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PUBLIC ENVIRONMENTAL RHETORIC: THE RHETORICAL FASHIONING OF
CIVIC RESPONSIBILITY

by

Maggie N.D. Hong

A thesis submitted to the faculty of

Brigham Young University

in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts

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BRIGHAM YOUNG UNIVERSITY

GRADUATE COMMITTEE APPROVAL

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This thesis has been read by each member of the following graduate committee and by majority vote had been found satisfactory.

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As chair of the candidate's graduate committee, I have read the thesis of Maggie N.D. Hong in its final form and have found that (1) its format, citations, and bibliographical style are consistent and acceptable and fulfill university and department style requirements; (2) its illustrative materials including figures, tables, and charts are in place; and (3) the final manuscript is satisfactory to the graduate committee and is ready for submission to the university library.

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ABSTRACT

PUBLIC ENVIRONMENTAL RHETORIC: THE RHETORICAL FASHIONING OF CIVIC RESPONSIBILITY

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Department of English

Master of Arts

Environmental rhetoric has the capacity to render private citizens a concerned public. In doing so, it can prompt in individual practices of what, in classical rhetoric, was described as civic virtue and engage them in activities of responsible citizenship that work toward practical change. Within the recent tradition of environmental public discourse in the United States, Rachel Carson and Al Gore have each realized this capacity in their use of environmental rhetoric, by addressing, respectively, the issues of pesticide pollution and global warming in ways that galvanized citizens as an active public. This thesis examines the reasons behind this effectiveness. It asserts that both Carson and Gore employed a modernized epideictic as a rhetorical tool through which on the one hand, enabled them to invoke the shared values and associated emotions that have the capacity to bind citizens together in common cause, and on the other hand, to convey their own ethical character as civic speakers worthy of trust and emulation. My project in

this thesis is to comprehensively track the process of arousing those political emotions and character in the writings of Rachel Carson and Al Gore, both of whom entered the public discourse in moments of environmental crises.

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INTRODUCTION

For some time now, I have marveled at the way people have elected to change their lifestyles out of concern for the environment. What prompted these individuals to take what is often the inconvenient alternative to a lifestyle they have grown accustomed to? Why pay a premium for an organic food product when its touted healthful benefits cannot be scientifically proven? With the rise of green consumerism that has become characteristic of the early 21st century, I have grown even more interested in studying public discourses that have helped popularize and shape public opinion on environmental issues. How does rhetoric explain the growing popularity of environmentalism? What sets environmental discourses apart from others even though they share the same logical arguments? Specifically, why is recent public discourse on global warming so effective that it has prompted current change in people's attitudes and actions? This thesis is an attempt to answer these questions.

There is, in rhetorical studies, a growing body of literature on environmental rhetoric. I want to begin by describing it and locating my project in relation to it. There are several select secondary works that inform readings and studies in environmental rhetoric. These landmark books include Carl Herndl and Stuart C. Brown's *Green Culture: Environmental Rhetoric in Contemporary America* (1996); Craig Waddell's *Landmark Essays on Rhetoric and the Environment* (1998); and M. Jimmie Killingsworth and Jacqueline S. Palmer's *Ecospeak: Rhetoric and Environmental Politics in America* (1992). These books remain representative of foundational literature in environmental rhetoric; hence these same texts represent most of the work within rhetorical studies. Based upon this work, much of the existing literature is concerned with analyzing the

patterns of discourse over specific environmental issues, such as those found in Waddell's collection, which include essays on the following: preservation vs. conservation, environmental hysteria, the spotted owl controversy, Three Mile Island, environmental ethics, Earth First!, Wise Use. Many of the essays published within *Green Culture* are concerned with advocating a more democratic rather than a technocratic communication model in public environmental debates, particularly when concerned citizens are invited to be part of the dialogue. Hence its authors impute the cause of public disputes that arise between the parties involved in shaping environmental policies to the use of the wrong communication model, as evident in the controversy of the location of the North Carolina radioactive waste site. Other authors within the same volume have attributed the success of public deliberation in the International Joint Commission's issuance of the Sixth Biennial Report on saving the Great Lakes; and Red Lodge, Montana's opposition to a mining project too close to Yellowstone National Park, to the rhetorical power of the citizenry's cultural constructs of their relationship with the environment. Elsewhere in the book are essays that examine specific influential texts to reveal how they have shaped our cultural understanding of the environment and the language we use to discuss it. For example, the first four chapters are rhetorical critiques of how Aldo Leopold, Rachel Carson and Barry Commoner have influenced the language with which we discuss environmental issues.

Killingsworth and Palmer's book is not any different in purpose from the other texts. They are also interested in identifying "the patterns of rhetoric typically used in written discourse on environmental politics" (1). However, unique to their work is the concept of "Ecospeak," which refers to the oversimplified frame of reference that eco-

writers, the government, and the media generally use to characterize most environmental debates, so that what results is a superficial dichotomy of intractable absolutes: environmentalism versus developmentalism. In order to better represent the range of attitudes that define the various discourse communities that engage in eco-rhetoric, Killingsworth and Palmer have extended the lens through which people typically frame environmental issues by offering another “continuum of perspectives on nature.” Their belief is that by using this new continuum to analyze environmental writings, the new resultant perspectives should increase human cooperation among the parties in order to effect actual resolution of environmental dilemmas. They argue that this is significant because political paralysis results from discourse communities speaking past each other.

Of course, interspersed throughout these rhetorical critiques of environmental rhetoric’s patterns of language are occasions where authors seek to “account for the success of persuasion” by examining what patterns of discourse lead to rhetorical success and why. These occasions are places where this literature converges with my own project. Coming out of this literature is a more recent collection, Craig Waddell’s edition of *And No Birds Sing Rhetorical Analyses of Rachel Carson’s Silent Spring* (2000), which has assisted me in my study and upon which my study is building. This is a project in explaining, in terms of the tradition of rhetoric as civic discourse, why and how some significant environmental texts have held such mass appeal. And their explanations for the rhetorical power of Carson’s book are numerous, ranging from the Burkean theory of her ability to come up with an appealing terministic screen, to the influence of historical context, to her ability to convey clinical science with literary flair, to her appeals to fear to motivate action, and to her effective use of apocalyptic rhetoric.

However, rhetorical studies have not explained in more general terms how environmental rhetoric operates. My project is to make an argument that public environmental rhetoric is in so many words concerned with teaching and reinforcing individual civic responsibility. My key question is this: if the function of environmental rhetoric is the construction of character so that the audience will be disposed to implement practical behavioral changes conducive to a green environment, then current environmental criticisms do not provide answers to my next question: how do public speakers like Carson and Gore rhetorically influence their audience to change their character in order to yield the kind of binding behavioral changes they call for?

Because my thesis is concerned with evoking in the audience a shared ethos of responsible citizenship, I will go beyond this current literature on environmental rhetoric to look at theories of rhetoric as public discourse to help me answer those questions. It is noteworthy here to define the term public in “public discourse” according to Gerard Hauser, who defines it as a body of concerned citizens who are actively engaged in resolving a public problem through rhetorical exchanges (Hauser, *Vernacular* 5). Let me be clear then that public discourse in this project will be understood as discourse that concerns public consequences that call for resolution by forming bodies of active citizens (“publics”) committed to bringing change.

I will look at some of the essential contributions of classical rhetoric that define rhetoric as civic discourse, whose preoccupation with questions of what makes a good rhetor in a civic setting enriches my understanding of how recent environmental discourse makes ethical appeals to move a collective people to act, to change. I have essentially found that environmental rhetors are invoking classical conceptions of civic

character into the public sphere as the means to save the planet by addressing one individual at a time.

Environmental rhetoric has the capacity to render private citizens a concerned public. In doing so, it can prompt in individual practices of what, in classical rhetoric, was described as civic virtue and engage them in activities of responsible citizenship that work toward practical change. Within the recent tradition of environmental public discourse in the United States, Rachel Carson and Al Gore have each realized this capacity in their use of environmental rhetoric, by addressing, respectively, the issues of pesticide pollution and global warming in ways that galvanized citizens as an active public. This thesis examines the reasons behind this effectiveness. It asserts that both Carson and Gore employed a modernized epideictic as a rhetorical tool through which on the one hand, enabled them to invoke the shared values and associated emotions that have the capacity to bind citizens together in common cause, and on the other hand, to convey their own ethical character as civic speakers worthy of trust and emulation. Specifically, they made successful appeals to values of liberal democracy, *phronesis*, active citizenship, and political activism, as well as the shared concern for quality of life in the face of a degrading natural environment. It is in the process of depicting public examples of virtue (model citizens, cultural achievements) and vice (government and corporate resistance against environmental hazards) that Carson and Gore also conveyed their good judgment and trustworthiness. In addition, the narrative and educative character of the epideictic arouses political emotions that serve to move and stimulate an audience's decisive action. My project in this thesis is to comprehensively track the process of arousing those

political emotions and character in the writings of Rachel Carson and Al Gore, both of whom entered the public discourse in moments of environmental crises.

The Political and Democratic Origins of Rhetoric as Public Discourse

The rise of democratic governments in ancient Greek and Roman cities enabled all citizens to participate in the shaping of public policy in regularly-held assemblies of adult male citizens (Kennedy vii). Theoretically, all that was required for this kind of political citizenship was oratorical skills, because the more effective the public speaker, the more influence he would have had over the debated public issues. However, Athenian public life differed in theory from its reality of class divisions, “power lust,” and manipulative rhetoric that resulted in the corrupted use of emotions to yield persuasion (Hauser, *Public Morality* 7-8). The lack of good character and proofs among persuasive rhetors was an issue that concerned Socrates, Plato and Aristotle who were eager to define a civic vision of Athenian public life. Particularly disconcerting to Plato and Aristotle was the sophistic belief that rhetoric could be taught for a price, along with teachings that inordinately emphasized emotional appeals as the ultimate means to persuasion. It was a common observation that “the moral integrity of those who were party to public disputes was not completely reliable” (Hauser, *Public Morality* 7). Hence it was during these conditions of political tension that Socrates, Plato and Aristotle entered the discourse of rhetoric beginning in the 5th century B.C. While in the process of conceptualizing and defining rhetoric, their discourse led to examination of the civic virtues that constitute good character of the same citizen-rhetors who would participate within the governing assemblies of the republic.

Civic virtue is generally defined as morality or as an accepted standard of duties and conduct that determine a citizen's social behavior within his community. To be more specific, Eugene Garver provides examples of citizens involved in political activities as instances of those who practice civic virtue: "Making policy decisions and legal judgments, giving advice, persuading others about matters of policy and law . . . To perform them is to be a citizen, and no one but a citizen does them" (7). In short, civic virtue reveals itself among those who engage in activities central to citizenship. Hauser summarizes the seriousness with which citizens of the ancient Greek and Roman period took of their civic duties with a famous quote by Aristotle: for the "individual is intelligible only as *zoon politikon* (a political animal)" (*Public Morality* 16). My thesis will argue that Carson and Gore emphasize this classical conception of civic virtue in their rhetorical arguments. Civic virtue is a broad term that I will use to refer to the individual civic responsibility that the discourses of Rachel Carson and Al Gore try to invoke among their audiences to inspire them to take action against their respective issues.

Aristotle wrote extensively on *phronesis*, the ancient Greek term for practical wisdom or prudence, for he believed that before a good and virtuous statesman could engage competently in public deliberation, he must first be found with this trait (Hauser, *Public Morality* 12). Aristotle asserted that *phronesis* manifests itself through one who is able to render a "thoughtful assessment of the consequences that might flow from proposed actions" (12). It is something that is acquired through practical experience as a result of maturation as men are able to offer "insight into what to think and do when confronted by conflicting alternatives" in order to bring about the common good or the good life (qtd. in Hauser,

Public Morality 12). The value of practical wisdom or what I like to think of as common sense, is significant in environmental rhetoric because Carson and Gore's publics are made of citizens who have come to the point of judgment where they see the proposed course of actions as prudential conduct that make practical sense—that ultimately seek the common good.

The audience's practical wisdom is important for this project because Carson and Gore's use of the epideictic genre is a reflexive rhetorical technique; in their process of praising and blaming to make concrete their exigencies and/or to arouse political emotions, they in effect appear virtuous and practically wise themselves. This argument is based on Garver's theory that "arête and *phronesis* are properties of the speaker as such, and so knowing how to argue about them tells the speaker all he needs to know about appearing virtuous and wise himself" (110). Carson and Gore both have large political followings because people ultimately trust them as rhetors of good character who entered the public sphere in moments of environmental crises out of civic virtue to advocate the public good.

This thesis will proceed as follows:

Chapter One will detail the methodology that I will be applying in Chapters Two and Three. The theoretical approach will be a blend of classical and contemporary rhetorical theory. It is classical for two reasons: 1) this project has elected to emphasize modern environmental rhetoric's adaptation of the epideictic, which is one of the three species of rhetoric as originated by Aristotle; and 2) the essential contributions of classical rhetoric to our notion of rhetoric as public discourse includes the classical principles of civic virtue and *phronesis* because my project asserts that change in the

collective character of citizens is the aim of environmental rhetoric. The first section of this chapter will explain in greater detail the epideictic and its functions as written in Aristotle's *The Rhetoric*, as well as the principles of civic virtue and *phronesis* written by Aristotle and amplified by Gerard Hauser and Eugene Garver.

Part of my argument asserts that environmental rhetoric is essentially modern rhetoric that recalls classical principles to solve public problems. As a result, the second half of the chapter will illustrate these key theoretical connections. I will begin with Lloyd Bitzer and Gerard Hauser, whose writings on the nature of publics and the formation of publics make explicit that we use rhetoric to solve public problems. Because of the inherent narrative property of epideictic rhetoric, I will also show how modern narrative theory helps enrich the classical notion of the epideictic. Epideictic enables modern environmentalist rhetors to do two things: through discourses of praise and blame, rhetors are able to 1) teach public morality within the context of civic life; 2) reinforce their ethos as *phronetic* speakers whose good judgment makes them worthy of belief and emulation. By telling stories of lived or neglected virtues in the praise and blame of person(s) and events, rhetors benefit from the work of powerful emotions acting upon the audience. Hence, where there is some discussion of narrative theory, there must necessarily follow the closely related principles of identification and emotions. Walter Fisher accurately describes the relationship between narratives and identification this way: "The operative principle of narrative rationality is *identification* rather than deliberation" (66). The telling of a concrete story is crucial in engendering the emotions (outrage, awe, good will, obligation etc.) that will engage an audience: it is through the audience's experiential process of "dwelling in the story" as a witness or character of the narrative

being told that the issues are made personal so that, as Hauser rightly puts it: “people become engaged because issues touch their lives” (*Vernacular* 51). The remainder of the chapter will elaborate upon Kenneth Burke’s principle of identification made evident in the speakers’ choice of cultural symbols and public knowledge found within the stories they tell that optimize the chance of, and to set into motion the process of identification among the audience. It is the resulting emotions that propel an engaged audience into decisive action.

Chapter Two will take the theoretical principles outlined and apply them to Rachel Carson’s text *The Silent Spring* as my first case study of environmental rhetoric. It is noteworthy to point out that Carson is an educator whose writings alerted and transformed the nonchalant way Americans in the 1960s viewed pesticides. Considered as the mother of the modern environmental movement, Carson’s influence and her book has had much staying power. For these reasons, I thought her book would be an excellent choice for study. Carson’s work is non-fiction but it is replete with mini narratives. In Carson’s case, blame discourse is more dominant than instances of praise. She dramatizes negative facts taken from news reports that serve as examples/proof of the need for the general citizenry to practice civic virtue by joining her in condemning the vices exhibited by instances of government and corporate inaction, or resistance against viable environmental concerns. I will explore some of the symbols she used in her narratives to point out how they were rhetorical, what emotions they produced, and why they intersect with the audience’s lives. Ultimately, persuasion occurs because by making her readers witnesses to the bad, she is implicating them with the moral

obligation to act upon the knowledge: “Obligation, [*moral* obligation] has the force of action” (Clark, 136).

Although Al Gore clearly uses epideictic rhetoric, the theoretical emphasis in Chapter Three will focus on using narrative theory and its associated principle of identification as articulated by Kenneth Burke to explain how people come to believe Gore’s message of global warming. Gore’s contribution to the public awareness he has raised on Global Warming and the fervor with which many people view the issue has intrigued me for some time and I thought his acclaimed *The Inconvenient Truth* would make a fruitful study. I will analyze the chapter entitled “My Sister” found in the companion book of *The Inconvenient Truth* where Gore diverges from praising his deceased sister’s character to telling stories of blame that bring the focus on corporate dishonesty as exhibited by the tobacco industry, and drawing parallels from the story to help him argue that the same corporate corruption coupled with government corruption is stalling global warming resolution. I will look at how he frequently appealed to the American identity and used the cultural symbol of a democratic America in order to inspire his audience to improve the condition of America’s democracy by practicing civic virtue as the means to solving global warming.

Chapter Four will be the concluding chapter where I will discuss why I think ethos is the most persuasive appeal. I will also argue how in addition to prompting civic virtue, modern environmental rhetoric is also concerned with instilling the virtue of reverence among its audience as defined by Paul Woodruff. Finally, I will end by discussing why if the benefits of an improved quality of life makes practical sense to the general populace, does there remain so much opposition to the environmental movement.

In the case of the environmental movement, the arguments for cleaner air, cleaner water, uncontaminated food, a right to live, are issues that already logically reveal that the well-being of man is heavily invested in its environment. It is one thing to convince the people that environmental problems and policies affect their lives: it is quite another to persuade an audience to actually do something about it. So the question is, how do rhetors take their audiences to the next level—how might they make the issues actually *touch* their listeners' lives to the extent that they will “inform their civic conduct?”

(Hauser, *Vernacular* 51). Rhetoric does not have hard and fast rules, for there simply is no uniform recipe that would guarantee the rhetorical success of any public speaker.

Having said that, I do believe that the findings from my study raise some possible reasons from which to assess, explore, and explain why another environmental rhetor, individual, or green organization may not be as influential in its reach. History has already proven that my selection of the two sources for study are successful popularizers of important environmental issues, and represent two well-respected voices within environmentalism. I believe my findings from my study offers another litmus test for environmental public speakers: is the invoked communal ethos shared between the speaker and the audience strong enough that it would draw an audience to first identify with it, and then intense enough for them to want to emulate it?

CHAPTER ONE

RHETORICAL THEORY AND ENVIRONMENTAL RHETORIC

Environmentalism within the United States has reemerged in this 21st century as a mainstreamed issue that has captured a broad audience. Because of its implications on the economy, natural resources, and public health within a competitive global economy, it appears that environmentalism in all its various forms will continue to be a critical issue well into the next century, as evidenced in the election platforms of current politicians.

But environmental rhetoric is not something new to this country. In fact, the 50s and 60s, produced a series of important environmental public rhetorical performances such as Aldo Leopold's *A Sand County Almanac* (1949) ; Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring* (1962); Barry Commoner's *Science and Survival* (1966); Paul R. Ehrlich's *The Population Bomb* (1968); Nevil Shute's novel-turned-high budget film, *On the Beach* (1959); and *Panic in Year Zero* (1962), etc. These texts have been influential in shaping public consciousness on the survival of the individual and the environment, as well as the vocabulary with which we engage in environmental rhetoric today. Moreover, what is most striking is their shared "tendency toward scientific self-critique" during a time in history when man was empowering himself with the astounding discoveries of nuclear science (Killingsworth 53). Their skepticism of scientific specialties as cure-alls at the neglect of holistic environmentalism continues to inform the perspectives of current environmental advocates.

Even though Rachel Carson was not the first to write on the subject of chemical pollution, she experienced general success unmatched by her contemporary Barry Commoner or her precursor Aldo Leopold. Many rhetoricians have asserted various

reasons for her persuasiveness. Some have argued that the terror that seized Americans during the Cold War was something that facilitated the wide reception of Rachel Carson's grim messages of pesticide contamination in her widely acclaimed *Silent Spring* (1960). Regardless of critics' opinions, Carson's book was and continues to be an important benchmark in the history of the modern environmental movement, the success of which influenced the establishment of the Environmental Protection Agency by President Nixon in 1970. The creation of the EPA is evidence that a public concerned with the environment had been created. Knowing she had been successful in creating active publics committed to fight indiscriminate pesticide use, I have been interested in understanding the rhetorical tactics she used that convinced and mobilized so many to belief and action.

Al Gore's award-winning documentary film, *An Inconvenient Truth: The Planetary Emergency of Global Warming And What We Can Do About It* did much to propagate the issue of global warming to the general populace by virtue of its medium. The film reached an international audience and its efforts to publicize this highly scientific subject among common citizens is notable. Gore's film and his subsequent work in the fight against climate crisis have garnered media attention, earned him a 2007 Nobel Peace Prize, and increased vernacular discourse on the subject. Global warming has emerged from the obscure circles of scientific conversations to become a common topic for ordinary discussion among ordinary citizens. For these reasons, Gore's success as a result of his discourse has led me to examine his rhetoric more closely to determine the reasons and tactics of his rhetorical persuasiveness.

Through their rhetoric, Gore and Carson have effectively built up large followings, or movements of citizens committed to a sustainable environment. Members of these grassroots movements demonstrate their commitment by being conscious of the public effects of their private lifestyle choices and by being vocal in the shaping of public policy. If the old adage is true that character influences behavior, then Carson and Gore's public rhetoric have changed the public's collective character. Although they speak on two disparate subjects, they both advocate a holistic perspective of the effects of human behavior on the environment. They both caution against human indiscretion and reliance upon the uses of scientific inventions that over time would tip the delicate balance between nature and science. Their influences have unequivocally been pivotal in the formation of the current green movement that has pervaded the country at the time of my writing.

Public environmental rhetoric has changed the way people make personal lifestyle choices. Many now pause to see how their private actions may affect their shared environment before making a lifestyle choice. Although individual civic responsibility is not a new concept, we must be careful not to dismiss the current move towards a more civic mind frame particularly in a world that values convenience, efficiency, scientific discoveries, and the inalienable right to pursue self-interests. This has led me to my question exactly what in Carson and Gore's rhetoric have prompted this keen social awareness that has come to characterize so many of their constituents?

Throughout this exploration, I have concluded that environmental rhetoric ultimately is civic education—in other words, it is the education of civic character. My project is to make an argument that public environmental rhetoric is in so many words

concerned with inculcating responsible citizenship and the civic virtues that constitute such a good citizen. My key problem is this: If the function of environmental rhetoric is the construction of character so that the audience will be disposed to implement practical behavioral changes, then current work in environmental rhetoric does not provide answers to my primary question: how does public environmental discourse operate to the effect that public voices like Carson's and Gore's are able to influence how a person thinks and acts about the environment?

In order to answer this question, we must look to principles of rhetoric to help explain this phenomenon. Hence my theoretical approach will be a blend of classical and contemporary rhetorical theory. Classical rhetoric offers two resources: 1) this project has elected to emphasize modern environmental rhetoric's adaptation of the epideictic, which is one of the three species of rhetoric as originated by Aristotle; and 2) the essential contributions of classical rhetoric to our notion of rhetoric as public discourse includes the classical principles of civic virtue and *phronesis*. Because the practice of rhetoric within the public sphere is the enactment of classical civic virtue, and my project asserts that a civic change in the collective character of citizens is the aim of environmental rhetoric, it follows that I will be discussing in the first section of the chapter components of a "civic rhetoric." I will highlight the principles of civic virtue as written by Aristotle. As we try to establish that rhetoric is what solves public problems, our discussion will lead to Lloyd Bitzer's insights on the importance of appeals to public knowledge in forming publics, and will end with Gerard Hauser, who makes explicit the role of rhetoric in public affairs. And finally, I will describe in greater detail the classical ideal of *phronesis* (practical wisdom), which is the highest form of civic virtue because as Gerard

Hauser and Eugene Garver's writings reveal, politics is best practiced by those who possess *phronesis*.

The second section will detail in chronological order, the development of the nature and function of epideictic rhetoric since it was first conceived in Aristotle's *The Rhetoric* but later extrapolated by classical and contemporary rhetoricians alike, principally Chaim Perelman and Olbrechts Tyteca who claim that epideictic has a distinctly civic and moral function within public life.

The third section of the chapter will focus on Walter Fisher's narrative logic, which contends that human communication is essentially story telling, which invokes Kenneth Burke's identification theory to help enrich the argument that rhetors can induce belief and action through the performance of stories that activate identification. And because my argument also asserts that environmental rhetoric recalls classical principles to solve modern public problems in ways that can be explained by modern rhetorical theory, the end of the chapter will develop those explanations.

Civic Rhetoric

The connection between rhetoric and politics can be traced to the ancient Greco-Roman era, where rhetoric, then understood as the art of public speaking, first emerged in the fourth century BCE as a "form of civic education intended to prepare Athenian and, later, Roman boys for participation in public affairs" (Hauser, *Vernacular* 15). Ancient Athens produced many cultural achievements and was regarded as the center of high culture in the western world. Perhaps the most significant of all these cultural feats is their development of the Athenian democracy, and "[Athenians] were immensely proud of democracy" (Woodruff 26). They believed that the people had the intellectual capacity,

the “citizen wisdom” to govern themselves, which led to the revolutionary idea that it is the general citizenry who should determine their own public affairs (Woodruff 24-5).

Aside from their erroneous exclusion of women, barbarians, and slaves from the democratic process, T.R. Glover reveal that Athenians defended a “democracy [that otherwise] encouraged an understanding of public life as the province and concern of every citizen” (qtd. in *Vernacular* 15). The political experience of the Athenians was such that politics pervaded one’s social life simply because there “was no buffer between social and political life” (*Vernacular* 19). Men identified themselves with the polis; they *were* the city-state. They gave themselves to the public. Those same people who deliberated in the official political forums were the same people Athenians would meet and engage with on the streets (*Vernacular* 19).

In other words, citizens practicing their **civic virtue** was part of the shared political experience in Athens. Greco-Romans understood civic virtue as the enactment of the duties that come with citizenship, such as being an informed participant in the deliberations of public affairs, public elections, and all other forms of political involvement in civil society. And this project is an assertion that contemporary environmental rhetoric celebrates and teaches this classical conception of civic virtue.

The classical Greco-Roman culture along with Aristotle’s *Rhetoric* clearly see rhetoric as public discourse with civic functions. Since my project is a study of public rhetorical performances that aim to solve public environmental problems, I have also found public discourse theory pertinent because it articulates that rhetoric can solve public problems and supports the notion that rhetoric’s character is civic.

Before a public can exist, the citizens' perception of the consequences of public acts must first take place. Sometimes, facts alone do not persuade. An audience may know about public problems but may not necessarily feel the immediacy or the compulsion to do something about them. John Dewey observed that it is only "when these consequences are in turn realized in thought and sentiment, recognition of them reacts to remake the conditions out of which they arose. Consequences have to be taken care of, looked out for" (27). And herein lies the rhetor's task: they are to prompt the audience to action. The means by which they can accomplish this is through rhetoric that first persuades the people in "thought and sentiment" that the problems require immediate resolution. An audience is more likely to experience intellectual and emotional engagement sufficient to form a public when "public spokesmen create discourse that expresses and generates public knowledge [by] debat[ing], judg[ing], celebrat[ing], and mak[ing] appeal to the community of feelings and ideas" (Bitzer 90). In order to persuade an audience that a factual condition is an exigency that needs to be modified, the issue must be perceived with a level of subjectivity so that what was a bare, external fact has been transformed into a personal and decisive fact. Bitzer refers to the result of such transformation as "experiential knowledge" (80). Explains Bitzer: "The experiential world presents to us many weighted or personal facts which are what they are because our participation gives them a status and invests them with a value they would not otherwise enjoy" (84). And what results is that an issue made personal enjoys an urgency it did not have before and the call for action immediate.

I would like to segue now into Gerard Hauser's definition of public, which I find to be most agreeable to my understanding on what has happened in recent environmental

rhetoric. Instead of searching in vain for *the* universal public, Hauser feels that *the public* should simply be left as it is as the “generic reference” we have come to use to refer to “a body of disinterested members of a society or polity...[similar to]... the undefined reference to ‘they’” (*Vernacular* 30). Instead, he believes in a plurality of publics and reinforces Herbert Blumer’s “understanding of developed societies as montages of publics, each one, as he has argued, activated as its members feel issues intersect with the conditions of their lives in ways that require their attention” (*Vernacular* 30). He believes that publics can be discovered wherever there is evidence of vernacular discourses, whereby common citizens engage in “discursive processes” by “publicizing opinions, for making them felt by others,” and who are actively participating in activities within the public sphere that produce “cultural awareness, social knowledge, and public policies and in evaluating deeds” (*Vernacular* 30). Hence, Hauser explicitly situates rhetoric and discourse within the formation of publics.

Like Hauser, I do believe that the vitality and extension of issue-specific publics rest upon common citizens who shape public opinion by engaging in discursive practices. However, I would add that a spokesman capable of appealing to the public’s shared symbols and traditions was necessary in order to create rhetoric of such nature and intensity that it would 1) engage an audience’s thoughts and emotions; and 2) that would lead to the organization of a public intent on taking action against a public problem.

Hauser’s conception of vernacular discourse is significant because he endows all citizens regardless of rank or rhetorical ability with the ability to engage in public affairs through everyday discursive processes. This democratic treatment of the public realm seems parallel with the classical era’s cultural acceptance of entitling all citizens access

to civic forums. However, we must reiterate that those who possessed eloquence had the greater advantage because of their ability to persuade policy decision makers within a deliberative assembly, just as it would within a present deliberative assembly (*Vernacular* 15).

It was within this kind of open cultural climate characteristic of the Classical era that the enterprising Sophists emerged, claiming that they could teach anyone to master the techniques of rhetoric, presenting rhetoric as a rule-based *technē* (art). Many philosophers, like Aristotle and Plato reacted to Sophism. For example, Aristotle's biggest complaint about the Sophists' handbooks was their exclusive focus on *technique* at the expense of substance, reason, and the person behind the rhetor (Kennedy 1:1:3-11). Aristotle believed that the Sophists had only half the equation. Rhetoric was indeed a *technē* (art), a tool that can be applied to any subject matter, but it was also a *dynamis* (ability) (Hauser, "Public Morality" 11). Aristotle's ideal rhetor, in addition to knowing all the rules "must be able to actualize these principles, must translate knowledge into practice through the crafting of persuasive arguments" ("Public Morality" 11). Such subjective undertakings in the artistic crafting of logical appeals requires "discernment" and "good judgment on matters of practical conduct"—an ability, that obviously cannot be taught systematically, but is a skill that can only be acquired over time and experience ("Public Morality" 12). Aristotle calls this ability to determine the right course of action for the community as *phronesis*, and the practitioner of it, the *Phronimos*.

As to the origins of *phronesis*, it is best to describe it as a fundamental Greek concept usefully articulated by Aristotle. In the *Nicomachean Ethics*, Aristotle talks about *phronesis*, translated as "practical wisdom," as an intellectual virtue (33). Intellectual

virtues like practical wisdom, he adds, are “originated and fostered mainly by teaching; therefore demands experience and time” (Aristotle, *Ethics* 34). And just as the ancient Greeks defined their political identity in rhetorical exchanges, Aristotle also adds excellence in rhetoric to the list of traits that fall under the label *phronesis*. He writes that a man with practical wisdom would be “able to deliberate well about what is good and expedient for himself, not in some particular respect, e.g., about what sort of things conduce to health and strength, but about what sort of things conduce to the good life in general” (qtd. in Self 133). Lois Self offers this clear description of the *Phronimos*: “The *Phronimos* does not exist in isolation. He deliberates well not only about private matters but with a view of what is good, what leads to *eudaimonia* or well-being for men in general, and the public’s acknowledgement of this ability testifies to their collective wisdom or inclination toward truth when persuasively presented” (135). Simply put, “The man of practical wisdom shares his excellent deliberations and leads the public through rhetoric” (Self 135). In other words, practical wisdom must necessarily include excellence in rhetorical ability within the public realm.

Phronesis is the ideal of civic virtue in the ancient Greek Republic because of its potential to bring about civil human conduct in the interest of the common good. Aristotle’s depiction of his ideal rhetor and the *phronimos* are significant because they are the same person. If the practice of civic virtue is an expression of citizenship duties, and the end of citizenship is to ensure the common good by putting aside selfish interests, then the term civic virtue is also ethical. The exercise of a citizenry’s civic virtues becomes a moral imperative because public issues are often moral, and a practicing citizen will fulfill his duties to pursue and preserve the same moral virtues. In short,

“civic virtue is a particular application of moral virtue—to public life and public matters” (Greg Clark 08). If *phronesis* is practical wisdom used in concert with rhetorical skill to conduct public affairs, then *phronesis*, by inference is also ethical. Eugene Garver reinforces this: “*Phronesis*, or practical wisdom and practical reasoning, is ethical throughout; the difference between *phronesis* and cleverness is not just that the former has morally good ends...*Phronesis* could be a combination of two independent psychic and moral functions, one which obtained good ends and the other good means toward those ends” (149).

Based on these premises then, I can conclude that ideal rhetors who possess the virtue of *phronesis* must also have good moral character; similarly, *phronetic* citizens who practice civic virtue are also moral. Among the many reasons that could explain the persuasiveness of these two rhetors, I have found that the speaker’s character alone is an important persuasive appeal, particularly when the speakers are urging their audiences to change *their* characters by adopting a more civic character.

According to Aristotle, *Pisteis* or the means of persuasion in public address, are three in number: ethos, logos, and pathos. Of ethos, he said, “[There is a persuasion] through character whenever the speech is spoken in such a way as to make the speaker worthy of credence; for we believe fair-minded people to a greater extent and more quickly [than we do others] on all subjects in general and completely so in cases where there is not exact knowledge but room for doubt” (*Rhetoric* 38). He further amplifies the importance of character by explaining that besides “logical demonstrations,” speakers themselves are convincing because they possess practical wisdom [*phronesis*], and virtue

[*arête*], and good will [*eunoia*] (121). Speakers who want to gain credence would do well to exhibit “either all or one of these” in their discourse (*Rhetoric* 121).

Eugene Garver has extrapolated from Aristotle’s *The Rhetoric* that “ethos is the most powerful proof, and the enthymeme is the essence of rhetoric” (171). In other words, a rhetor’s ability to persuade an audience ultimately boils down to the issue of trust: does the audience trust the speaker? Can the audience believe the speaker and what he is saying? Without trust in a speaker, an audience would discredit even sound reasoning and view a speaker’s attempt to evoke civic emotions as disingenuous. Taken within this context then, Garver is arguing that ethos subsumes logos because sound reasoning is evidence of character. He writes, “We trust a speaker, and impute *arête* and *phronesis* to him, when he presents us with a cogent and intelligent argument. We infer from logos to ethos. But rhetorical arguments are about indeterminate matters. So, in order to regard an argument as cogent and intelligent, we have to trust the speaker” (191).

Not only does *phronesis* refer to a persuasive attribute of speakers, I believe environmental rhetoric is also concerned with inculcating *phronesis* among the general citizenry. Because public environmental rhetoric have placed the obligation of solving the environmental crises upon the voices of the general citizenry, its rhetors are in effect organizing grassroot movements. They rely upon their adherents to disseminate the same rhetoric in their daily conversations with others and to press government agencies to change public policies that would favor the public’s objectives. In short, members of environmental publics are encouraged to practice *phronesis*, first in their ability to recognize and understand that the rhetorical message of environmental movements are evidence of practical wisdom, and second by engaging in rhetoric to pursue a course of

action that would serve the well-being of man in general (*eudaimonia*). For these many reasons, Aristotle's conception of rhetoric is inextricably tied to reason, politics and ethics. One cannot engage in a discussion of classical civic virtue without talking about the implications of classical rhetoric, politics or *phronesis*.

Epideictic Rhetoric

Perhaps one of the greatest contributions Aristotle has made to the study of rhetoric is the division of civic rhetoric into three species—three because “such is the number of [classes] to which the hearers of speeches belong”: deliberative, judicial, and epideictic (*Rhetoric* 47-8). Deliberative rhetoric embodies either exhortation or dissuasion; judicial rhetoric includes either accusation or defense as found in the court of law; and “in epideictic rhetoric, there is either praise [*epainos*] or blame [*psogos*]” (48). Of the three, epideictic rhetoric is comparably the most obscure, with scant details in Aristotle's *The Rhetoric*. Aristotle wrote that the end of epideictic is concerned “with virtue and vice and honorable and shameful” (*Rhetoric* 79). However, George Kennedy concedes that this “definition of epideictic has remained a problem in rhetorical theory, since it becomes the category for all forms of discourse that are not specifically deliberative or judicial” (*Rhetoric* 48). For this reason, there has been some interest among contemporary theorists to extrapolate from Aristotle's definition of the epideictic in order to derive a fuller understanding into this particular genre of oratory.

Modern rhetorical theorists contend that there is much more to the role of epideictic than “simple commemoration” or the frivolous display of one's rhetorical virtuosity in the public sphere (Hauser, “Public Morality” 5). Perelman and Obrechts-Tyteca introduced the didactic and civic dimensions of the epideictic based on the

premise that “epideictic discourse, as well as all education, is less directed toward changing beliefs than to strengthening the adherence to what is already accepted” (44). Given the very “publicness” of the epideictic contexts, Perelman and Tyteca argued that the nature and subjects of epideictic speeches make a compelling case—these speeches were more than mere spectacles. Occasions such as traditional “ceremonies commemorating past events of national concern, [public holidays], religious services, eulogies of the dead,” afforded speakers the opportunity to “foster a communion of minds” as attendees gather together to memorialize some thing or person crucial to society’s historical culture (55). In short, speakers achieve this type of collective consciousness by creating and delivering speeches that are evocative of the established values, traditions, and experiences shared by both speaker and audience (Perelman 53). They reinforce the values and traditions that its society prizes through laudatory or condemning discourses.

Furthermore, Perelman and Tyteca also suggest that epideictic rhetoric is a preparatory discourse, one that “creat[es]...a certain disposition in those who hear it” so that an audience is more inclined to take the kind of decisive actions such values extol, when called upon in deliberative and legal matters (54). Recent scholars who have maintained Perelman’s take of the epideictic include Nicole Loraux, John Poulakos, Takis Poulakos, and Gerard Hauser, all of whom have made significant contributions to the discussion of the import of didactic and political dimensions of the epideictic within the public sphere.

George Kennedy’s commentary in his edition of *The Rhetoric* is also similar in sentiment. He too believed that Aristotle defined epideictic rhetoric according to the

forms of speeches known to then ancient Greece, such as funeral orations and encomia—forms that were made popular by Gorgias and Isocrates (48). Kennedy also adds that “[i]n such speeches, praise corrects, modifies, or strengthens an audience’s belief about civic virtue or the reputation of an individual” (*Rhetoric* 48). This of course reiterates Perelman’s theoretical stance that cast the epideictic speaker in the role of a civic educator, who fashioned his speeches to promote socially accepted values.

Lawrence W. Rosenfield, however, found Perelman’s modern notion of a didactic epideictic with civic dimensions preposterous, as one that wandered too far from Aristotle’s original meaning. Rosenfield also contends that we misinterpret Aristotle’s epideictic when we understand it only in terms of praise and blame (133). He is careful to distinguish epideictic from discourses of praise and blame. Praise and blame fall under the tactics of encomium and panegyric, two rhetorical forms that were made popular in the classical period as vehicles to display oratorical virtuosity. Instead, he elevates the practice of epideictic to a loftier purpose, one that is concerned with “recognizing” or “acknowledging” intrinsic excellence. The function of the rhetor is to illuminate the inherent excellence resident in a person or an event rather than focusing on the achievements or the “outward signs of goodness” (134). He writes that in “either case [of recognition or disparagement,] the experience afforded the participants is the opportunity of beholding reality impartially as witnesses of being” (133). Those who present excellence do so for excellence sake, and are not looking to invite emulation or to institute change. Epideictic “functions only to provoke thought” (146).

Perelman’s findings thus opened up Aristotle’s epideictic to a range of controversial possibilities within the field of rhetoric. Perelman’s camp who argue there

is an educative motive behind the presenter of “excellence” serves as a critical backbone in this project because I side with Hauser in questioning Rosenfield’s argument that “the act of judging and witnessing necessarily excludes a didactic function” (“Public Morality” 10). They can be intertwined and in the case of public modern environmental rhetoric, the act of witnessing concrete examples of lived virtues or vices through the performance of epideictic narratives has moral implications. Environmental rhetoric is meant to be morally instructive and epideictic discourse is a vehicle through which rhetors can implicate an audience to be more civically virtuous by providing vivid examples of virtues and vices. At the same time, this genre of discourse is also an excellent tool to evoke the civic and personal emotions that arise from a community validating evidence of shared public knowledge to induce action.

Narrative Theory and the Principle of Identification

In order to articulate why the epideictic genre and its narrative quality make a persuasive rhetorical tool for public environmental rhetoric, we must first establish that environmental rhetoric is fundamentally moral. Takis Poulakos reveals through his analysis of Isocrates’ encomium, *Evagoras* that despite the customary practices of his day, Isocrates wrote the encomium hoping to lead the son of deceased King Evagoras to a moral end by displaying Evagoras’s lived virtues. As a result, *Evagoras* shows “that, initially, [during the classical period] rhetoric and ethics met through narratives” (Poulakos 319). Secondly, I would venture further to say that public environmental rhetoric *is* public moral argument. Walter Fisher argues that public moral argument stands out from other types of “reasoned discourse” because it is “oriented toward what ought to be,” toward “preferred patterns of living” (*Moral Argument* 276-7), towards the

just and the true. Ultimately, two distinct features characterize a public moral argument from other types of reasoned discourse: “It is publicized, made available for consumption and persuasion of the polity at large; and 2) it is aimed at what Aristotle called “untrained thinkers” (Fisher, *Narration* 152). By untrained thinkers, we are referring to the general populace who must judge among all the different field experts who participate in creating this public dialogue. And because environmentalism is an interdisciplinary field with a broad social impact, it belongs to the “realm of public-social knowledge” (*Moral Argument* 276). Walter Fisher argues that in such scenarios when a population of untrained thinkers is left to judge among debating experts discoursing on highly technical subjects, the traditional rationality paradigm (which holds that reason occurs only in formalized structures of argumentation) would preclude the citizenry from participating in public decision making (*Moral Argument* 269). Unable to understand one technical argument from another on specialized studies, the audience is rendered incompetent, or “irrational” by such a standard that emphasizes discursive reasoning (*Moral Argument* 269).

Walter Fisher’s theory of narration as a paradigm of human communication both challenges and enriches this traditional rationality paradigm by contending that “reasoning can be discovered in all sorts of symbolic actions—nondiscursive as well as discursive,” especially since “many nonargumentative modes of human communication invite adherence based on reason” (*Narration* 57). Fisher sums up his narrative paradigm this way: “Human communication should be viewed as historical as well as situational, as stories competing with other stories constituted by good reasons, as being rational when they satisfy the demands of rational probability and narrative fidelity, and as inevitably

moral inducements” (*Moral Argument* 266). This idea that all humans are storytellers is, of course, reminiscent of Kenneth Burke’s theory of dramatism, wherein he defines “man” as the “symbol-using (symbol-making, symbol-misusing) animals” (qtd. in Fisher 63). Fisher takes this concept and argues that the narrative genre subsumes *all* forms of symbol-making, making it possible for him to further assert that “symbols are created and communicated ultimately as stories meant to give order to human experience and to induce others to dwell in them in order to establish ways of living in common, in intellectual and spiritual communities in which there is confirmation for the story that constitutes one’s life (*Narration* 63). Fisher challenges the traditional rationality paradigm because where the former allowed experts skilled in argument to dominate public decision making, the narrative perspective considers all humans “rational” capable of telling and assessing stories. In other words, if all forms of communication are essentially stories, then narration is a universal faculty enabling all humans to engage rhetorically in evaluating reason and values.

The narrative paradigm has important implications for environmental rhetoric particularly because the epideictic genre is inherently narrative. And because the specialized knowledge and language of environmental science can easily elude the general citizen, environmental spokespersons intent on organizing publics of concerned and active citizens would do well to use narrative logic to convey expert knowledge to a lay audience. The narrative genre should be noted for its ability to capture and resolve “the dualisms of modernism: fact-value, intellect-imagination, reason-emotion, and so on” (*Moral Argument* 274). For these reasons, narrative theory both enriches and

facilitates the function of the epideictic genre, which is to teach and induce virtuous civic conduct by displaying stories of the honorable in order to inspire emulation of the same.

I am contending that epideictic genre is an effective vehicle for environmental rhetoric because its narrative character easily conjures the values and emotions that would render an audience responsive to the public moral argument that it ought to be more civically-minded in its relationship with the environment. What makes narratives rhetorical is the principle of identification, which Fisher pens as “the operative principle of narrative rationality” (*Narration* 66). I am asserting here that this is where Bitzer’s public theory and narrative theory converge: what Bitzer describes as public knowledge as discussed previously is essentially the term that sets in motion the principle of identification. When he argues that the bare facts need to be related to the “community of ideas and feelings” so that its members would apprehend the issue(s) more resolutely in both thought and sentiment, and his definition of public knowledge as truths and values located in the public’s tradition and experience, he is making a case for identification, only not in the same words as Burke or Fisher. In order to engage an audience’s interest, Bitzer argues that rhetors ought to speak in terms of public knowledge so that the “untrained thinkers” might identify with the subject matter and *experience* how the issues intersect with their lives.

I am also arguing here that in discourses of praise and blame where rhetors tell stories that exemplify lived virtues or vices, narratives can easily produce this idea of experiential knowledge where adherents can insert their intersubjectivities with the bare facts and make them personal. Again, this phenomenon can be attributed to the features of narrative rationality: an audience will assess the “probability” (coherence) and

“fidelity” (truth) of a story by comparing it with their own (*Moral Argument* 272). The narrative paradigm enables an audience to participate in their own formation of meaning by giving opportunities for them to “dwell[] in the characters in the story, by observing the outcomes of the several conflicts that arise throughout it, by seeing the unity of characters and their actions, and by comparing the truths to the truths [they] know to be true from [their] own lives” (*Moral Argument* 282). Once they have discovered and confirmed the truths from the stories because they ring true to the stories of their lives, their knowledge is binding.

Aristotle was wary about the use of emotions in rhetoric because the handbooks of rhetoric had inordinately emphasized emotions while giving scant attention to logical argument (*Rhetoric* 9). However, one should not infer that Aristotle did not recognize the place of emotions in rhetoric: Book II, Chapters 2-11 in the *Rhetoric* contains Aristotle’s insights into the psychology of emotions.

In order for an audience to take action, there must be an “intensity of adherence, aiming at effective action,” an adherence to—what I will add—the reasons and values in the argument presented (Perelman 49). In the case of epideictic contexts, the principle of identification enabled through narratives activates emotions (empathy) as a listener places himself in character, and experiences vicariously the sequence of events and all the attendant emotions the story seeks to arouse. In her book *Upheavals of Thought: The Intelligence of Emotions*, philosopher Martha Nausbaum reveals that emotions can best be produced from concrete narrations wherein a person is more likely to be able to enact them imaginatively and experience the gamut of emotions more so than he would if he were in other abstract states (65). She also articulates a connection between emotions and

narratives this way: “Emotions have a complicated cognitive structure that is in part narrative in form, involving a story of our relation to cherished objects that extends over time” (2). Nauusbaum’s quote reinforces the Burkean idea that humans respond to symbols because we contextualize things in symbols by the process of identification through association (Burke 134). Because symbols are representations of a reality, symbols also come with accompanying feelings that people have come to associate with that reality. This of course has implications on rhetoric: rhetors could effectively use symbols to trigger desired feelings among its audience as a way to induce people to action. Again, this enriches Bitzer’s definition of public knowledge, which essentially are evocative symbols that have come to characterize the public: “The spokesman engages the public’s fund of knowledge; his speeches echo its terms and maxims; he honors its heroes, rehearses its traditions, performs its rituals; he represents the public both to itself and to others . . . does so with sincerity because he is immersed himself in the tradition and experience of his public” (74).

I would like to briefly return to epideictic rhetoric. I want to emphasize that epideictic contexts are inherently emotional because the act of praising and blaming, of assigning what is beautiful or ugly involves a recognition and judgment of values (Perelman 48). And in the case of epideictic rhetoric where public commemorations of *arête* (excellence) are meant to reinforce shared traditions and ideas that characterize and bind a community, the values a rhetor appeals to through symbolic transactions are thus civic.

Aristotle defines virtue “as an ability for doing good,” and names “justice, manly courage, self-control, magnificence, magnanimity, liberality, gentleness, prudence, and

wisdom,” but adds that “the greatest virtues are necessarily those most useful to others” (*Rhetoric* 80). In the case of public environmental rhetoric, rhetors typically make appeals to the virtues of justice, courage, prudence, and wisdom, along with the classical understanding of civic virtues as democratic values, because of the obvious impact they have on a community as a whole (Hauser, “Public Morality” 12). Environmental rhetors can persuade their audiences that these values are worth fighting for by making them feel compelled to take action by presenting narratives that either show the worth of lived virtues or the endangerment of values that put the public good at harm.

Walter Fisher came up with “the logic of good reasons,” which is a “series of criterial questions” that would enable one to assess what constitutes a good reason for belief, attitude, action, or in other words, what are “those elements that provide warrants for accepting or adhering to the advice fostered by any form of communication that can be considered rhetorical” (107). Essentially, his logic asserts that values are those good reasons. He argues that the term ‘good reason’ “signifies that whatever is taken as a basis for adopting a rhetorical message is inextricably bound to a value—to a conception of the good” (107). Good reasons are value-bound: people have good reason to believe and act if the reasoning behind the rhetorical message is linked to the value of man’s right to pursue happiness [*eudaimonia*]. Fisher echoes this same sentiment: “A value is valuable not because it is tied to a reason or is expressed by a reasonable person per se, but because *it makes a pragmatic difference in one’s life and in one’s community*” (*Narration* 111).

Values are emotive because they are imbued with intersubjectivities that concretize the actual value. This is so that an audience will be able to relate, by virtue of

identification, to the values by way of the associative stories they have come to know as truth in their lives. Here we see again evidence of narrative theory that builds upon Burke's work, who said that "speaker persuades an audience by means of stylistic identification—for the purpose of causing the audience to identify itself with the speaker's interests; and the speaker draws on identification of interests to establish rapport between himself and his audience" (46).

Public environmental rhetoric ultimately conveys the values resident in narratives of praise and blame that would make society more moral. Moreover, I am arguing that social emotions coupled with ideas of virtuous civic conduct have the effect of obligating an audience oriented towards preserving *eudaimonia*. Candace Clark poignantly articulates the power of obligation: "[O]bligation has the force of emotion. I view the felt sense of obligation as a social emotion" (136). When the basis for belief and action is an obligation to the community—or a moral obligation, as many environmental rhetors like to call it—obligation to the health of a planet, obligation to our posterity, then obligation is what transforms a good reason to a persuasive reason (Fisher *Narration* 109).

The Classical Heritage of Modern Public Environmental Rhetoric

So how do all of these theories converge? My project asserts that environmental rhetoric is really about becoming a more moral public. Because recent rhetors consider environmentalism to be a moral issue, they seem to believe that if they can convince the citizenry to become more moral by urging a collective practice of civic virtue, then environmental problems will mitigate. Because of this, epideictic rhetoric becomes an effective tool through which speakers can reinforce public knowledge (i.e., traditions,

virtues, and values) by praising and blaming “public acts and actors” that resonate with the communal sense of right and wrong.

Additionally, rhetors teach public morality by using praise and blame discourse as an alternative way to urge a course of action. The call for action is implicitly embedded in epideictic rhetoric where the narrative form is replete with moral constructs. Gerard Hauser has inferred from Aristotle’s writings on the *phronimos* and his ideal rhetor/statesmen that “responsible persuasion translates the theoretical contents of politics and ethics into the praxis of statescraft and citizenship” (“Public Morality” 14). This of course underscores the title that George Kennedy gives to his translation of *The Rhetoric*, as “Aristotle’s theory of civic discourse,” locating rhetoric within politics. Since a *phronimos* is Aristotle’s ideal rhetor, and this *phronimos* by definition uses his prudence to advise the right course of action in public affairs, then what should result is a practice of citizenship.

Hauser’s “*Aristotle on Epideictic: The Formation of Public Morality*” is useful because it articulates a synthesis of the elements I have since explored. He argues that before citizens can rightly judge, they must first possess an understanding of the virtues and values that would best inform proper conduct. The epideictic genre provides rhetors with the occasion to offer this type of moral instruction. In Hauser’s words, the rhetor thus “occupies a unique place in celebrating the deeds of exemplars who set the tone for civic community and the encomiast serves an equally unique role as a teacher of civic virtue” (“Public Morality” 14). The civic implications suggest that epideictic rhetoric functions as a preparatory discourse; epideictic rhetoric acclimates an audience to take

political action based on public arguments that reflect the same values and virtues being lauded.

Hauser asserts that epideictic rhetoric has “constitutive possibilities,” meaning that it has the possibility to invent a reality through rhetorical constructs (“Public Morality” 5). This is because epideictic discourses are “rhetorical enactments of civic virtues” (“Public Morality” 6). The encomiast, the ideal rhetor narrates “stories of lived virtues” first to teach what civil conduct is as exhibited in the lives of significant figures or deeds, and second to persuade an audience to embrace a higher ideal by having them witness the excellence exemplified in events or persons that have put into practice civic virtue that make society more noble. He writes, “by valorizing heroes who are emblematic of a society’s best qualities, encomia provide concrete guidance on how to live in harmony with noble ideals. For this reason, Aristotle holds that “to praise a man is in one respect akin to urging a course of action” (1367b35). By setting up model citizens and endowing them with praise, rhetors are implicitly urging the audience to model the same: at the same time, “epideictic [also] offers instruction on recognizing virtue” (“Public Morality” 16).

Additionally, because many of the contemporary environmental problems we face seem dauntingly massive and uncontrollable, rhetors need a strategy that will give an audience faith that it can make a difference. Epideictic rhetoric illuminates the virtuous lives of people who stand in as inspiring examples of the impact one individual can make in the world and events that illustrate the culminating effects of people who have faith that their conjoint efforts can reach great heights. Epideictic rhetoric thus functions to

rhetorically create the good citizen so that it serves as a model “worthy of *mimesis* (emulation)” (“Public Morality” 18).

By coming together to witness the person or thing or event that is being memorialized, an audience also experiences the forging of communal bonds as it joins with others in recognizing and validating the virtues praised. Emotions activated through identification that is operative in stories will touch an audience and render a public binding. Ultimately, epideictic rhetoric establishes a pattern for a virtuous reality by emphasizing the appeal of excellence, of noble civil conduct through the performance of rhetorical stories. The next two chapters will be case studies. Both case studies will illustrate instances when Rachel Carson and Al Gore use the epideictic genre as a tool to teach public morality while urging individual responsibility through the evocation of shared ethos between speaker and audience, and the emotions that would bind citizens in an environmental cause.

CHAPTER TWO

RACHEL CARSON'S *SILENT SPRING*: A MODERN EPIDEICTIC

Public environmental rhetoric seeks change by creating a public of committed citizens who will make prudent lifestyle choices and pursue public policies that protect our environment. This chapter will demonstrate how Rachel Carson rhetorically formed such a public by her compelling book, *The Silent Spring*, by elaborating principally upon the epideictic component found in modern environmental rhetoric. Although epideictic in modern environmental rhetoric is characterized by both acts of praise and blame, rhetoric of blame is inarguably predominant in *The Silent Spring*. However, like other environmental rhetors who may “praise past actions...with the intent of celebrating timeless virtues and inculcating them as models for the future,” Carson also uses praise because of its ability to inspire civic action, a function redolent of classical rhetoric (Kennedy, 48, fnt 79).

I have chosen to focus on the story of the gypsy moth spraying in 1957 found in Chapter Ten because it contains instances where Carson uses epideictic rhetoric (principally the negative expression of it, blame discourse) to foster a communion of minds among her readers in their joint condemnation of the values being put into practice by federal agricultural agencies. This of course helps support part of my theoretical argument that epideictic rhetoric has a civic dimension because it renders an audience emotionally and intellectually disposed to take political action according to the values lauded and, in this case, against the vices deplored. My analysis will show that she used blame discourse to illustrate that pesticide pollution is real and harmful, and consequently, the mass applications of insecticides is simply immoral and evidence of a lack of civic

phronesis (judgment and prudence concerning things that are conducive with the collective good life).

By presenting as destructive the values expressed by the Department of Agriculture's (USDA) decision to carry out aerial sprayings, readers perceive an obvious disconnect between the citizenry's values and those of the government. The eagerness with which the USDA authorizes repeated wholesale sprayings reflects its values of convenience, of progressive science and of government authority. Although these values by themselves appear innocent, Carson's epideictic narrations make apparent that the USDA has misplaced its values, who in spite of evidence of ecological and human health devastation has authorized repeated aerial sprayings. The gypsy moth narrative demonstrates that the Department of Agriculture has wrongly placed its pursuit for agricultural convenience, cutting edge science, and its public authority above the environment and public health.

Carson's discourses of blame functions first to give her readers knowledge of disturbing facts, the knowledge of which then inculcates them with the moral obligation to take civic action to halt pesticide spraying that would prevent inexcusable ecological and human destruction. The issue of blanket pesticide spraying is a public moral argument because in its agenda to annihilate an identifiable pest, it needlessly and immorally devastates other forms of life. I am also arguing that her discourses of blame persuade greater expressions of civic virtues in her audience so that they would use their voices to ensure that responsible use accompanies the trigger of any spraygun.

Theorists have argued that persuasion often results from successful rhetoric that inevitably alludes to the community of ideas and symbols that characterize a public:

Carson's use of the epideictic is effective for this same reason. Epideictic is concerned with displaying values for the purpose of reinforcing shared traditions and ideas that characterize and bind a community. As such, it is inherently value-laden and hence emotive. People are more inclined to persuasion because of their ability to identify with recognized values. Moreover, epideictic's narrative feature enables Carson's audience to dwell in character in order to experience such emotions as fear and indignation as stories of revealed ironies amplify the USDA's lack of *phronesis* in its authorizations of aerial sprayings that place at peril human health and all that falls under the sky. As readers come to assess the government's conduct from Carson's stories, and are convinced by the evidence offered that the Department of Agriculture runs counter to their expectations that human health should be the prevailing consideration in its decisions to permit blanket spraying, the issue takes on personal significance. Because the shared value of pursuing the collective good life is at risk, readers are more disposed to politicize their indignation because they have vested interest in the issue. The passion of protecting human health, or worse yet, of preventing annihilation to the human species from a poisoned food chain, would create a public, binding and vocal in its intent on putting in check the use of synthetic pesticides.

History of Rachel Carson

Silent Spring's blend of literary deftness and scientific expertise is a testament to Carson's ability to make a career out of her two passions: literature and nature. Born in May 27, 1907, in Springdale, Pennsylvania, Carson spent her childhood education alternating between the private tutorings of her mother and formal schooling. From her mother, Carson developed a penchant for literature at a very early age, and had a

particular affinity to books about the ocean (Waddell 3). However, her love of nature was not only restricted to the splendors of the ocean. Her father had purchased a sixty-four-acre tract of undeveloped land and woods, and with her mother, her older brother and sister, that land provided hours of exploration in the wonders of nature. So it seems no surprise that when Carson enrolled in the Pennsylvania College for Women, she majored in English, only to have it changed to zoology after some encouragement from her biology professor.

Although Carson as a child had developed a great love for books about the sea, she didn't actually see the ocean until years later. It was in 1929, a year before she was to start her graduate work at John Hopkins University in marine zoology, that Carson saw the ocean for the first time while doing a summer fellowship at the Marine Biological Building in Massachusetts's Atlantic shores. This of course left a profound impact on Carson and of course, predisposed her to the publications she would later produce.

With her degrees in hand, Carson spent some time teaching at various universities when in 1935, the death of her father during the Depression era compelled her to look for more lucrative work to help her assume the financial obligations she had taken on for her family. So in 1936, after a year as a temporary editor with the U.S. Bureau of Fisheries (now known as the U.S. Fish and Wildlife), Carson landed a permanent position with them and eventually was appointed as chief editor of all Fish and Wildlife Service publications in 1949.

Silent Spring (1962) was not Carson's first published work. In fact, her first piece of published writing appeared in the September 1937 issue of the *Atlantic Monthly*, entitled "Undersea," an essay she had written for an assignment with the U.S. Bureau of

Fisheries. Publisher Simon and Schuster liked her work and encouraged her to write a book based on the ideas of that essay, the result of which became her first book “*Under the Sea Wind*, a compelling narrative description of the life of the shore, the open sea, and the sea bottom” (qtd. in Waddell 4). Six weeks before the Pearl Harbor Bombing, *Under the Sea Wind* was published on November 1, 1941. Waddell notes that “although it received a good initial response, the country’s preoccupation with the war soon eclipsed its publication” (5). It was during this time while Carson continued with her work with the Bureau that she learned of the troubling effects associated with the use of DDT. In 1945, her knowledge of DDT and its potential for harm prompted her to turn to *Reader’s Digest* to publish an article she had written on the subject, only to have it turned down. In 1951, Carson published her second book, entitled *The Sea Around Us* that “emphasized our dependence on the oceans and Carson’s belief that we would become even more dependent as we destroyed the land” (Waddell 5). It was this book that made the name Rachel Carson popular, which of course facilitated later public reception of *The Silent Spring*. *The Sea Around Us* did so well that “it stayed on the *New York Times* Bestsellers List for eighty-six weeks, setting a new record” (Waddell 5). Its success also called for the republication of her first book and it too became a bestseller. The phenomenal success of her two books was lucrative enough to allow Carson to resign from her post as chief editor in U.S. Fish and Wildlife Services and turn full-time to writing. Subsequently, she wrote another bestseller, published in 1955 called *The Edge of the Sea*.

Although Carson had failed in an attempt in 1951 to alert the public of the harmful effects of DDT by proposing an article to the *Reader’s Digest*, those who were

acquainted with her reveal that her passion towards the issue remained constant even though her energies had been directed elsewhere (Waddell 5). In 1957, “Carson’s attention once more was drawn to the potentially devastating effects of indiscriminate use of synthetic pesticides: the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s program to eradicate the fire ant and a Long Island suit seeking to stop aerial spraying of private land with DDT” (Waddell 6). The final trigger that brought about the 1962 publication of the *Silent Spring* came in the form of a letter. In 1958, Carson’s friend Olga Huckins, related in a letter the tragic details of the loss of birds from an aerial spraying of DDT intended to control mosquitoes, in spite of her protests against having her private property sprayed (Waddell 6). Not knowing who else to turn to, Huckins wrote Carson to find out who might be of help in Washington. Impassioned by the destruction of DDT made vivid in her friend’s situation, and knowing public dialogue on the subject was nearly nonexistent, Carson took on the challenge to write an exposè on the subject herself. The collection of expert testimony from the 1957-58 Long Island lawsuit that had drawn Carson’s attention to the issue of DDT equipped her with significant scientific material she needed to build her case against indiscriminate pesticide use. Carson spent four and a-half years on the research and writing of *Silent Spring* before it first appeared in the *New Yorker* as ten serialized chapters. The full novel followed suit on 27 September 1962. Carson’s book was widely received; book sales soared, reaching 100,000 copies sold in just two months. Cheryll Glotfelty sums it up nicely when she describes the impact of Carson on the general public in directing them to a new way of thinking: she “caus[ed] a remarkable about-face in public opinion, the rhetoric of *Silent Spring* persuaded the public that these miracle pesticides were, in fact, deadly poisons, harmful to all living things” (qtd. in

Waddell 158). However, although the general response was staggeringly positive, Carson's rhetoric gave voice to a controversial issue. The negative attention she received from the chemical manufacturing industry was proportional to the positive response from the reading public: "Perhaps not since the classic controversy over Charles Darwin's *The Origin of Species*...had a single book been more bitterly attacked by those who felt their interests threatened' (qtd. in Waddell 7). Angered by the negative publicity they had received, The National Agricultural Chemical Association and even the Manufacturing Chemists Association sought to discredit Carson and her book. Despite their efforts to salvage their image and that of their chemical products, Carson's book had instigated a change in thinking that could not be undone.

Silent Spring is a beautifully written book that seamlessly blends science with literature. History, however, has proven that this book replete with what classical rhetoric term epideictic contexts, is not simply a book to be admired for its display of literariness, or the literary prowess of its author. The epideictic instances in the *Silent Spring* have a more important function than "simple commemoration" or the frivolous display of one's rhetorical virtuosity in the public sphere (Hauser, *Public Morality* 5). *Silent Spring* has proven to be a powerful book because of the civic changes it achieved towards the widespread use of DDT. The many occasions where Carson uses discourses of blame to condemn the federal government, the chemical industry, and spraysmen by amplifying their shameful acts are deliberate; she does so in order to 1) persuade the audience to unequivocally perceive the mentioned parties as the bad guys, 2) to evoke the political emotions that would compel her readers to exercise their civic virtue to right the wrong. Thus Carson's *Silent Spring* is an excellent example of a rhetorical performance

that demonstrates the civic dimension of epideictic rhetoric. Cheryll Gloftfelty enriches this argument by revealing that “Carson wrote *Silent Spring* in order to goad the passive to take action and to give the “many, many people who are eager to do something...the facts to fight with” (qtd. in Waddell). In sum, Carson was an educator who empowered her readership with knowledge of the facts of pesticide in order to render an articulate public, one which uses rhetoric to bring about legislative changes in the public realm. The book is also an excellent example of how modern environmentalism recalls the classical conception of civic virtue (the performance of one’s civic duties within a democracy) in order to solve our environmental crises.

Evidence of a Rhetorical Public: The Influence of Rachel Carson

By 1962 when Rachel Carson’s polemical text *Silent Spring* was first published, synthetic insecticides like DDT and eldrin were considered nothing more than common household chemicals that the general citizenry didn’t think twice of. Hailed by many as miracle chemicals used to combat pandemic diseases like Malaria, pesticides became a mark of modern civilization. However, all of this changed with Carson’s revolutionary book that exposed the threat of these chemicals on human health and the environment. Public dialogue on chemicals and pesticides spread feverishly after the publication of *Silent Spring*. Carson’s unprecedented work on the subject had awakened the world from the lulling familiarity of toxic chemicals, a familiarity that made many impervious to their toxic properties.

Rachel Carson ranks as one of the most influential figures for publicizing the pesticide debate and making public knowledge the ecology paradigm (Waddell 8). Frank Graham, who wrote a book on the aftermath of Carson’s *Silent Spring* asserts that

“Rachel Carson uncovered the hiding places of facts that should have been disclosed to the public long before; she broke the information barrier” (qtd. in Killingsworth 72).

Evidence of the profound impact Carson’s book made in public policy can be also be summed up in Graham’s words: “Much of the subsequent history of pesticide policy is a response (pro and con) to Rachel Carson’s judgment” (qtd. in Killingsworth 72).

Shabecoff said this: “*Silent Spring* by Rachel Carson . . . is now recognized as one of the truly important books of this century. More than any other, it changed the way Americans, and people around the world, looked at the reckless way we live on this planet” (qtd. in Waddell 2). She raised public awareness on the subject as demonstrated by her immediate large readership: six months after the first ten chapters had appeared in the *New Yorker* in June 1962, sales of the full text printed in September reached more than one hundred thousand copies, and then a half a million the following spring (Waddell 7). Additionally, Carson received an overwhelmingly positive response from the federal government led by the Kennedy Administration. In 1963, President Kennedy commissioned his Science Advisory Committee to conduct further research into Carson’s claims on pesticide—the findings of which came out affirmative. This combined with growing public outcry eventually led to the establishment of the EPA in 1970 and the ban of DDT two years later under the Nixon Administration (Waddell 8). Congressional hearings with officials intent on effecting change on pesticide use also began to take place (Waddell 7). Because of *Silent Spring*’s popularity and the media coverage it received, in particular, the 3 April 1963 CBS Report that aired a special on Carson and her work, the hazards of pesticides was hotly debated and many citizens joined Carson’s cries for change (Lutts 18).

It is unfathomable that any serious environmentalist would not be familiar with Rachel Carson. Deemed the mother of the modern environmental movement, Rachel Carson's influence continues to be felt today (Gore xviii). Carson's holistic approach towards science and nature is a perspective that continues to inform the different types of the greater modern environmental movement. From the organic foods movement to the climate crisis movement, Carson continues to inspire new minds. Her text is still in print (Waddell 2). Many environmental writers/rhetors who have joined the rank and file of modern environmental activists have been influenced, whether consciously or not by Rachel Carson's rhetoric. For example, Al Gore, has revealed the impact *Silent Spring* had in solidifying his understanding of man's stewardship of the earth. All of the positive civic changes that took place and the recognition she received for the concerns raised in *Silent Spring* resulted from Carson having successfully formed a "public" through her civic rhetoric.

Analysis: The Rhetorical Formation of a Public through the Epideictic Act of Blame

In Chapter Ten of the book, Carson sharply criticizes the USDA and the New York Department of Agriculture for sanctioning aerial spraying programs of the gypsy moth in New York State. By retelling the details of the 1957 Long Island spraying that amplify the irrationality, the imprudence, the authoritarianism and the irresponsibility of the agricultural agencies, she is thematically blaming the government for causing ecological damages associated with pesticide use.

Because Carson understands that one of the constraints to change is a citizenry's uncritical acceptance of government discourse and their implicit faith in the government's responsibility to protect consumer interest, she tells fact-based stories that

prove otherwise—stories that reveal the government’s follies. Just as so many of the factual narratives Carson retells in her book are stories that bespeak of environmental degradation and similar human destruction, this story of the 1957 spraying fixates readers because given the examples, they fear what could happen to them. Fear can either render a people paralyzed or a people clamoring for change. Carson, of course, is looking to stir up a public that clamors for change. To fulfill this, she offers her readers a clear enemy, someone to hold accountable. And that enemy is the USDA, and its related pest control agencies, who become the indisputable subject of blame in many of her chapters.

Because environmental rhetoric is concerned with divisive issues that are advocated by parties with seemingly polar interests, blame is a typical epideictic act within this field of rhetoric because it sets up clearly for the readers which party should be perceived as the enemy. Carson is no exception to this technique and uses epideictic rhetoric to discredit the USDA in order to emotionally dispose her audience to exercise their civic virtue to compel change that would end government behavior that neither serve nor protect the interests of its citizens. To do this, she employs irony to reveal that the government’s pursuit of mass pesticide programs ignores citizens’ property rights and safety concerns, the sum of which amplifies the intolerable misbehavior of a government entity that is supposed to have a citizenry’s best interests at heart.

Carson first provides evidence that reveal the USDA did not have good reason to believe that the gypsy moth was a threatening insect nor the need to use synthetic pesticides as a form of pest control. What is so bizarre about the chemical extermination launched against the gypsy moth is that “drastic action was suddenly taken against [it]” (156). For it was only in 1955, after seeing the success from importation of parasites and

predators that prevented the gypsy moth from advancing beyond the northeast that the Agricultural Department declared that such measures had produced ““outstanding restriction of distribution and damage”” (157). The irony is that a year after they had declared success in controlling the gypsy moth with natural methods, the Plant Pest Control Division within the USDA conceived of an “ambitious plan” to “eradicate” the gypsy moth altogether (157). Carson ironizes the Plant Pest Control Division’s claim, the effect of which undermines the government’s credibility and makes suspect its motives. Clearly, she is suggesting that the exigence of the gypsy moth infestation was fabricated and that the government had ulterior motives or a more sinister reason for launching the program. Whatever its motive may actually be, readers are inevitably left suspect of government discourse.

Ultimately, Carson wants to emphasize to the reader that the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s conceived aerial acreage spraying operations are illogical, imprudent, immoral, and irresponsible, so she tells the following story the 1957 Long Island gypsy moth spraying as an example:

The Long Island area included within the gypsy moth spraying in 1957 consisted chiefly of heavily populated towns and suburbs and of some coastal areas with bordering salt marsh. Nassau County, Long Island, is the most densely settled county in New York apart from New York City itself. In what seems the height of absurdity, the ‘threat of infestation of the New York City metropolitan area’ has been cited as an important justification of the program. The gypsy moth is a forest insect, certainly not an inhabitant of cities. Nor does it live in meadows, cultivated fields,

gardens, or marshes. Nevertheless, the planes hired by the United States Department of Agriculture and the New York Department of Agriculture and Markets in 1957 showered down the prescribed DDT-in-fuel-oil with impartiality. They sprayed truck gardens and dairy farms, fish ponds and salt marshes. They sprayed the quarter-acre lots of suburbia, drenching a housewife making a desperate effort to cover her garden before the roaring plane reached her, and showering insecticide over children at play and commuters at railway stations. At Setauket a fine quarter horse drank from a trough in a field which the planes had sprayed; ten hours later it was dead. Automobiles were spotted with the oily mixture; flowers and shrubs were ruined. Birds, fish, crabs, and useful insects were killed (158).

Her argument is that aerial blanket spraying is irrational and imprudent because it indiscriminately unleashes toxic chemicals upon everything under the sky. She employs heavy irony to highlight the absurdity of a program that aims to eradicate forest-residing gypsy moths in a metropolitan city. She lists matter-of-factly that the operation on the gypsy moth ended up poisoning with pesticides not gypsy moths, but “truck gardens and dairy farms, fish ponds and salt marshes...[civilians], automobiles...[ruining] flowers and shrubs...Birds, fish, crabs and useful insects.” The string of victims of a spraying campaign that ultimately targeted no one and everyone at the same time is a stark reminder of the reach of pesticide that can make victims out of unintended victims. The killing of innocent animals and plantlife is a direct affront to the morality of these agricultural bodies, who seem to disregard the sanctity of life with these repeated aerial sprayings.

I do believe that Carson's concrete examples of poisoned plantlife and wildlife would at worst move the environmentally conscious and/or the ethically sensitive, but when she argues that pesticide contamination endangers human health, her constituency surely enlarges because human civilizations value public health and quality of life. If citizens can view chemical pesticides for its contaminating properties that ultimately reduce the quality of air, water, and food—the necessities that sustain human life—the issue will take on personal significance because it has man's interests at stake. Thus the mentioning of the suburban housewife with the garden, the children playing outside, and the commuters at the railway station are rhetorically persuasive simply by their "ordinariness." By this I mean that readers can easily identify themselves or someone they know within these brief snapshots of ordinary people engaged in ordinary activities on any regular day. These symbols of ordinary civilian life first heighten a reader's perception of the situational irony of what is to follow. As the reader enacts the narrative in his mind, the sight and sounds of the roaring plane showering chemical pesticides upon all that's beneath the sky becomes a gross juxtaposition. It seems inappropriate and unfair that civilians had no choice but to have the same chemical pesticides that have the potency to kill (at the very least, pests) to be showered upon them.

To contribute to the public perception that pesticide pollution is a public problem that calls for prompt action, Carson educates her readers on the principles of ecology. It was important for Rachel Carson to embed the notion of ecology into public consciousness in order to overthrow society's belief that it can control nature with chemical insecticides without causing itself similar harm. If she can have her readers adopt a holistic perspective towards the environment, then they will be more judicious in

their uses of pesticide. And surely, the message that pesticide is lethal and threatening builds momentum as it takes on the human repercussions. She shows through the story the interconnectedness of nature. For given the evidence of what the pesticide spraying has done to the “fine quarter horse” of Setauket that died after drinking from a pesticide-contaminated trough, and the ruined flowers and shrubs, her argument is implicit: Would not the drenched housewife, and the children and commuters, all who had been exposed to the rain of pesticide also face a similar fate? What about the water that the horse drank? Would not the pollution render our groundwater lethal as well? Thus her images of poisoned animal and plant life also function as vivid examples of the ecological chain of destruction that chemical pesticides can initiate. The reach of poison is extensive and the evoked feelings of fear can move a disquieted people to action because mankind is driven by the need for survival and the self-centered pursuits of one’s happiness and well-being.

This theme of unacceptable government behavior continues as Carson casts the USDA and its associated New York state agency as authoritarians. She notes that in 1956, “many complaints of damage were made by people in the areas” when “nearly a million acres were sprayed in the state of Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Michigan and New York” (158). She writes that “when plans were announced for spraying a million acres in 1957 opposition became stronger. State and federal officials characteristically shrugged off individual complaints as unimportant” (158). Carson deliberately repeats the government’s disregard for public rights and its failure to protect consumers so that readers come to perceive it as a pattern. For these purposes, the following mini-narrative within the 1957 gypsy moth spraying works persuasively in Carson’s efforts to undermine the ethos of the USDA (159-60):

The contamination of milk and of farm produce in the course of the gypsy moth spraying came as an unpleasant surprise to many people. What happened on the 200-acre Waller farm in northern Westchester County, New York, was revealing. Mrs. Waller had specifically requested Agriculture officials not to spray her property, because it would be impossible to avoid the pastures in spraying the woodlands. She offered to have the land checked for gypsy moths and to have any infestation destroyed by spot spraying. Although she was assured that no farms would be sprayed, her property received two direct sprayings and, in addition, was twice subjected to drifting spray. Milk samples, in addition, was twice subjected to drifting spray. Milk samples taken from the Wallers' purebred Guernsey cows 48 hours later contained DDT in the amount of 14 parts per million. Forage samples from fields where the cows had grazed were of course contaminated also. Although the county Health Department was notified, no instructions were given that the milk should not be marketed. The situation is unfortunately typical of the lack of consumer protection that is all too common. Although the Food and Drug Administration permits no residues of pesticides in milk, its restrictions are not only inadequately policed but they apply solely to interstate shipments. State and county officials are under no compulsion to follow the federal pesticides tolerances unless local laws happen to conform—and they seldom do.

What happened to Mrs. Waller's farm is in line with the examples Carson have already cited that amplify the government's negligence and authoritarianism. Carson wants to emphasize that not only do Agricultural officials ignore individual citizens' opposition to mass insecticide applications, neither do they honor what they say they will do. As it is written, in spite of Mrs. Waller's efforts to help the government eliminate the gypsy moth from her personal property without having to employ a wholesale spraying program, her farm still got sprayed: "Although she was assured that no farms would be sprayed, her property received two direct sprayings and, in addition, was twice subjected to drifting spray" (159). Whether or not the cause of this blatant oversight was simply careless or deliberate, either way, it had violated Mrs. Waller's property rights, the mention of which easily invokes the values of American democracy because our society values so much personal ownership. Consequently, readers are more disposed to sympathize with Mrs. Waller. In their process of identifying with Mrs. Waller, they will experience the stirring political emotions of injustice and the accompanying indignation over the government's exercise of undemocratic authority that "disregard supposedly inviolate property rights of private citizens" (159).

What happened to the milk produced from the Waller's farm depicts how the frightening chain of ecological destruction inevitably enters the human food supply: "Milk samples taken from the Wallers' purebred Guernsey cows 48 hours later contained DDT in the amount of 14 parts per million. Forage samples from fields where the cows had grazed were of course contaminated also" (159). By exposing the vulnerability of food safety due to inadequate or lack of governmental measures that regulate pesticides use, she is shaking up her audience's uncritical trust in governmental agencies to protect

the public. The idea that milk, a rhetorical symbol of a common food found in so many kitchens could be thoroughly contaminated with DDT is unsettling. What is more disconcerting is to know that the same milk could be sitting on the shelves of a local grocery store because as Carson reveals, “Although the county Health Department was notified [of the contaminated milk and forage samples], no instructions were given that the milk should not be marketed” (160).

In addition to the contaminated dairy farms, Carson also reveals the ominous situation of truck gardens (farms where produce is grown and sold locally), where “some leaf crops were so burned and spotted as to be unmarketable. Others carried heavy residues...the legal maximum [of DDT] is 7 parts per million. Growers therefore had to sustain heavy losses or find themselves in the position of selling produce carrying illegal residues” (160). Again, in spite of her revelation that there are no regulations that prevent truck gardeners from potentially marketing DDT-doused produce to the public in order to save their profit margin, Carson’s objective tone tells us that truck gardeners are not the enemy here. Rather, the government is to blame because its aerial spraying programs are what have put truck gardeners in the position where food safety could be compromised, our food supply polluted and public health endangered.

Although Carson’s exposé of the 1957 gypsy moth spraying condemns the USDA, the FDA, the County Health Department, and even the New York State Department of Agriculture for failing to protect consumer interests and public health, we must remember her discourse of blame is a means to an end. And that end is change. She reveals that the lack of consumer protection shown by government agencies during the 1957 gypsy moth spraying stems from inadequate regulations. Although the government agencies did not

take what citizens would consider full measures to protect the general public (which Carson implies is generally assumed and all too often a fact taken for granted), they didn't do anything that the regulations and laws did not require them to do. Thus she leads her readers to another outlet where they can place the fear, indignation, injustice her rhetoric has stirred: inasmuch as agricultural officials are to be blamed, it is the lawmakers who are ultimately responsible. Carson writes that "although the Food and Drug Administration permits no residues of pesticides in milk, its restrictions are not only inadequately policed but they apply solely to interstate shipments." (160). And what follows is the implicit urge to action embedded in the story of Mrs. Waller's farm: "State and county officials are under no compulsion to follow the federal pesticides tolerances unless local laws happen to conform—and they seldom do" (160). Herein is the root of the pesticide issue: the local laws do not recognize that the issue of pesticide is a significant concern to citizens. Since it is the laws that dictate what government agencies need to be concerned with, citizens must press for change by demanding regulations that would compel the USDA and agricultural agencies to conduct themselves more responsibly towards the application of pesticides and the monitoring of its levels.

Model Citizens Will Change the Course of Legislation Governing Pesticide

The culmination of the arguments presented in the gypsy moth story allow Carson to convince her readers that the actions of the USDA do not have the public's interest at heart and that the evidence of needless environmental destruction do not constitute the "ideal basis for human conduct" (Fisher 109). As a result of stories like these that make the citizenry witnesses to the USDA's neglect of human health and *phronesis*, Carson has in effect made the conduct of the USDA a public problem. Her blame discourse seeks to

impassion the people to protest against the condemned behavior of government officials, who repeatedly open the gate to destruction from widespread insecticide use. In other words, Carson's public discourse is civic rhetoric: it is intended to form an articulate public engaged within the political sphere through rhetorical performances that would influence policies on pesticide use. What I have shown is that by exposing the USDA's unethical behavior, Carson seeks to morally obligate her readers to exercise their civic virtue, to take civic action.

However, Carson also uses the epideictic act of praise to achieve the same ideological end. Randy Harris offers excellent insights from a linguistic approach, to the "drama" Carson has rhetorically created between what he terms "The Good Guys" and "The Bad Guys" (141-143). Specifically, he notes that the nonspecialist Good Guys Carson cites from are characteristically concerned citizens, who write to newspapers, environmental publications, or who contact conservationist agencies like the Audubon Society to articulate their dismay over eyewitness accounts of the ecological devastation from local DDT sprayings (139). For example, Carson talks about "an 'Alabama woman' [who] writes in *Audubon Field Notes* that within months of the fire ant campaign in her area there was not a sound of the song of a bird. It was eerie, terrifying" (104); "or a 'New England woman' and 'a conservationist' who wrote 'angrily' to a newspaper, speaks as part of a 'steadily growing chorus of outraged protest about the disfigurement of once beautiful roadsides by chemical sprays'" (Harris 139-140). Carson does not outrightly praise these citizens for vocalizing their opinions in the vernacular spheres available to everyday citizens as conveyed in these brief excerpts; however, it is clear she applauds their civic efforts. She included these citizens for the rhetorical purpose of

using them as models of civic behavior she hopes would be mirrored by her readers. She included them so that she could give the “citizens a voice in *Silent Spring*, [which is the same voice she gives] to her readers, engaging them in the book and in the argument. Further than that, she provides them with a template for future action. The nonspecialists she quotes are model citizens in the literal sense that they provide models of conduct, even models for writing, for Carson’s readers to emulate in the pursuit of legislation governing responsible pesticide use” (Harris 141). It also inspires the converted to exercise their civic virtue because her examples are concrete evidence of the potential for change in public thinking that can come from the collective influence of an articulate public who use public forums to disseminate its opinions concerning indiscriminate pesticide use.

Finally, Carson praises the civic efforts of a group of Long Island residents in the Gypsy Moth narrative by relating some brief facts concerning their lawsuit as a way to teach her readers why civic virtue matters in the cause against DDT use. She narrates the following:

A group of Long Island citizens led by the world-famous ornithologist Robert Cushman Murphy had sought a court injunction to prevent the 1957 spraying. Denied a preliminary injunction, the protesting citizens had to suffer the prescribed drenching with DDT, but thereafter persisted in efforts to obtain a permanent injunction...But because the act had already been performed the courts held that the petition for an injunction was “moot”. . . The suit brought by the Long Island citizens at least served to focus public attention on the growing trend to mass application of

insecticides, and on the power and inclination of control agencies to disregard supposedly inviolate property rights of private citizens (159).

The key is that these politically active citizens exercised their democratic rights and *protested* against the prescribed spraying. And even though they did not succeed in preventing the 1957 spraying, their persistence did lead to the eventual permanent injunction. Here is a case of citizenship worthy of emulation and of celebration. If it were not for these *phronetic* citizens who recognized that mass insecticide only causes more harm than good to health, property and the environment, and to have felt so strongly as to petition the judicial courts for protection, the “power and inclination of control agencies” would not have been curbed in Long Island. Had these citizens remained passive, had they not exercised their civic virtues, the story surrounding the publication of *Silent Spring* would have been different. The instigation and the research that went into *Silent Spring* owes itself in part to the public focus on DDT sprayings the Long Island suit brought to the fore that had recaptured Carson’s attention to fulfill the urgent need to publicize the issue.

Carson’s inclusion of the Long Island Citizens whose political action is worthy of praise and emulation reinforces my theoretical argument that modern environmental rhetoric has features of classical rhetoric first by its call for the practice of the classical custom of civic virtue, and secondly the principle of epideictic modernized by the assertion that epideictic is more than just celebratory discourse for an impartial audience functioning as spectators only. Epideictic acts of blame and praise have a civic, morally instructive dimension. This chapter should have shown that modern environmental rhetoric characteristically urges society to rise to more noble ideals by emulating the

rhetorical good citizen, who actively condemns the vices that make base the environment and society.

CHAPTER THREE

THE INVOCATION OF CIVIC VIRTUE TO FIGHT GLOBAL WARMING

Public environmental rhetoric is fundamentally concerned with persuading a citizenry to choose patterns of living that are conducive to a more sustainable environment. In addition, it seeks to bring about public policies that would require institutions of power like corporations and government agencies to implement more environmentally responsible business practices. Al Gore's campaign against global warming is an example of such public environmental rhetoric that seeks to achieve these same objectives. In *An Inconvenient Truth* Gore sees his primary task as the rhetor who sounds the alarm that global warming is a real public exigence—that is, a crisis of widespread consequence, one that must be addressed and resolved by the collective actions of a national and, ultimately, global public. For he believes that the scientific facts themselves are so compelling that the people in possession of the right facts will consequently create the public pressure necessary that would force elected government officials to respond with the desired legislative changes.

My purpose in the previous chapter examining Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring* was to use classical and modern theories of epideictic rhetoric to explain the rhetorical effectiveness and functions of Carson's work in environmental rhetoric. My purpose in Chapter Three examining Al Gore's *An Inconvenient Truth* is to use Walter Fisher's narrative paradigm combined with Kenneth Burke's principle of identification to explain how Gore's storytelling results in audiences who are persuaded by his story of global warming in both belief and action. The chapter will first begin with an introduction to Gore's work in environmental rhetoric, specifically what he has done with his acclaimed

film *An Inconvenient Truth*. Because he believes that impassioned, articulate citizens exercising their civic virtue are the means to bringing the political and environmental changes needed to help solve global warming, I will also present evidence that demonstrate Gore's successful formation of such a public. A narrative analysis of the chapter entitled *My Sister* found in the film's companion book will conclude the chapter.

Narrative Paradigm Articulates Why People Believe Al Gore and His Story of Global Warming

Central to Walter Fisher's narrative perspective is his restoration of the ancient definition of *logos* understood as "story, reason, rationale, conception, discourse, thought" (5). Given this definition, *logos* thus encompasses (to some degree or another) *all forms* of human expression. If human expression can simultaneously contain "story, reason, rationale, conception, discourse, thought," then it puts into question the formal structures by which we create genre-specific discourse: can absolute forms like the "argument" and "fiction" be correctly considered respectively as the primary carriers of reason and story? Well, Walter Fisher incorporates *logos* and takes it a step further by proposing that human communication is narration—that people are essentially storytellers and that at the root of any exposition or an argument is a story.

Ultimately, narrative logic is founded on the idea that all humans have the natural capacity to not only tell and experience stories but they also possess the inherent ability to assess a story's coherence (believability) and fidelity (truthfulness). Fisher's theory offers the theoretical language to show that people are persuaded by arguments not by the form but by "good reasons," what he calls the "stuff of stories," or more specifically, the "elements that provide warrants for accepting or adhering to the advice fostered by any

form of communication that can be considered rhetorical” (48). In other words, people are persuaded by values. Fisher thus makes the case that value judgments ought not to be discounted as irrational during human decision making because value judgments show the humanity of all symbolic communication.

If narration is a shared natural human capacity, then it follows that “reason, the movement of thought that occurs in communicative transactions” does not privilege one form of discourse above another, neither does it “elevate some classes of persons” for their ability to convey reason, a feature that is clearly egalitarian (Fisher 48). Because narration is believed to be inherently human, the ability to assess the probability [coherence] and fidelity [truthfulness and reliability] of stories is also unlearned, one that is “culturally acquired through a universal faculty and experience” (Fisher 75).

Additionally, Fisher also argues that narration is more effective than “the argument for nontechnical forms of communication because narration comes closer to capturing the experience of the world, simultaneously appealing to the various senses, to reason and emotion, to intellect and imagination, and to fact and value” (75).

Is it any wonder then that Gore would choose the story as the predominant mode of discourse through which he conveys the arguments, reasons, rationale of global warming to a pluralistic, non-expert audience of private citizens? The narrative is an effective medium through which Gore can simultaneously appeal to reason and emotion to the degree needed to render the formation of a public of engaged citizens mobilized chiefly to improve the condition of the American democracy as the means to fight global warming.

Although *An Inconvenient Truth* is mainly concerned with laying out the sobering facts of a climate crisis, seamlessly present throughout are stories of Gore's life that tell the process of his personal journey. These intimate narratives not only humanize and endear his readers to the revealed character of Al Gore, all the while reinforcing his credibility as a rhetor of global warming, they also serve as vehicles by which he can "lay out an important truth as [he] sees it, and then help[] [the audience] connect the truth to a course of action" (Gore 213). It should be of interest here that of the seven personal stories he tells, three of them can rightly be categorized in terms of their specific rhetorical function as instances of the epideictic, specifically, the epideictic act of praise. These three stories start off as eulogies, tributes that he pays to the three influential people in his life: Roger Ravelle (his biology professor), Albert Gore Senior (his father), and Nancy Gore Hunger (his sister).

I have chosen to focus specifically on the last of his personal narratives—his tribute to Nancy Gore Hunger, entitled "My Sister." Chapter Three will demonstrate that inasmuch as Nancy Gore played a formative role in shaping Gore's life, Gore's telling of her life story, particularly, her battle with lung cancer, is a rhetorical strategy meant to reinforce his readers' perception that global warming is a public moral issue comparable in nature and significance to the familiar story of the tobacco industry, whose campaign to glamorize smoking did not come to a head until the mid 90s when the nation faced overwhelming cases of cancer-related deaths among tobacco users. By telling the story of deception that has since marked the tobacco industry,—a story his audience knows well—and relating it to the story of global warming, Gore is rhetorically activating the principle of identification in order to yield the same community of ideas and feelings the

audience has come to associate with the immoral practices of the tobacco industry and carrying them within the context of global warming.

My analysis of Gore's tandem narration of the tobacco industry story and that of global warming will reveal how his rhetoric has withstood the tests of narrative rationality. Of the three criteria Fisher has developed to assess narrative probability, I will focus only on two: "material coherence"—the idea that people assess the truth of a story "by comparing and contrasting stories told in other discourses"; and "characterological coherence," specifically, the coherence of Gore's character—the idea that his narration is believable because it reveals a value orientation that is consistent with the story of a democratic constitutional America, one that shows a civic leader that exhibits *phronesis*, virtue and passion for the public good (Fisher 47). For those convinced and committed to Gore's rhetorical stories about global warming, that the issue itself and global warming naysayers threaten a citizenry's values of public health, quality of life, and even the continued existence of human life constitute good reasons for belief and action, thus satisfying narrative fidelity. Above all, integral to the persuasiveness of Gore's narration are instances where the principle of identification is at play. The principle of identification refers to man's symbol making process based on the idea that humans form meaning by contextualizing realities in symbols. From a rhetor's stand point, knowing that he/she is more likely to induce belief and action if they can communicate their message using symbols audiences can identify with (identification by association), will inform their selection of particular symbols for their associative arguments and engender emotions they know will work in their favor. My analysis will show that Gore's use of identification reveals itself in his performance of stories that appeal to shared values of

public health, quality of life, justice, moral virtue, and America's civic identity, the effect of which can sufficiently render an audience emotionally and intellectually committed to protecting public good.

History of Al Gore's Publicity Campaign:

Alerting the Public to the Global Climate Crisis

Former United States Vice-President Al Gore has been engaged in environmental rhetoric long before the success of his documentary film, *An Inconvenient Truth*, which raises the alarm of global warming. He was first introduced to the urgency and reality of global warming by his Harvard undergraduate natural sciences professor, Roger Revelle, in 1968. Revelle's scientific findings revealed a dangerous rise in carbon dioxide measurements in the atmosphere taken over a period of years at Mauna Loa, the Big Island of Hawaii. Convinced by Revelle's alarming data, Gore was persuaded to do something about this problem, and in 1976, he took the "prognosis of Global warming" to Capitol Hill as Tennessee's newly elected congressman. Gore writes, "I helped organize the first congressional hearing on global warming and invited Revelle to be the lead-off witness" (39). The hearing, however, did not produce the type of response that had gripped Gore; instead, he was met by resistance and general apathy by the congressional committee. Gore was evidently ahead of his time. Moreover, there was still extensive debate that global warming is not real.

Today, global warming is no longer considered an obscure subject exclusive to the conversations of treehuggers, environmental groups or the maverick scientists; global warming has become a part of the global dialogue. This can be attributed to the sensational success of Al Gore's 2006 Academy Award winning documentary film, *An*

Inconvenient Truth, which helped publicize the threat of a global climate crisis to the human civilization. *Times* writer Eric Pooley revealed in an article that the film “grossed \$50 million globally and sold more than 1.5 million DVD copies, and its viral effect continues.” Gore might not have had a mediating audience back in the 70s in Capitol Hill, but he certainly has engaged public interest today. Again, according to Pooley, “Gore's film helped trigger one of the most dramatic opinion shifts in history as Americans suddenly realized they must change the way they live. In a recent *New York Times*/CBS News poll, an overwhelming majority of those surveyed—90% of Democrats, 80% of independents, 60% of Republicans—said they favor "immediate action" to confront the crisis.”

Although the current Bush-Cheney administration refused to ratify the Kyoto Treaty, and has yet to implement federal mandates to cut carbon dioxide emissions, the citizenry and other prominent government officials have been compelled to take action at the local level to fight global warming because they are convinced that high carbon emissions *is* linked to global warming, and that human activities are responsible for the menacing rise in CO levels. These factors combined threaten the environment and human civilization. Instead of disbelief and apathy, there has been a change in people’s thinking: people today *believe* global warming *is* a climate crisis that requires their immediate action. And Al Gore has played an influential role in this process of change.

The public Gore has created is very much a grass-roots movement. For example, although the United States as a nation did not ratify the Kyoto Treaty, Gore reveals that individual cities across the country “have ‘ratified’ the Kyoto Treaty on their own and are implementing policies to reduce global warming pollution below the levels required by

the protocol” (288). Public awareness and interest of global warming have reached such a level that the 2008 presidential candidates must state their position on the environmentalism/global warming issue as a way to build constituency.

Although climate change has been the subject of scores of peer-reviewed articles during the past ten years, Gore had the leverage to reach the public with this urgent message that any other scientist advocate would have lacked. It took someone with the stature of Gore who has been in the public eye for as long as he has been in politics, who has “access to every leader in every country, the business community, people of every political stripe,” to have the cultural and political capital to connect with the right people capable of taking the message public through the media (Pooley). That his message was in the format of a film extended his audience. High box office sales across the country within the film’s first month of showing revealed there was public interest in what Gore had to say about the implications of global warming. People were actually interested enough to purchase tickets to watch the film at the theater: “The surprise isn’t that the movie is preaching to the converted—it’s that the converted are everywhere from Greenville, S.C., where the movie was averaging a strong \$7,300 in ticket sales per screen even in its second week of release to Minneapolis, where it was averaging \$7,600 per screen after a month” (Svetkey). And because it was a film, it allowed him to tap into the power-wielding circle of Hollywood, whose influence over celebrity-obsessed America is considerable. Gore has converted scores of celebrities to his cause: for example, Jon Bon Jovi, Cameron Diaz, Leonardo Dicaprio, Denise Richards, etc. In addition, his publicity campaign included making numerous public appearances and doing interviews at radio and TV shows, some of which include Oprah, Larry King, The

Tonight Show, The Daily Show, NPR, Saturday Night Live, etc. (Svetkey). Gore has certainly exploited the media to help make public the chilling science behind global warming and its implications on man and his planet.

So popular has Gore become as a result of the intelligent, moral, eloquent, and witty character he has projected on and off screen, Gore has become both a cultural and political icon. One cannot mention the name of Al Gore without thinking of the climate crisis. There is a segment of Americans in particular who, sold on Gore's cause against global warming, have publicly pledged their support for Gore as the 2008 presidential candidate in spite of his insistence that he has no intention of running (Pooley).

Evidence of a Public: The Climate Crisis Movement

Gore knows that the key to instituting federal action on a public exigence like global warming is through public response. If he can get to the heart of the people by helping public "members feel [that the issue of global warming] intersect[s] with the condition of their lives in ways that require their attention," the people will exercise their American democratic rights and pressure for political action (Hauser 32).

Gore's campaign to build public advocacy to fight the climate crisis relies on an active segment of society that uses rhetoric to shape local public opinion on global warming. In March of 2007, Al Gore took 40,000 signatures with him to Capitol Hill as part of his presentation at the congressional hearings over global warming. Although the government remained skeptical of his recommendations, the 400,000 signatures he collected indicate he has a large following. With plans to train an army of voluntary slideshow presenters 50, 000 strong, Gore is focusing on expanding that active segment of society. He is essentially creating the type of public whose membership Gerald

Hauser characterizes as one “that requires rhetorical competence, or a capacity to participate in rhetorical experiences” (33). He is reviving the original concept of the public that John Dewey says has been eclipsed by the age of technology, mass communication, and specialization, the result of which has confounded and removed citizens from accessing arenas of public deliberation where they might be influential in policy making (Dewey 126). Gore’s campaign to invite average citizens to join and continue the conversation of global warming is a campaign to form a mediating public.

Although the film is now out of the box office, Gore continues to build his public by “actively creating and attending to” his slideshow presentation at venues around the world to broad audiences “for publicizing [his and other scientists’] opinions, for making them felt by others” (Hauser 33). Previous to the film and subsequent companion book, Gore had delivered his slideshow presentation using a projector, the first of which was created in 1989. Sometimes, he would log as much as over 100 presentations a year (Svetkey). Today, because of the positive public reception to his film, in addition to personally presenting his message, he has screened, chosen, trained and dispatched the first 1,200 climate crisis “missionaries” who deliver his slideshow at different venues all across America (Pooley). Speakers come from all walks of life and different socio-economic backgrounds, but all enlisted to become voluntary spokesmen because they believe in the reality and urgency of the climate crisis.

Each presenter of the Climate Project is essentially a member of Gore’s public, who use rhetoric to change the way citizens live by changing the way they think about global warming. The rhetorical effect of Gore’s film was so powerful to the 1,200

voluntary climate crisis presenters/converts, that fellow presenter Gary Dunham says this: “All the trainees will tell you the same thing. That movie changed our lives” (Pooley).

And on July 7, 2007, in order to “trigger a global movement to solve the climate crisis,” Al Gore and producer Kevin Wall organized *Live Earth* by using the celebrity power of over 100 music artists from around the world to draw masses of people to live concerts hosted on seven continents in cities such as New York, London, Johannesburg, Rio De Janeiro, Shanghai, Tokyo, Sydney, Hamburg and Istanbul. Over a billion tickets were sold worldwide. The purpose of the 24-hour concert series was to raise global awareness of the climate crisis, and Gore and Wall capitalized on all forms of the media platforms to reach a worldwide audience through TV, radio, Internet and wireless channels.

Gerard Hauser’s theory of the rhetorical formation and action of a public is evident in Gore’s public; for both theorists concede that a public emerges because “indirect, extensive, enduring and serious consequences of conjoint and interacting behavior” demand a resolution (Dewey 126); Hauser adds to this by asserting that publics will negotiate a resolution through discourse (*Vernacular* 32). Because bipartisanship has paralyzed the government from making the necessary policy changes required to address global warming, Gore has turned to the democratic process of public deliberation by engaging the general citizenry in discourse. The means by which the “active segment of society” will address one another are, according to Hauser, “often less formal than institutional discourse, and their sites are not limited to institutional forums” (36). For example, in addition to attending the live concerts as supporters of stop the climate crisis cause, members of Gore’s public can also actively participate in the *Live Earth*

movement by hosting a *Live Earth* house party. This allows active citizens who could not physically attend the concerts to take part in public action by hosting an event that would allow climate crisis advocates and their neighbors to experience Gore's rhetoric in their own homes. Those who choose to host a Live Earth party have access to the Climate Project tool kits and visual aids that will allow them to engage intelligibly in conversation on global warming with their neighbors.

Additionally, Gore takes advantage of the internet to provide a forum for public deliberation on the issue of global warming; visitors to the site have a place to voice their stance or suggestions on ways to solve the climate crisis and contribute to shaping public opinion that way.

That conversations about whether or not the science of global warming should warrant belief and action are taking place in schools, homes, businesses, and government already indicate that Gore's public exists because "collective participation in rhetorical processes constitute individuals as a public" (Hauser 34). Even if there is divided opinion on whether global warming is as catastrophic as Gore insists or on the steps we take to help solve the climate crisis, that individuals articulate their judgments on the issue already indicate there is a climate crisis public (Hauser 32). This is precisely what Hauser talks about: "Any given public exists in its publicness, which is to say, in its rhetorical character," and the rhetorical character that gives rise to a public is fashioned by an informed and socially active citizenry engaged in vernacular rhetoric (33).

Clearly, evidence exists to suggest that Gore has successfully created a public that is keen on advocating change to curb carbon dioxide emissions in order to halt global warming. Inasmuch as change in public thinking concerning the reality, cause and threat

of global warming is a laudable feat, ultimately, the end of Gore and his public's rhetoric is to bring about *behavioral* changes. Although members of Gore's movement continue to demand federal mandates to control and reduce industry's carbon dioxide emissions, there are committed individuals making personal lifestyle changes every day to lower greenhouse gases in the following ways: buying locally in order to avoid burning fossil fuels that emit carbon dioxide from trucks carrying imported goods; buying hybrid cars to be less reliant on oil and gas; saving energy by switching to LED lightbulbs and finding ways around the house to increase energy-efficiency; recycling; urging for public action of this matter. Going green and green consumerism are ways that average citizens are helping to fight global warming today, one person at a time.

Narrative Analysis: Tobacco and Global Warming are Two Similar Moral Issues

Interspersed throughout Gore's text are yellow pages, imprinted on which are the personal life-stories that narrate his journey to his current environmental activism. "My sister" is one such chapter. Besides the obvious reason that Nancy Gore's story is a window to Gore's heart, the tobacco-related causes of Nancy's death allow Gore to foreground the issue of global warming within the moral context of the tobacco industry's deceptive marketing; additionally, from the tobacco narrative, he is able to transition into a scathing political critique of corporate interests that has infiltrated into what ought to be an impartial government, whose impact has stymied the change required to fight global warming. Because of the precedent the tobacco controversy has set, by the time Gore is through, its story serves as a cautionary tale of public inaction against corporate corruption and showing how public values of justice and quality of life are being compromised by industry that puts the American consumer public in jeopardy; by

telling narratives that give the audience the right facts concerning global warming, Gore is able to vivify a moral situation of corporate and government corruption so dire that citizens feel the urgent need for civic change through practices of *phronesis* and civic virtue.

Gore, the Persuasion of Character Through Narration:

Narrative Probability Satisfied

With all the many differing voices on the subject of global warming, why should citizens believe Al Gore? By sharing intimate stories from his life that reveal his personal journey, Gore offers his audience reasons why he can be trusted. A former public servant that is now a private citizen who was prescient enough to understand that global warming would become a serious issue since the 60s, and who has educated himself on the science by studying alongside global warming scientists, Gore has laudable credentials to prove that his knowledge of global warming is sound. As a public figure who has served for years in Washington, admittedly Gore's self-revelations, especially his stories about his upbringing, his son's car accident, and even his chapters devoted to his deceased father and sister humanize him and enhance his appeal. I would add, however, that the personal stories that explain his journey to his current environmental activism offer insights into his character, which allow readers to assess whether he, as a narrator, satisfies characterological coherence; in other words, whether or not Al Gore the narrator, is worthy of their belief.

I believe Al Gore's rhetorical success results in large part because of the successful persuasion of his character as one who is trustworthy but who also possess the desired traits of a civic leader. To those who believe Gore and his cause, they consider

him as *phronetic* (one who possess the classical virtue of *phronesis*), sincere, intelligent, moral, passionate about the environment and passionate about serving for the public good. They know that long before his film became a box office hit, Gore had voluntarily been delivering the same slideshow presentation to audiences for his sheer passion on the subject. They consider Gore's exposè of both government and corporate dishonesty as driven by his sense of morality, virtue, and justice. They see in Gore a man who values the ideals of a democratic America, who will passionately expose and denounce those who work to prevent an informed citizenry. They see in Gore a man who posses *phronesis* by using his oratorical skills to convincingly argue that government and corporate partnership to secure an America dependent on oil is not the best course of action. Gore has found his calling by using his position of trust to intervene in the public sphere to dispel public illusions concerning global warming. And illusions, he claims, have been deliberately placed for public consumption for the same reason that the tobacco industry worked to discredit the science that showed that tobacco was linked to cancer: to protect corporate interests at all cost. Thus, Gore's role easily wins the good will of his readers, and satisfies the characterological coherence because they are persuaded that he as a narrator has their best interests at heart.

Material Coherence through Double Storytelling

Al Gore started off this chapter eulogizing his deceased sister: "How do I describe my sister? She was luminous. Charismatic. Gutsy. Astute. Funny. Incredibly smart. And kind" (256). Although Gore inarguably misses and venerates his sister with the fervor that he claims, the patterns he have come to recognize between the circumstances surrounding tobacco in the 60s and global warming in the present conveniently allow him

to use Nancy's story for a deliberate rhetorical purpose: talking about Nancy allows him to locate global warming within a context that his audience is familiar with. And the similarities he has found between the two stories work in Gore's favor because they are negative. In other words, his double storytelling deliberately sets up the familiar story of the tobacco industry as the single point of reference from which his readers will compare and contrast the new story of global warming; by emphasizing the similarities of both narratives, Gore can expect his readers to conclude that his story of global warming meets material coherence and thus satisfies narrative probability and warrants their belief. By demonstrating that both issues share the same corporate discourse and the same scientific arguments, Gore is able to facilitate public perception of an identifiable, workable, moral issue in place of the paralyzing impression that global warming is esoteric, global and far-removed. Gore is eager to show his audience that this type of deliberate corporate misinformation has happened before, and as a result, is foreshadowing similar serious ramifications with regards to global warming:

During the 1960s, even after the Surgeon General's report made it abundantly clear that smoking can cause lung cancer, the tobacco companies were working overtime to encourage Americans not to believe the science—to create doubts about whether there was any real cause for cancer. And a lot of people who might otherwise have fully absorbed the terrible truth about smoking and health were tempted to take it less seriously than they should have. After all, if there were still such serious doubts, then maybe the jury isn't out. Maybe the science wasn't definitive. So for almost 40 years after the landmark Surgeon General's report

linking smoking to lung cancer, emphysema, and other diseases in the United States, more Americans continued to die from smoking-related causes than were killed during World War II . . . The clever and deceitful approach the tobacco companies used to confuse people about what the science really demonstrated added up to a model for the campaign that many oil and coal companies are using today to confuse people about what the science of global warming is really telling us. They exaggerate minor uncertainties in order to pretend that the big conclusions are not a matter of consensus. (256)

Gore clearly wants his audience to blame the tobacco companies for causing the deaths of impressionable young men and women smokers (like Nancy who started smoking at 13) who believed (or found it convenient to believe) that the jury still wasn't out in spite of the published Surgeon General's report because the tobacco companies were saying otherwise. His choice of words reflect his blame, making culpable only the tobacco industry for creating the kind of public confusion that has paralyzed the general public for decades from taking action against their marketing that caused countless tobacco-causing deaths. Such word choice as "clever and deceitful," "confuse," "exaggerate," "pretend" appeal to the theme of victimization by emphasizing that cigarette companies intentionally distorted the facts so that they could continue to profit from public ignorance. He argues that people continued to smoke to their deaths because they were being lied to; for, conversely, he is essentially saying that had it not been for the "tobacco companies [that] were working overtime to encourage Americans not to believe the science—to create doubts about whether there was any real cause for

concern,” there would have been less Americans dying from smoking-related causes (256). Although it is clear that Gore has left out the smokers’ personal accountability for choosing to smoke to their deaths, his followers are willing to overlook this oversimplified argument because Gore has already won their affection. They have determined through his personal narratives that he “has a trustworthy and reliable character, that his. . . heart is in the right place” (Fisher 147). Fisher explains further that once that happens, “one is willing to overlook or forgive many things: factual errors if not too dramatic, lapses in reasoning, and occasional actional discrepancies” (148). Despite this one factual exclusion that might shake the narrative’s material coherence, readers will still conclude that the story holds up against the tests of narrative probability because of the coherence of Gore’s character as sincere, and discount this lapse in reasoning as a sign of overzealousness.

A few pages later, readers find an old smoking advertisement that serves as vivid example of false marketing, one that touts images of various doctors smoking their cigarettes as if to suggest that cigarettes are medically sound if doctors are even smoking them. Gore uses the story of tobacco to remind his readers what they, as a more savvy modern audience, already know: when a corporation’s product marketability and livelihood are threatened by compelling science, one must be wary of its corporate discourse. His caveat is that we must remember that corporations ultimately are protecting their profits and we must exercise our *phronesis* when trying to distinguish between competing rhetoric. For as it has been shown by the tobacco industry, when corporate interests are at stake, corporate power will speak, ultimately to create confusion

to combat the sobering voices of clinical science so that the less discriminating audience is left uncertain of scientific truths.

The moral lessons from the story of the tobacco industry allow Gore to mentally groom his audience to receive his argument that corporate interest is what is keeping the resolution of global warming at bay. With Gore's caveats from the tobacco industry narrative fresh in his readers' minds, it is easy for them to identify with and to arrive at the same conclusion regarding global warming because he demonstrates that both narratives share the same plot: scientific discourse threatens corporate interest, corporate discourse seeks to undermine the science, and private citizens are made victims of corporate power. He writes:

The misconception that there is serious disagreement among scientists about global warming is actually an illusion that has been deliberately fostered by a relatively small but extremely well-funded cadre of special interests, including Exxon Mobil and a few other oil, coal and utilities companies. These companies want to prevent any new policies that would interfere with their current business plans that rely on the massive unrestrained dumping of global warming pollution into the Earth's atmosphere every hour of every day.

One of the internal memos prepared by this group to guide the employees they hired to run their disinformation campaign was discovered by Pulitzer Prize-winning reporter Ross Gelbspan. Here was the group's stated objective: to reposition global warming as theory, rather than fact.

This technique has been used before. The tobacco industry, 40 years ago, reacted to the historic Surgeon General's report linking cigarettes smoking to lung cancer and other lung diseases by organizing a similar disinformation campaign. One of their memos, prepared in the 1960s, was recently uncovered during one of the lawsuits against the tobacco companies on behalf of the millions of people who have been killed by their product. It is interesting to read it 40 years later in the context of the ongoing global warming disinformation campaign.

“Doubt is our product, since it is the best means of competing with the ‘body of fact’ that exists in the minds of the general public. It is also the means of establishing a controversy,” Brown and Williamson Tobacco Company memo, 1960s.

One prominent source of disinformation on global warming has been the Bush-Cheney White House.

They have attempted to silence scientists working for the government who, like James Hansen at NASA, have tried to warn about the extreme danger we are facing. They have appointed “skeptics” recommended by oil companies to key positions, from which they can prevent action against global warming. As our principal negotiators in international forums, these skeptics can prevent agreement on a worldwide response to global warming. (263-4)

One of the biggest constraints to fighting global warming is public uncertainty on the reality of the issue and whether it is human caused. Gore's inclusion of Ross

Gelsban's important discovery of the memo that offered unequivocal evidence of a deliberate public misinformation campaign shows that the oil and coal companies have indeed accepted global warming as a fact: "Here was the group's stated objective: to reposition global warming as theory, rather than fact." If citizens think the issue may be a hoax, or think that there is no scientific consensus on the facts of global warming, then the people will not pressure for change of the status quo. And if they can muddle the facts so that the people are uncertain that global warming is actually caused by human practices, then they are more likely to think that there is nothing humans or industries can do to change the prevailing situation. In light of this corporate logic that runs deep in his narratives, Gore is teaching his readers to think in a new paradigm: instead of uncritical acceptance of corporate and government discourse that resist global warming, there must be critical scrutiny of their motives.

The Appeal to Classical Civic Virtue and American Values:

The Politicization of Global Warming

By revealing specific instances of the Bush-Cheney administration's team-ups with special interests, Gore is effectively appealing to his readers' values of the ideals of democracy and civic life. His exposé of the narratives of dishonesty and immorality within the Bush Cheney administration is what Pezullo describes as "an invitation to identify with . . . [his argument]" . . . and to "witness what is going on in a way that invites him or her to feel implicated in the fate of those . . . arguments" (145). How does he implicate them? Gore helps readers realize the urgent need for civic change by implicating them with the knowledge that their "electable" officials are showing lack of *phronesis* and public morality in first pandering to the interests of financially backed

special interest groups, and second, by creating policies that maintain corporate environmental irresponsibility, or which Gore rhetorically describes as the massive unrestrained dumping of global warming pollution into the Earth's atmosphere every hour of every day" (263). His argument that citizens need to exercise their civic virtue in order to change the political machinery that is deliberately stalling policies aiming to resolve global warming is persuasive because it expresses civic values such as public health, morality, justice, social responsibility—values that constitute good reasons for belief and action because they “make a pragmatic difference in one's life and in one's community” (Fisher 111). His story of global warming repeatedly answers the question of transcendent issue in the affirmative: “are the values the message offers those that, in the estimation of the critic, constitute the ideal basis for human conduct,” thus satisfying narrative fidelity (Fisher 109).

Surely, the Bush-Cheney administration's attempt “to silence scientists working for the government who . . . have tried to warn the extreme danger we are facing” and hired “skeptics [who] can prevent agreement on a worldwide response to global warming” reflects a dysfunctional government riddled with internal conflict from the absence of a common purpose. Gore's story of Phillip Cooney serves as a concrete example of our democratic government whose purpose to serve for the public good has been supplanted by special interests:

At the beginning of 2001, President Bush hired a lawyer/lobbyist named Phillip Cooney to be in charge of environmental policy in the White House. For the previous six years, Cooney had worked at the American Petroleum Institute and was the person principally in charge of the oil and

coal companies' campaign to confuse the American people about this issue.

Even though Cooney has no scientific training whatsoever, he was empowered by the president to edit and censor the official assessments of global warming from the EPA and other parts of the federal government. In 2005, a White House memo authorized by Cooney . . . was leaked to the New York Times by a hidden whistleblower inside the administration. Cooney had diligently edited out any mention of the dangers global warming poses to the American people. The newspaper's disclosure was embarrassing to the White House, and Cooney, in what has become a rare occurrence in the last few years, resigned. The next day, he went to work for Exxon Mobil. (264)

Gore emphatically points out the ironies of Bush's selection of Phillip Cooney to an environmental position: Cooney seemed like an unlikely candidate with no relevant credentials (he had "no scientific training"), and had important ties to the Oil and Coal Industry, an industry often at odds with environmental groups. He is also careful to allow his readers to recognize the absurdity and the audacity of Cooney, a powerful oil executive with no scientific credentials, who would be empowered to rewrite EPA's official assessments of global warming and to deem them representative of the government. Gore's purpose is to illuminate Cooney's blatant disregard for public honesty, and for government negligence. Cooney has shown that he as a government official is not acting in the best interests of its people, by "diligently edit[ing] out any mention of the dangers global warming poses to the American people." This story serves as another telling example of an impaired government that has misappropriated its power by electing to place special interests ahead of the public good.

More significantly, however, Cooney is a story that speaks of the American democracy run amok. The classical conception of civic virtue and the lofty ideals of democracy rested on the hinges of an informed and politically engaged citizens. Gore's examples of the government carrying out misinformation campaigns to prevent an informed citizenry show how undemocratic the American political system has become under the Bush Cheney administration.

Gore's examples of the intermixing of government and corporate interests revealed in brazen acts of public dishonesty present a persuasive case of broken politics, a narrative that resonates strongly with an American people who conceive of their shared identity upon the nation's democratic heritage. I would argue that the politicization of global warming has fueled public interest in the issue because advocates, like Gore, benefit from the emotional value of generative symbols that people use to contextualize themes such as public injustice and government irresponsibility. Specifically, when people hear narratives of public injustice and government irresponsibility, they will assess these stories according to public knowledge of what constitutes just civic behavior and a democratic government. Powerful symbols like democracy and America encompass a host of associated values, namely justice, virtue, an informed citizenry, public service, and because these are what characterize the unique American identity, Gore is reminding his audience of the significance of these same values by showing how they are being flouted at the government level and are in danger of being lost. By telling stories contextualized in language imbued with symbols of democracy and the American identity, Al Gore is invoking and relying on the people's passion, their keen sense of civic responsibility, and their loyalty to defend American values and strategically

transferring these political emotions to his cause of fighting the political machinery that is preventing the nation from pursuing the *phronetic* course of action in fighting global warming.

Conclusion: The Appeal to the American Identity
as the Means to Achieve Political Ends

Al Gore connects two seemingly different issues together—tobacco and global warming—by demonstrating that both stories share the same villain: in both cases, corporations undermine compelling science at the expense of the health and lives of Americans in an effort to protect their economic interests. However, inasmuch as it was immoral of the tobacco industry to blatantly undermine science to preserve their profit margin, what seems more morally disturbing is that the evidence presented suggest that the government, in its position of trust, has heeded corporate interest, thereby relinquishing its duty to first serve public interest; additionally, evidence suggests that the government has deliberately misinformed the general citizenry on global warming to prevent the democratic process of change needed to address an environmental issue with unwelcomed changes in civic and business practices.

Perhaps the greatest appeal of global warming is its relevance to individuals everywhere. In Gore's words, "And that is what is at stake. Our ability to live on planet Earth—to have a future as a civilization. I believe this is a moral issue" (298). The ability to live in a habitable earth and to leave an earth habitable for our posterity are issues Gore considers moral, because we have the moral obligation to protect such fundamental values as man's quality of life, his ability to pursue happiness, and at worst, his ability to survive.

The story of the tobacco industry also functions as a cautionary tale of public inaction, of the cost we would pay if we are “taking our time—too much time—in connecting the dots “when accepted habits and behaviors are first found to be harmful” (259). Gore is in effect foreshadowing a conclusion of epic proportion—of the grave effects of a nation that allows corporate interest to run its natural resources to the demise of a civilization, or lest the fate of all become like that of Nancy Gore Hunger who smoked to her premature death because she did not connect the dots when the alarm bell was rung. Gore’s clarion call to act now is clear.

However, because the implications of global warming are daunting, and the players involved are institutions of power and money, Gore’s rhetoric must be able to inspire his readership to take action lest it is paralyzed by helplessness. His readership might well feel hopeless: what could one person do in the face of such a massive, politicized issue? And after his grating rhetoric that highlights the immoral team-up between public policies and oil and coal companies, the audience can understandably be left cynical over what may seem like all too familiar repeat of partisan rhetoric. Given the sobering facts, Gore realizes that public paralysis that results from despair could be another viable constraint to action against global warming.

Besides his primary role as the one who raises the alarm on global warming, I would assert that Al Gore also functions as a civic speaker who uses epideictic rhetoric to galvanize citizens to his cause by bringing to their remembrance symbols steeped in American tradition. By celebrating the stories of American triumphs, he is appealing to the audience’s identification with the celebrated cultural events that exemplify values of justice, morality, and persistence for two purposes: 1) to attach the same noble purposes

to his cause of global warming, and 2) to present his readers with models for virtuous civic behavior worthy of emulation. Gore infuses his movement with significance by declaring the climate crisis the mission of the 21st century, equivalent in import to the nobility manifested in momentous events that have come to characterize the American identity in order to generate the kind of energy that will sustain a public, that will inspire their political will.

Towards the end of the book, he leads his readers through a rhetorical journey of American history that appeal to public pathos with an awe-inspiring introduction: “Are we, as Americans, capable of doing great things, even though they may be difficult?” (290) In order to urge his readers to use politics to fight politics, to give place to hope where there may be cynicism, he brings to remembrance value-laden stories that speak of seemingly insurmountable moral challenges that were overcome by Americans. Additionally, in order to make sustainable his public, Gore must engage his audience’s interest. And he does so by rhetorically creating the excitement that attends those who participate in an important movement like the one he is trying to form by making public participation an appealing *experience*. By tapping into the emotional and value encoded stories of America’s heritage, his audience ends up seeing global warming as a movement comparable to the import and nobility contained in such stories as the founding of America because they are all motivated by common values.

And what follows are six important historical milestones that appeal to the American experience with their respective images: the American revolution that resulted in the founding of our nation based on “liberty and individual dignity”; the victory against fascism; the “moral decision that slavery was wrong”; women’s suffrage;

vaccinations that improved the quality of life; the civil rights movement where “we took the moral challenge of desegregation”; and finally, how “we landed on the moon—one of the most inspiring examples of what we can do when we put our minds to it” (290-3).

These narratives so crucial to the American identity reiterate moral greatness, and triumph. As he shuttles his audience along a succession of these brief but powerful tributes praising historical public achievements, the audience experiences the collective pride as Americans, and feelings of majesty and awe to the extent that they feel a part of the intrinsic excellence they are re-witnessing in these celebrated times within American history.

By evoking these stories that illustrate Americanism at its best, he is reminding his readers of stories that speak of the indomitable American spirit for its exemplified commitment to such values as liberty, individual dignity, ingenuity, peace, moral integrity, quality of life, justice, and greatness, and their accompanying emotions of pride and awe in order to incite his audience to rise up to “change the policies and the behaviors” that put at peril the planet and humankind (296). These narratives again appeal to the American experience, and reinforce the significance of the same values Al Gore has rhetorically attached to his global warming cause. Just as the American people have accomplished great things together, by talking about global warming within the context of these narratives, Gore is rhetorically forging the American spirit by drawing on the “community of feelings and ideas” that has made America great in the past, and giving his readers concrete examples of emulating the same: to maintain the American identity, the people need to use the democratic system to fight civic problems. Gore is posing the rhetorical question: shouldn't the 21st century follow suit and express the same

cultural values upon which this nation is founded in the way they deal with global warming? He is implicitly arguing that anything less would reveal a generation whose values are inconsistent with and disconnected from the spirit of America.

And if there is any doubt exactly how the people might make a difference, Al Gore puts any concerns to rest. Part of why Al Gore's global warming story is so persuasive owes itself to the fact that it teaches readers pragmatic steps they can take as private citizens to act as individual agents for change. However, of particular relevance here is Gore's emphasis on the nobility of civic virtues—that it is the voting rights of the people that can remove a government ridden with special interests, and that the people can elect new leaders who would restore public service as the common purpose who would thus resolve the climate crisis. Gore writes:

As citizens of a democracy, we can support candidates who show a record of environmental responsibility, and we can exercise our right to vote for leaders committed to sustainability. We can voice our disapproval when our elected leaders pursue policies detrimental the environment, and we can lobby in support of programs and actions that advance global cooperation on this issue. As consumers, we can use our purchasing and investing power to send messages of support to corporations and outlets that show integrity and leadership—and messages of intolerance to those that demonstrate negligence and denial (319).

Certainly, his discourse here is to remind the American people of the beauty of being able to exercise their civic responsibilities. Eager to inspire fellow citizens to trust in the democratic system as the means to solving the climate crisis, Gore is invoking classical

principles of citizenship, and the emotional appeal of participating in a political experience where democracy reveals itself in the voice and will of a people rhetorically engaged in the public realm. By adopting the stories of Americanism in selling his cause, Gore has inspired the hearts of Americans to not only be partakers of democracy only, but contributors to democracy by being political citizens as well. Environmental rhetoric, in the case of Al Gore's *An Inconvenient Truth*, has thus shown to be responsible for creating a rhetorical democracy built upon publics of politically active and *phronetic* citizens involved in solving public problems.

CONCLUSION

THE GREEN NARRATIVE

Unless you are a media hermit, it is impossible not to notice how the environment has become a news-making category in its own right. “Environment or Health and Environment” can now be found alongside the tabs of “World News”; “US news”; “Technology”; “Business,” etc. Recent civic emphasis on the green narrative has made environmental issues such as global warming, pesticide pollution, energy conservation, alternative energy, the preservation of natural habitat a part of the public dialogue. As an environmentally conscious citizen myself, I started this theoretical journey to explain how environmental discourse have created such excitement within the public sphere, and why some environmental arguments are more successful than others.

Because I have tried to explain how rhetoric influences civic attitudes about the environment, it would be wrong of me to end without examining why else environmentalism is so popular these days. In many ways, I believe that rhetoric and context converged as political circumstances and cultural climate both facilitated and fueled public sentiments and reception over environmental issues. In many households, the felt effects of the environment were palpable. Such factors as the rise in foreign oil prices spurred by our dependence on fossil fuels, the increase in strength and frequency of hurricanes and natural disasters, combined with the economic strain imposed by the credit crunch and the financial market crisis of this year (2008) have certainly created the social conditions that support the arguments of advocates against global warming. Because of the direct financial impact these conditions have created on individual citizens, many have found that reducing energy consumption not only makes environmental sense,

but that it makes economic sense because such lifestyle changes as driving a smaller car with a higher gas mileage, taking public transit instead of driving, installing solar panels and other energy-efficient products, or reusing items instead of acquiring new not only reduce greenhouse gases but they reduce quantifiable costs in the long run.

By showing how the solutions presented for becoming more environmentally responsible can quantifiably improve the conditions of people's lives, environmental advocates like Carson and Gore are essentially appealing to the public good. Gore explains quite effectively the appeal of the lifestyle changes he urges: "As we incorporate these suggestions into our lives, we may well find that not only are we contributing to a global solution, we are also making our lives better. In some cases, the returns are quantifiable: Using less electricity and fuel, for example, saves money. Furthermore walking and biking improve our health; diets of locally grown produce bring enhanced taste and nutrition; breathing cleaner air is energizing and healing; and creating a world of restored natural balance ensures a future for our children and grandchildren" (306). When the environmental arguments focus on the benefits from an improved quality of life so that it becomes a win-win situation for the people, the audience is more inclined to be persuaded: they believe that it makes prudent sense to adhere to the means needed to solve the climate crisis and that it simply is the *phronetic* thing to do.

Alas, this project is not a study of environmentalism but of how rhetoric explains the popularity of environmentalism. I believe that rhetoric's greatest contribution to the subject of environmentalism is that it has made the green narrative culturally appealing. Environmental rhetors have convinced many that environmentalism is first and foremost ethical. And for this reason, many are committed to making their individual civic

responsibility to the environment a moral duty. However, we know that there remain many of us who still do not do what we know is morally right. I believe that much of the hysteria surrounding the current environmental movement is due to environmentalist rhetors like Gore who have used rhetoric to infuse environmentalism with excitement and cultural significance, who have contributed to the re-branding of individual civic responsibility and political activism as emblems of a progressive and democratic people. And how did they do this? Although they use many successful appeals, I believe that ultimately, the successful environmentalist rhetors are those whose conveyed ethos influences the audience to identify with and develop their own civic judgment conducive to environmental change. My project should have demonstrated that influential environmental rhetoric uses a modernized version of the epideictic, where in the speaker's process of narrating instances of praise and blame to educate public morality, the speaker's own character and *phronesis* are invoked as a type for civic emulation.

Modern Environmental Rhetoric as the Education of Civic Character

Environmental Rhetoric is ultimately civic education—or the education of civic character. I say this because environmental rhetoric is concerned with building a more moral public; its discourses often focus on the virtues that constitute good citizens. It believes that a moral public will be environmentally responsible because it is the virtuous thing to do. Rachel Carson and Al Gore are no exception; they believe that a civic change in the collective character of citizens will solve environmental crises. Modern environmental rhetoric, in short, looks to principles of classical rhetoric to help solve its problems. This is evident in the rhetors' clarion call to the citizens to practice civic virtue, which during the Greco-Roman period was understood as the fulfilling of one's

citizenship duties to public life and public matters. Moreover, modern environmental rhetoric's emphasis on urging citizens to participate rhetorically in publicizing and urging the resolution of the environmental issues in the public realm reveals the influence of classical rhetoric in two ways: 1) it defines rhetoric classically as civic discourse; and 2) it seeks to inculcate *phronesis* among the general citizenry. *Phronesis* is practical wisdom, and those in possession of this classical virtue would be "able to deliberate well about what is good and expedient for himself, not in some particular respect, e.g., about what sort of things conduce to health and strength, but about what sort of things conduce to the good life in general" (qtd. in Self 133). Aristotle believed that the *phronimos* (or the ideal rhetor) was few and far between. Thus for Carson and Gore to see in each reader a potential to possess *phronesis* is clearly a modern adaptation of an ancient principle. This is most apparent in Al Gore's case who helped select and train an army of voluntary "citizen-*phronimos*" if you will, of global warming, as well as his invitation to his common readers to use "vernacular discourse," what he refers to as rhetorical discourse within informal settings, to change minds on the issue. In short, members of environmental publics are encouraged to practice *phronesis*, first in their ability to recognize and understand that the rhetorical message of environmental movements are evidence of practical wisdom, and second by engaging in rhetoric to pursue a course of action that would serve the well-being of man in general (*eudaimonia*).

The Epideictic Serves to Create Unity

My analyses of two major works, *A Silent Spring* and *An Inconvenient Truth* have revealed that public environmental rhetoric relies heavily on the epideictic for two reasons: 1) to remind and reinforce audiences of humanity's shared values to create unity,

and 2) to inspire readers to take civic action based on those values. Based on these two functions alone, epideictic rhetoric is present and pertinent in any social movement that uses rhetoric to publicize the issues and to extend its body of supporters as a means to invoke social change. Intended to reinforce shared traditions and ideas that characterize and bind a community, epideictic rhetoric speaks to the audience's shared values in the condemnation of the vices blamed or affirmation of the virtues praised with the implicit call to civic action. It is within this context that a rhetor is able to use rhetoric to foster a communion of minds required to form a public of environmentally active citizens.

Although both Carson and Gore use praise and blame, it is apparent that blame is more predominant in Carson's rhetoric and praise in Gore's. Carson's discourse reveals that she was chiefly concerned with educating the public on the issue of pesticide contamination, and used the epideictic act of blame to depict the agents of chemical pollution while implicitly calling her readers to join her in condemning the same. Her rhetoric amplified the vices of government imprudence, corporate irresponsibility, and ecological ignorance to help the audience recognize that the revealed actions of the government agricultural agencies did not share the citizenry's value of pursuing the public good.

In Al Gore's case, aside from exposing the dishonesty of the Bush administration and the oil and coal companies in their handling of the issue of global warming, Gore's rhetoric is notably more positive. Besides merely sounding the alarm on global warming, Gore also functions as a motivator intent on instilling hope and desire in his audience to do something about climate change. He used the epideictic act of praise to commemorate the virtues that gave rise to celebratory events that attest of American triumph, and to

establish model citizens whose evidence of civic virtue, *phronesis*, and morality inspire emulation as readers are urged to improve the condition of the American democracy as a way to fight against the government corruption that is stalling the resolution of global warming.

Additionally, the epideictic is an effective tool for its inherent narrative properties. The ability to connect with people is resident within the narrative form. Both Carson and Gore are storytellers. They tell stories to instruct and to inspire. And although much of the content in epideictic is in the form of praise and blame of persons and events, the narrative form through which the content is conveyed has within it the features that would allow rhetors to connect with the mass audience. First, there is the universality of the narrative form. Humans tell stories to communicate, and it is an inherent human capacity to communicate and to understand stories regardless of education or stature. Secondly, the principle of identification activated through narration appeals to the readers' ability to simultaneously experience the associated facts and feelings that would enable them to better identify with the issues presented. Thus the use of identification reveals itself in the performance of stories, or the use of symbols to stir hearts. By telling value-laden stories that appeal to shared values of public health, quality of life, justice, moral virtue, and America's civic identity, readers become emotionally engaged because of the symbols such values have come to personally represent. Thus identification that operates within narration facilitates an audience's experience of the "intensity of adherence that would help form and sustain a public of committed citizens in their movement for cleaner environment.

The Unveiling of a Speaker's Character:

The Persuasion of Ethos in Public Discourse

Aristotle wrote in *The Rhetoric* that it would serve a speaker well to “appear virtuous and practically wise” by making cogent arguments and judgments of *phronesis* and virtues in others because an audience infers from such instances that the speaker must then possess the same traits (119). Among the many reasons that could explain the persuasiveness of Carson and Gore, I side with Aristotle and Garver’s assertions that character is the most persuasive appeal. Audiences infer from the speaker’s ability to rightly judge what vices to condemn and what virtues to praise, that the speaker must possess the *phronesis* and virtues that inform such value judgments. I believe Carson and Gore have successfully portrayed themselves as leaders with *phronesis* and virtue simply because their rhetoric, which is predominantly epideictic in content, affords them occasion to discourse at length about vices of government self-subservience, corporate deceit, and praising virtues where due, of people and events that exhibit public morality, ideals of American constitutional democracy, civic responsibility, etc, which in turn have the effect of indirectly conveying to the audience the substance of their moral character, their belief system, and their value orientation.

This project has taken the concept of character to help account for persuasion. It borrowed from Walter Fisher’s narrative paradigm the idea of characterological coherence, whether a speaker satisfies characterological coherence and is worthy of belief and trust. I have also looked back to Aristotle to help enrich the influence of character on persuasion. The implications of these quotations on the ethical appeal have provided a fruitful study for Eugene Garver, whose book “*The Professionalization of Virtue*” asserts

that ultimately, “Argument will persuade to the extent that it makes us believe and trust the speaker” (146). Garver has further summarized from Aristotle’s *The Rhetoric* that “independent of demonstration, there are three qualities in the speaker that cause belief: *phronesis*, virtue (arête) and goodwill (*eunoia*) . . . the ability to persuade an audience that one possesses [both *phronesis* and character], he says, from being able to make arguments about *phronesis* and arête in others (e.g., II.1.1378a16, I.9.1366a27), but the speaker establishes *eunoia* by causing emotions in the audience” (110). Because the fact is, if an audience cannot trust the speaker, they will not believe his argument, regardless if the reasoning is intelligent and cogent. Garver notes that “It is by seeing an essential place for trust that Aristotle can simultaneously affirm both his theses, that the enthymeme is the body of proof and that character is the most persuasive of appeals” (177). In other words, he argues that “reasoning persuades because it is evidence of *phronesis* and character (151). The ethical appeal is particularly important in modern environmental rhetoric when the objective of the rhetors is to urge readers to change *their* characters by adopting a more civic character. The rhetors must first be able to establish their characters as civically virtuous in order to have the authority and credibility to persuade others to do the same.

I believe readers trust that both Carson and Gore are honorable people who out of sincere concern for the public good have felt compelled to rhetorically intervene in their respective environmental crises. And if readers are convinced that the speakers are engaged in their rhetoric out of sheer passion for the work, then it makes it even less likely to find suspect their character, which, according to Garver’s argument of the interdependence between ethos and logos, would neither diminish the argument’s

believability. Moreover, the goodwill that Aristotle talks about exists among the readers-made-advocates for Carson and Gore because of the appropriate civic emotions that the speakers have inspired through the vehicle of narratives, stories embedded with symbols associated with American ideals of justice, of responsible citizenship, of civic virtue and their belief that the speaker is working on behalf of the common good.

Today, being Green has become so mainstream that people *want* to be seen for their eco-friendliness. It has become almost vogueish to be green. This is exactly what environmentalists want. I believe Al Gore's global warming campaign has contributed to enhancing the cultural appeal of being green; they have successfully helped market the "green narrative" as culturally appealing so that green has come to represent civic responsibility, public morality, social and political consciousness, change, progressivism, etc. An *Entertainment Weekly* article remarked on Gore's image that "while promoting the movie this summer, Gore has been connecting with crowds more effortlessly and comfortably—even charismatically—than he ever did as a politician." And this I believe is the key to persuasion for any speaker seeking to build his constituency: it is the speaker's ability to draw people to his character, to his ability to connect with the people, or inversely, the ability of the people to identify with the speaker. I have come to the conclusion the speaker's ethos is inarguably the most persuasive, particularly in movements that require a public's change in attitude and behavior simply because the speakers must convey themselves as living examples of the cause they are urging. As a rhetor trying to sell his cause of global warming, Al Gore has become the brand: Gore is what it means to be green. And I believe many have identified with his civic vision and his judgment and consider him as a model citizen worthy of emulation.

If Environmental Good Makes *Phronetic* Sense, Why is there Opposition?

As we know, even the well-reasoned, symbol-laden arguments executed by a skilled rhetor will not guarantee persuasion. In the wake of the current financial crises that have swept the country with fears of an ailing economy, it is not uncommon to hear depictions of the dichotomy between environmentalism and developmentalism. Many still do not believe that the two are compatible despite the inroads that advocates for alternative energy have made. Many citizens believe that global warming ought to be put on the backburner when the economy is in crisis.

Fundamentally, I believe it is difficult for audiences to discredit the logic of pro-environmental arguments when such arguments for a cleaner environment are made within the context of protecting or improving man's quality of life. In spite of this, many remain unmoved by the measures called for by environmental enthusiasts because the truth is, reason isn't necessarily the most persuasive; the changes called for require the sacrifice of convenience. Al Gore's title of his documentary and companion book truly pinpoints the underlying problem: the environmental good is often an inconvenience.

For example, farmers look to synthetic pesticides to produce large crop yield at a fraction of the time and physical effort required of organic agriculture; the risk of the effects of long-term pesticide accumulation in the human body through the chemical infiltration into the soil, water, and food must thus be taken. Some households like the disposability of paper towels over reusable dish cloths at the expense of a growing landfill. Many would rather drive than walk the 10 minutes to the corner grocery store to pick up produce instead of doing his part to cut back unnecessary carbon emissions. Many are simply unwilling to sacrifice personal convenience for the sake of the greater

good. In other words, I like to think of this mind frame as symptomatic of a society that has lost its civic character, one that has lost its awareness of thinking for the common good. I believe that Paul Woodruff would say that all of this is evidence of the lack of reverence. Reverence, which Woodruff seeks to define in his book, “is the well-developed capacity to have the feeling of awe, respect, and shame when these are the right feelings to have”; that “reverence stems “from a deep understanding of human limitations; from this grows the capacity to be in awe of whatever we believe lies outside our control—god, truth, justice, nature, even death” (8, 1).

A common argument adversaries to the global warming movement make is that climate change is a natural phenomenon, and who is man to think he can control the climate? Although such reasoning resembles Woodruff’s description of reverence, it can also be rightly deemed irreverent. When individuals use this argument to defend their refusal to make changes over things they have control over to prevent environmental degradation, it seems that their character is found wanting of reverence. It is the critics of the environmental movement who are past feeling, whose love of convenience and individuality and selfishness have amounted to the incapacity to be “awestruck at the sight of the majesties of nature”; to feel and treat the earth with respect that results in responsible use of its resources and the defense of limited resources; and to feel shame when exposed actions reveal that current behavior is not wise stewardship are exhibit symptoms of irreverence (Woodruff 9). Such attitudes reveal the traditional value of harmony between man and nature has been displaced. Isn’t man overstepping his human limitations by forgetting that he is merely a *steward* of the earth only?

Protecting the environment is a moral obligation. For those of us who live in developed nations and who have the luxury to pursue change, it is incumbent upon us to do something. This study has led me to conclude that aside from instilling individual civic responsibility and *phronesis* in the modern audience as the means to solve environmental problems, environmental rhetors are also invoking the forgotten virtue of reverence. And in the process of incorporating epideictic to bring to bear such forgotten values, a successful environmental rhetor is one whose trustworthy ethos leads an audience to adopt reverence and civic responsibility in order to influence an audience to make environmental change.

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