food Inc.*

carrots' and 'Thank you for the beautiful carrots.'" Another CSA farmer interviewed appears grateful but also a little confused by how animated some of his shareholders are during pick-up. He seems to wonder aloud, "I guess when you're so cut off from something that is as real as vegetables and a farm and everything else, people really appreciate it...so it's more than just food." The references to excitement, animated appreciation, and Nestle's use of something as strong as *love* to describe their relational proximity to food indicate strong feelings are at play here. We may ascribe some of this intensity to the fact that all the examples refer to moments of close proximity and face-to-face interaction. But these heightened, reactive states suggest that there exist abiding feelings of trust, mutuality and solidarity that underlie and fuel those pitched moments of excitement.

It is not just consumers who are seeking relational proximity—farmers are also seeking a closer connection to those they feed. One farmer in *Ingredients* states so flatly: "We set out primarily to be close to our consumers, to produce food real close to our consumers." The relationship component is especially evident in one interview with an Ohio vegetable farmer: "So many farmers, ourselves included at one time, we didn't realize we were growing food. We were growing a commodity. And there's a big disconnect there. When you realize that you're really producing food, you understand that there's a greater sense of responsibility to the folks who are going to put that product on their table and feed their children with it." The commodification process that keeps consumers from knowing who grew their food

also keeps farmers from knowing who they're growing food for. The farmer indicates quite clearly that the process had a numbing effect on his ethics.

Yet what is most revealing about this statement is the farmer's rhetorical use of the word *food*. The farmer was producing food in the technical sense in both scenarios, but he divides the two definitively, calling the disconnect "big." In doing so he attaches to food a sense of obligation, liability, and importance. Food here implies a web of relationships that demands accountability, care, and commitment. A similar sentiment is echoed later by another farmer: "What we've come to now is a recognition of responsibility—that's a delicious future."²⁰⁸ Using the a term of flavor to describe the next stage of relational proximity between consumers and growers of food, this farmer reminds us that taste is a central component of the Local Food movement's rhetorical strategy. Furthermore, he links together the ethics of local food with bodily pleasure.

By highlighting these affective and emotional components between grower and consumer, these films push us away from a quantitative and standard definition of what "local" means. Instead of state lines or a set number of miles, we see local food continue to be defined in terms of relationship, interaction, and the resulting effects felt upon the body. "I think it has gone beyond just telling people to eat organic," remarks Erika Allen in the closing scene of *Food Fight*, "[n]ow it's about who is growing your food, are they a part of your community [and] are they

²⁰⁸ *Food Fight*.

invested in the health of the community?"²⁰⁹ In the same vein, *Ingredients* ends with a single question suspended in the middle of an otherwise black screen: *Who is your farmer?* In their final moments, these films choose to emphasize the importance of relational proximity. Such is a strong indication, I would argue, that the movement is attempting to move forward on the felt values of trust, respect, and mutual responsibility.

A RARE MORAL ARENA: LOOKING BACK IN LOOKING FORWARD

The Local Food movement emerged out of a complex of social, political, and environmental pressures. Among these is the seemingly sudden boom of organic and natural foods in the marketplace at the turn of the twenty-first century. The food activism that prefigured this took root in the cultural upheaval of the 1960s. The politics of food, although by no means central to the counter-culture that emerged in '60s, certainly had a place on the agenda. Organic food enjoyed a revival during this period, as food became closely linked with politics and growing one's own was tantamount to fighting corporations that were at once further infiltrating the food system and simultaneously war-profiteering in Vietnam. It was not until the mid-1990s, however, that organic showed noticeable presence in overall food

²⁰⁹ The "it" that Allen refers to is the generalized "Food Movement," which emerged as chemical-based industrialized agriculture began to gain influence. As I commented in this chapter's introduction, such question point precisely to matters that the Crying Indian PSA seeks to obscure. One can easily see the stark contrast if we replace food with plastic bottles: Who is making the plastic bottles that pass through your possession? Are they a part of your community and are they invested in the health of the community?

sales, sprouting a national conversation about the use of chemicals in food production, and sustain. “Almost overnight,” Michael Pollan writes in 2001, “the amount and variety of organic food on offer in my local supermarket has mushroomed.”²¹⁰ Indeed, the \$1 billion of U.S organic food and beverage sales in 1990 underwent enormous growth each year, resulting in sales of \$24.8 billion in 2009.

As organic sales started to mount in the last few years of the twentieth century, corporate investment followed. Although the term organic for many years safely suggested a holistic approach to farming that included soil health, sustainable harvesting practices, equitable labor structures and community networks, around the turn of the century organic production began to mirror conventional practices: large-scale monocrop cultivation that ends with produce travelling distances just as long as the non-organic. If organic was synonymous with local at one point, the two terms have been travelling separate paths for the past decade.²¹¹ “[T]he codification and commercialization of organic,” Laura DeLind writes, “has helped catalyze a ‘*second generation*’ response to food system issues—the Local Food movement.”²¹² In other words, “local” emanated out of “organic” in an effort to better signify the importance of context—of place, people, and situated practice—reinserting values into food debates that got left behind when organic went big business.

²¹⁰ Michael Pollan, “Naturally,” *New York Times*, May 13, 2001.

²¹¹ Obviously, there is significant overlap between the two, but because certified organic is federally regulated, not all local farmers can afford the licensing fees required for U.S.D.A. organic labeling. As a result, many local products are sold as “chem-free.”

²¹² DeLind, “Of Bodies,” 123. Italics mine.

The Local Food movement, then, is a recent tactical shift in a food movement that has been developing, though no doubt irregularly, since the industrialization of food. Organic was—and continues to be—promoted as an alternative to the crops laden with pesticides, herbicides, and synthetic fertilizers, as well as antibiotics fed to animals that remain at the point of human consumption. The boom in organic sales was fueled in large measure by increased exposure of the negatives of industrialized food. A spate of serious food contamination scares in the nineties fomented numerous investigative ventures into food system, a handful of which found their way to mainstream publication venues. Eric Schlosser's *Fast Food Nation: The Dark Side of the All-American Meal*, for example, appeared in 2001 and revealed with grotesque detail the industrialized, exploitative workings of the modern food system.²¹³ Fear and repulsion to the dominant system catalyzed the rapid expansion of organic foods, and the promotion of organic foods was closely tied to these negative.

The shift in emphasis to local food, as noted, is aimed at injecting considerations about food practices that organic is unable to encapsulate; this is especially evident after the same agri-businesses food activists sought to undermine with organic, successfully (and easily) integrated organic into their profit stream without having to significantly modify the system's infrastructure. The analysis

²¹³ The high volume of sales *Fast Food Nation* received helped pave the way for other popular exposes, perhaps most notably Morgan Spurlock's *Supersize Me* (2004). The documentary, which captures a month-long diet of nothing but McDonalds (and the unsurprising, but still very gross health effects), was popular enough to receive an Oscar nomination.

performed here of local food discourses suggests that the affective stimulations generated in the contexts of food have become a central strategy for evolving the movement. Though rational, instrumental strategies that stress economic advantages and the quantifiable benefits of local food are prominent, this analysis reveals their secondary status to strategies that focus on taste, pleasure, and an embodied connection to place and people.

One could propose that the focus on affective elements is contained to these few documentaries or perhaps unique to the medium of film. Other texts across the Local Food movement, however, also reveal a privileging of taste and pleasure. *The Locavore Way*, for example, begins with a list of “10 Reasons to Eat Locally Produced Food.” The number one reason given: “For the sheer pleasure of it.”²¹⁴ Books that chronicle local food exploration also highlight pleasure, such as Gary Nabham’s *Coming Home to Eat: The Pleasures and Politics of Local Food* and Barbara Kingsolver’s *Animal, Vegetable, Miracle: A Year of Food Life*. In these texts, pleasure is not tied specifically to physiological taste, but encompasses the positive feelings of being connected to others and the embodied affirmation that comes with acting in accordance with one’s ethics. The same focus has been long-touted by the “Slow Food Movement,” which may be considered the Western European equivalent of the America’s Local Food movement. The manifesto of the Slow Food is a prime example of affective advocacy, arguing, “[a] firm defense of quiet material pleasure

²¹⁴ Amy Cutler, *The Locavore Way: Discover and Enjoy the Pleasures of Locally Grown Food* (North Adams, MA: Storey, 2009), 10.

is the only way to oppose the universal folly of the Fast Life [. . .] May suitable doses of guaranteed sensual pleasure and slow, long-lasting enjoyment preserve us [. . .] Let us rediscover the flavors and savors of regional cooking [. . .] That is what real culture is all about: developing taste rather than demeaning it.”²¹⁵

The Slow Food Movement manifesto interestingly positions pleasure as a strategy of resistance. Quiet material pleasure is implied to be under attack by a way of life characterized by speed, but sold as efficiency and productivity. The negatives are to be overcome not through critique, it suggests, but through creation of the positive. Perhaps, then, when the manifesto proclaims pleasure as the “only way” to oppose a culture of frenzied production, it is referring to long-term strategy and movement sustainability, rather than specific tactics. In other words, the only way to defeat a way of life geared toward the economic system’s health, instead of a cultural or personal health, is to keep the focus centered on the affective pleasures (rather than analyzing the affective negatives), which food appears uniquely positioned to do. Kingsolver expresses a very similar sentiment of strategy in her book *Animal, Vegetable, Miracle*:

But sticking it to the Man (whoever he is) may not be the most inspired principle around which to organize one’s life [. . .] We hoped a year away from industrial foods would taste so good, we might actually enjoy it. The positives, rather than the negatives, ultimately nudged us to step away from the agribusiness supply line and explore the local landscape. Doing the right thing, in this case, is not about abstinence-only, throwing out bread, tightening your belt, wearing a fake leather belt, or dragging around feeling righteous and gloomy. Food is the rare moral arena in which the ethical

²¹⁵ Carlo Petrini, *Slow Food: The Case for Taste*, trans. William McCuaig (New York: Columbia UP, 2003), xxiii.

choice is generally the one more likely to make you groan with pleasure. Why resist that?²¹⁶

Both the manifesto and this passage gesture to the unsustainability of critique and a brand of activism anchored in fighting *against*, rather than fighting *for*. What persuaded Kingsolver to adapt her food practices to a more locally-based regime was the experience of taste and the generation of pleasure; though an ethics of avoidance may bring positive affect, its foundation is negative—it is ultimately characterized by *not* doing something unethical.

We can ascribe part of the success and continuing momentum of the Local Food movement, I believe, to its use of affective advocacy. My argument is that by placing the body's experience of positive affects as the locus of their rhetorical strategy, these discourses are shifting the movement onto a foundation of desire defined by affirmation, rather than opposition. Put differently: Local food for local food's sake *over* local food for the sake of undermining the status quo of corporate control. To be clear, I do not set these strategies in opposition. Instead, what I would argue this analysis illuminates is a shift in Local Food movement discourse toward a rhetorical foundation focused on longevity. Such a shift reveals, I believe, a certain confidence in the movement's message. Critiques of the current system are rife enough at this point, the analysis suggests, that they no longer require the primary focus. Enough people know why they should not participate in the

²¹⁶ Kingsolver, *Animal, Vegetable, Miracle*, 22. Italics mine.

industrial food system, but not enough know why they should make the effort to extricate themselves from it and participate in a localized system.

What affective advocacy indicates about the common sensorium is hinted at in Kingsolver's depiction of ethics. Doing the right thing, she suggests, is typically characterized by decreasing consumption, dedicated asceticism, abstinence, and generally "dragging around feeling righteous and gloomy." These descriptions are a snapshot of what many today consider to be "activism." To be an engaged, informed, and ethical activist in the contemporary period is often characterized with being severely constrained in choices, cynical, and generally "anti-." No doubt these characterizations are accurate to a certain degree and exist for good reason—there's plenty of injustice and devastation to be depressed about and unethical options in the marketplace certainly outnumber the ethical ones. As a foundation for activism, however, this anti- orientation is untenable in the long haul.

If the affective advocacy revealed here is indeed helping the Local Food movement continue to gain traction in the common sensorium, it is perhaps because the activist critique of capitalist structures has long and far outpaced viable alternatives. The desire for projects that extend beyond denunciation is strong, but outlets few. What is at stake here is the evolution of the movement, the continued galvanization of forces into systemic social change. As David McNally succinctly puts it, "[s]ocial movements will not develop if they refuse to name and define

alternative possibilities.”²¹⁷ To “name and define” I would make the simple addition, “and work towards the realization of.” The movement’s evolution will depend on its ability to form a project of creation rather than demolition, which requires a foundation deeper than rational and instrumental appeals can provide. Such a foundation requires engaging what is “collectively termed the non-rational, the embedded, the vernacular, or the embodied.”²¹⁸ It requires strong affective ties and knowledge, meaning, and memories that are incorporated—literally pulled into and felt by the body.

²¹⁷ David McNally, *Another World is Possible: Globalization & Anti-Capitalism*, 2nd ed. (Winnipeg: Arbeiter Ring, 2006), 19. Italics mine.

²¹⁸ DeLind, “Of Bodies,” 127

CHAPTER 4

OCCUPY ANGER

Aristotle's anger presumes a contoured world of emotional investments, where some people have significantly more liabilities than others. A man becomes angry both at those who belittle him and, interestingly, at those belittling other whom it would be shameful for him not to defend, such as parents, children, wives, or dependents. Emotional investments running the other direction are meager at best.

—Daniel Gross, *The Secret History of Emotion*

In the end, it is the compassion for justice that precipitates anger, but it is the empathetic impulse that inspires the people to remain committed to any movement. Anger alone cannot do.

—Jeffrey O.G. Ogbar, *"It Can't Be All Anger"*

WHAT IS OUR ONE DEMAND?

—Occupy Wall Street poster

INTRODUCTION

The first mention of #occupywallstreet occurred on July 4th, 2011, in a tweet by *Adbusters* Magazine, an anti-consumerist journal based in Vancouver, Canada.

The tweet read, “Dear Americans, this July 4th dream of insurrection against corporate rule: [<http://www.adbusters.org/magaine/95/revolution-america.html>] #occupywallstreet.”²¹⁹ The embedded link directed one to an article published the previous April that decries the “25 million Americans [who] are unemployed and [the] 2.8 million homes [that] are in foreclosure,” as evidence of extreme inequality, and argues that these were the natural outcomes of a system rigged to lavishly benefit a few at the expense of the many. “The opulent one percent,” it declares, “are sucking us dry even as they push us, debt-ridden and redundant, over the precipice. Only an insurrection against their monied despotism can save us now.”²²⁰ *Adbusters* has frequently released calls for uprisings and rebellions against a consumerist-based society for over two decades; this particular tweet and its linked article did not receive any more attention than the others.

Just over a week later, however, *Adbusters* sent out an email to its subscriber list-serv with the subject heading, #OCCUPYWALLSTREET. “Alright you 90,000 redeemers, rebels and radicals,” it began, “A worldwide shift in revolutionary tactics is underway right now that bodes well for the future.”²²¹ That shift, they proclaim, is “a fusion of Tahrir with the acampadas of Spain,” one that combines the swarm strategy of 21st-century decentralized collectives with pragmatic simplicity: “we zero in on what our one demand will be [. . .] and then we go out and seize a square

²¹⁹ Lauren Dugan, “What was the First #OccupyWallStreet Tweet?” *AllTwitter*, October 16, 2011.

²²⁰ Micah M. White, “Revolution in America: Will Corporatocracy or Democracy Prevail?” *Adbusters*, April 21, 2011.

²²¹ *Adbusters*, “#OccupyWallStreet: A Shift in Revolutionary Tactics,” *Adbusters.org*, July 13, 2011.

of singular symbolic significance and put our asses on the line to make it happen.” Just as Egyptians gathered in Tahrir Square to collectively make their one demand—oust Hosni Mubarak—*Adbusters* called for people to flood “the financial Gomorrah of America,” Wall Street, develop an ultimatum, then “incessantly repeat [that] one simple demand in a plurality of voices.” The article ends by asking readers to post a comment and begin the conversation of what that demand might be, then prepare to “pack our tents and head to Wall Street with a vengeance September 17.” The proposed plan, in other words, was to deliberate on possible demands, then reach consensus on a single priority prior to the encampment, so that when the spectacle of protest begins, a sole demand would unite the collective in solidarity and give direction to their actions.

Not long after the initial September 17th gathering in New York—which was swiftly evicted by police out of Wall Street proper forcing protestors to retreat to nearby Zuccotti Park—other encampments began to form on public grounds, all attaching “Occupy” to their city’s name. Occupy Boston, Occupy Baltimore, and Occupy Columbus were among the first to appear, followed by an explosion of sites across the US—from Occupy Tulsa to Occupy Anchorage—and across the globe, from Occupy Buenos Aires to Occupy Istanbul. As 2011 came to a close, the phrase “Occupy Wall Street” and its adaptable prefix “Occupy” could be found in heavy circulation in both national and global mediascapes. “Occupy” was being attached entities well beyond cities, too, with websites and meet-up groups rallying around topics such as food (“Occupy Big Ag”) and public transportation (“Occupy Transit”).

There is even a Twitter account, still actively posting after two years, named “Occupy Rhetoric.”

As a testament to its rapid entrenchment in our vernacular, “Occupy” was named 2011 Word of the Year by linguists in the American Dialect Society,²²² as well as by the Global Language Monitor²²³, and was runner up for the Oxford English Dictionary Word of the Year.²²⁴ “It’s a very old word,” comments Ben Zimmer, chair of the New Words Committee for the American Dialect Society, “but over the course of just a few months it took on another life and moved in new and unexpected directions, thanks to a national and global movement.”²²⁵ Linguist Geoff Nunberg also designated “Occupy” his word of the year, noting that it is a “rare linguistic phenomenon, a word that bubbles up out of nowhere and actually helps to create the very thing it names.”²²⁶ The fact that “Occupy” achieves these designations is perhaps even more impressive when one considers that the initial protest occurred in late September and did not gain substantial news network coverage until the beginning of October. In other words, the rise of <occupy> in the American vernacular, as well as in global discourses, was nothing short of meteoric; its prominence, as well as its concordance with McGee’s definition—a high-order

²²² Stephanie Gallman, “Linguists Name ‘Occupy’ as 2011’s Word of the Year,” *CNN* online, January 7, 2012. <http://www.cnn.com/2012/01/07/us/2011-word-of-year>.

²²³ “Top Words of 2011,” <http://www.languagemonitor.com/global-english/top-words-of-2011-2/>.

²²⁴ <http://blog.oxforddictionaries.com/2011/11/squeezed-middle/>.

²²⁵ Gallman, “Linguists.”

²²⁶ “Occupy: Geoff Nunberg’s Word of the Year,” *Fresh Air*, *NPR*, December 7, 2011.

abstraction representing collective commitment to a particular but equivocal and ill-defined normative goal—lead me to treat the term as an ideograph.

This chapter explores the multiple valences of <occupy>, asking how it functions within the context of “Occupy Wall Street” (OWS) rhetorics and in relation to the common sensorium. I begin by performing a close reading of the term “occupy,” illustrating the definitional range it encompasses. This flexibility, I contend, allows for an array of economic and political critiques to gain unification under the banner of <occupy> and consequently, charges the ideograph with the affects attached to those critiques. I follow this definitional reading with an analysis of *Adbusters*’s campaign materials, looking to see how those affects are mobilized and oriented, deploying Richard Grusin’s concept of *premediation* to demonstrate how *Adbusters* successfully “future-casts” the mass protest. Though Grusin and I agree that the aim of Occupy Wall Street rhetorics is to shift affective orientations, I argue that he does not go far enough in his analysis and that in order to understand what social movements actually seek to *move*, one must analyze the specific forms of affects and emotions that predominant in movement rhetorics. Moreover, I contend that the wide range of terminology that Grusin uses in framing collective affect and its circulation intimates a theoretical imprecision of the field’s available vocabulary for affect at a collective level, demonstrating the need for a concept like the common sensorium.

What emerges from an analysis of *The Declaration of Occupation of New York City*, a publication produced by the “General Assembly” of Occupy New York City,

and an ensemble of mainstream media reports, is an emphasis on the temporal dimensions of anger and its relationship to retribution. Drawing from Aristotle's insights on anger in the *Rhetoric*, I show how collective anger has a definite window of time within which it can animate and persuade. Because Occupy Wall Street rhetorics did not coalesce around a single demand—as the model movement of Egypt's Tahrir Square did—this collective anger cannot achieve full reconciliation. Without a clear demand, "Wall Street," a metonym for a broad set of practices, remained an elusive figure for retribution. Though the metonymy of "Wall Street" allowed for a broad set of criticisms, it presents a difficulty for defined acts of retribution. However, in looking at one project that has evolved from the Occupy Wall Street movement—the hurricane relief efforts of "Occupy Sandy"—I argue that an incipient "affective advocacy" is at work, whereby <occupy> is rearticulated through an opposing set of affective attachments, anchored primarily in compassion.

OCCUPY DEFINITION

How does the "Occupy" in "Occupy Wall Street" function rhetorically? Even before it is attached to "Wall Street" and becomes a circulating prefix for identifying movement rhetorics, thereby transforming its everyday usage and raising it to the status of ideograph, "occupy" already entertains myriad definitions: to employ; to make use of; to engage one's attention; to hold; to live in and use a physical space; to seize for one's own use; to take possession of, especially by force; to be situated in

or stationed at a position of office; or to gain access to and remain in a building or on a piece of land, without authority. Within the context of the OWS rhetorics, <occupy> is deployed in ways that exploit this definitional spectrum.

The term's definitional flexibility directly contributes to its overall rhetorical capacity, its ability to link disparate arguments and artifacts in innovative fashion. For example, one of the most popular slogans protestors would brandish on posters at Occupy rallies read, "Lost my job. Found an occupation." The phrasing creatively collapses the employment definition with the seizure of physical space definition, gesturing simultaneously to the large number of movement rhetorics that focus on the increasing role of precarious work in the economy—part-time "flex" labor is contingent, sporadic, carries no long-term benefits, and is often poorly paid—and to the mass gathering of protestors responding to such shifts and other economic elements deemed unjust. The popular slogan of OWS also plays on the differences between job and occupation, wherein job refers to a specific vocation and occupation refers to a wider field within which the job is situated, a profession or trade to which one belongs and applies their skills, even if it is not always for economic gain.

To suggest that one "lost a job, but found an occupation," then, also suggests that one found a larger, and perhaps more meaningful field within which their work can be valued. As Kenneth Burke argues in *Permanence and Change*, an occupation is not synonymous with job, though they both undoubtedly connote labor. For Burke, "occupation" is a rich term for rhetorical theory precisely because it extends

beyond specific jobs to other forms of “symbolic labor” without losing the invocation of work, which is important, since “[w]ork both reflects our interests and forms them.”²²⁷ Our occupations, Burke argues, have the tendency to envelop us, and as a result, our perspective shapes “emphases, standards, desires, kinds of observation, expression and repression” in accordance with our occupations, such that “[t]hey are more than occupational, they are preoccupational.”²²⁸ As a refrain of the movement, then, “lost a job; found an occupation” alludes to yet another definitional shade of occupy—the complete engagement of one’s attention and efforts—demonstrating both the flexibility of the term and a corresponding slipperiness when deployed in the context of social movement rhetorics. The slogan indicates the creative freeplay at work within activist discourse, the wielding of language to induce new perspectives and mobilize collective affect to the point at which these perspectives become preoccupations.

The rhetorical functioning of <occupy> in this context of OWS draws heavily on the affective connotations of “military occupation”—with its emphasis on organized force, intimidation and control—in characterizing the movement’s tactics and targets. Its flexibility, however, prevents it from being contained within this singular definition. As Nate Berg notes, “Whatever the response [one may have to the movement's political agenda or values], the fact that these protests have

²²⁷ Burke, *Permanence*, 240.

²²⁸ *Ibid.*, 237-8.

persisted for weeks and months in parks has put a spotlight on public spaces.”²²⁹ Is it an occupation if a group has the right to use the space? The answer to this question is both Yes and No. Such a paradoxical answer is possible because of occupy’s rhetorical flexibility. An occupation does not necessarily entail any illegality or forceful invasion. In the 20th and 21st centuries, however, the term occupation becomes increasingly associated with military presences in foreign countries.²³⁰ The definitional ambiguities and cultural connotations of “occupy” are precisely what make the term so rhetorically rich.

A contingent of activists, academics, and critics have recognized, however, that such ambiguity can also be perceived negatively. After all, activists played a significant contributing factor in framing the 21st century wars of Iraq and Afghanistan as “occupations,” rather than noble acts of a defensive war. One study on the “semantic build-up” to the Iraq war found that major networked news (Fox, CNN, ABC, CBS, NBC, CNBC) largely used the pro-war frames of “Fighting for Freedom and Democracy and Threat Weapons of Mass Destruction.” The media analysis also revealed that, “the failure to find any such weapons became, as the war progressed, an argument for war opponents. Anti-war frames stressed world

²²⁹ Nate Berg, “The Occupy Movement and the New Public Space,” *The Atlantic*, November 22, 2011.

²³⁰ The Hague Conventions of 1907 played a critical role in this linguistic shift, adding definitional clarification in Article 42: “Territory is considered occupied when it is actually placed under the authority of the hostile army. The occupation extends only to the territory where such authority has been established and can be exercised.” World War II brought even more attention to foreign occupation and the 1949 Geneva Convention elaborated on the precedents set by the Hague Conventions, further linking “occupation” with “militaristic presence.”

opinion, oil, occupation, and the strength of the protest events themselves.”²³¹ The strategy of these anti-war rhetorics is to forefront the term “occupation” to frame US military actions overseas—and US foreign policy more generally—as aggressive, illegitimate, and focused primarily on the expansion of empire, rather than any proposed humanitarian reasons. The rhetorical investment in this term spanning seven years in the lead-up to Occupy Wall Street’s emergence in September 2011, no doubt contributed to the affective charge of <occupy>.

For these reasons, as the introduction to *Dreaming in Public: The Building of the Occupy Movement* makes evident, “occupy” as a mobilizing term is not wholly supported nor embraced uncritically by those involved:

Throughout this collection, we use “Occupy” and “Occupy/Decolonize” interchangeably to designate this new movement as a whole. Our reasons are multiple. We want, first, to credit the arguments against “occupation” and the ways in which the word Occupy erases both histories of colonialism and experiences of military rule. But beyond this, our own active opposition to existing military occupations - in Palestine, in Afghanistan, in Iraq - means the unmodified term “Occupy” makes us queasy, even though OWS is, as a sign at Zuccotti Park says, “an occupation a radical Jew can get behind.” Nonetheless, “Occupy” has become the commonplace name for the movement, no matter how many of its participants feel, as we do, that “Reclaim” or “Decolonize” better suit its realities and aims.²³²

One way to read this text is as a lamentation that “occupy” is too deeply engrained in the movement’s mobilizing rhetoric and potentially dangerous to even share it with

²³¹ Mark Harmon and Robert Muenchen, “Semantic Framing in the Build-Up to the Iraq War: Fox VS CNN and Other US Broadcast News Programs,” *ETC: A Review of General Semantics* (2009): 12-26.

²³² Amy Land and Daniel Levitsky, *Dreaming in Public: The Building of the Occupy Movement* (New York: World Changing Press, 2012), 16.

“Decolonize,” as uniting the two could easily lead to confusion, undermining what a marketing executive might refer to as “brand recognition.”

Although such critiques insightfully point to the negative rhetorical implications of using <occupy> to fashion a positive frame—its potential to obscure and elide the injustices created by 21st empire building—they miss, I believe, precisely what this project as a whole attempts to foreground: the affective dynamics of social movement rhetorics, and especially the ideographic structures of those rhetorics. “Reclaim” and “Decolonize” may indeed “better suit” an extended *rational* framework for justifying activist actions and the need for social change, but they do not carry the same affective charge that “occupy” does. Rather, this theoretical dissonance and linguistic tension, largely (and perhaps ironically) fueled by years of anti-war activist investment, actually *benefits* the term’s catalyzing capacity. <Occupy> invites an array of economic and political critiques to coalesce under its banner and in addition, the affects attached to those critiques. We must pay attention, in other words, to the *non-rational* aspects of the term, its attachment to “Wall Street,” and its circulation across our mediascapes.

With the marker of “Wall Street”—an actually existing place—following “Occupy,” it is justifiably easy to link the term quite closely to definitions of forcefully taking over physical space. More evidence for this particular definition is added for each city that has Occupy activity operating within it. Although it may appear obvious to associate “Occupy” with the aggressive seizure of space through physical presence, there is much more occurring with the term’s rhetorical

functioning. The creative and various uses of "Occupy" within the movement's rhetorics, the term's circulation throughout the mediascape, and the discursive frames it builds and contests as a result, indicate that "Occupy" deserves a more robust, nuanced analysis.

PREMEDIATING OCCUPY

Without question, physical "occupation" of place is of critical importance to the movement, and was so from the very beginning. For example, attached to *Adbuster's* initial invitation to Occupy Wall Street was a poster, at the bottom of which sits a succinct imperative: "Bring Tent." My argument is certainly not to lessen these physical and spatial aspects of the term, but rather to caution against any easy analytical foreclosure that may result from unduly privileging them. Yet even with this evidence of emphasis on corporeal occupation, for a full understanding of the rhetorical functioning of "Occupy," we must look beyond the notion of bodies-in-proximity. To focus to an overly exclusive degree on *collectivities of people*—how many there are, where they are, how long they'll be there—draws one closer to an implicit definition of social movements that ultimately limits rhetorical reflection. In other words, if, in an effort to understand, rhetorically analyze, and gauge the effectiveness of Occupy Wall Street, we begin counting bodies and nights spent in a particular location as "the movement," the frame being built is one that looks for the rhetoric *within* social movements, rather than a rhetoric *of* social movements.

To begin with, Wall Street itself was never actually occupied. Protestors, as they expected, were met with fences and a police presence when they attempted to move into the space. Police had also zoned off the protestors' second choice, Bowling Green Park. This location was of particular symbolic importance, as it boasts the iconic "Charging Bull" statue representing a "bull market."²³³ This statue is prominently featured on the widely circulated *Adbusters* poster calling for Occupy Wall Street (Fig. 1).

²³³ The bear and bull have emerged as symbols and terms for market movement based of their respective killing styles: a bear kills by pushing down; a bull kills by pushing up, using its horns.



Figure 1. Adbusters's poster calling for Occupy Wall Street

In it, a ballerina performing an Arabesque is gracefully perched atop the bull's shoulders. In the poster's background, black-clad and hooded activists with gas masks on appear to be emerging from what we may safely presume to be tear gas deployed by police in a struggle to disperse the protestors. Their body positions suggest fitful motion, a mixture of defensive reaction and persistence to remain in place. Such a depiction is "future casting" what Occupy Wall Street will look like: a group of prepared activists (they have gas masks on, after all) attempt to rally around an iconic symbol of what they argue is a critical source of cultural injustice, and as a result, being confronted by (and confronting) police. The poster forecasts the occupation as a *physical* one, situating it within a very specific location: the Charging Bull statue, and from a very specific focalization: the viewpoint of those being challenged.

This poster exemplifies what Richard Grusin has recently identified as "premediation," a process "in which the future is remediated before it even happens."²³⁴ Grusin describes premediation an anticipatory act, distinct from prediction; in that prediction is judged by its representative fidelity to what *actually* happens, "[p]remediation entails the generation of possible future scenarios or possibilities which may come true or which may not, but which work in any event to guide action (or shape public sentiment) in the present."²³⁵ The *Adbusters* poster, seen through the lens of premediation, aesthetically presents a specific future scenario for Occupy Wall Street in an attempt to mobilize and orient collective affect

²³⁴ Grusin, *Premediation*, 48.

²³⁵ *Ibid.*, 46.

in the present. Alongside the emails, tweets, and blogposts circulated by *Adbusters* in the lead-up to September 17, 2011—each of which differently premediates what OWS might look like—this poster played a significant role in collectivizing public sentiment and coalescing it around an event that, in turn, provided a premediation of what could happen elsewhere, in different cities, in different countries, and in wildly different contexts.

In a blogpost just two weeks into Occupy Wall Street, a point in its development when it was just beginning to gain widespread attention from the mainstream media, Grusin himself argues, “Occupy Wall street is best understood as a premediation of the occupation of Wall Street.”²³⁶ He claims that, regardless of its duration or interpreted outcomes, OWS is already a complete success because it “opens up paths to potential futures in which the occupation of Wall Street (or the political occupation of other sites) is actualized.” As I read Grusin, the premediation of OWS succeeds in actualizing pathways of desire—of *pathē* —vis-à-vis an illustrated and collective imagining of the future.

Premediation occurs at two distinct points, but both equally important to understanding the Occupy movement as a whole: 1) with each media release by *Adbusters* in the lead-up; and 2) with each mediation of the gathering in New York City and the “occupation” of Zuccotti park. What is most pertinent to note in the first instance of premediation is that it does not depict the actual occupation of Wall

²³⁶ Richard Grusin, “Occupy Wall Street Premediates the Occupation of Wall Street,” accessed September 19, 2012, <http://premediation.blogspot.com/2011/09/occupy-wall-street-premediates.html>.

Street per se, but a critical *symbol* of Wall Street—the *Charging Bull* statue. From the beginning, Wall Street is being framed as a *concept* to “occupy,” rather than *only* as a physical location for seizing. Foregrounding the bull and all it symbolizes within a setting that reframes those values and characteristic, *Adbusters’s* poster indicates that what Wall Street *represents* is the target.

The poster’s aesthetic design, without question, contributed to its heavy circulation both pre-occupation and well into the movement. “There’s a number of ways to wage a meme war,” Lasn pointed out in an interview, “[and] I believe that one of the most powerful things of all is aesthetics.”²³⁷ The center of this design presents a powerful contrast for the viewer’s consideration: a lithe female dancer is poised atop an enormous statue symbolizing virility and aggression. The dancer’s arabesque pose has her body open, extended, and balanced; the bull is cast mid-charge, its muscles bulging, and its torso pulling to one side in conveying the intensity of its motion. Her facial countenance is relaxed but focused, with a very subtle grin growing at the corners of her mouth; conversely, the bull’s nostrils are flared, the muscles around its eyes are tightened, its head lowered and cocked. The dancer’s body communicates equanimity and the type of strength associated with finesse. The bull’s body, much to the opposite, appears wound in a flight of

²³⁷ William Yardley, “The Branding of the Occupy Movement,” *The New York Times*, November 27, 2011.

belligerence, with “its tail curved like a lash.”²³⁸ The juxtaposition exhibits delicate, lissome flesh perched atop seven thousand pounds of bronze metal.

One could argue that such clear contrasts suggest that *Adbusters* envisions Occupy Wall Street as movement that will conquer in its occupation of Wall Street by meeting violent, brute force with the assured composure of non-violence. I would argue, however, that despite all the differences highlighted in joining a bull and ballerina, it is where the two overlap that our attention should be placed. *Adbusters* aesthetically contrasts a symbol of Wall Street’s strength, power, and virility with its own symbol of strength, power, and fertility. The “bullish” market the statue implicitly references—where investor confidence and optimism in the market and its upward trend appear high—is paired with a depiction of equal confidence and optimism of the activists and their movement. The poster does not seek to trump one symbol over another (even if the dancer is on top); rather, they put the pair in *balance*. The protestors in the background are evidence enough that the poster’s design does not argue *against* aggression, anger, or sheer force. Aligned with the bull’s characteristics—powerful, fitful motion—the masked protestors forecast an occupation whose tactics and strategy will demonstrate a balanced mixture of approaches.

OCCUPY METONYMY

²³⁸ Dianne L. Durante, *Outdoor Monuments of Manhattan: A Historical Guide* (New York: New York University Press, 2007), 79.

From the vantage point of rhetorical analysis, the charging bull is a metaphor for Wall Street, which is itself an act of metonymy. As Burke puts it, “[m]etonymy may be treated as a special application of synecdoche,” with synecdoche defined as a rhetorical maneuver in which the whole of something is represented through one of its parts. For example, “Wall Street” operates as a part (the physical location of where stocks are traded) standing in for the whole: a collected series of practices and sets of belief that, taken together, constitute the economic assemblage of capitalism. In the case of OWS rhetorics, the “whole” to which Wall Street refers is frequently framed as something more specific: a particular strain of capitalist practices deemed unjustifiably risky and unethical, and the source of blame for many cultural ills, domestic and foreign. That said, the whole can just as easily be framed to mean the entirety of capitalism. The basic strategy of metonymy, Burke writes, is to “convey some incorporeal or intangible state in terms of the corporeal or tangible.”²³⁹ The intangible concept of free market capitalism, its enacted and embodied theories, is represented as a tangible, physical location—literally grounding the abstraction.

The rhetorical device of metonymy facilitates flexibility in representation, precisely because the whole of what Wall Street encapsulates is so expansive. Consequently, Wall Street can be both revered and reviled as a marker for the values and aspirations it represents, simultaneously framed as a cornerstone of what makes America unique and powerful, and as the epicenter of a society corrupted by

²³⁹ Burke, *Grammar*, 506.

greed, a symbol of decadence and moral depravity. The enormous symbolic value of Wall Street can perhaps be best demonstrated by pointing out that the vast majority of financial trades no longer physically take place at the New York Stock Exchange (NYSE) or the adjacent NASDAQ market in the Wall Street district. In fact, only about 12 percent of buy and sell orders occur on the actual floor of the NYSE, which sits at 11 Wall Street.²⁴⁰ In sum, our current stage of capitalism—one that is reticulated globally, densely digitized, and overwhelmingly complex—is symbolically reduced to eight blocks of lower Manhattan through the metonymy of “Wall Street.”

The rhetorical implications of Wall Street-as-metonymy became evident in an exchange between Ohio Senator Sherrod Brown and Federal Reserve Chairman Ben Bernanke during a Senate Banking Committee hearing in 2008, spurred by the severe economic downturn. Brown asks, “[d]oes Wall Street owe the American people an apology?” Bernanke responds by saying, “Wall Street is an abstraction.” In this rare moment of rhetorical meta-reflection in the annals of Congressional testimony, Bernanke implicitly argues that Brown’s question cannot be answered for the simple reason that Wall Street cannot apologize, because Wall Street is a metonymic figure. Wall Street is not a unified actor and does not have the agency to respond as one. Rather, as Richard Grusin puts it, “[t]he agency of Wall Street [is] the agency of the complex socio-technical assemblage of financial employees, bank

²⁴⁰ Rick Newman, “The NYSE Shut Down by Sandy Isn’t as Vital as You Think,” *U.S. News & World Report*, October 29, 2012.

statements, office buildings, powerful computer serves, distributed financial software networks, and so forth.”²⁴¹

I concur with Grusin’s use of “assemblage,” as it directs attention to the reticulate nature of economic practices and beliefs, and its manifestations in such seemingly banal genres such a bank statements. Like Grusin, I agree it is critical to emphasize that this economic assemblage—referred to throughout this project as neoliberalism, though it goes by many names—has material implications, with its effects registered not just in bank account holdings, but also on the environment, our bodies, and relational ways of being and acting in the world.

I part ways with Grusin, however, when he claims that “Wall Street is as real an object as any other” and that the “economic deities” of Wall Street, the market, or the Dow, “are anything but ‘abstractions.’” Grusin wants to resist the connotations abstraction carries of being an “immaterial essence,” and suggests that to claim Wall Street as an abstraction is to elide the “very real and concrete socio-technical, cultural, and economic practices and capital resources” of our everyday. My contention here is that a false choice has been proposed between Wall Street as concrete object or as an abstraction that delinks it from all material consequences. For me, the stakes of this framing are quite high, as Grusin attenuates the power of rhetorical devices like metonymy, metaphor and synecdoche to fundamentally shape our perspective and behaviors. I would argue instead that rhetorical analysis reveals a metonymic figure like “Wall Street” is indeed an cognitive abstraction

²⁴¹ Grusin, *Premediation*, 150.

made possible through language, and that as a particularly potent metonym, it significantly shapes our immaterial *and* material environments. I would suggest that this actually demonstrates the power of rhetoric in shaping our world, and therefore the need for strong rhetorical analysis.

My analysis of occupy's myriad and flexible definitions combined with *Adbusters's* recognition and exploitation of Wall Street as metonymic figure in its calls for protest reveals how the phrase "Occupy Wall Street" is rhetorically rich and remarkably adaptive as a result. The productive ambiguities of <occupy> combined with the potent, yet pliant symbolism of Wall Street are significant factors, I argue, in the catalyzing effects witnessed in conjunction with the phrase "Occupy Wall Street." Collectively, they are key contributions to what Grusin calls the premediation of the movement. As he notes, "Wall Street—as stock exchange, city street, or geographical place—is not physically occupied. It is, however, virtually occupied." He continues, arguing that, "#occupywallstreet open up paths to potential futures," especially for the occupation of other sites, and also, importantly, alternative economic paths for our future.²⁴²

CALL FOR THE COMMON SENSORIUM

Grusin claims that it is OWS rhetorics' "premediation of greater and more numerous and powerful potential occupations in the future, that vitalizes the

²⁴² Richard Grusin, "40 Days in the Wilderness: Premediation and the Virtual Occupation of Wall Street," accessed November 7, 2012, <http://premediation.blogspot.com/2011/10/40-days-in-wilderness-premediation-and.html>.

Occupy movement and marks its continued success.” In Grusin's analysis, the term "vitalize" should be taken rather literally, as he places a clear emphasis on the animating and enlivening forces of "individual and collective affect," "collective moods," and "structures of feeling." It is the collective mood that is generated, shaped, and mobilized through rhetorics of premediation. Grusin puts it quite plainly: "premediation works by mobilizing affect in the present." Grusin's elaboration on this claim is worth quoting in full:

Premediation deploys multiple modes of mediation and remediation in shaping the affectivity of the public, in preparing people for some field of possible actions, in producing a mood or structure of feeling that makes possible certain kinds of actions, thoughts, speech, affectivities, or moods, mediations that might not have seemed possible before or that might have fallen flat or died on the vine or not produced echoes and reverberations in the public or media sphere. As an event of premediation, #occupywallstreet is working to change the mood or collective affective tone in the media, in public discourse, in social networks and in the political sphere so that talking about amnesty for college or mortgage debt or demanding increased taxes on the wealthiest individuals and corporations or thinking about restructuring property relations and economics becomes not only permissible, but indeed *begins to appear as common sense* or received wisdom.²⁴³

I quote Grusin at length here because he explores this claim further and identifies how such affective shifts in turn catalyze other possibilities, which are registered affectively and rhetorically. For example, the rhetorics and mediations of OWS create a mood—of “occupation” or generalized resistance—that in turn makes possible other moods, such as increased confidence to speak one’s opinion, courage in the face of opposition, or hope that with enough collective momentum, significant change for the better can indeed occur.

²⁴³ Ibid. Italics mine.

Importantly, the shift in affective orientation that OWS spurs also leads to reconfigurations of rhetorical expectations and possibilities in the public discourse on related topics, signaling an evolution in what Jenny Rice calls “rhetorical ecologies.”²⁴⁴ What can be said, by whom, and in what manner of delivery is recalibrated as a result of shifts in affective orientation.²⁴⁵ Grusin addresses this recalibration as a transformation in public discourse, when new arguments emerge as plausible (where they were not before), and furthermore, begin to “appear as common sense.” Grusin usefully points to the mutability of common sense and the speed at which new logics and arguments can be introduced and transformed by the rhetorical atmosphere to appear as “received wisdom,” likely furthering their persuasive purchase. He also draws a clear connection between shifts in the “affectivity of the public” and its impact on the cultural category of common sense; in doing so, I argue, he (unwittingly) points to the analogous relationship between common sense and its affective and emotional analogue: the common sensorium.

²⁴⁴ Evolution is used here to complement the biological overtones of Rice’s “rhetorical ecologies,” and as such, is used in its strictest sense of signaling significant changes in development, without any qualification that this is an improvement. From a truly Darwinian perspective, evolution is about adaptation to a shifting environment, not about elevation or advancement, and certainly not in any moral sense.

²⁴⁵ Grusin refers to this evolution in the rhetorical ecologies of OWS as a change in “the affective *tone*” in public discourse (*italics mine*). I find Grusin’s arguments regarding OWS compelling, especially in this passage, in part because of his use of auditory- and sonic-related terms. In addition to tone, he chooses “echoes” and “reverberations” in discussing the circulation of affect. As argued in my introduction, these auditory terms are often better at conveying the processes of affect, in contrast to visual metaphors, for example. The common sensorium, again, is defined as a “cultural *ambient* of emotional norms,” to suggest as a correlate the sounds that fill our everyday experience, yet fade to the back as indistinct noise.

As much as I clearly commend Grusin's astute explorations into premediation's affective element and how OWS illustrates the concept, I believe his writings also demonstrate the value and need for the rhetorical category of the common sensorium. Consider the wide range of terms Grusin uses in framing collective affect and its circulation. It is variously labeled within this single article as "affectivity of the public," "a mood or structure of feeling," "collective affective tone," "collective moods," "networks of revolutionary feelings," "public mood," "shared feeling of injustice," "collective affectivity," and "revolutionary counter mood." It is often the case that such descriptors come as synonymous pairs, such as "collective moods or structures of feeling" and "mood or collective affective tone." Such variance in language, I contend, is more than poetic flourish; rather, the rash of terms paradoxically intimates a lack of vocabulary with regard to affect at a collective level. Just as a close analysis of the term <occupy> contributes to a greater understanding of how OWS rhetorics function, I likewise see a value in placing greater analytical pressure on the specific terms used when discussing the affective and emotional dynamics surrounding social movement rhetorics.

OCCUPY ANGER

The Declaration of the Occupation of New York City is a key text to the Occupy movement, as it was the first formalized statement of principles to emerge out of not just Occupy NYC, but also the movement as a whole. The *Declaration* is a professionally designed document with a modern, minimalist aesthetic. The writing

itself was composed by the “NYC General Assembly,” a collective of groups working together in “an open, participatory and horizontally organized process,” with the aim of creating a vision for #occupywallstreet and “building the capacity to constitute ourselves in public as autonomous collective forces within and against the constant crises of our times.”²⁴⁶ The *Declaration* is rather succinct, comprised of an introductory announcement of purpose only two sentences long, followed by four pages of grievances levied against the “corporations and government [that] have become a plutocracy.”

The opening lines acutely demonstrate the central role of affect and emotion in social movement emergence and development: “As we gather together in solidarity to express a feeling of mass injustice, we must not lose sight of what brought us together. We write so that all people who feel wronged by the corporate forces of the world can know that we are your allies.” These sentences, which constitute the entire first section of the *Declaration*, attempt to capture and direct the intensity of affect, the raw and abundant passion felt by those who participate in or sympathize with OWS. Indeed, this text is equal parts declaration and invitation, welcoming others “who feel wronged by corporate forces” to join in solidarity. Grusin likewise reads the *Declaration*’s introductory lines as evidence of how OWS seeks to shift the “affectivity of the public,” claiming that they reveal “[t]he heart of this revolutionary counter-mood.” “The initial aims of #occupywallstreet,” he

²⁴⁶ NYC General Assembly, *The Declaration of the Occupation of New York City*, accessed October 23, 2012, <http://www.nycga.net/about>. All subsequent quotes from the *Declaration* refer to this edition.

writes, “seem clear—to produce and intensify a mood occupation or civil disobedience, a shared feeling of injustice towards such development as income inequality, the foreclosure crisis, workplace discrimination, [and] student loan debt,” among other economic developments and byproducts of a largely 21st-century neoliberalism.²⁴⁷

The Declaration’s rhetorical decision to choose a “feeling of mass injustice” as their primary proclamation—and the first formally released statement on behalf of the prototype encampment of OWS—reveals the centrality of anger to Occupy. Importantly, the Declaration states that not only is this an occasion for the expression of a feeling, but also that this is the feeling uniting all those there in NYC: “We write so that all people who feel wronged by the corporate forces of the world can know that we are your allies.” A “feeling of mass injustice” itself begs questioning, since as emotional expressions go, it falls outside our everyday emotional lexicon. Consider how awkward the response would be to the question, “how are you feeling today?” Our cultural norms and emotional definitions make a response like, “I am feeling injustice,” nearly impossible to comprehend. Within the scope of the Declaration of the Occupation of New York City and its context, however, I would argue that this “feeling of mass injustice” is a clear articulation of collective anger. I base this on Aristotle’s systematic and sustained treatment of anger in the *Rhetoric*.

²⁴⁷ Grusin, “40 Days.”

I invoke Aristotle's analysis for two reasons. First, the *Declaration's* emphasis on injustice aligns with Aristotle's conception of anger, which stresses the perception of an unjust act of "slighting." "Anger may be defined," he writes, "as an impulse, accompanied by pain, to a conspicuous revenge for a conspicuous slight directed without justification towards what concerns oneself or towards what concerns one's friends."²⁴⁸ Anger, in other words, involves an evaluation of justice and an emotional response to its perceived violation. An estimation of one's sense of worth and social standing is also included in this definition, for if a slight is "without justification," an expectation of what one and others deserve—a standard of justice—is necessarily implicated. Using Aristotle's definition, then, one could replace "mass injustice" with "anger," without losing any of the import placed on injustice. Daniel Gross notes that, "Aristotle's anger presumes *a contoured world of emotional investments*, where some people have significantly more liabilities than others."²⁴⁹ Recognizing the asymmetrical power relations in Aristotle's account is to recognize that his "[theoretical] presumptions [of anger] are thoroughly psychosocial," rather than psychological or psychobiological.²⁵⁰ The sociality presumed in Aristotle's definition of anger is evident and compelling.

The second reason I find Aristotle particularly useful for this analysis is that he explores anger more systematically and at more length than any other emotion in the *Rhetoric*. Its privileged role as an emotion central to his thinking beyond his

²⁴⁸ Aristotle, *Rhetoric*, 91 (1378a).

²⁴⁹ Gross, *Secret History*, 3.

²⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 3.

rhetorical theories is evidenced by the fact that across his other works, anger is referenced over one hundred times—more than any other emotion. As Renu Dube writes, “[a]nger is correctly recognized by modern scholars as the paradigmatic passion in Aristotelian rhetoric.”²⁵¹

Analysis of media coverage from the first month of Occupy Wall Street across both right- and left-leaning news outlets reveals that anger is the “paradigmatic passion” of Occupy Wall Street. Specifically, in reviewing articles from *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, *The Wall Street Journal*, *Fox News*, and *MSNBC* between September 17, 2011—the first marked day of OWS protests—and through the end of the following October, anger can be seen as a unifying element in the media’s analysis. When journalists struggle to report what the movement is demanding, who is leading it, or where it is headed, they fall back on anger, indicating in a variety of ways that only one thing is clear: people are angry. I turn toward these “traditional” mass media organizations, rather than, say, a collection of tweets from @OccupyWallStreetNYC, for two reasons. First, despite the attention paid to so-called “Twitter Revolutions,” which tend to implicitly suggest that the medium of social media networking—primarily Twitter and Facebook—have inherently democratic capacities, and are therefore the prime catalysts of change, traditional media outlets continue to wield enormous influence in the framing of social

²⁵¹ Renu Dube, “‘Time Appeases Anger’: The Rhetorical-Political Temporality of the Paradigmatic Passion of *Ogre* in Aristotle’s *Rhetoric* and *Politics*,” *Advances in the History of Rhetoric: The First Six Years*, eds. Richard Leo Enos and David Beard (Anderson: Parlor Press, 2007), 367. Dube cites Aristotle’s multiple references to Achilles’s anger as evidence that Aristotle “is not concerned with the private emotions of anger, but anger in the arena of the public meeting or *agora*.”

movement rhetorics.²⁵² Secondly, as Kevin DeLuca, et al. rightly note, these organizations "have a vested interest in preserving the world as it is, in perpetuating the status quo."²⁵³ This vested interest in the status quo is of particular relevance to my project, as the common sensorium and its rational analogue of common sense, are critical forces in upholding the status quo. Consequently, looking to the way dominant news outlets invoke and frame anger is beneficial to understanding how social movements operate within and against culturally constructed structures of emotional norms.

Traditional media outlets within the United States were noticeably sluggish in labeling OWS a significant event worthy of coverage in its initial unfolding. For example, there was no mention of the happening on the major television stations for the first ten days.²⁵⁴ And although it was covered in brief on a blog section of *The New York Times* website, the protest did not merit actual print until the twenty-fifth

²⁵² In no way am I suggesting that social media networks or even the modality through which—and by which—rhetorics are constructed are of lesser importance than more traditional, mass media outlets such as *The Washington Post* or *Fox News*. The two have been set in opposition in ways that highlight their differences, implicitly suggesting that they are competing, and antagonistic forms. Subsequently, the similarities are obscured and the manner in which they act symbiotically goes largely unacknowledged. In choosing to analyze predominantly traditional news reports I do not intend to suggest that one must make a choice between two forms of media—on one hand the centralized outlets whose message is heavily influenced by commercial forces, and social media on the other, touted for its many-to-many networks of largely non-commercial and commons-based messages. Quite to the contrary, I wish to acknowledge this as a dichotomy of media that obscures as much as it illuminates.

²⁵³ Kevin DeLuca, Sean Lawson, and Ye Sun, "Occupy Wall Street on the Public Screens of Social Media: The Many Framings of the Birth of a Protest Movement," *Communication, Culture & Critique* 5 (2012): 488.

²⁵⁴ Ibid., 489. This lack of reporting within the United States is further highlighted when one considers how it was covered internationally. As DeLuca, et al. note, presses from London to France to China all ran stories within the first three days of OWS.

of September, a full week after OWS began, and even then, it was placed relatively deep into the local Metro-news section. The article, “Gunning for Wall Street, With Faulty Aim,” begins with the sentence, “By late morning on Wednesday, Occupy Wall Street, a noble but fractured and airy movement of right frustrated young people, had a default ambassador in a half-naked woman who called herself Zuni Tikka.”²⁵⁵ The article, as this introduction and its title suggests, is largely dismissive of the protest, framing the event through phrases such as, “the group’s lack of cohesion” and “intellectual vacuum.” The author, however, also introduces the movement as “noble” and comprised of “rightly frustrated” people. Although the movement is ultimately framed as misguided, it is suggested that their motivating force—frustration and anger at “corporate greed, corporate influence, [and] gross social inequality”—is nevertheless justified. Separate from what ends that anger may be directed, the author concedes that the collective anger at Wall Street is warranted.

What the movement is against, in other words, is represented as evident, and the emotional energy fueling the protest is portrayed at the very least as understandable. Even Karl Rove, political consultant for the Republican Party and former Deputy Chief of Staff to President George W. Bush, grants the rhetorics of anger some legitimacy. Writing in a *Fox News* Op-ed in the first month of the protest, Rove argues that the *only* thing OWS has in common with the Tea Party, a political movement that he endorses, is “an amorphous anger aimed at banks,

²⁵⁵ Ginia Bellafante, “Gunning for Wall Street, With Faulty Aim,” *The New York Times*, September 25, 2011.

investors, rich people and bourgeois values.”²⁵⁶ This theme is repeated across reports from multiple news organizations, regardless of their political leanings. “Although right-leaning blogs saw OWS protesters as angry and therefore dangerous,” DeLuca et al. conclude, “left-leaning blogs tended to see this anger as legitimate and not dangerous.”²⁵⁷ What emerges from an analysis of initial reporting, then, is the unifying force of anger, as one *Washington Post* headline makes abundantly evident: “United in Anger, Occupy Wall Street Protesters Go Global.”²⁵⁸

The binding force of anger is most frequently juxtaposed with the claim that the movement’s specific criticisms are as diverse as they are lengthy. Anger itself may help make a headline, but anger is directed *at* someone or something. The metonymic “Wall Street,” as argued, is a broad collected set of practices, thus allowing for an equally broad set of criticisms. The author of the *New York Times* article previously cited reports that, “in specific terms, [the main message of the movement] was virtually impossible to decipher.” She characterizes the protest as little more than an “opportunity to air societal grievances as carnival.”²⁵⁹ The title of another *New York Times* article efficiently summarizes the conclusions drawn by many other traditional mass media outlets: “Countless Grievances, One Thread:

²⁵⁶ Karl Rove, “Democrats Woo the Occupy Wall Street Protesters But Could It Backfire?” *FoxNews.com*, October 13, 2011.

²⁵⁷ DeLuca et al., 497.

²⁵⁸ Karla Adam, “United in Anger, Occupy Wall Street Protestors Go Global,” *The Washington Post*, October 16, 2011.

²⁵⁹ Bellafante, “Gunning for Wall Street.”

We're Angry.”²⁶⁰ The same sentiment is echoed across media platforms. PBS ran a segment the first week of October titled, “‘Occupy Wall Street’ Protests Give Voice to Anger Over Greed, Corporate Culture,”²⁶¹ for example, while *The New Yorker* published a piece on OWS with the title, “All the Angry People.”²⁶²

A representational trend emerges across media reports that the singular element of OWS that is unambiguous and consistent is its broad-based anger; this leads many reporters to highlight a lack of centralized message. One of *The Washington Post*'s early articles on OWS says that the movement “has tended toward the amorphous, expressing a generalized rage at economic inequality and financial hegemony.”²⁶³ The author further juxtaposes anger with a perceived lack of clarity with regard to the movement's primary goal: “There may be no common manifesto or list of goals—something that has drawn criticism from both inside and outside the movement—but there is one common thread: anger.” He continues, emphasizing the emotional unification, “[s]ome have looked for jobs for months; other have lost their home to foreclosure. Angry, they all are.” One *Fox News* article claims that “[c]onversations with protesters confirm the diffuse nature of the grievances,” but adds that, “[v]irtually without exception, protesters who are willing

²⁶⁰ Mark Lacey, “Countless Grievances, One Thread: We're Angry,” *The New York Times*, October 17, 2011.

²⁶¹ Paul Solman, “‘Occupy Wall Street’ Protests Give Voice to Anger Over Greed, Corporate Culture,” *PBS Newshour*, October 5, 2011.

²⁶² George Packer, “All the Angry People,” *The New Yorker*, December 5, 2011.

²⁶³ Harold Meyerson, “Rescuing American from Wall Street,” *The Washington Post*, October 15, 2011.

to share their specific grievances inevitably connect their anger to the bailouts of the big Wall Street banks.”²⁶⁴

Many reports frame the diversity of critiques they encounter at protests as a negative; that the “lack of organization and articulated set of goals,” for instance, leads toward skepticism of the movement’s sustainability and makes it easy to see protesters as “nothing more than gadflies, dilettantes and ne’er-do-wells.”²⁶⁵ Some reports are more generous, claiming that the Occupy movement is “a potent example of what is happening across our country as the anger and frustration of ordinary Americans builds,” and that, “[w]hile the media and pundits obsess over what the Occupy Wall Street protester’s want,” the movement has nevertheless succeeded by “forcing a national conversation about everything that is wrong with our economy.”²⁶⁶ Other reports fall in between, suggesting that when only anger is evident—and not accompanied by an equally clear critique or demand—the effect is simply disorienting.

WINDOWS AND CHANNELS

Critiquing social movements for a lack of centralized message or proposed set of solutions is a consistent refrain within the history of social movements and to be expected. What is far more interesting in this case is how anger is discussed and

²⁶⁴ Dunstan Prial, “Occupy Wall Street, Tea Party Movements Both Born of Bank Bailouts,” *FoxNews.com*, October 20, 2011.

²⁶⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁶⁶ Mary Kay Henry, “Why Labor Backs ‘Occupy Wall Street,’” *The Wall Street Journal*, October 8, 2011.

its relationship to the Occupy movement. In addition to the patterns already noted, an analysis of these initial media reports reveals that anger is framed as a very time-sensitive emotion—it comes with an expiration date. In itself, this framing reveals common cultural understandings of anger that align with Aristotle’s account. For instance, Aristotle states in the *Rhetoric*, “time puts an end to anger” and thus the orator must consider if “anger is no longer fresh” with his audience, if one is to choose the most effective response. “Anger,” he puts it plainly, “can be cured by time.”²⁶⁷ Compounded by this is Aristotle’s categorization of anger as a “courageous emotion” since anger “takes no account of the future.” Although other emotions surely are transformed over time, Aristotle’s multiple references coupling anger with time indicate a higher significance of the relationship, than, say, the relationship between time and guilt.

Two metaphors in particular emerge from media reports referencing anger within a temporal framework: windows and channels. The first is largely implicit and the second frequently explicit, as one *New York Times* suggests, “[it is] unclear if the current protests [will] lead to a lasting movement, which [will] require the newly unleashed passions to be channeled into institutions and shaped into political goals.”²⁶⁸ Windows and channels are linked in this passage, which is representative of how the movement is analyzed in popular social forums with an emotional lens. A “lasting movement,” the argument runs, can only occur if the emotional

²⁶⁷ Aristotle, *Rhetoric*, 103 (1382a7).

²⁶⁸ Erik Eckholm and Timothy Williams, “Anti-Wall Street Protests Spreading to Cities Large and Small,” *The New York Times*, October 4, 2011.

investments and affective attachments are brought together from across a wide plane and given a singular direction, thereby multiplying its force. Jerrold Post's article, "A Deep Well of Discontent," extends the metaphor further, claiming that the movement has "tapped into widespread discontent," but notes, "[w]here this movement goes—how it channels the strong current of discontent—will depend upon whether healing leadership can mobilize these forces to reform governments to the needs of all their people."²⁶⁹ The metaphoric framing here provocatively mirrors Heidegger's claim that "it is into such a mood" that one enters via rhetoric, with anger swirling across the social field ways that exceed any one person's control. If we agree with Heidegger's assessment that a rhetor, "must understand the possibilities of moods in order to arouse them and guide them aright," then it is evident that <occupy> and its cluster of associated rhetorics has helped arouse and guide anger. Of central concern in media reports, however, is the extent to which that anger is guided and toward what ends.

The exigency for channeling anger comes from the perception that it can be transformed into a fundamentally different emotion with time. Analysis of initial OWS media reports reveals assumptions about anger's time-bound volatility—that it can dissipate as quickly and unpredictably as it can ignite and motivate. For example, the *USA Today* article, "'Occupy' is Anger Without Solutions," claims that, "[a]nger is a combustible material and can have unintended consequences."²⁷⁰

²⁶⁹ Jerrold M. Post, "A Deep Well of Discontent," *The New York Times*, October 19, 2011.

²⁷⁰ Cal Thomas and Bob Beckel, "'Occupy' is Anger Without Solutions," *USA Today*, October 19, 2011.

Another article observes that, “[m]any of the Occupy activists have expressed great anger at the increasing bifurcation of wealth in the United States,” but then wonders, “whether this movement, or any, is more durable when it develops out of a visceral anger.”²⁷¹ Aristotle says straight-forwardly, “time puts an end to anger.” How that anger comes to end is an open field, as these representative quotations indicate. Moreover, these reports suggest that how long that window lasts before being inevitably transformed is overdetermined; one can only speculate.

Where speculation comes to rest, however, is revealing, and two patterns are apparent in initial media reporting: weather and development of the movement’s message will be the predominant factors in whether a channeling of anger occurs before the window of time expires. Perhaps because the first is largely outside of protestor control, most speculation focuses on if <occupy> rhetorics will develop in such a direction that they act as a conduit for the collective anger. It has already been illustrated that a clear thread in the movement’s first couple months of reporting was a frustration (on the media’s part) with the lack of clear message, goals, or demands. Speculation on the movement’s relationship to collective anger is linked with this perceived lack, and not just with reporters, but activists working to further the movement as well. Deepak Chopra, for example, commented in an essay written for *The Huffington Post*, “[i]f Occupy America can channel its anger into awareness, the next step is to ask, ‘What is our goal?’”²⁷² Coming to a consensus

²⁷¹ Jeffrey O.G. Ogbar, “It Can’t Be All Anger,” *The New York Times*, October 19, 2011.

²⁷² Deepak Chopra, “The ‘Occupy’ Movement: Turning Anger Into Awareness,” *The Huffington Post*, October 6, 2011.

of purpose—*awareness*, as Chopra phrases it—is of central concern for those invested in leveraging the power of anger toward a positive outcome.

It is worth noting that Chopra does not ask, “What are our *goals*?” Although the subtle difference between a singular mission and plurality of demands is not an issue explored by nearly any of the media reports analyzed here, I argue that it is critical to reading anger in relation to <occupy> rhetorics. Recall from the beginning of this chapter *Adbusters*’s email that helped spark OWS: “Alright you 90,000 redeemers, rebels and radicals,” it began, “A worldwide shift in revolutionary tactics is underway right now that bodes well for the future.” That shift, they proclaim, is “a fusion of Tahrir with the acampadas of Spain,” one that combines the swarm strategy of 21st-century decentralized collectives with pragmatic simplicity: “we zero in on what our *one* demand will be [. . .] and then we go out and seize a square of singular symbolic significance and put our asses on the line to make it happen.”²⁷³ After determining what that demand might be, the call encouraged its readers to “pack our tents and head to Wall Street with a vengeance September 17.”²⁷⁴

The movement’s strategy would have two major prongs, modeled after prominent international social movements. One prong—from the acampadas of Spain—would be the inhabitation of powerfully symbolic public space. The other prong—a lesson taken from the Egyptians who gathered in Tahrir Square to oust Hosni Mubarak—would be the emphasis on a single goal. After reaching consensus

²⁷³ Italics mine.

²⁷⁴ *Adbusters*, “#OccupyWallStreet: A Shift in Revolutionary Tactics,” Adbusters.org, July 13, 2011.

on the that demand, protestors would flood “the financial Gomorrah of America,” the email premediated, “[and] incessantly repeat [that] *one simple demand* in a plurality of voices.”²⁷⁵ The focus on a singular goal is clearly seen in *Adbusters*’s “Bull and Ballerina” poster analyzed earlier. The dominant text, printed in blood red, is the question: “WHAT IS OUR ONE DEMAND?”

Of the two prongs recommended by *Adbusters*, only one was followed—occupying public space. A single demand never crystallized, although many contenders were discussed thoroughly. Many argued that a plurality of demands should be issued; some arguments summoned a Situationist-inspired tone, suggesting that protestors “demand the impossible.” Others claimed that issuing any demands would frame the movement as a political organization, thereby limiting OWS in suggesting that they were only interested in solving issues only through democratically and politically sanctioned channels. George Lakoff, for example, argued that, “it is a good thing that the occupation movement is not making specific policy demands [. . .] [i]f it did, the movement would become about those demands. If the demands were not met, the movement would be seen as having failed.”²⁷⁶ What Lakoff’s argument does not take into consideration, however, is how demands (not necessarily limited to policy) serve as a route of retribution for reconciling collective anger. Anger, Aristotle notes, “must always be attended by a certain pleasure—that which arises from the expectation of revenge,”

²⁷⁵ Italics mine.

²⁷⁶ George Lakoff, <http://occupywriters.com/works/by-george-lakoff>, accessed February 27, 2013.

retaliation, and retribution.²⁷⁷ Without a collective demand, collective anger and its attendant expectations are rendered vulnerable to attenuation or substantial transformation.

Reading the movement's development through a rhetorical and pathē-centric lens reveals that the collective anger of Occupy Wall Street, in order to be channeled, requires an act of retribution that will satisfy the injustice felt. Chopra writes, for example,

[w]hen I was down among the demonstrators, I led a meditation on that question [of a goal], and it seemed to calm down the people around me, which demonstrates, I think, that the whole Occupy movement is about angry idealists, not just people who feel screwed by Wall St., although that is the spark and the point of injustice that somehow must be faced.²⁷⁸

Although anger is timebound and therefore will inevitably transform with time, it is appeased, as Aristotle argue and Chopra suggests here, by directing it toward the point of injustice. Anger, in other words, cannot be understood adequately in isolation; it must be read in conjunction with the forces that will transform it—either actively, through focused retribution, or passively through the passage of time. Because Occupy Wall Street rhetorics did not coalesce around a single demand—as their model movement of Egypt's Tahrir Square did—this anger did not achieve reconciliation through vengeance. However, in the following and final section, I suggest that <occupy> is still capable of undergoing rearticulation, shifting away from an unreconciled anger to the affective pleasures of compassion.

²⁷⁷ Aristotle, *Rhetoric*, 92 (1378b).

²⁷⁸ Chopra, "The Occupy Movement."

DIRECT ACTIONS OF COMPASSION

The collective anger of Occupy Wall Street has been significantly diminished since its peak in that last few months of 2011. Since then, one campaign in particular has emerged from the initial movement that deserves critical reflection. “Occupy Sandy,” is a relief effort organized by Occupy protestors for those suffering in the aftermath of Hurricane Sandy, a storm that devastated significant portions of the East Coast in late October of 2012, roughly one year after the initial occupation of Zuccotti Park. Occupy Sandy received substantial press because its relief operations often proved faster and more effective than larger disaster-relief agencies; they were also frequently credited with being more in touch with the specific needs of local residents and were agile enough to adapt and help aid in the recovery.

For example, in *Time* magazine, Occupy Sandy is labeled a “vital part of the city’s hurricane relief infrastructure,” in large measure because they were “among the first to move” to action.²⁷⁹ The author notes that, “[w]hile huge bureaucratic organizations like the Red Cross and overwhelmed government agencies like FEMA took days to reach some neighborhoods, Occupy made use of Facebook and Twitter to channel volunteers and supplies to existing local institutions.”²⁸⁰ *The New York Times*, which, as my previous media analysis suggested, rarely framed Occupy Wall Street in a favorable light, wrote the following about Occupy Sandy:

²⁷⁹ Jared Malsin, “Best of Enemies: Why Occupy Activists Are Working with New York City’s Government,” *Time*, November 13, 2012.

²⁸⁰ Ibid.

[m]aligned for months for its purported ineffectiveness, Occupy Wall Street has managed through its storm-related efforts not only to renew the impromptu passions of Zuccotti, but also to tap into an unfulfilled desire among the residents of the city to assist in the recovery. This altruistic urge was initially unmet by larger, more established charity groups, which seemed slow to deliver aid and turned away potential volunteers in droves during the early days of the disaster.²⁸¹

Just as Occupy Wall Street shifted affective and emotional orientations to “occupy,” transforming it into the ideograph <occupy> with valences of collective anger attached, Occupy Sandy demonstrates how ideographic and pathētic orientations can shift again. <Occupy>, in the wake of Sandy, came to be associated with compassion, maturity, and generosity.

Although Aristotle warns of anger’s capacity to push one away from reflection and toward hasty reactions, he also indicates that it can be an equally powerful driver of virtuous action in striving against injustice. He maintains that gentleness can replace anger when justice has been achieved. The collective anger of Occupy Wall Street may not have crystallized into a clear moment of retribution against its primary target—Wall Street—for reasons that I have articulated, and these popular efforts do indeed indicate that anger has abated; however, I resist the notion that the movement is following an Aristotelian path of anger, wherein one becomes gentle and “grow[s] mild when they have exhausted their anger upon another.”²⁸² Rather, I read Occupy Sandy as an incipient shift from activism to advocacy, where the primary efforts are directed toward promoting alternatives to

²⁸¹ Alan Feuer, “Occupy Sandy: A Movement Moves to Relief,” *The New York Times*, November 9, 2012.

²⁸² Aristotle, *Rhetoric*, 98 (1380b).

the status quo, in distinction to critiquing and generating resistance to it. As I noted in the previous chapter, I use activism and advocacy as complementary actions and terms. The distinction is intended to call attention to how movement rhetorics are primarily organized, certainly not to suggest an either/or situation.

I do not, however, view this shift as a growing mild, as the Aristotelian trajectory suggests. Those working with Occupy Sandy characterize the project as a natural extension of OWS and its original mission. As one volunteer puts it, “[o]ur job while we’re doing this relief and recovery work is also to show people how this situation is inherently political.”²⁸³ In contrast to charity or aid, the rhetoric of Occupy Sandy has been framed around empowerment. “We want to empower people to work within their communities to solve problems they’re facing,” an Occupy Sandy volunteer argues; handing out bottles of water and giving away food and simply stopping at that, she continues, “[is] disempowering.”²⁸⁴

I would suggest that this project gestures toward an incipient strain of affective advocacy—a rhetorical strategy that places the body and its material dynamics as a primary locus for enacting social change—within Occupy Wall Street, one that has the potential to spur further projects where compassion and solidarity are the primary aim, complementing critique, rather than replacing it. However, there is not enough evidence to suggest that Occupy Wall Street rhetorics have

²⁸³ Rebecca Davis and Meena Hart Duerson, “Occupy Sandy relief effort puts Occupy Wall Street activists in the spotlight again a year after Zuccotti Park,” *New York Times*, December 5, 2012.

²⁸⁴ Allison Kilkenny, “Occupy Sandy Efforts Highlight Need for Solidarity, Not Charity,” *The Nation*, November 5, 2012.

tipped in this direction quite yet. My principal point is to show that the ideograph <occupy> is still flexible enough in its definition and diachronic history that its cultural connotations and affective attachments can be rearticulated and to situate this rearticulation along an axis of activism and advocacy. Just as I argued in regard to the Local Food movement, what is at stake is the evolution of the movement. The collective anger that once circulated alongside and through <occupy> has been largely dissipated, and as a result, I believe Occupy Wall Street will not develop further unless rhetorics that define and work toward the realization of alternative possibilities—such as Occupy Sandy—continue to circulate through our collective mediascape. As Jeffrey Ogbar writes, “[i]n the end, it is the compassion for justice that precipitates anger, but it is the empathetic impulse that inspires the people to remain committed to any movement. Anger alone cannot do.”²⁸⁵

²⁸⁵ Ogbar, “It Can’t Be All Anger.”

POSTSCRIPT

LOOKING BACK; LOOKING FORWARD

What is common is 'sensation'. Human beings are tied together by a certain sensory fabric, a certain distribution of the sensible, which defines their way of being together; and politics is about the transformation of the sensory fabric of 'being together'.

—Jacques Rancière, “Aesthetic Separation,
Aesthetic Community”

There is just the possibility of teasing ourselves toward a reorientation in which we can sense a better accommodation of desire and pleasure, of risk and sweetness, of aversion and attachment, of incoherence and patience.

—Lauren Berlant, “Affect and the Politics of
Austerity”

Summary

This study began with several expansive questions: What are the ways in which we are culturally entrained to experience certain emotions toward certain objects rather than others? How can we identify and analyze the social pedagogies that implicitly instruct one how to express emotions in rhetorically sanctioned

ways? How does a dominant cultural discourse help structure what one is even allowed to feel? I have responded to these questions by first establishing the concept of the common sensorium—an affective and emotional analogue to common sense—under the premise that in order to adequately explore such questions, we need a name and a frame for the structural norms of *pathē*, which are rhetorically inherited, produced, and refined. Historical events, cultural institutions, and social practices are not only shaped through emotion, but also, in turn, shape the very conditions for emotional possibilities. The common sensorium, I hope, will provide critics within rhetorical studies, as well as those outside it, with a category that can help articulate how the forces of affect and emotion get configured through social pedagogies of *pathē*.

To examine the contours of the common sensorium I examined three different social movements, which I attest are primarily attempts to shift collective affective and emotional orientations—in other words, attempts to move the common sensorium. In order to do so I reenvisioned the ideograph as a lens for the affective and emotional dynamics of social movement rhetorics. My approach frames ideographs as affective catalysts and guides for emotional orientation that simultaneously constitute and reflect a culture's matrix of social and political norms. This methodology, I hope, is one step toward establishing an elective affinity between ideographic analysis, affect theory, and critical emotion studies. It is also my hope that this reconfigured analytic will provide social movement scholars with

the means for articulating more clearly how social movements produce change in everyday perspectives and behaviors.

My investigations into the Environmental movement, the Local Food movement, and Occupy Wall Street demonstrate just one way the common sensorium can be applied as a lens. In Chapter Two I try to show how emotions operate differently in the collective than they do when contained at the level of the individual. Collective guilt may be at times phenomenologically indistinguishable from direct, personal guilt, but its rhetorical composition reveals significant motivational differences and effects. In Chapter Three, my aim is to reveal how rhetorics of taste seek to enliven one to an alternative “sensory fabric” of the common, as the Ranciere quote at the beginning of this Postscript suggests. This chapter analyzes rhetorics that invite readers to the threshold of language, where experiences of taste have the potential to fundamentally transform how one perceives their relationship to the land that provides them with sustenance for survival *and* pleasure. This chapter perhaps best demonstrates how “[a]n ideograph [. . .] is always understood in its relation to another [and is defined] by using other terms in its cluster.”²⁸⁶ Chapter Four directs attention to the collective crafting of an ideograph, from its initial ascendancy to its need for rearticulation. This analysis of <occupy> demonstrates the dynamism of ideographs, how they can entertain an amalgam of meanings, and catalyze collective commitment toward a vaguely-defined goal.

²⁸⁶ McGee, “Ideograph,” 15.

It is my hope that taken together, these case study arguments reveal to the reader some of ways in which their everyday experience is shaped through ideographic orientations and their affective attachments. Whereas I seek to offer the humanities something of value and explanatory power with the concept of the common sensorium, and offer to scholars of social movements a reimagined ideographic methodology for analyzing affect and emotion at the level of the collective, I hope there are insights within the case studies that will provoke in any lay reader a better sense of how the feelings they may experience at any given moment have rich connections to the culture in which one is embedded.

As both epigraphs indicate, coming to an appreciation of the ways cultures entrain and enforce emotional norms does not in any way suggest one is trapped into an unchangeable paradigm of emotional expression, or that authentic experience is an illusion of self-grandeur. Quite to the contrary, an understanding that, say, one's feeling of guilt for driving an SUV with the knowledge it negatively impacts the environment has been long in the making and is generated through an active web of cultural and rhetorical forces can actually be quite invigorating, even liberating. For such a perspective, I would argue, better positions one toward a life of emotional and affective awareness, of recognizing and evaluating possibilities of connection and agency through desire and pleasure, risk and sweetness, aversion and attachment, incoherence and patience.

Suggestions for Future Research

At this stage in this project's life, two immediate areas for further scholarly development come to the fore. The first area was impressed upon me following a job talk: After concluding my presentation of the common sensorium and its value for understanding a phrase like "eco-friendly," a Chinese professor of film eagerly approached me at the podium. At a pace too fast for me to keep up, she began articulating a list of differences between how guilt would be understood in China's common sensorium and the United States's. She spoke the phrase "common sensorium" as if she had been familiar with it for some time, using it to sketch out how key historical events shaped cultural interpretations of different emotions. The moment was most memorable for demonstrating the complex, but exciting challenges that intersections of national, transnational, and global rhetorics present to the common sensorium. For example, submitting the common sensorium to a transnational analytic, which also emphasizes movement—of ideas, commodities, and people within and across borders—would render the common sensorium a more robust concept. Though beyond the scope of this project, exploring the common sensorium in a future project would benefit, I believe, from a more transnational framework that explicitly addresses cross-cultural rhetorics.

The second area I am interested in pursuing while developing this project involves reflecting on the intersections of digital media and the common sensorium. The reticulate networks of everyday technology—from one's Facebook account to a car's GPS—and the distributed agencies that emerge from them no doubt have an

impact on our cultural ambient of emotional norms. More specifically, the emotional relationships we build *through* mobile technologies and the affective intensities we attach *to* mobile technologies are worthy of increased attention. As one may recall, “emotion” and “movement” share the same etymological root of *emovere*, which suggests that the intersection of affect theory, mobile technology, and rhetorical theory could yield interesting findings with regard to the common sensorium.

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APPENDIX:

DATA CHARTS FOR CHAPTER TWO

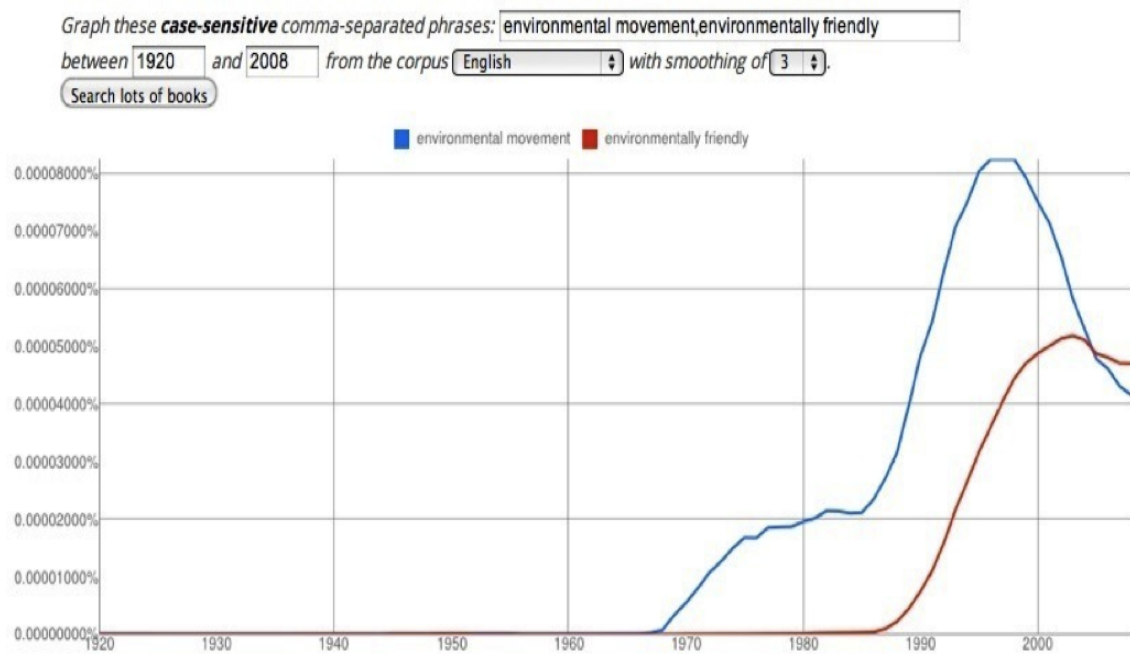


Figure 2: Google N-Gram comparing publication references of “environmentally friendly” and “environmental movement.”

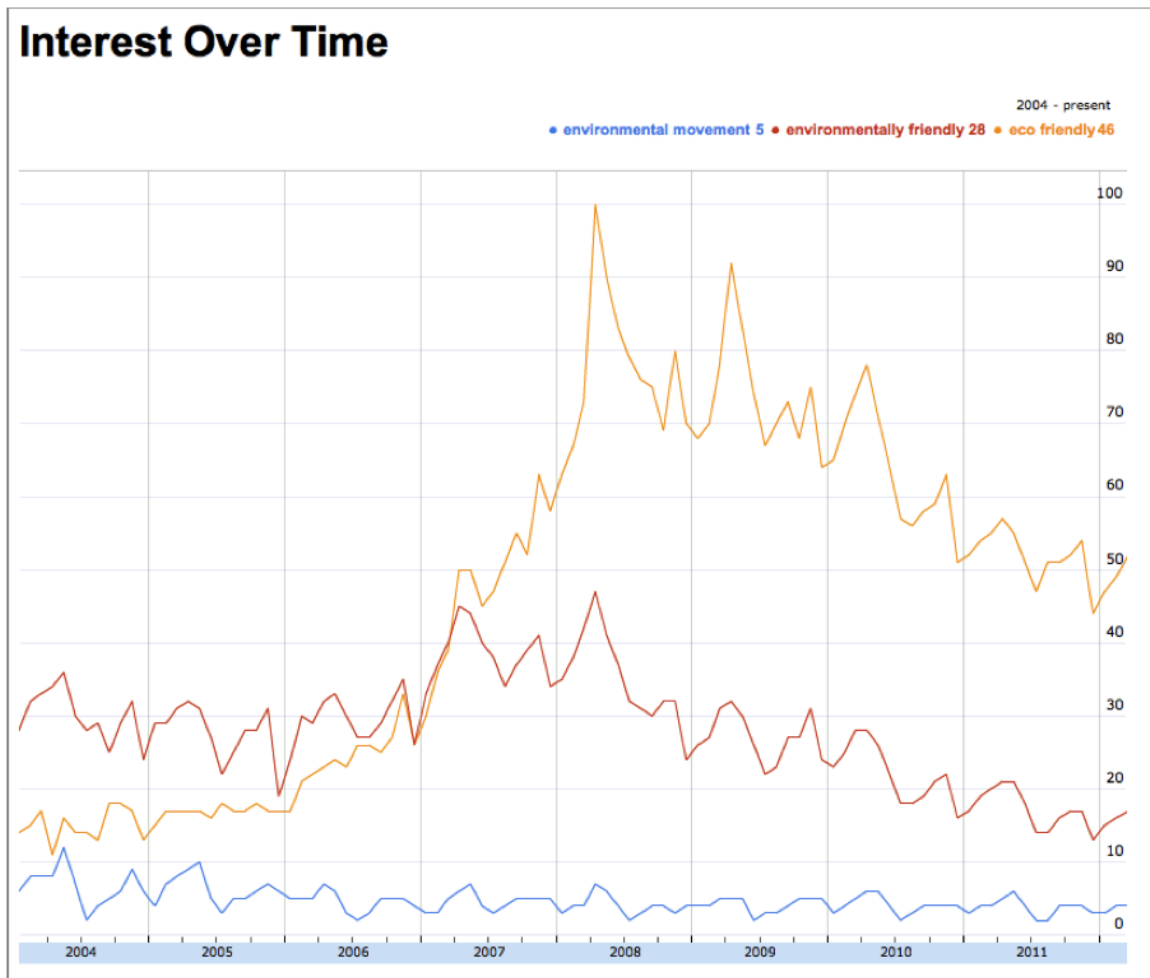


Figure 3. Google Insight chart comparing Internet searches for “environmental movement,” “environmentally friendly” and “eco-friendly.”