

THESIS

RHETORICAL RESONANCE:  
EXPLORING POTENTIALITY THROUGH MATERIALITY AND SYMBOLICITY

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## ABSTRACT

### RHETORICAL RESONANCE:

#### EXPLORING POTENTIALITY THROUGH MATERIALITY AND SYMBOLICITY

Using the Mall of America in Bloomington, Minnesota, as an artifact for analysis, this thesis investigates how rhetoric and communication scholars can better understand and investigate the linkages between material objects and symbolic discourses as they pertain to the production of rhetorics. This thesis offers a theory of rhetorical resonance to guide the analysis of how multiple material and symbolic components resonate together and produce rhetorics. Building from theories of affect and ambience, rhetorical resonance offers a way for scholars to analyze the effects of materiality and symbolism as resonant facets of the world. Additionally, this thesis proposes a resonant methodology to orient scholars in their pursuit of analyzing rhetorically resonant artifacts. Drawing from previous rhetorical work in rhetorical field methods and “being [through] there,” this thesis develops a methodology focused on building an artifact from pieces instead of accepting one thing as an entity itself. Finally, this thesis utilizes a resonant theory and methodology to analyze the Mall of America. It draws out the various pieces of the mall’s security rhetorics while focusing on how it contrasts the harshness and danger of being outside with the relative safety and comfort within the structure itself. Additionally, this thesis also analyzes how once inside, the Mall of America diverts security attention to young teens who are prohibited by the Parental Escort Policy from being alone in the mall. Overall, this thesis serves to push rhetorical theory and methodology to engage with artifacts and analyze the way material and symbolic components work together to produce rhetorics upon an audience.

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## Chapter I: Introduction

A great block of concrete and brick rises from the ground in Bloomington, Minnesota. An oversized sidewalk better suited to police or fire vehicles than pedestrians separates the fortress-like building from the two-lane roads surrounding it. These roads lead into and away from the parking structures that house thousands of passenger vehicles. There are no trees to offer shade from the heat and humidity under the Midwestern summer sun, no overhangs to protect a pedestrian from the biting snowstorms of the northern winter, and no other people, save for the occasional Mall of America employee lounging in the otherwise barren space. The only benches are placed near employee entrances, which are painted to blend in and remain mostly invisible to the thousands of potential shoppers who visit this temple of American capitalism. The Mall of America directs movement, even existence, at least for potential consumers, to the inside of the building itself. Experiencing this space gives me a strong sense that I do not belong outside the Mall of America, but that I should be inside amongst the shops. I realize this not through reading a sign, but through the architecture and the material aspects that structure the place in a distinctly inhospitable manner.

Since the communication is both clear and non-symbolic, how can communication scholars account for what the Mall of America is doing? Communication scholars and rhetoricians have been investigating the link between materiality, or at least physical objects, and communication since the 1980s.<sup>1</sup> Those efforts built upon previous approaches to rhetorical criticism. Likewise, my theory of a resonant rhetoric emerges from two of the dominant approaches to rhetoric as a field of study: Neo-Aristotelian and ideological criticism. This attempt to reread suppressed possibilities for rhetorics of materiality aims to show how a focus

on symbolicity cannot completely ignore the material sides of communication, even if popular movements within the discipline such as Neo-Aristotelian and ideological criticism have behaved as though it could, and provide a framework from which future scholarship can draw.<sup>2</sup>

Overall, this thesis argues for the adoption of rhetorical resonance, a rhetorical theory that accounts for how materiality and symbolicity work together to produce rhetorics upon an audience. This introduction, however, aims to root the development of a resonant rhetoric in already established and important rhetorical theories and lines of criticism. Therefore, I begin with an overview of Neo-Aristotelian and ideological criticism and argue that these theories do not necessarily preclude materiality even if rhetoricians have not used them this way yet. Then, I make a general argument that rhetoric has much to gain from recent research into materiality. Next, I summarize four theoretical approaches to materiality and two methodological approaches. Then, I give a brief introduction to the history and significance of the Mall of America, my artifact for chapter four. Finally, I preview the remaining chapters of the thesis.

### **Defining and Criticizing Rhetoric**

When Herbert A. Wichelns advocated for the liberation of rhetorical scholars from English departments, he laid the foundation of modern rhetorical inquiry and a Neo-Aristotelian method of rhetorical criticism.<sup>3</sup> Therefore, his essay serves as a useful text from which we can extract some general tenets of Neo-Aristotelian criticism.<sup>4</sup> Even though Wichelns is speaking explicitly in terms of oratory, he outlines some general guidelines for identifying what should fall under the purview of rhetoric. Assignifying objects will not meet all his criteria, but we can still find two openings in Wichelns through which we can understand material artifacts as rhetorical.

First, an audience is both assumed and required in addition to a specific context or occasion.<sup>5</sup> In separating rhetorical studies from poetic or literary studies, Wichelns notes, “the writer of rhetorical discourse is, in a sense, perpetually in bondage to the occasion and the audience.”<sup>6</sup> Likewise, objects that exert a force are dependent upon the presence of an audience and the specificities of the occasion that lead to the actions of a subject. For example, the material features of an airport may provide specific lanes for movement for years, but if there is a threat to the security of the building, that material reality may quickly change just like the well-rehearsed political speech is delivered flawlessly a hundred times before being derailed by a determined protester.

Second, having related the necessity of an audience and context in both oratorical and material criticism, we can link oratory and materiality through effect. Wichelns states succinctly that rhetoric “is concerned with effect.”<sup>7</sup> Poetry and some aspects of architecture would be useful in explaining the beauty of something within their field, but rhetoric is focused on the effect that something, traditionally a speech, but now also a film, monument, or building, has on people. When considering effect, signifying objects tend to have a more immediate effect than a speech or other symbolic message that must be cognized and understood. A constructed space that feels uncomfortable, draws you in, or pushes you away is affecting a body more immediately than a message that reinforces cultural norms that then have a material effect.

In addition to supporting some of the goals and theoretical commitments of Neo-Aristotelian criticism through Wichelns, turning a rhetorical eye to materiality follows the theory and practices proposed by Raymie McKerrow in his 1989 article “Critical Rhetoric: Theory and Praxis.”<sup>8</sup> McKerrow’s essay was a breakthrough work in shifting the discipline toward ideological criticism.<sup>9</sup> Again, there are moments of possibility for rhetorics of materiality within



McKerrow's call for ideological criticism that highlight a series of openings within ideological criticism as a general practice that have not yet been fully utilized by communication scholars.

First, McKerrow claims, "a critical rhetoric examines the dimensions of domination and freedom."<sup>10</sup> A thorough theoretical and methodological framework to critique the physical manifestations of domination and freedom would be a useful pairing with the symbolic and semiotic critiques that rhetorical criticism often produces. Resonant rhetorics also conform to the four initial factors McKerrow outlines for a critical rhetoric: "critical spirit" (a drive to investigate and question the structure of the world), "demystifying function" (rhetorics of materiality offer an explanation for how materiality effects a body), "something which it is against" (physical domination and usurpation of a space or people through the built environment), and consequences (helping people to better understand the effects on their bodies and how that effect is achieved in order to live less dominated lives and build less dominating structures).<sup>11</sup>

McKerrow ends his "Critical Rhetoric" essay with a series of "Principles of a Critical Practice" against which we can place resonant rhetorics.<sup>12</sup> To do this, I will examine the opportunities created for material criticism by four of McKerrow's principles. His first principle, "*Ideologiekritik* is in fact not a method, but a *practice*," aims to address the perceived prescriptive practices of a method that takes in information and exerts a predetermined critique.<sup>13</sup> McKerrow instead calls for a critical rhetoric that is open to the possibilities inherent in the world without being inextricably bound to a particular method. By using physical objects as texts, rhetorical critics are even better equipped to answer McKerrow's call to "maximize the possibilities of what will 'count' as evidence for critical judgment."<sup>14</sup>

The second principle, “the discourse of power is material,” highlights the need for rhetoricians to account for the environment built by those in power in order to maintain their privileged position in the system, as well as those who struggle against it.<sup>15</sup> Buildings, roads, bridges, and even whole cities are material products that exist because some entity (person, corporation, government, etc.) gathered materials and labor and constructed a specific structure or set of structures within a space. Built environments do not just appear beyond the reaches of extant power structures. Analyses of the way structures act upon people and sway (or force) people to act provides a corollary to the rhetorical analysis of mass media and politics.

Next, McKerrow claims that rhetoric should deal with practiced knowledge (*doxastic*) instead of “true” knowledge (*epistemic*).<sup>16</sup> Materialist inquiry can be most productive when dealing with how people interact and are affected by objects in their practiced lives.<sup>17</sup> In other words, rhetorics of materiality should not call for a *reading of*, but for an *engagement with*, spatial traditions, architectural practices, lived experience, and the abilities of humans to create, destroy, and repurpose their surrounding environment.<sup>18</sup>

Finally, McKerrow’s sixth principle which I will connect to materiality is, “*Absence* is as important as *presence*.”<sup>19</sup> While McKerrow was writing specifically about symbolic action, the same notion holds for materiality. In the opening anecdote for this essay, the absence of shelter is at least as important as the material that exists outside the Mall of America. Additionally, like symbolic discourse, the emergence and recession of material features or ways of interacting with objects can provide a telling look into the ways those objects and practices have changed historically.

The possibilities for thinking about materials rhetorically, and therefore for resonant rhetorics, lie dormant in landmark essays for the traditions of Neo-Aristotelian and ideological

criticism. Even though it requires a broad reading of foundational texts of Neo-Aristotelian and ideological criticism, the effort to reread their works for resonant rhetorics serves to expand a rhetorical purview to materials themselves without placing them in a subservient position to symbolicity. At the same time, efforts to draw materiality into rhetorical studies should not vault materiality into a privileged position over symbolicity. The two aspects work together to create rhetorical force. Therefore, scholarly understandings of rhetoric should be amended to further allow for the resonance of materiality and symbolicity.

### *Materiality Within Rhetoric*

The effort to alter rhetorical theory to include materiality is not new. Past efforts that attempted to encapsulate materials within rhetorical studies have led to more inclusive and expansive definitions of rhetoric.<sup>20</sup> For example, Carole Blair, a leader in rhetorical studies of materiality, space, and place, defines rhetoric as “any partisan, meaningful, or consequential text, with the term ‘text’ understood broadly as a legible or readable event or object.”<sup>21</sup> Blair later claims that rhetorical texts act, through a variety of means, upon subjects in ways that alter the cognitive or physical space around them. She writes, “There are particular physical actions the text demands of us: ways it inserts itself into our attention, and ways of encouraging or discouraging us to act or move, as well as think, in particular directions . . . Rhetoric, regardless of its medium, is introduced into a space that would be different in its absence.”<sup>22</sup> Thus, Blair explicitly opens the door to material objects for rhetorical inquiry.

While Blair’s understanding of a rhetorical artifact is likely to make some scholars with more traditional views of rhetoric uncomfortable, the possibility of introducing physical objects into the purview of rhetoricians already existed latently within Neo-Aristotelian and ideological criticism. Rhetorics of materiality should be available to study for those who desire a more

expansive rhetorical theory. Moreover, Blair provides a materially inclusive definition of rhetoric upon which this thesis develops resonant rhetorics. Finally, communication scholars should take additional steps in our attempts to understand material conditions by devoting scholarly attention to their material existence in conjunction with their symbolic capabilities through resonance as well continue to investigate and question how we define rhetoric.

As we push the boundaries of rhetoric, we should not forget or ignore its beginnings. Communication studies has a historically tenuous relationship with the study of materiality and even more so with materials themselves. While the discipline traces its roots to speechmaking, the focus has shifted to the point where many scholars understand rhetoric and communication as more than speaking or writing.<sup>23</sup> The calls, new and old, for communication studies, and rhetoric in particular, to take materiality seriously presented a series of questions that rhetoricians have previously addressed. A number of scholars have produced insightful scholarship on extra-linguistic texts. For example, Greg Dickinson has written on how Starbucks attempts to connect its customers to a sense of natural-ness without drawing attention to the global economic practices and exploitations that make it possible to buy a cup of coffee in Colorado.<sup>24</sup> Additionally, Blair has published on how the Holocaust Memorial Museum<sup>25</sup> functions as a physical structure to create an uneasiness in a visitor and how the Vietnam Veterans Memorial<sup>26</sup> (along with Marsha Jeppeson and Enrico Pucci Jr.) and the AIDS Memorial Quilt<sup>27</sup> (along with Neil Michel) function to remember and commemorate tragic deaths in new and innovative ways.

Dickinson, Blair, and other scholars have shown that rhetorical scholarship is productive in areas outside oratory and linguistic communication. Rhetoricians are able to investigate meanings behind material objects and how those objects articulate with power structures, capitalism, and identity construction. Material artifacts are constructions and physical

realizations of society, culture, and technology that shape people's lives. Resonant rhetorics influence, constrain, or enable activities and means of experiencing their environment through an asignificatory (at least in part) process. This thesis seeks to take this notion of materiality further by advocating an understanding of material objects as asignifying rhetorical artifacts. Additionally, this thesis calls for the analysis of symbols and materials as resonant communicative elements instead of separate factors.

### *Maintaining the Material*

The many different theoretical lenses and methodological approaches to rhetoric allow for the analysis of a large number of texts in many ways. This plethora of options requires scholars to carefully engage a text so that their theoretical and methodological choices enable them to accurately and meaningfully conduct rhetorical criticism. To illustrate the problems that arise from disparate pairings of theory and methods (which I expand upon below), I turn to Zagacki and Gallagher's essay "Rhetoric and Materiality in the Museum Park at the North Carolina Museum of Art."<sup>28</sup>

Zagacki and Gallagher's essay on Museum Park takes an approach to materiality that loses the weightiness of the material while claiming to maintain it.<sup>29</sup> Their essay devotes significant attention to the way bodies interact with and move through the surrounding environment, but it also conflates material experiences with symbolic communication and conflates reading with engaging methodologies (a distinction upon which I will elaborate below). The essay relies on reading interviews, statements, and the "meanings" of the Museum Park's exhibits in order to account for how "material rhetoric and its enactments . . . can function rhetorically to invoke a collective sense of civic and cultural understanding."<sup>30</sup> These interviews are themselves symbolic representations of the material experience of a visitor to the Museum

Park. Interviews such as these could be useful in presenting a wider range of experiences in a certain place, but they should not be used in place of first-hand engagements with the material conditions. Additionally, their conclusion that the Museum Park invokes “a collective sense of civic and cultural understanding” is not a materialist claim, but a symbolically cultural claim.<sup>31</sup> The effects that arise from the collective sense invoked by the Museum Park could certainly be material such as more conserved forested lands or cleaner lake water, but the understanding that can lead to these material constructions should not be conflated with the material conditions themselves. Doing material research is difficult, especially given the discipline’s desire for symbolicity, and using methodologies ill-suited to the theoretical questions presented in research makes it even more challenging.

Understanding materiality and symbolicity as resonant components allows for a more complex and nuanced description of rhetorics of materiality. Material conditions influence the experience of a body. In addition to locating the influences of an experience in material objects, rhetorics of materiality center the body as key to experience. One of the most important factors in rhetorics of materiality is the focus on the embodiment of the experience. We do not encounter spaces or have experiences divorced from our bodies.<sup>32</sup> While this presents some difficulties, such as generalizability and communicating experience for mass dissemination, it also produces more grounded work. Some spaces might yield such disparate experiences that it is impossible or ill advised to attempt to produce a generalized account of the material rhetorics at play.

By making the choice to focus on the rhetorics of materiality encountered through exploring by engagement and observation in the Holocaust Museum, Blair chose to put the embodied experiences she had in the forefront of the analysis rather than relegate them to secondary factors. The Holocaust Memorial Museum is certainly a place filled with symbolic

meaning, but if Blair had attended to what the Museum *means* instead of what it *does*, she would have produced a very different piece of work. That is not to say that meaning should be disregarded. On the contrary, this call for a specific understanding of materiality does not aim to supersede analysis of symbolic meaning but to complement it. Indeed, a resonant rhetorical approach seeks to utilize both materiality and symbolicity throughout the process of rhetorical criticism. Blair produced passages that are rooted in the embodied experience with attention to the material construction of the Museum. She also described the experience of being in the museum as “an ordeal, not just because of its collection or the story it tells (although, of course, those are devastating), but because of the dehumanizing force of its interior space on the body.”<sup>33</sup> Blair recounts her experience in detail. There is no claim that this is what everyone felt, but it is within reason to think that a place that acts as a “dark, crowded and confusing . . . congested maze that seems to offer few moments or spaces for relief” would have a similar effect on most people.<sup>34</sup>

Similarly, Victoria Gallagher describes the way the material arrangement of the Birmingham Civil Rights Institute’s “brick, mortar, and glass that comprise the actual building” creates a material and symbolic “permanence” that provides a script (or exerts a force) for “how to move through and experience the museum.”<sup>35</sup> Additionally, the museum’s “physical layout evokes the journey metaphor” in a variety of ways. Most striking is the use of light in the area toward the end of the museum where the visitor must “walk ‘with’” statues representing the “Selma to Montgomery marchers.” This area is one of the only spaces in the museum lit naturally, and thus “the visitor emerges from the darkness begun with the introductory film and continued throughout the spotlit galleries of segregation and civil rights, into the light of walking with ‘others’ in a march for freedom.” The material conditions of the museum coupled with

general cultural knowledge of the struggle, about which the museum preserves information and experiences, interpellates a specific kind of subject who is reverent and uncomfortable both of and in the place and of and in the history of the surrounding space. Gallagher also describes the benches within the museum saying, “Even the placements of benches, where they are as well as where they are not, affect their physical mood.” This placement clearly influences visitors to the museum to stay and witness certain parts of the museum and prohibits them from lingering too long in others. Overall, rhetoricians have produced an impressive amount of scholarship about material objects, but there remains uncertainty as a field about what that scholarship does and how scholars should go about doing it demonstrated by the varied approaches I just summarized. This thesis project aims to relieve some of that uncertainty and replace it with a theoretical and methodological framework centered on resonance.

### *Supporting, and Supported by, Symbolism*

To demonstrate the need for an increased understanding of the material features of life, it is important to understand what scholarship focused on symbolic or semiotics does not, and cannot, account for in the experience of life. Humans do not live as solely cognitive beings, we feel and do things that are not necessarily the result of semiotic communication.<sup>36</sup> In order to account for this element of human experience, this thesis asks three types of questions over three chapters: theoretical, methodological, and critical. First, there are two theoretical questions: How do primarily signifying objects exert a force or influence onto people? How do people feel or understand the force exerted by signifying objects? Second, this proposed thesis asks two methodological questions: What are the best practices for researchers to gather information about signifying objects? What are the most effective and reliable ways to convey information about signifying objects to other scholars? Finally, this thesis asks two critical questions to guide



inquiry into asignifying objects: How do the asignifying forces complement or mitigate the signifying aspects of the text?<sup>37</sup> What new information or ways of understanding can rhetorical inquiry into asignifying objects bring to the discipline of rhetorical studies specifically and communication studies generally?

This thesis will not advocate for doing away with analyses of symbols and discourses by offering a theory about the rhetorics of materiality. Instead, it offers a corollary that can support, and be supported by, these analyses. While some scholarship deals with the ways meaning is created and maintained and how that does work to build and create society, culture, and governing apparatuses, the materialist criticisms can attend to how built environments structure action in more immediate ways as well as enable or prevent the transmission of symbols and discourses. I offer resonant rhetorics as a way to draw material and symbolic analyses together and better understand how audiences encounter rhetorics in the world. Far from replacing one viewpoint with another, this essay asks how more traditional conceptions of rhetoric and resonant rhetorics can work together to create a more complete understanding of the world.<sup>38</sup>

#### *Materiality at the Mall of America*

To illustrate the increased understanding of how the world works by looking at the influence of material artifacts through a rhetorical lens, this proposed thesis turns to The Mall of America. Malls generally, and the Mall of America specifically, serve as texts with rich scholarly backgrounds that enable me to expose and highlight the previously absent study of materiality across a body of literature. Therefore, a pattern of scholarly attention and inattention can be established which will highlight the benefits that rhetorics of materiality can bring to the discipline. Malls as a type of place have received attention both from inside and outside rhetorical studies. For example, both Richard G. Jones Jr. and Christina R. Foust<sup>39</sup> and Greg

Dickinson and Brian L. Ott<sup>40</sup> have published on the 16<sup>th</sup> Street Mall in Denver Colorado, Gary Gumpert and Susan J. Drucker<sup>41</sup> wrote an article on the historical development of the shopping mall, and Andrew F. Wood<sup>42</sup> wrote a chapter of his book *City Ubiquitous: Place, Communication, and the Rise of Omnitopia* on malls.<sup>43</sup> Additionally, the Mall of America houses abundant symbolic communication through advertising and marketing as well as powerful asignifying features such as construction areas, fences, temporary and permanent walls, benches and other seating in specific places, as well as the stark difference between the external and internal architecture. This provides a practical place from which to illustrate the usefulness of resonant rhetorics and what that lens is able to see that strictly symbolic or material analyses cannot.

This introduction proceeds with a summary of the relevant theoretical literature on materiality within communication studies and groups those texts into four general theoretical approaches. Then, I survey methods available for scholars to conduct (through what I will term reading and engaging) and disseminate research. Next, I will provide a description and background information on the Mall of America and elaborate on how this particular artifact is well suited to illustrating a theory of rhetorical resonance. Finally, this introduction will preview the chapters in the rest of the thesis project.

## **Review of Theory**

This essay takes Michael Calvin McGee's 1982 essay "A Materialist's Conception of Rhetoric" as the starting point from which rhetoricians and communication scholars began to take serious interest in questions of materiality.<sup>44</sup> While materiality's relationship with rhetoric and communication has shifted and evolved since then, McGee's notions provide a solid base

upon which we can trace development and against which we can set other conceptions. This section divides the rhetorical literature on materiality into four groups: rhetoric having material consequences, materiality being a medium for symbolism, symbols as having material qualities, and materiality being rhetorical.<sup>45</sup>

McGee's essay called for an understanding of rhetoric as having material implications on how people live. This formulation of rhetoric as material relied not upon rhetoric being "material in the sense of a 'thing' like a rock or a tree, but rather as a palpable and undeniable social and political force."<sup>46</sup> Consequently, McGee was an early proponent of joining rhetoric and materiality through experience. In this essay, he writes, "Though it is the only residue of rhetoric one can hold like a rock, it is wrong to think that this sheaf of papers, this recording of 'speech,' is rhetoric in and of itself . . . Rhetoric is 'object' because of its pragmatic *presence*, our inability safely to ignore it at the moment of its impact."<sup>47</sup> McGee's conception of rhetoric's materiality relies on a human subject because it is only through their experience of rhetoric's ability to do something that it becomes material. The requirement of a human subject to consider and recognize the effects of rhetoric for it to be material could pose an interesting problem for resonant rhetorics, but this issue is beyond the scope of this thesis's attempt to develop resonant theory. Therefore, this thesis will venture to formulate a theory for materiality that focuses on humans as subjects, while leaving the possibilities for nonhuman subjects open for further work.

#### *Rhetoric has Material Consequences*

McGee's iteration of rhetoric and materiality came from his attempt to "reconnect theory and practice."<sup>48</sup> He called for rhetoricians to approach theory with the goal of describing and explaining human practices.<sup>49</sup> McGee understood rhetoric to have material consequences because it actively mediated people's understanding of their world.<sup>50</sup> Ronald Walter Greene

describes McGee's conception of a materialist rhetoric as "a critical perspective concerned with how the representational logics of symbolic action circulate as a form of social control."<sup>51</sup> While McGee's theory is important and was groundbreaking when originally published, it preserves the speech or symbolic act as the sole object of rhetorical inquiry, and therefore artificially limits the texts that are available to help scholars understand and better the world.

Even though restricting rhetoric to the symbolic is limiting, it is an influential and popular position among rhetoricians. For example, Dana Cloud disseminates a warning for rhetorical critics to not conflate discourse and the material features of the world.<sup>52</sup> As a staunch Marxist, it is not surprising for Cloud to chastise the discipline for teetering on the edge of reducing the world to a matrix of rhetorics that create material conditions. Cloud's position here essentially erects a roadblock for attempts to expand rhetoric infinitely, or nearly infinitely, without division or difference between the various ways in which particular rhetorics act but others do not. For example, John M. Sloop's call for positioning rhetoric "*as* the energy of that cultural mediation [between the material and the rhetorical]" would not provide enough room for the various ways objects and symbols affect people in very real ways.<sup>53</sup>

Much of the force for Cloud's arguments comes from her position against the notion that "discourse not only influences material reality, it is that reality. All relations, economic, political, or ideological, are symbolic in nature."<sup>54</sup> Cloud wants to maintain a distinction between ideas and their communication or rhetoric and the effects of those ideas. Maintaining her position within a Marxist framework Cloud writes, "To Marxist theorists and their elaborators, ideas—or ideologies—have material consequences."<sup>55</sup> While I would be hesitant to describe the goal of forming a theory of resonant rhetorics in this way, the underlying argument that ideologies, rhetorics, and superstructures influence the material conditions, which in turn provide a base

from which particular ideologies, rhetorics, and superstructures can be said, heard, and believed supports the notion that only attending to part of the system yields only partial results.<sup>56</sup>

When materiality is only important to scholarship as a measure of the effectiveness of rhetoric, that scholarship loses sight of the practicality and importance of how material conditions impact how we live. I do not claim that rhetoric and material conditions are separate (the above articulation is part of a complex system of linkages between rhetoric and material conditions). However, the lived experiences and the material conditions that demand immediate attention or action by those who encounter them are more active than accounted for by the above connections between rhetoric and materiality. When Greene discusses rhetorical practices as creating “the conditions of possibility for a governing apparatus to judge and program reality,” he makes the material conditions a mere byproduct of the rhetorical operations at play.<sup>57</sup> Similarly, while investigating problematic practices of othering and discrimination, scholars use material conditions as the impetus for rhetorical investigation of the symbolic forces at play while distancing their critique from the material conditions that physically divide people and limit their opportunities to move and change their conditions.<sup>58</sup> These authors do not appear to downplay the importance of material conditions; in fact, the authors take them quite seriously. However, they do not engage in analysis of material conditions beyond their status a result of rhetorical practices.

#### *Materials as Mediums for Symbolic Communication*

Another way to understand the connection between material conditions and discourse is to articulate physical objects as the medium through which discourse is understood. Projects rooted in this understanding use physical objects as texts.<sup>59</sup> However, they flip the direction their investigative project takes from those projects that view rhetoric as having material

consequences. Instead of using symbolic practices to account for the existence of material conditions, these projects begin with the object and extrapolate the rhetorical conditions and symbolic practices from the information they gain through an interrogation of how the object structures meaning, sense-making, memory, and other symbolic practices.<sup>60</sup> This approach also combines the symbolic focus of a more traditional rhetoric with the texts of a rhetorical discipline that is pushing its boundaries outward to become more inclusive and expansive. This style of scholarship focuses on how people make sense of the world in which they live through analysis of material mediums.<sup>61</sup>

The distinction between a position where interrogating discourse can explain material conditions and one where interrogating material conditions to explain discourse can be difficult to determine since all rhetorical criticism is necessarily critical of a text. The distinguishing characteristic is in the relationship between what is being examined and what is being explained. On one hand, Charles E. Morris III analyzes the dominant discourses of J. Edgar Hoover's tenure as the head of the FBI in order to explain his persecution of homosexuals. Hoover led a charge where homosexuals were symbolically classified as deviants and as dangerous to children, which led to severe material consequences (unemployment, imprisonment, and death in some cases) for many people.<sup>62</sup> On the other hand, Blair, Jeppeson, and Pucci Jr. use the Vietnam Veterans Memorial as a text to explain a discursive shift in public remembering and memorializing as well as offer some theories about the causes and consequences of such a shift.<sup>63</sup> This distinction is evident in scholarship, but in practice, material conditions and symbolic structures work to create and maintain one another. Scholars draw these boundaries and select a direction in which to work (material to symbolic or symbolic to material) to make the process manageable and understandable for an audience.<sup>64</sup>

Despite the approaches detailed above, scholars should not necessarily view materials and symbols as disjointed. The call in this thesis is to bring rhetorical theory and practice into conversation with the embodied experiences of life and the interaction with symbols. Symbols have material qualities. As Michel de Certeau theorizes, symbolicity is only consequential if it has an understandable (but not necessarily correctly understood) material aspect through which meaning can flow.<sup>65</sup> Likewise, even a seemingly asignifying object, such as a bench or a blank wall, could be read symbolically by someone if their history projects symbolic meaning and import onto the object. Returning to de Certeau, language only has meaning because we have the history and experience to access that meaning and project it onto the material figurations of letters.<sup>66</sup> From this scholarly position, materiality is subservient to symbolicity, and the physical features of the world are less important because they act as mere transmitters of meaning.

#### *The Materiality of Symbols*

If rhetorical critics and theorists spend all their time deciphering meaning or perceiving symbols as disembodied whispers always pointing somewhere else, they lose the connection to the physical and experiential impact rhetorical practices have on people, their lives, and their bodies. Blair recognizes the consubstantiality of the material and the symbol, and the difficulty associated with inquiring about their connection, when she writes, “Paradoxically, the symbol is the material element of rhetoric, but the very notion of a ‘symbol’ teaches us to reach outside it for its meaning and to treat that meaning as if it were the real dimension of rhetoric, or at least the most important one.”<sup>67</sup>

Moreover, Greg Dickinson’s “Joe’s Rhetoric” essay explicitly positions itself as a call to look at the materiality of symbols. He writes, “Rhetorical theorists have theorized rhetoric through notions of symbolicity that emphasize the ways the symbol is ephemeral . . . we seldom

pay strict attention to the materiality of the symbol.”<sup>68</sup> Dickinson succinctly phrases the problem of an exclusive focus on signifying as, “the problem with an exclusive focus on symbols and meaning making is that this focus can obscure the consequentiality of rhetoric.”<sup>69</sup> In order for a symbol to be understood, it must have some material existence. That material existence has been overlooked by rhetorical scholars who have used the symbol as a sort of springboard to access the symbolic meanings that have been attached to it.<sup>70</sup>

The notion that symbols have material qualities is expounded upon in Dickinson’s analysis of the coffee at Starbucks. In intricate detail, he describes how the “materially embodied rhetoric of the natural begins with the smell and the sound of the shop.”<sup>71</sup> He describes this as “non-discursive” and as “not necessarily more material than, say, a political speech,” but as texts that are more difficult to understand as symbolic because of their lack of words.<sup>72</sup> The material experiences a person has in the coffee shop do not necessarily “mean” on their own, but as subjects with prior experiences and knowledge, we attribute meaning to the experiences in mostly predictable ways. Kenneth S. Zagacki and Victoria J. Gallagher demonstrate this predictability when looking at *Gyre* in the Museum Park at the North Carolina Museum of Art. They note how “the placement of the pieces encourage visitors” to interact with the structure.<sup>73</sup> The spaces in which we live and spend our time supply subjects with the “cultural resources” to make meaning and provide a material location that is physically structured for a certain mode of living.<sup>74</sup>

While Dickinson, Zagacki, and Gallagher attend to the material interaction of people with a given text, Starbucks for Dickinson and Museum Park sculptures for Zagacki and Gallagher, they ultimately resort to symbolically connecting their text to semiotic structures. Starbucks designs its store with particular color schemes, displays, smells, and sounds, but the subject must



be able to access the symbolic system that links those aspects to Starbucks, freshness, and naturalness in order to complete the signifying chain. Likewise, Zagacki and Gallagher describe the sculptures in Museum Park in detail and occasionally attend to how people interact with them, but the bulk of their analysis rests on the sculptures abilities to “remind,” “demonstrate,” “reveal,” “suggest,” and “imagine” how the subject and society relate to nature and preservation. Acknowledging the materiality of symbols is important for rhetoricians to maintain a focus on lived experience as it relates to symbolic discourse. However, by maintaining an analytical focus on the symbolic structures, scholars risk missing the immediacy and heft of physical structures in shaping our lives.<sup>75</sup> Rhetorics of materiality can account for the heaviness and weightiness that escapes when the focus is limited to meaning and the symbolic realm.

Materiality and symbolicity are assuredly linked, but this theoretical standpoint reduces the importance of materiality to nothing more than a medium for symbolicity instead of an artifact that can exert forces. Blair explains the connection between material and symbolic as “the material character of rhetoric” being irreducible “to its symbolicity.”<sup>76</sup> Likewise, the symbolic character of rhetoric is impossible to reduce into only its materiality. Materiality, whether an impetus for, a result of, or, more likely, both impetus and result, cannot be wholly accounted for through a strictly symbolic understanding. Turning again to Blair, there is a sense that something more is happening in the world than either materialism or symbolism can fully account for, but scholars have yet to determine what that additional factor is, “[Rhetoric’s] symbolicity and purposefulness are significant, but they are features of rhetoric, not its essence . . . One of the forgone opportunities of this analysis is a consideration of how the material, symbolic, and purposeful dimensions of rhetoric may interact, interfere, or intersect with one another.”<sup>77</sup> Just over a decade later, Donovan Conley and Greg Dickinson lament the over-

reliance on symbolicity and the notion that the focus of materialist and space and place studies remains “perpetually elusive.”<sup>78</sup> Thus, the need for a comprehensive theory of the linkages between rhetoric and materiality is necessary to understand the very real ways in which people go about negotiating and living their lives more effectively and completely.

### *Material as Rhetorical*

The final formulation for articulating materiality and rhetoric accounts for an understanding of material artifacts as having rhetorics of their own. Scholars such as Lawrence Grossberg,<sup>79</sup> Carole Blair,<sup>80</sup> and Georgia Aiello<sup>81</sup> advance similar notions of materiality in their work. In order to account for the forces exerted by structures on people, the concept of experience plays an important role in scholarship that treats material as having rhetorical power by its existence in the world. Scholarship with this view seeks to determine how objects exert their force and what effects does that force have on the human body and actions.

By understanding material objects as rhetorical, scholarship is drawn towards how bodies engage with the material features of a built environment. If materials produce rhetorics, then those rhetorics are practiced through the ordering and manipulation of bodies. One of the best examples of this focus on the effect of materials on bodies comes from Blair’s description of her visit to the Holocaust Memorial Museum. Blair describes the Museum as a structure, not the exhibits, as “creat[ing] discomfort” and “teaching somatically.”<sup>82</sup> This effect stems from the immediacy and presence of the structure constraining the bodily movement in such a way that the force of the structure is felt, not cognized. Blair specifically draws attention to this phenomenon saying, “The building’s rhetoric had exerted its force effectively with me. I felt exhausted, overwhelmed, resentful, and nearly frantic for some respite.”<sup>83</sup> Similarly, Aiello describes the experience of the Manifattura delle Arti as partially influenced by the symbolic

meaning behind the redevelopment and partially constructed by the physical changes in the paving and ways the area can be entered.<sup>84</sup> The material structure is acting upon the body and forcing the body to act in specific ways that in turn structure the experience of a space.

In order to account for the immediacy and presence of this force, resonate rhetorics necessitate a critic to delve into the ways audiences experience a structure and how they create or understand meanings from symbolic discourse. Additionally, ideas of *doing* rather than *meaning* are important to materialist rhetorical studies. Blair notes that what objects *do* should be prioritized over their meaning or the intentions behind them writing that “we must ask not just what a text means but, more generally, what it does; and we must not understand what it does as adhering strictly to what it was supposed to do.”<sup>85</sup> When encountering objects rhetorically, scholars must search for the ways the object physically structures bodily experience and action.

Scholars should model their contributions after descriptions where the body and the experience of the individual are put into direct discussion with the material rhetorics of a space. Ideas matter (in a very literal sense) because once they are manifested through material means they literally shape the world and constrain or enable bodies. Material conditions are the construction and physical realization of society, culture, and technology that shape the way people live.<sup>86</sup> The physical features of a space are often fragments of the extant power structure, for example a military base along with its fences and bunkers serves a specific purpose for a military and its supporting structure, but can also be utilized in ways that run counter to the prescribed method for engaging with them.<sup>87</sup> Analyses of these structures and their effects, used alongside symbolic analyses, can create a fuller understanding for rhetoricians about how people live in the world.

While my call for rhetorics of materiality focuses on the functions of built environments and material objects, it does so by analyzing and experiencing the (literal) forms and how they create, limit, and influence the way(s) people can have experiences within that area. As Blair notes, “Perhaps the best way to think about this notion is to ask what is different as a result of the text’s *existence*, as opposed to what might be the case if the text had not appeared at all.”<sup>88</sup> If scholars understand rhetoric as Blair does, and include the possibility of things producing rhetorics or exerting rhetorical force, we can begin to see the initial musings of a substantial theory of rhetorical resonance.

Having conducted an overview of the theoretical underpinnings that provide this thesis’s base, Chapter 2 aims to develop a new rhetorical theory based in resonance. By taking a broader look outside of communication to develop a resonant theory, Chapter 2 expands the foundation of the theory as well as grows it into a useful maturity. Next, I survey the methods used by communication and rhetorical scholars for conducting space, place, and in situ research.

## **Review of Methods**

While materialist theories are important, they have served largely as a check to the work rhetorical critics had already been doing. Rhetorical critics have been working with varying notions of materiality for around two decades, developing theory, and using ideas from outside the discipline of communication and rhetoric such as critical geography.<sup>89</sup> In an attempt to assist scholars in finding connections between the material features of our lives and the power dynamics that shape them, Blair posed a series of questions in her 1999 article “Contemporary U.S. Memorial Sites as Exemplars of Rhetoric’s Materiality.”<sup>90</sup> Especially useful to this project are her first, fourth, and fifth questions: What is the significance of the text’s material existence?

What does the text do to (or with, or against) other texts? How does the text act on people?<sup>91</sup>

Using these questions as a guide, we can evaluate the methods that have been used to investigate materiality from a communication perspective.

Materiality and space/place scholarship presents challenges because, unlike a film or speech, the text is not typically accessible in an office or wherever a researcher's laptop can open. Additionally, spaces are continually changing with people coming and going.<sup>92</sup> This requires the researcher to collect information multiple times to better understand what interactions are happening between occupants of a space and the various aspects that comprise the space. There appear to be two main modes for collecting information for materiality or space and place scholarship divided by what the scholar is doing with the information. Generally, scholars "read" symbolic discourses about a space or "encounter" experiences of a space. While different styles of reading and exploring are often combined to produce a thorough and interesting analysis, each method has limitations and benefits.<sup>93</sup>

### *Reading for Meaning*

Reading a space is like reading a book in that once you have the information, it can be done almost anywhere. Moreover, it is a symbolic act in which one party transfers selected information to another party who then makes sense of it. Using reading to discuss space can take two forms: texts about a space and texts in a space.<sup>94</sup>

Texts about a space are larger discourses that construct a space symbolically. Discourses that make us imagine "The West," "The South," and "The Outback" in particular, largely uniform, ways even if we have not been to these places personally. Likewise, discourses about "the city," "the suburbs," and "the country" all invoke general, even contradictory, sentiments about a wide range of actual places.<sup>95</sup> Texts about a space exceed one particular instantiation of

the text. The edges of the text leak, blur, and cannot be pinned down, even when appropriated into specific texts about a place.<sup>96</sup> Therefore, something such as “The West” is reproduced and appropriated across a variety of individual texts, each of which supports and increasingly decenters “The West.” In other words, no one place is “The West,” but rather a collection of texts constructs a similar image about “The West.”

In contrast to texts about a space, texts in a space are more specific and can be further divided into either official or vernacular types. Official texts in a space are things such as monuments or memorials that provide information about the significance, history, or meaning of a space.<sup>97</sup> Semi-official texts in a space such as brochures or pamphlets offer activities or “must see” areas typically for consumers and those looking to spend money. Finally, vernacular texts in a space are narratives or photographs from people who have experienced the space.<sup>98</sup> These texts also structure spaces symbolically, but do so with more specificity.<sup>99</sup> While there might be a general text in the Wild West, a flyer advertising a specific saloon will play with those themes in specific and “official” ways that a text of a space is too large and diffuse to do. These texts in a space always present an edited version of the experience. A brochure or pamphlet is obviously edited and is probably advertising something to a reader, but the personal narrative is also edited to include some things while overlooking others. Texts in a space are useful in reading how an individual or group of people make meaning or cognize their experiences from a space.<sup>100</sup>

### *Encountering Rhetorics*

In contrast to reading, encountering an artifact requires a researcher to be physically present. Encountering can be done in one of two ways: observation and engagement. While I distinguish between these two modes of encountering, they are not necessarily always distinct. A

researcher can observe and engage at the same time, but it might be best to separate them and direct full attention to one at a time.

Encountering through observation entails watching how other people interact with the space. However, and this is true of encountering in general, it is done with a purpose.<sup>101</sup> Scholars who encounter by observation or engagement do so with the goal of discovering something new, different, or interesting that can help them determine something (that something will change depending on their theoretical perspective) about the interactions they are exploring. Blair observed her fellow patrons at the Holocaust Memorial Museum and the ways they interacted (or avoided interacting) with one another and the Museum itself.<sup>102</sup> Likewise, Zagacki and Gallagher observed the ways that visitors to the Museum Park interacted with *Gyre*.<sup>103</sup> Observing how other people interact with a setting, where they do and do not go, and other general patterns of behavior and movement gives this research depth and nuance that is unlikely to come from merely presenting an autoethnography of an experience in the space.

Encountering through engagement occurs when the researcher inhabits and interacts with the space. Again, there is no single way of accomplishing this engagement. Blair engaged through a museum visit,<sup>104</sup> Dickinson took part in the ritual of Starbucks,<sup>105</sup> and Wood explicitly attempts a version of the *flâneur*.<sup>106</sup> During the research the author experiences the place first-hand. In this method of research, the experiences of the author are the primary medium through which analysis occurs. Experiencing and interacting with a place or an object allows an author to confirm or challenge the experiences reported and constructed in the other methods of collecting data against their own experience as well. Encountering through engagement allows the author to take a more active role in finding information about how a space functions instead of relying on information from other people. For example, when I visited the Mall of America, people did not

spend time near the exterior of the structure. This led to some further investigation on my part to find a reason. As I noted in the opening paragraphs, there is no linguistic prohibition regarding occupying the exterior space, but the material structures are able to communicate that “message” quite effectively. However, even when observations about other occupants of a space are included in scholarship, engagement mediates everything through the experiences and (literal) viewpoint of the author. Therefore, authors with differing identities are likely to experience the text differently. This does not imply that the information gathered on one engagement is more or less valid than another, only that the experiences are different for a variety of reasons that can likely be traced back to a combination of discursive and material factors.<sup>107</sup>

I return to methodological work in Chapter 3 and work to make distinctions between two camps of encountering methodologies. Then, I lay out a resonant methodological approach that aims to orient researchers in constructing their own artifacts from various components and examining them through a resonant lens. Finally, in this introduction, I offer some background on the artifact I use to illustrate a resonant theory and methodology.

### **The Mall of America**

Minnesota’s professional sports teams vacated the 78-acre space that would eventually become the site of the Mall of America in 1982. The Bloomington Port Authority purchased the land in 1985. The Mall of America officially opened on August 11, 1992, and with it “the face of Minnesota changed forever,” according to the Mall of America’s website.<sup>108</sup> From the beginning, the Mall of America was envisioned as being a project of sorts, something that was being constructed on such a large scale it would have to be done in phases. Phase I of the plan cost around \$600 million and already included parking for 13,000 vehicles, a golf course, and an



amusement park.<sup>109</sup> The amusement park originally run by Knott's Berry Farm's Camp Snoopy was designed with the aesthetics of a park in mind. Knott's Berry Farm's President Terry Van Gorder described it as "a park-like environment, with trees, streams, and waterfalls."<sup>110</sup> Indeed, far from the more sterile shopping complexes of the 1950s suburbs, the Mall of America hearkens back to antiquity and medieval markets where entertainment was present alongside trade.

In addition to bridging a few thousand years of commerce, the Mall of America also provided a representation of America that was supposedly more open and accessible than other pillars of American-ness such as the White House. Kara Swisher of *The Washington Post* wrote in 1991 that, "by its very name, [the] Mall of America conjures up a bit of everything that has defined shopping and perhaps the United States over the years—commerce, entertainment, capitalism, bigness, joyous overindulgence and more than just a little kitsch."<sup>111</sup> The Mall of America came at what turned out to be the end of the era of giant enclosed malls. Even before it opened, some questioned its financial feasibility. Swisher noted the attention that such a large project was getting at a time when mall construction was slowing drastically, "Many wonder if mall development hasn't finally turned from a surging locomotive of proud growth into a wildly out-of-control runaway train . . . In the past few years, the mall market has become saturated just as the economy has weakened. New shopping center construction starts have declined by double-digit percentages since 1989, retail sales have been flat and important stores have been reeling, some to the point of bankruptcy."<sup>112</sup> Yet, even opening into this kind of environment, the Mall of America was a success and still draws millions of visitors each year because it is more than a place to shop, it is an experience and a spectacle.

The notion of being more than a mall captured the ire of a rival national developer who lampooned the Mall of America as more of a circus than a mall saying, “I just don't get it—with all the geegaws and junk all over the place—who is going to have time to shop there?’ the developer said. ‘Mall of America is not a mall, it's a circus.’”<sup>113</sup> Another article claimed the mall was a “destination.”<sup>114</sup> The article goes on to describe the Mall of America as

the marriage of sightseeing and entertainment with shopping - a growing trend in the '90s . . . It's the single-largest retail/entertainment center. But in terms of retail capacity, the Mall of America ranks as only the fifth- or sixth- largest shopping center in the USA. ‘It's the mix of what Mall of America has to offer, it's the blending of activities that makes it so special. We have everything from a dollar to Gucci. From Filene's Basement to Nordstrom. It's a hybrid,’ says Colleen Hayes, mall tourism manager.<sup>115</sup>

The Mall of America’s focus on the entertainment aspect also includes the way it markets. In fact, the marketing team even turned to Disney for its approach to customer service.<sup>116</sup> The mall’s combination of experiences aside, it still functions as a mall, and as such “as a spatial system structuring opportunities and constraints for movement and social interaction.”<sup>117</sup> One of the main ways the Mall of America’s structuring system works is by keeping the things that would interest the “average” visitor, including all attractions save the front marquee and a group of flags, advertisements, and opportunities to shop, within the protective walls of the structure. Importantly, none of these articles, which describe the interior and the economic possibilities and pitfalls in detail, give even the slightest mention to the exterior of the mall.<sup>118</sup> For such a massive structure to have no attention paid to its exterior is a testament to the power of the rhetorics of materiality that exist in the Mall of America’s exterior walls and architecture. Furthermore, the Mall of America appears to have always been successful in drawing people inside the space where they can shop, play, and eat.<sup>119</sup> By using the Mall of America as a critical object, this thesis can illustrate the benefits of resonant rhetorics and expose what a physical structure is doing to those who encounter it.

## Preview of Chapters

The remainder of this thesis will develop rhetorical resonance as a theory, propose a methodological approach, and demonstrate its usefulness through a critical example before concluding the project. Chapter Two articulates a theory of rhetorical resonance. Drawing upon Kendall Phillips's work on resonance in film,<sup>120</sup> this chapter aims to strengthen resonance as a more general rhetorical theory by integrating work on affect<sup>121</sup> and ambience.<sup>122</sup> The theoretical argument put forth in this chapter will be especially suited to use by communication scholars in efforts to engage with materiality and symbolicity as resonant features of rhetoric.

Chapter Three will survey the methods currently in use for collecting information for space and place or in situ rhetorics and propose a methodological approach for conducting resonant research. I draw from two main methodological camps, rhetorical field methods<sup>123</sup> and "being [through] there"<sup>124</sup> to establish practices for gathering data in the engagement style I described earlier in this introduction. Then, I develop a methodological approach especially well-suited to resonance.

Chapter Four will take the theoretical and methodological conclusions from the previous chapters and provide an extended example of how they can help provide insights for rhetoricians through an analysis of the Mall of America. I conduct an analysis of the structure with particular attention paid to how the Mall of America works to provide resonant rhetorics with a focus on security and order through an internal/external dichotomy and a particular method of disciplining teens within the building.

The fifth and final chapter serves as a summary and conclusion of the theoretical and methodological arguments made in this thesis project. I also discuss implications for the field of communication studies. Finally, I offer avenues for further research into the rhetorics of

materiality as well as explicate shortcomings and potential problems with the theory that arose during the thesis process.

## Chapter II: Rhetorical Resonance as a Theoretical Model

In the same way that musical symbols such as notes, scales, and tempo markings are impossible to fully realize without the physical objects to give them life, symbolicity is only part of the apparatus that encourages some actions and beliefs while discouraging others. This immense apparatus, which I will describe in more detail later in this chapter, is the result of a nearly infinite resonating of material and symbolic components that simultaneously create, maintain, and at times destroy one another. Symbolicity exerts rhetorical force diffusely and makes it possible to imagine conditions and then make sense of those conditions that exist. Materiality exerts a more direct, immediate, and present force that is still rhetorical because its existence alters the world.<sup>125</sup>

In order to account for the immediacy and presence of this force, rhetorics of materiality offer critics opportunities to delve into how physical things shape experiences and actions rather than, or in addition to, how subjects create meaning from symbolic discourse. In order to do this, I offer rhetorical resonance as a response to my call for an applicable theory to address rhetorics of materiality. To return to the musical metaphor, rhetorical resonance does not necessarily aim to investigate why particular notes are in a musical piece or how a musician interprets those symbols, but offers an avenue to investigate what that music does to a person. Do they become sleepy, excited, nervous or uncomfortable? Do people leave, lean back and close their eyes, or get up and dance?<sup>126</sup> Carole Blair notes that what texts do should be prioritized over their meaning or the intentions behind them writing, “We must ask not just what a text means but, more generally, what it does; and we must not understand what it does as adhering strictly to what it was supposed to do.”<sup>127</sup> Moreover, where text has previously been used to refer to an

object of rhetorical criticism, recent work as well as this theory of rhetorical resonance suggests a linguistic shift toward the term “artifact” over “text” to highlight the material aspects of rhetoric and its subjects of inquiry. When encountering material objects for rhetorical analysis, critics should search for the ways the object physically structures bodily experience and action.<sup>128</sup>

If rhetorical scholars will continue to count materiality among our discipline’s objects for study (and this appears to be the case), we need a theory that enables us to study materiality through a specifically rhetorical lens as opposed to other disciplines and to offer something meaningful and original to conversations about materiality. Therefore, I offer rhetorical resonance as a way for rhetoricians to bring materiality and symbolicity together and seek a more thorough understanding of how these various components work with one another. This chapter proceeds with a brief etymology of resonance before building from communication and rhetorical work related to film, affect, and ambience.

### **Roots of Resonance**

Resonance is a familiar term for scholars in a variety of disciplines. Communication scholars theorizing materiality and affect have taken up resonance, but only as an ancillary, supporting, and peripheral way to clarify the concept on which the author focuses.<sup>129</sup> However, I want to center resonance in order to better grasp the communicative components of materiality and symbolicity as they are encountered. Resonance provides a theoretical framework to bring symbols and materials together as rhetorical components. This section will proceed with a brief overview of resonance generally, before turning to Stephen Greenblatt and Kendall Phillips for the most sustained discussion of resonance within communication studies to date. Drawing from their work, I begin to develop a theory of rhetorical resonance that I believe will enable scholars

to engage with the combination of materiality, symbolicity, and the body more directly and as more connected than we have in the past.

At its most basic levels, resonance is a mode of intra-action. The *Oxford English Dictionary* defines resonance in the common way as having to do with sound or sound quality. However, resonance has also meant “corresponding or sympathetic response” as far back as 1594.<sup>130</sup> English speakers used the Middle French term for “reinforcement or prolongation of sound by reflection or by the synchronous vibration of a surrounding space or a neighbouring object” (*resonance* or *resonnance*, now usually *résonance* in French) and began to use the word “resonance.”<sup>131</sup> Even early on in its use, resonance has included two conditions. The first is that there are multiple components so that a resonance can occur between or among them. The second is that there is an element of return, resound, or reverberation. In other words, resonance also entails a feedback loop (which I take up later in the chapter).

Resonance needs multiple components so that they can resonate with one another. Sound waves can resonate within an echo chamber, our throats, or they can be absorbed into the scaffolding of a concert hall, thus physically resonating within the material instead of escaping back into an audience’s ears. In addition, magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) uses magnetic fields to create a detailed scan of the body. Radio waves and the magnetic field intra-act with the body to produce images, which specialists then interpret. Many scientific tests for magnetism and chemical compounds are described or named as a kind of resonance in which a known agent is introduced to an unknown sample in hopes of a predictable change from their intra-action or resonance.<sup>132</sup> Colloquially, a particular speech or piece of music could resonate with me on an emotional level and I could feel the sound waves resonate with my body and the scaffolding and

other acoustic measures at a concert. While resonance can mean these kinds of intra-actions, communication scholars have developed particular uses of the term as well.

One way communication scholars have used resonance is to describe the connection between media such as film and the goings-on in the lived world. Stephen Greenblatt, who although not a communication scholar himself, provides a base upon which communication scholars build for resonance, describes resonance as a way to understand an object as a part of a larger web of meaning.<sup>133</sup> In other words, any particular object is a node or component of a much larger symbolic and material system that makes a particular object's existence possible and gives it meaning.<sup>134</sup> Using the example of a "round, red priest's hat," supposedly belonging to Cardinal Wolsey located in Christ Church at Oxford, Greenblatt traces the series of linkages from a "bit of red cloth stitched together" to Shakespeare and the Reformation. Nothing exists on its own or outside the influence of cultural and symbolic systems. Resonance, for Greenblatt, accounts for the ability of an object to "reach out beyond its formal boundaries to a larger world," a notion to which I will return often.<sup>135</sup> Thus, we see that resonance is always something more than any particular object or discourse while simultaneously a function of how these objects and symbolic practices reach beyond themselves to other nodes.

Kendall R. Phillips builds upon Greenblatt's work in his book *Projected Fears: Horror Films and American Culture*. He describes resonance as operating somewhat beyond direct display of an audience's lives. Specifically, the films that audiences were watching resonated with their lives and their experiences in ways that were not direct, but were allegorical or descriptive enough for the audience to know that the screen images were indirect "depiction[s] of their own collective fears and concerns."<sup>136</sup> Again, resonance accounts for the ways that



cinematic images and sounds escape their distinct boundaries and connect with the goings-on beyond the theater through the experience and knowledge of an individual or aggregate audience.

More than a restatement of Greenblatt's work, Phillips provides a description to help us understand how objects, whether cinema or hats, manage to extend their presence beyond themselves and, in the process, illustrates why resonance is the best term to describe this phenomenon. Aiming to provide a "more productive way of thinking about the subtle relationship between film and culture" than allegory, Phillips turns to Greenblatt's work on resonance.<sup>137</sup> Even though Phillips is explicitly concerned with horror film in this book, his description of the mechanism through which resonance functions need not be limited to the screen. Here, I quote Phillips at length before teasing out how his work can be applied to material artifacts beyond, or perhaps closer than, cinema.

Consider the more literal, physical sense of resonance. If we were to sound a tuning fork of the right frequency in a room full of crystal wineglasses, we would find a sympathetic hum emerging from the glasses. This physical act of re-sounding—or vibrating in sympathy with a similar frequency—gives a sense of the way that certain literary or filmic texts impact with the broader culture.<sup>138</sup>

There are three elements within these few sentences I wish to address for my purpose of offering a theory of rhetorical resonance: 1) components and assemblages, 2) material and symbolic elements, and 3) sympathetic connections. First, we can use this simple description to delineate the importance of components and assemblages. While we could begin to build assemblages from the raw elements which compose the tuning fork and crystal wineglasses, that would prove to be of little use for now. Therefore, we begin to construct our assemblage, in the tradition of McGee, from the objects Phillips describes: a tuning fork, room, crystal wineglasses, our bodies, and sound waves.<sup>139</sup> We can also safely assume air fills the room. This might be a symbolically

insignificant point, but it is a material necessity since sound waves need a medium through which they can travel.

We could place all of these components in conversation with one another at once and use that as an artifact for study. However, and I will elaborate on this more in the next chapter on methods, we can prune this assemblage of components that do not play a vital role in the investigation into how the wineglasses are vibrating. In this case, the most important components for the phenomenon I am observing are the tuning fork, air, sound waves, and wineglasses. Therefore, I can, after thorough investigation, determine that the room and bodies are not key components to this assemblage and move forward with a manageable artifact for analysis.

Second, these objects (tuning fork, crystal wineglasses, and air) compose the material side of our artifact. These objects are animated by the sound waves emanating from the struck tuning fork. I can see, touch, smell, taste, hear, physically orient or balance myself through proprioception, etc. to a material component.<sup>140</sup> I can do these things with an object directly or at least as directly as the laws of physics allow. However, I cannot touch culture itself.<sup>141</sup> I cannot taste meaning. I cannot even hear directly. Waves of energy with particular frequencies and amplitudes vibrate against my eardrum, which vibrates the tiny bones in my inner ear when sends nerve signals to my brain, which interprets those signals as sounds. I do not have to press my ear against an engine to hear it rumble. Rather, the sound of the engine allows it to, as Greenblatt wrote, “reach out beyond its formal boundaries” and come to me.<sup>142</sup>

Just like the engine’s sound informs me that an engine nearby is running, culture informs me on how to use the material artifacts around me. In turn, culture is maintained through the material artifacts. Because culture and meaning-making practices cannot touch us themselves, they become material through objects. Not only are paintings, films, and music elements of

culture, but so are the more everyday and innocuous elements of life. Houses, workspaces, cars, and malls all give culture physical form and, in turn, are given meaning by the symbolic aspects of culture.<sup>143</sup>

To summarize this discussion of material and symbolic components, I will make four theoretical touchstones clear. First, material components possess a presence, weightiness, and heft that symbolic components do not. Second, symbolic components, extrapolated outside the tuning fork/crystal wineglasses metaphor, reference cultural norms, societal structures, and ordering practices that permeate our lives and shape how we make meaning. Third, both material and symbolic components are “real,” although we experience material components directly as themselves while only experiencing the effects of symbolic components (a point I take up in more detail in the next section). Fourth, material and symbolic components give rise to one another in a co-constitutive relationship. Now that I have discussed composing an artifact and both material and symbolic components, I will turn my attention to theorizing how artifacts produce rhetoric.

The final aspect I turn to from Phillips expands his idea of “sympathetic connections” from something that happens between a cinematic production and a theatergoer, to something that occurs among material artifacts, audiences, and symbolic structures. While Phillips utilizes the term “sympathetic connections” to describe how an artifact connects to larger cultural structures for an audience, I aim to adjust this mechanism to account for two different but related features of rhetorical resonance. First, material objects work through similar sympathetic connections as Phillips describes for cinema. As I state in the beginning of this chapter, material objects are the physical realization of cultural norms. We can investigate the role of material objects in the world by searching for the cultural and societal features that enable those objects to

exist. What anxieties does this object or set of objects seek to assuage and for whom are they supposed to work?<sup>144</sup> Physical objects can provide insight into cultural practices and value systems that might be difficult to uncover without the physical manifestations.<sup>145</sup> In other words, we can use material objects to understand culture better.

Second, material objects exert their influence through different mechanisms than symbolic discourses and structuring influence of culture. To illustrate this difference, I turn to a VIP section of a bar, restaurant, or party.<sup>146</sup> For this example, we will consider three different methods of separating a VIP section from the general space and how that method demarcates those spaces differently. One way to separate the two areas is simply to post a sign that names the VIP section as such. This method relies upon people to realize their role within the cultural caste system of wherever they are. VIPs and those who have paid for that access know they are welcome in that area, while those who have not are assumed to know that area is off-limits. Changing the sign to read “No Entry” or a similar sentiment moves us from general cultural knowledge to a symbolic message. Those who “belong” there are presumably given another message that permits them entry to an otherwise forbidden area. Everyone else simply gets to read the sign and should know they are not permitted to enter.

Consider the difference in how someone encounters this scenario when a material barrier is placed at the entrance. The barrier could still operate primarily as a sign that entry is restricted, such as a velvet rope. However, if the “barrier” becomes a member of a security team attempted entry becomes a different experience. Trying to walk into a restricted area and being physically prevented from doing so is not the same experience as being told, whether by norm or explicitly by signage or verbal commands. Similarly, being told, “Stop!” by a police officer and being handcuffed and placed in the back of a police vehicle which physically limits your movement as

opposed to symbolically limiting you are different. As rhetoricians make efforts to better understand the specific consequences of material objects and how they encourage or discourage (in)actions, it is important to keep these differences in mind and avoid equating materiality and symbolicity even though they are related components of experience.

Resonance, the process through which connections are made between an artifact and larger cultural systems, can also help explain how material components prompt or dissuade particular actions from the bodies they encounter.<sup>147</sup> The tuning fork has a physical effect on the crystal wineglasses. I have already described how their interaction can demonstrate material and symbolic components, but it is also a powerful example of material intra-action. A properly tuned fork will vibrate at the same rate that the wineglasses are vibrating already. Atoms, and therefore all matter, are never completely still. Everything is in a state of perpetual motion despite our inability to observe it without extremely powerful technological equipment. Within that statement, which may have been inconceivable just a few hundred years ago, lies heart of rhetorical resonance. If everything is always moving, from vibrating atoms to planets and even galaxies zooming through space, we can learn about power dynamics, cultural practices, and organizational strategies by looking at the seemingly basic ways groups of people structure movement.<sup>148</sup> Additionally, while the reasons, conversations, and discourses (generally symbolism) behind these structuring mechanisms are important, there is no substitute for the very real, present, and forceful effects that material components have on our movement, lives, and very existences.<sup>149</sup> Material components operating on the same frequency and in close enough proximity to a body will encourage particular movements while discouraging others.

A tuning fork will only resonate with wineglasses when they vibrate at the same frequency. Likewise, material components and bodies will encounter each other if they are

attuned to one another (a concept I discuss in detail below).<sup>150</sup> For now, it will suffice to say that not all material components affect all people the same way. A bouncer will let some people past while preventing others from entering. A cobblestone path might deter skateboarders and rollerbladers more than pedestrians or cars. A police checkpoint might manifest cultural fears and discriminatory practices differently on black and brown bodies than on white bodies.<sup>151</sup>

To summarize this section, within rhetorical resonance, multiple levels are available for analysis. Material and symbolic structures exist beyond themselves insofar as they link to one another. I have termed this linking resonance to account for the ways these components influence one another and reach beyond themselves to create a “new” artifact. Material objects reify symbolic structures, which in turn, help audiences make sense of material objects. Research focused on the material side of this process can serve as a “check” on the vast array of symbolic work the field produces. If there is a pattern showing discrimination in our films and television shows, does that pattern also appear in our housing, roads, water supply, grocery stores and sidewalks? Are there disconnects between what we might expect to see based on what we assume cultural and societal values to be, and what physically exists in specific areas? Differences could lead to exciting new research about why this was expected, why it was not found, and what those consequences (material and cultural) are. Starting from the ground up (in the most deliberate sense) provides a different way of evaluating culture. Thinking of that evaluating process as a resonance further allows for the possibility of a both/and framework. Some parts of the system might resonate with some aspects of the artifact while others might not. Theorizing through resonance also has a more bodily centered side.

Rhetorical resonance can help critics understand the link between the material and symbolic/cultural “realms,” but it can also help us understand how material objects act upon

bodies to elicit particular actions. This is perhaps the most important aspect of my call for rhetorical resonance. When analyzing material objects, rhetoricians should be attending to what they *do* and not only what they *mean*. Analyses of what objects mean restrains us within symbolism and discourse. While this criticism is important, it does not address the presence of what a material object does in the moment of the encounter.<sup>152</sup>

Having laid out the skeleton of rhetorical resonance, the remainder of this chapter will proceed to add some depth, to flesh out in more detail, how this theory is useful to rhetorical critics. I will accomplish this in two ways. First, I will utilize Brian Massumi's theory of affect to make the rhetorical power of material objects clearer. Second, I will draw upon Thomas Rickert's theory of ambience to detail the usefulness of rhetorical resonance for scholars researching material artifacts and expand upon his theory.

### **Resonance and Affect**

Another use of resonance relies on using it in order to focus on the participation of various components of the web Greenblatt describes with one another. Massumi describes this as "differential participation" rather than reflections or correspondence to reality.<sup>153</sup> He also uses resonance to explain the interaction of the brain and skin in perceiving stimulation saying the two organs "form a resonating vessel" and describing the process as a "vibratory event."<sup>154</sup> Together they form something that only exists, is only brought into being, through the resonating intra-action between the various components.

Resonance enables a critic to analyze the various influences of a particular situation and determine which of those influences are the most important for the work they are doing. Whether those most salient influences are larger societal features such as economic or governmental

systems, or smaller more focused aspects such as the architecture of a particular room or the local mythology of a particular graveyard, resonance requires the critic to investigate and determine which are most important in a given situation. In the previous section, I laid out a theoretical framework around resonance. Rhetorical resonance conceptualizes rhetoric as a function of an assemblage of variously resonating components that coalesce around an audience. This section turns to Massumi's theory of affect to help explain how material and symbolic components have different effects on subjects and produce rhetorics differently. In order to do this, I utilize Massumi's work in two ways. First, I turn to his discussion of emotion as "qualified intensity" to explicate how rhetorics of materiality act upon bodies. Second, I utilize Massumi's work on foreclosing possibility and how rhetorical resonance furthers this line of inquiry.

Significant parallels run between affect/emotion and materiality/symbolicity. Here, I will discuss three of these parallels, not to imply that there are no further similarities, but because these are the most salient components for positing a useful theory of rhetorical resonance. Adding flesh to the bones, to return to a previously used metaphor, must happen before the body can grow and change to better accommodate the world in which it finds itself.

The first parallel between affect/emotion and materiality/symbolicity draws from Massumi's claim, "emotion and affect . . . follow different logics and pertain to different orders."<sup>155</sup> If affect is written directly onto the body in ways other than through cultural and symbolic logics, then what we call emotion is the understanding of those affects, those bodily experiences, once the structures of language, culture, and society are imposed upon the "raw" experiences. In other words, in order to take the unqualified affect and create qualified emotion, we *make* sense through symbolic systems. In parallel, material objects act upon bodies differently than symbolic discourses. Symbolic discourses can and do structure culture, society,



government, power/knowledge, and meaning, but those structures are made physical through material objects. Material objects do not structure understanding; they structure movement, access, and existence in an immediate and direct sense. Keeping this in mind, the material encounter with an object is not a function of symbolic discourse (apart from the cyclical and co-productive relationship among symbolicity and materiality discussed above), but a bodily experience that requires a different logic to analyze and critique it.

Affect has provided one outlet for scholars to investigate sensations and bodily reactions as they are felt or experienced. Rhetorical resonance aims to deepen this work and build a theory for scholars to investigate how material objects shape our experiences and encourage (even perhaps demand) or discourage actions. Both affect and rhetorical resonance formulate sensation and experience as operating on different levels, different wavelengths, than language and symbolism operate. Massumi describes the tendency to turn images, and his argument applies to include material objects such as monuments as well, into texts that operate at the symbolic level, thus erasing the effect they have on the material and bodily level. He writes, “Approaches to the image in its relation to language are incomplete if they operate only the sematic or semiotic level, however that level is defined (linguistically, logically, narratologically, ideologically, or all of these in combination, as a Symbolic). What they lose, precisely, is the expression *event*—in favor of structure.”<sup>156</sup> Rhetoricians have tended toward making claims about the symbolism of a text. However, by favoring analyses of how our lives are structured and how speeches, films, television, advertisements, monuments, memorials, etc. help people to make sense of the world, we have generally bypassed the ways in which we physically get along in the world. Rhetorical resonance offers a theoretical lens through which scholars can focus on one or both of the two levels on which rhetoric operates, raw material experience and qualified symbolic meaning, or

how they work together. This theoretical position draws attention to the varying ways rhetoric works on people and aims to acknowledge the different levels of rhetorical force without collapsing them into one another.

While rhetorical resonance allows for the critique of the connections between material objects and the symbolic structures that give rise to and emerge from them on one level, the other level rooted in the material objects effect on bodies themselves provides a framework to address the “expression event” to which Massumi refers.<sup>157</sup> At this level, resonance provides a theoretical lens to understand material objects as exerting combinations of forces upon one another and upon bodies. Additionally, because “resonance assumes feedback,” bodies are also exerting forces upon material objects.<sup>158</sup> This complex web of actions and reactions is encapsulated in what I have described so far as “intra-activity” following Barad’s work.<sup>159</sup> Rhetorical resonance provides a way to dissect and critique these forces at the level of material objects. Instead of understanding various objects and bodies as discrete entities, rhetorical resonance interprets a “scene” as one complex series of relationships. Therefore, a thing does not act upon a body, but rather one component has an effect upon another component within the same system.

The difference might seem relatively small; after all, I am not claiming some kind of mystical or spiritual force that links everything together. I am however, suggesting that we reorient ourselves to the material objects that have become popular critical artifacts. Instead of concerning ourselves with string theory and complex theories of time and space, or investigating each piece separately, we take in the watch as a whole- its springs, gears, hands, battery, face, and strap each performing a specific function *in relation* to each other part.<sup>160</sup> Understood in this way, the watch is a complex series of relationships which, while possessing meaning (it is meant to be read against a particular system of time and symbolizes particular status and economic

wealth or poverty), is not reducible to that meaning. Its physical and material relationships are vital to understanding and responding to the existence of the watch and its effects.

Taking a step back again to Massumi, we can understand a complex series of relationships as taking place within the intra-activity of a “resonating vessel.”<sup>161</sup> Only when all the components are arranged and functioning “properly” or as they are intended does the vessel, the artifact as a whole, fulfill its purpose. However, many things can inhibit the intended purpose and cause a “malfunction.” A watch’s battery can die, weather can shut down a power grid, roads need repairs, and bodies can behave in ways counter to the artifact such as running red lights, cutting across abandoned lots, and occupying private places for protests.<sup>162</sup> Even in these cases, or especially in these cases, there is an event—something is happening. Returning to the crystal wineglasses, the effect might be most obvious when the intended pitch is struck, but a pitch unattuned to the wineglasses still reaches out, it just might not be noticed right away. Rhetoricians can investigate how that event occurred and how each component reached beyond itself to become something larger and incorporate subjects into an event.

Third, rhetorical resonance posits a system in which an artifact simultaneously enables, disables, encourages, and discourages varying actions. Thus, in Massumi’s terms, artifacts continually encounter bodies in the “realm of *potential*.”<sup>163</sup> Before action is actualized or materially performed, it is possible. All the actions could happen are possible and therefore virtual (having not yet actualized). They could come to fruition, but only one of them will emerge from the virtual possibilities and occur. Material objects assist in the orientation process that reduces an infinite range of possibility to a singular realized action. This function, altering the possibilities within the world, is rhetoric as Blair sees it—something is different than it could be otherwise.

Here again, in the discussion of selecting and not selecting, it is worthwhile to return to the different levels of operation for material objects and symbolic structures.<sup>164</sup> Material objects orient possibility through physical capability. Physically limiting movement or rendering particular selections impossible, while others become easier and more likely to actualize. Concrete walls physically prevent bodies from moving through them except where doors and walkways exist. In other words, actions are possible where material objects do not prevent their emergence from the virtual realms of possibility but encourage them. In addition to material possibility, symbolic structures help to select actions through norming practices and systems of reward and punishment. Symbolic systems create meaning (right, wrong, good, bad, proper, and improper) to assist in the selection process by providing incentives and deterrents accordingly, but the symbolic systems at work do not orient possibility in the same way material objects do. Of course, we should never forget that materiality and symbolicity are co-constitutive components of the world and serve to create and reinforce one another while doing their work on separate levels and via separate logics.

In summary, rhetorical resonance offers a repositioned understanding of how materiality and symbolicity encounter audiences and then produce rhetorics. By investigating these entwinements, the critic is also able to find moments of rupture and analyze the practices and materials that enable particular messages to disseminate and thrive. Rhetorical resonance repositions materiality and symbolicity as components of an overall artifact for critical investigation. Resonance draws heavily from Massumi's work on affect especially when discussing the different levels and logics of materiality and symbolicity, qualification, and the virtual realms of potential. In addition, rhetorical resonance amplifies and focuses Thomas

Rickert's recent theory of ambient rhetoric and the process of attunement to which I turn in the next section.

### **Ambient Resonance**

Through determining and evaluating the most effective modes of rhetoric in a resonant structure, rhetorical resonance also furthers Thomas Rickert's theory of ambient rhetoric. While Rickert approaches many of the same issues I do from a more theoretical position with a heavy reliance on Heidegger, I aim to form a pragmatic theory of resonance to accommodate both symbolic and material aspects. Even so, I rely heavily on his work. I do not aim to provide a theory of how materiality and symbolicity "actually" work. Instead, I seek to provide a theoretical framework from which rhetorical critics can better understand the effects of material objects and their linkage to symbolic systems in order to assist in more robust and pointed critique.

Rickert urges turning our rhetorical understandings to the material features of our world and opening rhetoric to the asignifying aspects of life.

Rhetoric, while traditionally taken as a discursive, intentional art, can and indeed must be grounded in the material relations from which it springs, not simply as the situation giving it its shape and exigence, but as part of what we mean by rhetoric. Rhetoric in this sense is ambient. It surrounds; it is of the earth, both in the most mundane of senses and in the Heideggerian idiom, as that which withdraws from meaning and relationality . . . Rhetoric impacts the senses, circulates in waves of affect, and communes to join and disjoin people. It gathers and is gathered by things not as a denial of the social but as an essential complement to it.<sup>165</sup>

While I generally agree with Rickert's position and aim to build upon his work, there is one key potential difference I need to explain.

Rhetoric is produced. It is not some wellspring or mythic force into which rhetors or groups of rhetors can tap to draw upon its power. Rhetoric is not a force that exists prior to its

creation. There is nothing *a priori* about rhetoric. Someone or something produces rhetoric through material and symbolic systems and then it is realized or actualized through the encounter with an audience. It is not necessarily “of the earth . . . in the most mundane of senses” because, while it does include material objects, rhetoric does not predate, and will not postdate, producers and audiences. Admittedly, I find it unclear if Rickert encourages us to understand rhetoric as an always already present force or as one that emerges from a particular encounter between rhetor and audience, but it is important to preempt this misunderstanding for rhetorical resonance.

Soon after claiming that rhetoric is “of the earth,” Rickert clarifies his position stating, “In arguing that rhetoric is ambient, I am claiming that rhetoricity is the always ongoing disclosure of the world shifting our manner of being in that world so as to call for some response or action.”<sup>166</sup> Similarly, Rickert notes that ambient rhetoric works differently than what he terms “the extraction model of rhetoric” where the rhetor takes the already present elements of persuasion from a situation.<sup>167</sup> My point here is that rhetoric does more than show itself or emerge from a situation, as Rickert sometimes seems to suggest.<sup>168</sup> Symbolic and material encounters continually produce a variety and an abundance of rhetorics.

The overflow of rhetorics produced in an encounter work in various ways to select particular possibilities and bring forth a singular realized occurrence from the virtual realm as discussed in the last section. Therefore, while rhetoric could work by “shifting our manner of being in the world” as Rickert argues, it might be more clearly argued that *rhetoric shapes the possibilities of acting with the world*.<sup>169</sup> Certain long-standing and pervasive rhetorics such as those around housing, love, and family might be so powerful as to alter our being on an ontological level, but that is not the case for the infinite amount of rhetorics we encounter and to which we respond, in some form or another, each day. This is not to suggest that “smaller” or

more localized and specific rhetorics are unimportant or that they lack power or force, but rather to resist the urge to grant rhetoric unlimited and irresistible power. If rhetoric, any rhetoric, could alter our basic ways of being, what hope exists for resistance? Rhetorics are more complicated, and (often) more subtle than that.

Shifting from rhetoric that alters our ways of being to one that orients the possibility of realizing actions and thoughts also posits resonance as the manner through which rhetoric operates. Understanding rhetorics as selecting possibilities means rhetorics must resonate with one another on both a material and symbolic level to produce effect. No one discourse nor one material object can unselect every possibility but one. Materials must resonate with other materials and with symbolic structures in order to select one from the potential outcomes. Even in the most dominating structures, no rhetoric is always perfectly effective. This is why we should think of rhetoric not as something that can alter our fundamental modes of being, but as a production of resonating components that aims to direct possibility to the point where an action is much more likely to happen than any other is.

This rhetoric works in similar ways to how Rickert adopts Heidegger's notion of disclosure for ambience. Disclosure is the constant revealing and concealing of the world. Some things are brought to the forefront of our consciousness while others fade into the background. They do not disappear or cease to exist, but we turn our attention from them and allow components of the world to become ambient—there but not noticed.<sup>170</sup> One of Rickert's central claims is that this disclosing through ambient aspects shapes our being in the world. Moreover, disclosure is accomplished in material and symbolic (as I have delineated them in this essay) means. Therefore, rhetorical scholars should take these components of life seriously and attend to them with rhetorical analysis.<sup>171</sup>

I aim to rework his argument through the notion of rhetorical resonance. Selection through resonance and disclosure through ambient attunement (the always altering adjusting to what is being disclosed) understand our existence in the world in dramatically different, although not necessarily irreconcilable, ways.<sup>172</sup> Through disclosure, we attune, connect and orient, to our surroundings and the goings-on around us. This process alters the very way of being in the world. The rhetorical aspect then, is the way shifting being in the world affects the messages and actions that are able to be sent, received, and understood. Alternatively, theorizing rhetoric through a lens of resonance and placing the effect in the act of selection turns the focus of rhetorical work back to the effects of the rhetoric in question. In sum, resonance does not posit that rhetoric shifts audiences ontologically, but that rhetoric, when successful, orients potentiality. Powerful rhetorical systems can even orient potentiality in ways that appear to be, even that function as though they were, shifting our very ways of being in the world.<sup>173</sup>

Resonance is the continual production of rhetoric through the meeting of various material and symbolic forces through which bodies and their environments attune to one another and therefore exist as components of the world. A rhetorical scholar's job is to identify how through material, symbolic, and most importantly, the unique combinations of material-symbolic resonances in a chosen artifact structure that existence. Such an understanding of rhetoric builds upon the prior work of scholars in space and place, materiality, and embodied communication to theorize rhetoric as an act and as something that is always being produced, but is not always noticed.

Within a resonance-centric theory, rhetoric is understood as produced through the supporting and destroying of potentials I have just described. Rhetoric is neither symbolic nor material, but is instead produced by the resonance of symbolic and material factors with



(harmony) and against (dissonance) one another. Rhetoricians can use this framework to identify and critique the effects of the various components working on a particular audience.

### **Reorienting through Rhetorical Resonance**

In sum, this chapter has proposed resonance as a way to reorient rhetoricians toward the unique combinations of materiality, symbolicity, and audiences that comprise a constructed artifact. By theorizing rhetoric as produced through a meeting of communicative forces and inscribed through and on a body, rhetorical resonance refocuses critical inquiry onto what aspects are most salient in an artifact and how the artifact, with all its various aspects and nodes, produces rhetorical effects. Adopting rhetorical resonance as a key theoretical lens through which critics can analyze rhetorical practices positions materiality and symbolicity as key components to understanding rhetoric, even though they operate through different logics.

Specifically, rhetorical resonance is defined by the following four characteristics. First, resonance is a way of understanding rhetorical effects as reaching beyond the formal boundaries of objects and discourses so that an object can harmonize or produce dissonance with other objects and discourses. Second, material objects and symbolic discourses (language, societal structure, law, values, etc.) exhibit their effects on different levels and according to different logics. Even so, materiality and symbolicity are connected through resonance and through their continual co-production on one another. Third, material objects and symbolic discourses produce rhetoric(s) when they encounter an audience to act as a node around and upon which the rhetoric coalesces. Fourth, rhetoric functions to select the potential actions, thoughts, feelings, and impressions that can emerge from any situation and subsequently become realized.

This adjustment to include material objects and acknowledge the different levels on which materiality and symbolicity work enables rhetoricians to build a theoretically rich and critically diverse body of work that deals with material aspects directly without ignoring important symbolic features that impact the rhetorical effects of an artifact. Moreover, rhetorical resonance explicitly calls for a focus on both the symbolic and material features of an artifact, thus preventing rhetoricians from slipping beyond the bounds of materiality and into a purely symbolic analysis. Having laid out the theoretical position and commitments of rhetorical resonance, the next chapter aims to build a methodology for researching and criticizing through the lens of rhetorical resonance theory.

### Chapter III: A Resonant Methodology

An attention to space and place has put a new emphasis on embodied research and present-ness in the field.<sup>174</sup> To continue pushing that emphasis in additional productive ways, this chapter aims to posit an approach to doing research through a rhetorical resonance theoretical lens. I lay this resonant methodological approach out in three steps. First, I establish some basic assumptions communication scholars have set forth previously for research in the field. Second, I provide a framework inspired by Burke's pentad for assembling the components within a constructed artifact and analyzing the artifact. Third, I summarize this methodology with a discrete procedure for conducting resonant research.

I am searching for the building blocks for a methodological approach for rhetorical resonance. By dissecting other approaches, I do not intend to argue that they have no purpose, because they have great utility for some researchers. Some of the issues I raise are explicitly methodological (the approach to collecting "data" and what is deemed valuable and appropriate) and not methods (the specific practices used to collect data for a project) related.<sup>175</sup> Therefore, some of what I raise as potential pitfalls might be strengths in other situations when theories other than rhetorical resonance are used.

Overall, I argue for the adoption of a resonant methodology. Inspired by the Burkean pentad, this approach to conducting research aims to aid scholars and critics in bringing together the material and symbolic components of an artifact for rhetorical investigation. By constructing an artifact with varying relationships of material and symbolic components, the scholar themselves reemerges as a central figure in the process of building an artifact and in its analysis. Overall, resonance as a theory and as a methodology aims to better enable rhetorical scholars to

investigate the ways materiality and symbolicity work in concert and in contrast with each other to produce rhetorics upon an audience. A resonant methodology also addresses many of the shortcomings of two popular approaches to conducting rhetorical research in the field.

### **Rhetorical Approaches to Studying Materiality**

Recently, two loosely collected, important, and not entirely unrelated approaches emerged for scholars aiming to conduct in situ research within rhetoric and communication studies. The first camp, rhetorical field methods, aims for a more formal and delineated system of methods.<sup>176</sup> The second camp, “being through there,” builds a methodological approach from Carole Blair’s parable of “being there” and Greg Dickinson and Giorgia Aiello’s addendum of “being through there.”<sup>177</sup> This section proceeds by analyzing these approaches for their contributions to potential studies through a rhetorical resonance framework.

#### *Camp 1: Rhetorical Field Methods*

Rhetorical field methods are an attempt to formalize, at least in part, the methods rhetorical scholars who work in the field, or at least out of the office, use. Jason Middleton, Samantha Senda-Cook, and Danielle Endres note their concern for the lack of generalized methodological commitments portrayed by many rhetoricians who conduct in situ analysis. Because there is no widely accepted method for conducting these kinds of analyses for communication scholars, each has more or less made up their own method for conducting research. Middleton, Senda-Cook, and Endres view this as a generalized problem in part because it leaves little in the way of a methodological roadmap for scholars to judge the efficacy of their methods.<sup>178</sup> Parallel to my argument in the last chapter, as rhetoricians develop more objects for analysis, we simultaneously need to develop both additional theories about how these objects

work and methodological approaches for conducting this research. Rhetorical field methods aim to engage that challenge directly.

Specifically, rhetorical field methods have two main areas of inquiry for rhetorical critics. First, they address the “rhetorical intervention” produced when scholars engage with in situ research.<sup>179</sup> This intervention consists of the rhetorical knowledge produced for the discipline and its students as well as the resulting emancipatory features that hopefully arose from the work being done. In other words, the distinction between “real world” and “academia” is exposed as an unnecessarily false one and collapsed for rhetorical field methods. Second, rhetorical field methods aim to lay out proper procedures for doing the research that is “accessible only through participatory methods.”<sup>180</sup> Moreover, the authors describe rhetorical field methods as offering “a tool for situating oppositional logics within a lived set of rhetorical experiences that inform and shape them, and which those practices challenge and transform” and “a means for interrogating the dynamics of social experience that influence the (in)effectiveness of lived rhetorics.”<sup>181</sup> In sum, rhetorical field methods are focused on how rhetoricians can and should gather and analyze the “data” they collect from in situ research. The authors of rhetorical field methods specifically position their method as an option through which rhetoricians can examine rhetorics as they emerge through their own experiences and the information gleaned from others in the same (or similar) situation.<sup>182</sup> Even so, there remain three problematic assumptions, at least if this method were used in conjunction with rhetorical resonance, underlying rhetorical field methods that I address here.

The first assumption of rhetorical field methods is that a single answer that will emerge if given enough data to explain *the* way something means rather than *a* way something means. This couples with an issue I name the “draw of science” evident in how Middleton, Senda-Cook, and

Endres write about rhetorical field methods.<sup>183</sup> For the authors, a rhetorician's experience, observations, and analyses do not appear to be sufficient evidence to make a claim. Rhetorical field methods make a call for including more "data" within the rhetorical artifact of analysis. To quote them at length

[Previous materiality scholars] fail to unpick [sic] the constellation of identities, relationships, and other components of *actually lived* social practice that shape how "live" rhetorics are differently experienced. Rhetorical field methods aim to address these critical absences. For instance, rather than simply "being there," more formal modes of participant observation (including interviewing and other techniques for in situ analysis) enable practitioners of rhetorical field methods to glean more nuanced data about the diverse identities and interpretations shaping "live" rhetorics.<sup>184</sup>

Within this passage are two lines of thinking I wish to address.

To begin, I disagree that other scholars failed to unravel the vast tangle of "identities, relationships, and other components" that affect how the rhetorics under consideration "are differently experienced."<sup>185</sup> Rather, I read the essays to which the authors refer as offering one possible way of making sense of the rhetorics within a constructed artifact.<sup>186</sup> By offering this as a shortcoming instead of a choice in limiting scope, Middleton, Senda-Cook, and Endres seem to call for a method of analysis that can provide a master narrative, an overall understanding, for how an artifact works. However, there are always multiple rhetorics working differently upon various audiences. Black and brown bodies often experience much different rhetorics than white bodies. People who speak the language of an artifact experience different rhetorics than those who do not. Elderly people, middle age people, and young people experience different rhetorics, as do able bodies and dis-abled bodies. There is no master narrative for any rhetorical artifact. There are always multiple rhetorics and multiple ways of engaging with those rhetorics. No one analysis can account for all possible engagements with a rhetorical artifact, and rhetoricians should not attempt to fool ourselves into thinking that we can. Moreover, the above passage

points to interpretation over different actions from an artifact. Instead of an artifact acting differently upon different subjects, subjects make different meanings from a mostly, if not entirely, passive and static object. Therefore, they can point to “diverse identities and interpretations” while still leaving out the different ways the artifact itself is acting upon those varied identities.<sup>187</sup>

Additionally, calling for “more formal modes of participant observation” is an explicit attempt to move toward a more social scientific method. While scientific study is not necessarily something to avoid, it moves beyond the realm of rhetoric.<sup>188</sup> Certain subsets of communication have produced vast amounts of research through a scientific lens, but rhetoric should not attempt to move toward more objective methods. In the study of *how* something functions, subjectivity, or at least experience, should be valued over objectivity and generalizability for the reasons I lay out above.<sup>189</sup> Moreover, scientific methods do not come without their own “baggage” in the forms of imperialism, colonialism, sexism, and elitism that are inexplicably intertwined with the development of scientific methods, methodologies, and epistemologies.<sup>190</sup> The biggest issue from a rhetorical resonance position however, is that by drawing in other people’s experiences through interviews or other means, there is necessarily multiple additional levels of translation and uncertainty brought into the rhetorical critique. With every level of translation, from raw experience to internal sense-making language, to communicating to the researcher, to composing an essay, the effects of the material encounter become abstracted and are (re)symbolized.

Rhetoricians can provide insight into an artifact by relying on their training and skills to identify and provide an explanation for things that all too often go unnoticed by untrained persons.<sup>191</sup> In other words, a rhetorical analysis provides insight into how something works that goes deeper than how those who encounter the artifact might notice. A rhetorician can connect

the various components within an artifact to produce a particular set of relationships which can then be best analyzed from a specific node (the rhetorician). From their own particular position rhetoricians can provide an account and analysis of one way, or maybe even multiple ways, an artifact is working. This does not, or should not, limit all accounts of that artifact or similar artifacts to following the initial analysis. Indeed, multiple accounts from multiple positions and multiple constructed artifacts should provide a more robust and a richer account of the various ways an artifact functions and the various rhetorics it creates for various audiences.<sup>192</sup>

The second problematic assumption of rhetorical field methods is the focus on the production of meaning, rather than how a particular artifact is doing work for/on an audience. For example, Middleton, Senda-Cook, and Endres envision rhetoric as “constituted . . . through a series of material *contexts*, social relationships, identities, consciousness’s, and (interrelated) rhetorical acts that *produce meanings*.”<sup>193</sup> While I agree that this an accurate description of some rhetorics, as I argued in the last chapter, there is more to rhetoric than meaning. Material objects are more than stage dressing for the work of meaning. Materiality works in specific rhetorical ways as well. Material rhetorics act upon the body, however they act differently than symbolic rhetorics as I discussed last chapter. Instead, the body encounters much more “raw” rhetorical force. That is, we encounter material rhetorics before we “make sense” of them, but not before they affect us. For rhetorical resonance to reach its full potential it must be used with a method that accounts for the various resonant (also ambient and affective) elements within an artifact, not just meaning.

The final assumption for rhetorical field methods relates to how a whole is defined. There is a sense in which rhetorical field methods seeks to add discrete data sets to make the whole of the collected data larger. However, as I addressed in the introductory chapter, rhetorical



resonance functions in part by shifting what is understood to be “whole.” For example, rather than using a researcher’s experience as one whole and adding interviews and observations to that data to make a bigger set, rhetorical resonance understands all of these components as inherently incomplete. However, by putting them together the rhetorician can build something that has enough parts to make a compelling argument. In the next chapter I piece together my experience in the Mall of America with observations of shoppers and visitors, discourses on malls and capitalism, and interpretations about the physical structure itself to create an artifact I can then analyze.

Moving forward, “being there” is no simple matter as Middleton, Senda-Cook, and Endres claim, but a complex if relatively informal way of conducting embodied research.<sup>194</sup> To parse this out, I move to the second way of conducting in situ research. First, I examine this methodological approach as proposed by Blair. Second, I take up Dickinson and Aiello’s recent contribution of “being through there.”

### *Camp 2: “Being (Through) There”*

Blair offers a compelling explanation of the importance of engaging with an artifact first hand with minimal reproduction(s) and translations. There is something special about engaging with a thing itself rather than reproductions or descriptions. Benjamin called it “aura”, but Blair leaves this special-ness open to naming because the practice in this case is more important than whatever it is that makes it special.<sup>195</sup> “Being there” opens new, or at least different, experiences than would be available for a researcher if they were working with copies, reproductions, and reports. Of course, there is something to be said for working explicitly with reproductions or other secondary means as the text themselves (and Blair notes this briefly as well).<sup>196</sup>

On one hand, if a researcher sets out to investigate how people's interactions with the Statue of Liberty works to construct their sense of nationalism and patriotism, it would make sense to spend much of the essay on reproductions of the Statue of Liberty because many more people have encountered the reproductions and done so more often than have been to the physical Statue of Liberty itself.<sup>197</sup> However, note how in this case the text being constructed is not one of the Statue of Liberty itself, but of the influence of the discourse surrounding the Statue of Liberty and its multiple, variant, and plentiful manifestations through the capitalist structure of the United States of America.

On the other hand, Blair notes that physically being in a place opens up particular nuances that can otherwise be closed off to those who wish to engage an artifact or text. Specifically, writing about taking classes to see works in the National Museum of American Art, Blair argues that not only can certain aspects of the paintings themselves be seen only in person such as “vivid colors, the texture of the canvas, the layering of paint, the flow of brush strokes, and so forth,” but that the “physical journey, the place, and the presence of other museum goers” also change the experience through the seemingly simple act of “being there.”<sup>198</sup> Overall, “being there” not only exposes critics to new components, but it also orients them toward specific ways of engaging and understanding artifacts.

Blair's notion of “being there” was supposed to stir up discussion among scholars, and in that case it seems to have been successful. Recently Dickinson and Aiello published an addendum to “being there” and advocated for a methodology of “being through there.”<sup>199</sup> This figuration adds the latent notion of *movement* as an explicit aspect of gathering information for an in situ examination of an artifact. Dickinson and Aiello offer “a friendly revision to Carole Blair's argument that studying material places relies on ‘being there,’ [more specifically] we

argue that ‘being through there’ directs our attention to the centrality of embodied and material movement through space.’<sup>200</sup> “Being through there” asks for more than a critic’s presence. Instead, it requires the critic to be mindful and investigative of historical and cultural practices that shape that way a space was constructed and how movement through that space (both in terms of rate and direction, what Dickinson and Ott termed velocity and vector) is also rhetorical.<sup>201</sup> Both these approaches are general calls for situated knowledges that are produced through the expertise and experience of a rhetorical scholar investigating the way something, or some group of things, functions in relation to an audience. Despite generally being favorable for a rhetorical resonance approach because of its open-ended nature and call for in situ work, “being through there” still highlights two problems for use with my proposed theory.

First, within both Blair’s and Dickinson and Aiello’s essays there is the self-diagnosed issue of having to physically be in a place.<sup>202</sup> For those with access to a site this is less a hang-up than an opportunity to conduct thorough research. However, for those who cannot afford a trip, gain access, or whose artifact no longer exists as a material object (ruins, demolished buildings, historically significant areas that have been “modernized,” etc.) it is not possible to be present. Moreover, it is not always possible for a critic to be present at the physical site of an artifact. Funding issues arise for many scholars, especially those still in school, without tenure track positions, or with small travel funding opportunities. Certain artifacts or even components of artifacts might also pose problems for those with various (dis)abilities. Should these artifacts and critics be precluded from materialist rhetorical research? I argue not necessarily for two reasons. First, we might take a lesson from rhetorical field methods and merely offer present-ness as one way, albeit a highly desirable one, of conducting research. There are other ways to construct an artifact without access to the physical object itself. However, the amounts of material as opposed

to symbolic “data” might shift accordingly as could the conclusions drawn from this data. If every method and theory must have its drawbacks, aiming for being present with an artifact is a worthwhile one to have. Second, and I hope to make this clearer in the next section, by tweaking the idea of “being through there” from one of yes/no, complete/incomplete, and success/failure to one of degree and relation, a preference for present-ness can remain without being an overpowering demand upon the researcher, especially when it is physically, socially, and/or economically unfeasible.

Second, “being through there” should do more as a methodological approach to call for a positioning of the researcher themselves as key to understanding the way(s) in which something is working. While they point towards the importance of *a* body in doing in situ work, they do not thoroughly address just how important that *particular* body is for the research. Particular bodies will encounter different aspects of an artifact in vastly different ways as their body and the discourses in which it is entwined are allowed or denied movement or existence within a space. As important as the artifact is, the positions from which a researcher is approaching the artifact, or the node around which the components are being built, are equally important for helping readers (and writers) understand that the analysis is just one possibility and should not foreclose other ways of encountering the artifact. This demands a critic position themselves in relation to the artifact, to other possible critics, and position the artifact in relation to themselves.

*Notes from Rhetorical Field Methods and “Being Through There”*

Based on the limitations of the methodological approaches I just laid out and the theoretical work done in Chapter 2, we can now begin to consider what a resonant methodological approach might look like. Before outlining a resonant methodology, however, I offer a summary of the limitations of rhetorical field methods and “being (through) there.”

1. An author can offer one way something is working for them without declaring that as *the* way it works for everyone. There will be similarities and differences for various audiences.
2. There is no set way of testing hypotheses or determining factual truths through something akin to the scientific method, nor does there need to be one. We, like the earliest of Western rhetoricians, remain to do our work in the realm of probability and sensibility, not truth.<sup>203</sup>
3. Meaning is important, as I discussed extensively in Chapter 2. However, rhetoric's potential is not exhausted through meaning.
4. As Blair and recently Dickinson and Aiello argue, there is something unique about the experience of "being through there" that supports physically engaging with an artifact whenever possible. However, there are some cases when that is not possible for a variety of reasons.
5. "Being there" is not a static practice that can be checked off a list and completed. It is a process that involves an unfolding, disclosing, and covering.<sup>204</sup> Movement ("being through there") is constant and should be a part of the research process.
6. Finally, the scholar's particular body and social position plays an extremely important role in the constructing, researching, and writing about a particular artifact. This node, the scholar, is the thread tying all the components together to form a salient artifact. It is also the node through which the artifact is encountered. The scholar themselves is inextricable from the artifact.

Despite these limitations being troublesome, no methodological approach is perfect.

However, these limitations are especially difficult when coupled with a resonant theoretical

grounding as they work against some of the tenets of rhetorical resonance. To respond to this methodological gap, I propose a resonant methodological approach in the next section.

### **A Dramatistic Framework for Rhetorical Resonance**

Having laid out some general tenets of a methodology for rhetorical resonance, I now aim to develop that methodology. To do this, I take inspiration from a widely accepted rhetorical construct—Kenneth Burke’s dramatistic pentad. By taking the spirit of Burke’s pentadic ratios and applying it to the construction and examination of a resonant artifact, I aim to build a methodological approach, not a strict set of methods, for conducting rhetorical resonance research. Overall, this approach aims to highlight the function of the specific critic in constructing a resonant artifact. Moreover, by allowing for play in the relationships of material and symbolic components, a resonant methodology resists the lure of material things being simply as they are for a more complex and nuanced understanding of things as one manifestation of what could have been. First, I proceed with a brief overview of Burke’s pentad and dramatistic theory. Second, I outline the basic functions it can serve as a methodological approach to rhetorical resonance. Finally, I posit a comprehensive model for a dramatistic framework for conducting research under a rhetorical resonance theory.

Burke begins his essay *A Grammar of Motives* by laying out the five key terms for dramatism.

We shall use five terms as generating principle of our investigation. They are: Act, Scene, Agent, Agency, Purpose. In a rounded statement about motives, you must have some word that names the *act* (names what took place, in thought or deed), and another that names the *scene* (the background of the act, the situation in which it occurred); also, you must indicate what person or kind of person (*agent*) performed the act, what means or instruments he used (*agency*), and the *purpose* . . . any complete statement about motives will offer *some kind* of answers to these five questions: what was done (act), when or

where it was done (scene), who did it (agent), how he did it (agency), and why (purpose).<sup>205</sup>

The use of these terms in rhetorical criticism has been widespread, most notably by Mari Boor Tonn, Valerie A. Endress, and John N. Diamond.<sup>206</sup> The five terms are placed into relationships with one another called ratios.<sup>207</sup> Importantly, these terms and ratios are not meant to “avoid ambiguity” but are instead meant to “clearly reveal the strategic spots at which ambiguities necessarily arise.”<sup>208</sup> Different readings of the “same” event with different ratios produces a different understanding of the event or even an entirely different event.<sup>209</sup> Therefore, taking inspiration from Burke’s pentad allows a resonant methodology to speak to the deficiencies of rhetorical field methods and “being through there” described above.

As I aim to rework Burke’s dramatic pentad into a methodological approach for rhetorical resonance, the concept of ratios, which I re-term as relationships, plays an important role. The key aspect dramatism plays in rhetorical resonance is in the construction of the artifact and the avenues for additional research. Since rhetorical resonance assumes artifacts are necessarily incomplete and are composed by scholars, and everyday people, in an attempt to create something capable of being thoroughly investigated, this act of construction is of great importance in the overall critical act. Piecing together various components, always situated around the node of the researcher themselves, requires choices. Those choices should, like dramatism, not seek to eliminate ambiguity and multiplicity, but to highlight the areas where it always already exists.

Additionally, the various components do not all hold equal importance within the matrix of the artifact. Some components might be important to include but hold little value for the overall analysis, such as the air in the example of the wine glasses last chapter.<sup>210</sup> Here the material and symbolic levels come into play once more. One version of a resonant criticism

might pay more heed to the symbolic goings-on of an artifact and construct it mostly of symbols and meaning. Another might preference the material forces at play and give less attention to the meaning and symbols at work. Both are worthwhile and important criticisms, and neither should be faulted for not being the other. There is enough work to go around for multiple criticisms and analyses of the “same” event. If rhetoricians construct and analyze their artifacts with a nod toward dramatism, that is, with an eye toward uncovering what can easily remain hidden if the artifact remains analyzed at its face, we can understand that every choice necessarily does work before we even approach the critical aspect (although the construction itself should not be acritical). Through the construction we are actively selecting, reflecting, and deflecting aspects of an event for our work.<sup>211</sup> While Burke’s focus lies on the symbolic, we can easily replace his symbolic interest in any of the pentads parts, with material engagements that permit a resonant approach. As such, a resonant methodology is less a kind of pentadic analysis exactly, than it is an extension of pentadic thought applied to a wider experience of rhetoric which is inclusive of both material and symbolic components.

If we are to rethink the construction of components into an artifact through dramatism, then some of the dramattistic terms must be refined to better fit a resonant methodology. While Burke’s original pentad remains a viable option for scholars seeking to analyze an event, as we step outside the pentad as a theory and a method in one, and attempt to use it as a methodological approach for another theory, some changes are necessitated. Unlike Burke’s pentad, these changes, developed from his terminology, all exist as part of the artifact within a resonant methodological approach. It is important, however, that I address these changes explicitly because while this methodological approach is inspired by Burke’s work, there are significant changes in how his terms would fit into the overall structure.



First, the act becomes a more pointed feature of the approach. No longer is it sufficient to say that the act is what was done, but also *how* it was done. Not necessarily in terms of tools such as agency would account for, but in terms of the rhetorical questions—How does this work? and How is this doing work? Merely naming the act, as important as that is, leaves us lacking in terms of rhetorical depth, but the overall investigation is into the way a particular artifact functions or acts upon an audience.

Second, scene takes on a whole new meaning when the notion of materiality is taken up as I have suggested. No longer the background or mere setting for the rest of the pentad, scene takes a more active and important role than before. Scene becomes that which allows for the agent to act in particular ways with particular agency. Scene becomes agential itself. Moreover, symbolic discourse also becomes an actor/scene amalgam as it permeates through the event and enables or disables particular forms of action and not others.

In this way, scene becomes absorbed into the Burkean category of agent. Agent takes on a wider range of features than it has before. If material objects are exerting rhetorical force upon audiences as I have argued, then they are their own scene/agent/agency in themselves. The separate categories of scene and agent are collapsed into one another, but under the right circumstances each piece of the new scene/agent point is able to be pulled apart. Agents can still move through a scene, but the scene no longer remains a passive setting. Instead it is now an active participant in the construction of an artifact and in the shaping of experience.

This last point is grounded explicitly in the theory of rhetorical resonance I laid out in the last chapter as well as the insights gained from “being there” and “being through there” methodological approaches already. Scenes act upon audiences as though they were agential, and it is my position that they should be treated as agents themselves. Turning back to Blair’s

argument that being in the museum positioned her students differently than being in class and looking at slides of the paintings, we see that the museum acts upon an audience (her class) and therefore serves as more than a backdrop to the action. It actively orients and positions the possible actions and understandings that can emerge from within it.

There is, however, another element for a methodological approach that we must add to create a three-pronged approach to rhetorical artifacts—the rhetorician themselves. Even as the components are laid across a dramatisitic board, the one doing the laying must be accounted for. The rhetorician is the central node upon which everything else is built and upon whose experience, skill, and knowledge the analysis relies. The rhetorician could be included as another actor within the dramatisitic framework, but they are also prior to the emergence of the event. The rhetorician, in doing their research, exists in a liminal space not quite a part of the artifact, but not wholly apart from it either. This is why I suggest making the rhetorician their own point within this framework. If we return to the wine glasses scenario, there has been one aspect I have not yet addressed. Someone had to set up the room. They had to get wine glasses and a room and arrange it. They had to get a tuning fork and strike it just right. The entire event could not have occurred without the inside/outside participant. Likewise, an event cannot be constructed into an artifact for analysis without the researcher and their choices.

In summary, I will more clearly explicate and name the pillars of a resonant methodological approach. The first pillar is the artifact. The critic composes the artifact from multiple material and symbolic components which resonate with one another. This is likely the most expansive pillar, and it encompasses Burkean elements such as agent, scene, act, and agency. All these components have an active role, that is, none of them are merely a backdrop, in shaping the actions and thoughts of the audience, the second pillar. An audience is any number

of subjects who are engaging with the artifact and its components. Through this engagement, a critic, the third pillar, can analyze the rhetorics that are produced. Critic exists as its own pillar because of its crucial status in the production of the analysis. Even though a critic might (and should if possible) also be an audience for the artifact, they are the subject responsible for translating that experience and those observations into an essay that others can read and from which they can learn. Therefore, the critic exists alongside, although not always wholly separate from, the audience. Additionally, when the critic is also part of or the entirety of the audience, they must carefully position themselves within the essay and explicate their identity and how it served to alter the experience and therefore the resulting analysis. Finally, the fourth pillar is comprised of the context. Context functions as the most background oriented of the pillars. It serves to answer the question, “Into what rhetorical situation is the artifact inserting itself?”<sup>212</sup> Context helps to orient the analysis and the engagement with the artifact. It should not overwhelm the essay, but serve as a foundation upon which the analysis can build.

Having now outlined my methodological approach and posited terms as needed, I can lay out the general tenets of my proposed methodology to go alongside rhetorical resonance theory. Constructing the artifact for analysis should be done self-reflexively around the researcher. Their body and their identities, and all the cultural and historical positioning that comes with them, play an important role in the construction of the variously selected components into an artifact for analysis. The research process is built around the specific body, past experiences, and future expectations of the researcher.<sup>213</sup> Piecing these components together creates an artifact in the same way rhetoricians have used Burke’s dramatisitic pentad to create and analyze an event for decades. As such, certain components will be given precedent over others and this construction process will allow, hopefully even encourage, different readings of the “same” event or structure.

Overall, this methodology encourages “being through there” whenever possible. However, it also recognizes the limitations and cases where that is not possible. In those cases, the artifact moves toward more symbolic and distanced analysis and away from the material components that rhetorical resonance aims to capture more fully than other rhetorical approaches. Finally, a resonant methodology aims to recognize its ability to only offer a partial analysis. It cannot give a definite answer to what is happening and how it is happening. Instead, it offers one (or a few) probable insight(s) based on the rhetoricians training, skills, and experience. In so doing, this methodological approach offers an opportunity to uncover and focus on the material and symbolic resonances that might otherwise go unnoticed and therefore unexamined by the critic.

Finally, this paragraph aims to lay out a more formalized series of steps for a resonant method. The first step is to identify a general artifact. Second, a critic should determine as many components, both material and symbolic, as they can. During this step, initial research and even a preliminary site visit if possible are important to orient the researcher to the various components. Third, these components should be placed into relationships with one another in the hopes of uncovering important ways that they might resonate to produce rhetorics upon an audience. Steps two and three continue throughout the research and writing processes. Fourth, more in depth and focused research to further explore the resonance process with the selected components. Finally, critics should write their essay, keeping in mind the central role they play as a component and the ways their specific identities, positions, and impressions give rise to their work.

In the next section, I put the theory from the last chapter to work with the methodology from this chapter. I demonstrate the usefulness of rhetorical resonance through an analysis of the Mall of America. I show how to construct an artifact from various components, put them into

useful relationships, and perform an analysis of the material and symbolic components of a Mall of America artifact.

## Chapter IV: Rhetorical Resonances at the Mall of America

Approaching the Mall of America from the highway takes you through a series of twisting ramps before finally spitting your vehicle and its occupants out into a mass of concrete and parked cars. Entering the mall's structure itself presents a choice. If you parked in the Mall of America's massive parking structures, you can enter through the elevated sliding glass doors and quickly begin experiencing all it has to offer. However, if you are unlucky enough to wind up in one of the overflow lots, you might find your way to one of the pedestrian entrances. These entrances, mostly located on the exterior of the large department stores that anchor the Mall of America's corners, are sparsely decorated save for the large concrete planters that conspicuously guard each entrance. Even one of the more ornate mall entrances, which you would only use if you rode the buses or other public transports that arrive and depart from nearby, is guarded by low concrete pillars that prevent vehicles from entering the mall's interior. This vast array of concrete pathways and strategically placed obstacles works to bring people to the Mall of America. In addition to efficiently and safely moving cars toward available parking and people toward available goods, the Mall of America disciplines visitors through a variety of resonating material and symbolic rhetorics. In sum, the Mall of America is a source of numerous rhetorics and rhetorical components, both material and symbolic that intra-act in specific ways. As such, it is an excellent artifact for demonstrating a critical approach to resonance.

One way the various components of the Mall of America resonate with one another is by producing two kinds of security rhetorics for its visitors. The Mall of America draws people to its interior where they can shop and spend money. Simultaneously, it disciplines those bodies and actions in specific ways. For this analysis and demonstration of my resonant theory and

methodology, I look at how the Mall of America produces security rhetorics to draw people inside and then disciplines young teens once they enter its castle-like walls. Overall, the Mall of America produces resonant rhetorics that aim to maintain security and control over its patrons, especially those presumed to not have enough money to participate in the capitalist rituals of the mall.

This chapter will expand upon the theory and methodology I put forth in the preceding chapters through an analysis of security artifacts at the Mall of America—the contrast of its interior and exterior in terms of safety and security and its focus on maintaining order and ease of shopping by strictly regulating young teens. Even so, as I noted in the last chapter, my analysis is only one way of looking at the Mall of America. There are other analyses that can and should be done, including other work on the mall’s security rhetorics. I develop these inquiries by utilizing a rhetorical resonance theoretical approach and a resonant methodology. Beginning with the rhetorics involved in the internal/external security of the Mall of America I lay out the various components that comprise the artifact. Then, I place these components in resonant relationships with one another and analyze how they produce rhetorics upon an audience.

### **Safety Inside the Castle**

When I first visited the Mall of America for this project I was struck by the stark wasteland outside the structure that clearly separated the interior from everything beyond the walls. The Mall of America appears as some kind of castle from the outside. It bears a striking resemblance to the Maryland Science Center in Baltimore, which David Harvey describes plainly as “look[ing] like a fortress.”<sup>214</sup> James J. Farrell notes “Since nothing is for sale outside [most malls], there’s no reason for the exterior to be fancy. The building is basically a fortress

designed to protect us from the trials and tribulations of the world we're coming from.”<sup>215</sup> The high brick and concrete walls separate the Mall of America from the surrounding area. Nearby parks and lakes are not visible from the grounds of the Mall of America. Instead, an expanse of concrete roadways and parking lots extends into the distance with chain hotels serving as a barrier to the world beyond the Mall of America. Harvey goes on to describe what he calls the “strategic design” or the “strategic building” of the area (entrances away from the street and the street itself as a defensive barrier between “the mass of downtown buildings and the low-income and largely African-American communities of West Baltimore) as being purposefully designed in order “to keep out social unrest and minimize [certain types of] property damage.”<sup>216</sup> Like the Maryland Science Center, the exterior walls of the Mall of America appear to be fashioned after a bunker. Grey, unadorned exterior walls made of concrete masonry units (CMUs or cinderblocks more generally) covered by an Exterior Finishing Insulation System (EFIS) rise far above the heads of anyone who lingers long enough to gaze upward at the structure.<sup>217</sup>

These bunker-like walls are one component of an internal/external security artifact. Following the methodological approach I laid out in the last chapter, I now proceed to identify and select the components. For this section, I examine three material components: the walls I described above, the entrances and their defensive elements, and the Minnesota weather that bears down upon those who linger outside the Mall of America.

Obviously, the sequential method from last chapter is much messier than it appears. Each step bleeds into the next. I have written this chapter with an eye toward first identifying a general artifact, then identifying components, then finally analyzing resonant rhetorics. However, identification and analysis are not practically kept apart. Therefore, there is analysis interspersed with identification throughout this chapter. As I list the components, I have also begun to



describe how they operate and therefore veer into analysis. First, I attempt to only offer analysis on the parts of the whole that are especially prevalent for each component. In other words, even though they all work together to create an artifact, each component does more work in some areas than in others. Then, when I bring them together as an artifact, I analyze the specific ways they work together as a whole. So, while in practice, identifying components and analyzing an artifact are intimately linked, I have delinked them here to make the methodological process as clear as possible.

Despite the size of the Mall of America, there are only a few entrance points for potential consumers. Each anchor store (Macy's, Nordstrom, Sears, and one that is currently vacant and is not open to the public), positioned at the four corners of the Mall of America, has entrances on their exteriors. Otherwise, shoppers must enter through the parking structure or the main entrance termed Central Parkway, which festively displays the words "Mall of America" in red, white, and blue with shooting stars to round out the splendor and excess. No matter where someone enters, they must pass between a series of defensive artifacts such as metal pillars and concrete flowerpots that prevent large objects, such as vehicles, from encroaching too closely upon the Mall of America. Additionally, despite the exterior of the Mall of America being boring and bland, the entrances are made of glass in order to offer a sneak peek at the wonders inside which are brightly lit and welcoming.

The barren exterior where a person is exposed to the temperamental and extreme Midwest climate, gives way to large canopies that offer protection and relief from the elements around the entrances of the anchor stores.<sup>218</sup> These canopies offer a reprieve from nature and an opportunity for a shopper to collect their wits and prepare to accept the invitation inside to begin the ritual of shopping and experiencing the Mall of America. Overall, the Mall of America's

exterior creates a sense of unease and misplacedness on the body of the subject. There are no signs that say you should not be out here, but the material objects interpellate the body in ways that would make signs redundant.

In addition to these material components, there are numerous symbolic components that strengthen the perceived safety of the Mall of America's interior. The three symbolic components this section will address are colors, people, and security guards. Even though all of these have material aspects to them, I am going to address their symbolic components here, as those played a more prominent role in my analysis and experience of the Mall of America. While the material features of the Mall of America's exterior work to make subjects uncomfortable and out of place, the symbolic features reaching out from just inside the Mall of America's secure walls offer an alternative.

The outside of the Mall of America is covered in greys and muted tones. However, the inside and the entryways themselves are colorful and inviting. The red, white, and blue grand entryway is emblematic of the others. Many entrances lead into department stores with their admittedly muted tones, but also their splashes of color from advertisements and products. Even the beige floor, brown couches and chairs, and fluorescent lighting (not normally comforting displays themselves) of the Nordstrom anchor store exhibit a warmer and more welcoming palate than the harsh and unforgiving greys of the Mall of America's exterior. A resonate approach works by contrasting these color schemes and revealing the way they work to contrast with one another to make a normally bland and disinterested color scheme a much more inviting and comforting one, something that might not come to the fore with another approach. These more comforting and welcoming color choices (as well as the materially more comfortable 70-degree temperature inside the building during the harsh Midwestern summers and winters) draw

subjects in through more than security, there is comfort inside the Mall of America through colors, foods, and festivities.<sup>219</sup>

More importantly than color and lighting in drawing people into the Mall of America is the symbolic forces of other people. Nobody is outside the structure, save those going to and from their vehicles, and they are usually in the parking garages, not wandering outside the building. The exterior is a lonely, isolating place where I felt constantly observed as though I were doing something wrong by merely existing outside the Mall of America. Affectively, it is unnerving. While I was out there, I felt as though someone was constantly sneaking behind me like a tiger stalking prey through the jungle. Of course, there was nowhere for anyone to hide, but the affective vulnerability was all too felt on my body and in my mind. The only people I encountered were police and security personnel, and they seemed at best confused, and at worst curious (being a white, middle class man certainly helped keep curiosity from turning to suspicion or worse) about my being outside the structure.<sup>220</sup> However, inside the building there are thousands of people. Whether they are shopping, eating, playing, or just spending time in public, the people are inside. Going to a mall, particularly one that is such a tourist attraction is, for better or worse, a social experience. Being around the rest of the people is a sign that you are following the rules and are participating properly in the activities. The presence of people going through the doors to the inside and the stark contrast between inside and outside the structure also draws people in by telling them that inside is where the people are.

Finally, to return to explicit messages about security, there are numerous security and police officers, both uniformed and plain clothed, inside the Mall of America itself maintaining the security of the shoppers. If the outside of the Mall of America is a symbolic wasteland filled with bland walls and empty sidewalks, the inside presents the opposite—a town square bustling

with people, shops, color, life, law, and order. Security and police officers were immediately made known when I walked into the structure. Their uniforms and presence, conspicuous, but not intruding (at least to me), signaled to me that this was a place where the rules mattered. It is not only rules about violence and shoplifting, but also rules about decorum and presentation that are enforced in these halls. This is not a place to run, this is a place to walk. That feeling only intensified as the material conditions grew crowded and the architecture exhibited many twists, turns, and only allowed for short straightaways, forcing me to turn every dozen yards or so, especially at the higher levels. Heightened senses of decorum help keep the small town sized Mall of America calm and eager to see the next exciting store display or sale opportunity. Having drawn out the most relevant components for this artifact, I now turn to analyze how they resonate together to produce rhetorics.

The exterior and interior components of the Mall of America resonate together to create an uncomfortable, foreboding space outside and a gentler, more inviting space inside. Each of the components I name above does their own work in furthering this spatial construction. However, they are never encountered alone. Each of the components necessarily fits into place with the others to create a stronger and more prevalent artifact. For example, when entering the Mall of America, I do not just notice the spacious sidewalk or the disparity in colors. I encounter these material and symbolic components together as a resonant artifact. Each component connects to the others and they work together to make sure I know the inside is preferable to the outside. The material and symbolic components work together to produce rhetorics greater than the sum of the parts.

Rhetorical resonance encourages the investigation of how components resonate to form artifacts. For example, the exterior walls are not just looming. The walls are also muted colors.

Therefore, the strength of the inhospitable and insecure argument is not simply added with each additional supporting component, but multiplied. A resonant approach allows me to investigate this multiplied force where other approaches would investigate each separately or as added instead of multiplied factors. Most importantly however, is the way the exterior and the interior play against one another through the resonance of the material and symbolic components. The stark contrasts between the harsh and potentially dangerous world on the outside and the welcoming safety of the consumer space inside are only so rhetorically effective because the Mall of America created their own opposites on the other side of the wall.

The exterior of the Mall of America highlights the vulnerability and isolation of bodies in sprawling desolation. Of course, being in a city, there are other buildings visible from just outside the Mall of America. However, none of them are easily accessed and the Mall of America sits removed from the rest of the city by bustling multi-lane roads and great deserts of concrete. Tall, straight walls of blank concrete with plain brick in some places provides no rest from the harsh weather of the American Midwest. The muted and bland colors provide little interest or change to all but the most specifically interested eyes. The lack of people is a telling sign that there are better areas nearby in addition to having a bodily impact of making the isolation and out of place-ness felt physically. Even so, people would be unlikely to encounter these rhetorics (and only the most circuitous adventurers encounter them at all) if there was not some potential reward or pleasure within the high walls of the castle.

The exterior rhetorics are so powerful and the routes to avoid them so convenient that many visitors manage to skip the outside of the Mall of America save for a parking garage or brief walk from public transit along a secured, but more welcoming entrance. They go right for the colorful and comfortable interior of the Mall of America. While the outside is reminiscent of

a medieval castle or brutalist fortress on lockdown, the interior draws more from the castle's courtyard with its shops, people, goods, and carefully cultivated water features and potted vegetation.

Inside the Mall of America there is plentiful food, drink, entertainment, and commerce to satisfy even the most gluttonous of American consumers. Even with all the revelry within its walls, there is an added level of much more visible security than there is outside. Security guards and police are stationed at the entrances and additional personnel, both uniformed and plain clothed, patrol the walkways of the giant commercial castle. Negotiating the economic needs of a mall, where as many people as possible need to come through the doors as quickly as possible, and the security situation of a post- 9/11 America, especially of a place such as the Mall of America that has been threatened before.<sup>221</sup> Once through the initial fortifications such as the thick walls and large concrete planters outside the doors, the space opens up and encourages exploration. Each shop attempts to lure potential customers over with lighting, sound, and product displays. Doors are unguarded as the Mall of America provides the security from those who wish to do harm and shoplifters alike. Each vendor peddles their wares openly and with apparently little overall concern for security beyond a few employees and security cameras (especially if, like I am, you are white).

Overall, the Mall of America produces a set of security rhetorics upon those who encounter the giant structure. The exterior isolates and imposes vulnerability upon those who encounter it as it pushes them towards the more comfortable interior. Once inside, the space opens and security is taken over by the presence of uniformed personnel. The inside of the fortress, the castle's marketplace, securely nestled within its sturdy walls, provides a safe and relatively comfortable place for consumers to engage in the consumption and purchasing

practices that allow the Mall of America to thrive. Even though the resonant internal/external rhetorics of the Mall of America work to draw people inside, the security rhetorics continue to operate inside the mall itself.

### **Young Teens as Economic Disruptions**

Instead of marking an area as inhospitable, security rhetorics inside the Mall of America work to restrict the movement and even the presence of younger teens who could possibly interfere with the consumption activities occurring within the mall. A notice on the “Hours” page of the Mall of America’s website reads, “We welcome all youth to Mall of America<sup>®</sup>, however on Friday and Saturday evenings youth under the age of 16 must be accompanied by an adult 21 years or older from 4 p.m. until close. Learn more about the **Parental Escort Policy**.”<sup>222</sup> In case the bolded, underlined, and italicized cues on the Parental Escort Policy were not enough to demonstrate how seriously the Mall of America takes potentially non-consuming “youth,” the over-emphasized term also leads to a more detailed description.<sup>223</sup> Specifically for this section, the Parental Escort Policy is enforced by Mall of America security during all hours from December 26-31, which covers the extent of my second trip to visit the building for this project. The existence and enforcement of the Parental Escort Policy as I observed it on that visit actively serves to disrupt the Mall of America as a place for guests of all ages, and instead privileges those whom the Mall of America constructs as more active shoppers and consumers. The Mall of America thus constructs younger teens as deviant and disruptive while it disciplines them for using the space without an escort. Overall, this contributes to the mall’s resonant security rhetorics by opening up space for economic activity through the discipline of those with likely little money and lots of time on Friday and Saturday nights. In order to construct the second part

of my artifact, I turn to symbolic components such as Mall of America advertising and policies as well as security personnel's behavior and strategic positioning.

Despite “common knowledge” that teens hang out at the mall, the Mall of America does not actively recruit teens to their structure.<sup>224</sup> Most of the time, teens are simply ignored or at least not promoted. In their “Visitor’s Guide,” the Mall of America boasts “Events for Everyone” and touts their “**400 annual events including celebrity appearances, performances, competitions and autograph signings** by authors, chefs, musicians, political figures, and other big stars.”<sup>225</sup> Even though some of these events would supposedly be of interest to teens, they are nowhere to be found in the 104 pages of the 2016 guide, the 95 pages of the 2015 guide, or mentioned on the Mall of America’s website other than alongside the Parental Escort Policy.<sup>226</sup> Toddlers, young adults (typically differentiated from under 21 “teens” by the nearby alcoholic drinks), early professionals, even elderly patrons are all depicted in the pages of the guides, but no discernable teenagers. In other words, the Mall of America does not want teenagers to occupy it, or at least does not want groups composed solely of teenagers to occupy it.

However, teens with cash to spend are still welcome to enjoy the mall. In addition to fast food, an arcade, and a movie theater, all of which are “classic” teenage hangout spots, there are a number of stores that cater to teenage shoppers. Stores such as American Apparel, a two story American Eagle Outfitters, Aéropostale, Buckle, Forever 21, Gap, H&M, Hollister, Hot Topic, Maurices, Old Navy, and Pac Sun all trade on the fast fashion of typically younger crowds whose styles and sizes come and go far too quickly for their parents to invest in clothing of higher quality. The Mall of America certainly is willing to take money from teenagers, but overall it seems reluctant to become a prime spot for spending leisure time.



In order to discourage teenagers from spending time but not money in the Mall of America, the Parental Escort Policy prevents youth under the age of 16 (presumably because 17-20 year olds will have some source of disposable income or be “too old” to hang out at the mall anyway) must be accompanied by an escort over the age of 21 on Friday and Saturday nights. These are the two nights a week high school students will typically not have school the next morning and be more likely to spend time out on the town with their friends. Therefore, the Mall of America put a policy in place to further reduce potentially “troublesome” (taking up space, but not spending money) youth on these nights. As I mentioned above, this policy is also enforced all day during the end of December when students are likely out of school and those with disposable income might come to the Mall of America’s vast array of shopping opportunities for some last minute gifts.

On my visit to the Mall of America during the end of December 2015, I observed this policy enforced in a rather particular way that further highlighted the paradoxical relationship the Mall of America has with teenagers. Mall security officers were only placed outside the stores I laid out above and were stopping young people only as they came out of the store and entered the corridors of the Mall of America. After being stopped by security personnel, the teenagers were briefly questioned then made to stand against a pillar while they called their parents or escorts on the cell phones each had.

Notably, this practice serves two major purposes. First, there is the symbolic/material intra-action of making sure the delinquent teens are kept under the eye of the security officers until they are retrieved by their parents or another adult over 21 with whom they can wander the Mall of America freely once again. Being exposed with nowhere to escape the watchful eyes of the security guards limits the possible courses of actions for teens. Symbolically, they are

restricted from simply leaving under the threat of additional undefined penalties beyond merely having to wait for an adult to accompany them. Materially, they are placed into highly visible positions with few options for movement. This also enables security to keep a constant watch over the space instead of taking teens back to an office and therefore not being present in front of the store for a period of time. Since there was an average of around three teens waiting to be “bailed out” in front of each store I visited on a particular day (more as the day turned to evening), this constant vigil appeared to be working quite effectively.

Second, the teens posted up against the pillars and walls of the Mall of America’s interior were signs to the rest of the Mall of America’s crowd with a two-fold message. One, if you are under the age of the Parental Escort Policy, you should not be here because you will be caught. During the time covered by the Parental Escort Policy, young teens are a disruption that the Mall of America would rather publically discipline than allow to continue unabated. Two, if you are here to do some shopping, the Mall of America understands that you might not want to navigate around teens and their groups, and the Mall of America will do its best to make sure you, a paying customer, do not have to deal with that additional potential hassle. This dynamic of disciplining teens to open more space for consuming highlights the function of the Mall of America’s resonant security rhetorics on particular audiences. The “captured” teens serve as a sign, but also they are materially placed out of the way so as to not disrupt the consumer experience and freedom of movement of other shoppers.

Additionally, it is also worthwhile to account for the vectors—particularly the directional aspect—these teens were taking before being stopped by security. Personnel were posted outside particular stores and not others.<sup>227</sup> They also were not patrolling, they were posted, two or three, per store front and gazing into the store as they waited for potential violators to come out into the

Mall of America's general space. They seemed mostly unaware of people going into the store to shop, but focused on those leaving the shopping area. This way, if the teens were going to shop, they could do so—once. Then security personnel would post them, bags in hand, against the walls and pillars of the Mall of America and send a message that their existence, outside the stores and post-purchase, was not acceptable during these crucial hours of the Mall of America's business.

These components work together to support the security oriented rhetorics of internal safety and disciplining those with little in terms of economic capital in favor of those with disposable income. Consumers and their children can safely shop at the Mall of America without having to worry about teenagers running wild throughout the space. Even though teens are often associated with the image of a mall, the Mall of America makes no special effort to court them to its space. Instead, teens are often imagined as problematic visitors who must be controlled so that adults (with money to spend) and their children can use the Mall of America as they wish.

The most telling example of this attempt to control teens within the Mall of America is in the application of the Parental Control Policy. Symbolically, the policy sends the message that parents should not allow their teenaged children to roam the Mall of America during certain hours (specifically the hours when teens are not in school and might have some time to spend out with friends) and during the prime buying time during the holiday season. However, one message is not often heeded, so it must be materially and symbolically enforced.

The Mall of America enforces this policy through the security personnel that at times patrol the interior and at other times act as guards securing the entrances into the Mall of America from the individual stores that cater to teenagers. By targeting these stores and detaining teens coming out of them, the security personnel keep unaccompanied teens out of the

mall, while allowing them to make a purchase. Paradoxically, this means teens who are consuming and making purchases in the Mall of America's stores are more likely to get caught and forced to wait for an adult to escort them than the teens who never enter a store and might not be buying anything at all.

Moreover, the material layout of the Mall of America and its surrounding grounds also contribute the relative docility of the teens once they were detained and placed against the pillars by security personnel. The Mall of America is crowded, especially around the holiday season. There is no quick way to escape the sight lines of security, and there were always multiple security personnel guarding each entrance. In addition, even if one of the teenagers was able to get away (potentially because they would not want to make a scene by chasing someone through a crowded mall), they would have nowhere to go. As I noted in the last section, the Mall of America sits largely alone, the parking lots serve as a kind of concrete "moat" that isolates the enclave-esque aspect of the mall from the rest of the city.<sup>228</sup> In the cold and wind of Minnesota during the winter, the young teens are materially stranded within the confines of the structure.

Overall, the Mall of America both entices teens to enjoy the stores and entertainment while simultaneously casting them as troublesome and at times even undesirable. The various material and symbolic components work together to produce a system in which teens exist as a paradox, both highly valued and a nuisance. Teens are drawn to the Mall of America for the opportunities it presents for them, despite not being included in the advertising and informational materials. Finally, even if they do shop during specific times, following the primary capitalistic purpose of the Mall of America increases their likelihood of being caught and detained thus being subjected to particular rhetorics of control, both material and symbolic.

## **Beyond the Resonances at the Mall of America**

This brief analysis aimed to shed some light on what a resonant analysis would look like. The analysis constructed an artifact from a variety of symbolic and material components. These components worked in concert with (although they could have also worked against) one another to produce rhetorics upon particular audiences. Overall, the Mall of America ushers people inside and then disciplines those who likely have the least money to spend.

The first section comprised of mostly my own experiences at the Mall of America and my sense of what its outside was doing to me. By constructing the exterior and the interior of the Mall of America as separate components of one artifact, I was able to read them against one another and draw out the details that produced the most effective rhetorics upon me. The second section showed how security rhetorics continued to operate once I entered the Mall of America, albeit mainly through the discipline of others. It demonstrated the ability of resonance to observe action and put the material and symbolic components that enabled and resulted from those actions to work through rhetorical criticism.

Finally, these observations are not necessarily the ones that others would make. They are mine and, as such, always partial (in both senses of the word) and incomplete. Others would make different observations. I did not take specific notice of whether sex, race, or displays of wealth affected who was stopped by security personnel and who was allowed to pass. Multiple analyses should be permitted, even encouraged, to produce a multiplicity of meaning. In the next and final chapter, I take this issue up further, summarize the work I have done in resonant theory and methodology, and point to further areas of research.

## Chapter V: Conclusion

The Mall of America will continue to serve as both a symbolic and material feature of the Minnesotan and even the American economic landscape. Like any decent landmark, there is much more to the Mall of America than there appears to be at first. This thesis aimed to provide additional theoretical and methodological tools for rhetoricians and communication scholars to investigate how objects such as landmarks, memorials, roads, and malls affect people's lives. By offering rhetorical resonance and a resonant methodology I have proposed a path for scholars to construct and analyze an artifact. While rhetoricians and communication scholars have been using memorials, museums, and more everyday places and spaces such as malls for decades now, rhetorical resonance aims to create a theory that can account for both materiality and symbolicity in the production of rhetorics. The distinction between text and artifact and the explicit construction of an artifact from components should serve to push rhetoric and communication scholars to uncover new ways of criticizing the world around us.

To conclude this thesis, I offer some final thoughts on resonance as a rhetorical tool. First, I review the contributions of resonance as a theoretical model. Focusing on the work resonance allows critics to do with components and artifact construction, I lay out some potential avenues for future research opportunities. I also discuss some of the ramifications for defining and understanding rhetoric once a resonant approach is introduced. Second, I revisit a resonant methodological approach and summarize the process of conducting resonant research. Again, I focus my discussion on the benefits of constructing an artifact over assuming a text is whole from the beginning. Third, I discuss additional research subjects related to the Mall of America. I summarize how a resonant approach enabled me to analyze the interior/exterior and disciplining

of young teens together as elements of an overall set of security rhetorics. I also lay out some of the ways that my analysis falls short. Because I made choices, some components were left out of my analysis. Additionally, because I have a particular subject position, I was able to disengage with some components and unable to engage in others. Finally, I argue that these necessary shortcomings support my call that an artifact should be revisited by multiple people because every new visit can reveal something important about how people live in the world.

### **Resonance and Rhetorical Theory**

Rhetorical resonance as I have offered it in this thesis is an attempt to continue to close the gap that can sometimes exist between scholarship and lived experience. By taking an approach that understands the world as having been constructed by an audience from incomplete and indeterminate components, resonance pushes against simplistic readings of even the most seemingly banal encounters. While Carole Blair, Marsha S. Jeppeson, and Enrico Pucci Jr. claimed that postmodern memorials were designed for multiple means of encounter and therefore were more than one text, resonance recognizes that any text or artifact is constructed from multiple components and aims to account for that construction during the criticism process.<sup>229</sup>

By making the act of artifact construction as prevalent as it is in the resonance approach I offered here, resonance also disrupts what something might mean as a text. As I argued earlier, “text” is an imperfect way to describe the object of criticism from a resonance standpoint. Something cannot only be read and still adhere to the general tenets of rhetorical resonance. In order to adequately address the way various components intra-act an artifact must be engaged with and experienced. The specific way this happens will obviously depend upon the artifact and

the skills and resources of the researcher, but Chapter Three laid out general guidelines to engaging in this kind of research.

One of the primary goals of rhetorical resonance as a theoretical lens is to bring together work on materiality and symbolicity under one umbrella. As I mentioned briefly in Chapter Four, people, as experiencing entities, do not encounter either symbolicity or materiality. Rather, we encounter material *and* symbolic components and piece them together, rapidly and often unconsciously, into artifacts we can then identify, from which we can make meaning, and ultimately with which we can consciously engage. But before we can do that, we engage a larger world that shapes how we can identify, make meaning, and engage through both material and symbolic means. A resonant methodological approach works by identifying important components, while ignoring others, and then putting those components together to examine how they work as a whole upon an audience. In other words, something is always left out, but it is not included because of a choice made by the critic. Then the critic can analyze how the selected components work together to form a coherent whole.

Thus, rhetorical resonance is an approach that is primarily focused on analyzing how things work together to form a whole that then produces specific rhetorical effects upon an audience. When working through the various components of an artifact, it is important to include components that address both the symbolic and material rhetorics produced by the artifact. While it would potentially be possible to conduct rhetorical criticism that only attends to symbolism or materiality through a resonant lens (i.e. analyzing how various components work together to produce particular rhetorics), it would lose the weightiness (the physical presence of an object that makes itself known) and systemic power (the way symbolic resources shape how we



understand the world and what we can even begin to think about) that an approach such as resonance can offer through a meaningful combination of both materiality and symbolicity.

Even when analyzing something at the level of discourse, I think it would add thickness and heft to an analysis to include material components, resonances, and rhetorics. For example, if I were to conduct research into masculinity and violence, I could look at discourse about masculinity as well as film, television, advertising, and other symbolic aspects. Currently, I would fit in well with other communication and rhetoric scholars if I stopped here. However, if I took a resonant approach, I would look for some material components of masculinity as well. What material objects allow for masculinity to take on its current form of violence? Material objects such as guns and sporting competitions have consequences for masculine violence in resonance with symbolic practices and learning/teaching. Similarly objects such as fast cars and speedy motorcycles have material implications that support discourses on masculinity and are in turn supported by them. The ability to more clearly draw out that relationship is one benefit of a resonant approach. While it might be easier to see the value of a resonant approach to something that has obvious material form such as a monument or a mall, I believe there are real opportunities to analyze power structures and discourse as well with a particular eye toward the material objects that enable those discourses to circulate and continue to be produced and, in turn, what material objects are produced by the discourse.

Finally, resonance works to theorize rhetoric as something that is produced upon an audience. When a variety of components resonate with one another in the presence of an audience able to connect with that resonance, an artifact produces rhetoric upon the audience.<sup>230</sup> Without the audience, rhetorics are not able to coalesce around or upon anything. Something or someone must serve as a node for the unformed rhetorics stabilize around and actualize.<sup>231</sup> When

I first began writing this thesis, I sometimes referred to something “having” a rhetoric. However, as I continued to work on developing a theory of rhetorical resonance, it became clear that rhetorics are not possessed, but instead they are produced. Rhetoric, through a resonant perspective, is a constant engagement of an audience with an artifact. Artifacts themselves, are merely a collection of resonant components that we have decided to call a singular entity for the sake of understanding and living our lives. There is nothing inherently whole about an artifact from a resonant rhetorical perspective. A wall such as the those on the Mall of America is usually easy to understand as a whole thing. However, as I pulled it apart in my analysis, there are various components that comprise that wall. Critics build artifacts back up and then analyze the production of rhetorics. We, as living beings, are consistently encountering new and old rhetorics. Some we accept without much questioning such as how to sit on a chair. However, those rhetorics are produced whenever we encounter a chair. To return to the Mall of America to illustrate this point further, there are rhetorics of the Mall of America, but the Mall of America does not *have* a set of rhetorics. The Mall of America as an artifact continually produces rhetorics upon those who encounter them.

So, while Carole Blair might posit that rhetorics are those things that the world would be different without, I claim that rhetorics are produced by the world in varying strengths by materials and symbols through the relationships with other materials, symbols, and an encounter with an audience. We live an over-rhetoricized world (not because of politics necessarily, but because we are constantly being bombarded by materials and symbols asking or demanding, weak and strong, us to act, think, or behave in a certain way), but we are quite adept at moving through most rhetorical encounters without devoting much attention to them. Could this mean that rhetoric and communication studies risks getting too large and out of hand to exist as a

single discipline? Perhaps. However, I believe if rhetoric and communication scholars are able to remain focused on the production of rhetorics instead of other features such as history, English, and politics (all of which certainly can play a role without being a defining feature of a rhetorical analysis) we should be able to maintain a serviceable and identifiable disciplinary body.

Additionally, the method I offered in Chapter Three can help lend an identifiability to rhetorical and communicative focused works as well as recreating the process of needing to ignore aspects and components of the world while doing the analysis similarly to how we move about our lives.

### **Following a Resonant Methodology**

The resonant methodological approach I laid out in Chapter Three supports the theoretical commitment to bringing together various material and symbolic components. By not taking any artifact as already constructed or assuming it is plain to see, smell, hear or otherwise engage, a resonant methodological approach demands that a critic spends time investigating what components comprise the artifact they want to analyze. Not all the components will likely be relevant for an analysis, but by identifying as many as they can, researchers give themselves the best chance to find those components that are working the most powerfully together or even perhaps find an explanation to that piece of the artifact that does not quite make sense at first or even second blush.

The initial laying out of all the components and selecting the ones which compose the artifact for analysis is perhaps the most important methodological insight of this thesis. Artifacts do not come premade. We must make our own. If we, as scholars, rely on the world to present us with ready-made artifacts for analysis, we risk missing out on the more hidden parts that might prove insightful and important to understanding how the artifact works upon audiences.<sup>232</sup>

Moreover, by providing a specific link between method and artifact, a resonant methodology provides more guidance in identifying components and constructing an artifact than either rhetorical field methods or “being [through] there.” As I said in Chapter Three, access to the material features of an artifact is ideal (“being [through] there”), but not always feasible. Therefore, if material access is not possible or extremely prohibitive, the artifact for analysis will be different than one that was constructed with the ability to engage the material components at the source. Thus, even when I provided a list of steps, it did not endeavor to have a specific set of practices. Rather, I aimed to orient scholars toward the general approach that I proposed. For this reason, I describe my approach as a resonant methodology instead of a method. Following Sandra Harding, my methodological approach is a general notion of how to go about research instead of a specific set of directions that unfolds linearly.<sup>233</sup> The steps I outlined in Chapter Three are much messier in practicality with each overlapping and bleeding into the other steps. Instead of acting as though the world is clear-cut and easy to understand, resonance embraces the messiness of life and attempts to provide understanding without painting over the messy parts.

In the next section, I review how a resonant approach enabled me to construct an artifact from various material and symbolic components for analysis. Even so, some components were not taken up for this project. I lay some of these out and call for an understanding that they are important and should be available if other scholars want to return to the Mall of America (as I did since I was not the first to write about it), build, and analyze their own artifacts.

### **Future Directions for Research on the Mall of America**

When I put my theory and methodology to work analyzing the Mall of America in Chapter Four, I examined how the mall works to produce a variety of security rhetorics upon its

visitors. First, I analyzed how the interior and the exterior of the Mall of America resonate with one another to produce rhetorics that draw visitors inside and discipline them if they try to stay outside the building for too long. This system works by both making it easier to get into the mall and then back out to your vehicle if it is parked in one of the giant parking structures and by making it rather boring, intimidating, and all around unpleasant, simultaneously through resonances of affect, materiality, and through the cognitive effects of the symbols, or lack thereof. Moreover, once my analysis moved inside, there was a new set of security rhetorics being produced. Rhetorical resonance allows for the analysis of the intra-action of all these parts and of how they work together to produce rhetorics upon an audience.

Additionally, resonance gave me a framework to analyze these two related, but different, ways of producing security rhetorics at the Mall of America. By using a resonant framework, I was able to draw out the ways the two sets of security rhetorics worked alongside one another to draw people inside and only then be concerned about who was being drawn in. This gives the Mall of America a unique set of resonances as well with its advertising which supposes young teens will come to the mall whether or not they are specifically targeted with the guidebook. Overall, the Mall of America draws people inside and then imposes specific rhetorics of security through targeted disciplining of young teens who simultaneously are unlikely to have much expendable income and run the risk of being perceived as nuisances by adults, presumably those with trying to get their shopping done.

However, this is only one way of engaging the Mall of America. As I mentioned in the last chapter, I did not attend to issues of race, gender, sex, sexuality, (dis)ability, or class. Looking back on my visit, I think an analysis of gender and gender performance would be an especially fruitful addition to my analysis of the discipline imposed on the young teens during

the hours the Parental Escort Policy is enforced. Most of the young people I saw detained by the Mall of America security personnel were young girls. Additionally, while I did see female security personnel, I do not think I saw any posted in the positions that guarded the mall from the young teens coming out of the stores. It is entirely likely that I just happened to be in the wrong place to see female security personnel detaining young males, but it is just as likely that what I saw was the norm. This could add a whole new level of resonant analyses to the work I have already done with the Mall of America and security rhetorics.

When selecting components to include in an artifact there are necessarily things that are excluded. My analysis excluded identity and many other things. This is one reason that within the resonant methodology I included a specific call for multiple analyses of what, at the first look, might appear to be the same artifact. One analysis is not enough to fully draw out how a general artifact is doing work in the world. Especially if each author begins by constructing their own artifact from components, each analysis is likely to reveal different and meaningful rhetorics produced by the artifact.

Another reason multiple readings are important is because each author's positionality is different, and thus we all see the world at least a little differently. I chose to largely bypass identity politics because, as a white male, I have the privilege to not confront my identity in most situations. Similarly, when I was outside the Mall of America I was never confronted by security officers. I got some quizzical looks, but no confrontation. I imagine a person of color would not have been able to take pictures of walls, doors, and support beams without at least a little more interaction with security personnel. Additionally, the Mall of America is a predominately white space. I was able to blend in and observe without being obtrusively observed myself. Everyone is

observed, but I was observed from a distance which enabled me to watch and take pictures without questioning from security or police.

Overall, this thesis urges a more nuanced and intra-active approach to rhetoric. A resonant rhetorical theory offers a framework for building a specific artifact from components and analyzing how it resonates to produce rhetorics upon an audience. A resonant methodology orients critics to identify components and analyze what rhetorics those components produce when they resonate as an artifact and coalesce on an audience acting as a node for the actualization of rhetorics. This resonant approach allowed me to analyze security rhetorics at the Mall of America with both symbolic and material components. The Mall of America is a concrete capitalist citadel that dominates visitors by prioritizing security and privileging patrons with disposable income at the expense of young teens. A resonant approach helped me perform this analysis and will hopefully assist in many more to come.

## Notes

1. See, for example Michael Calvin McGee, “A Materialist’s Conception of Rhetoric,” in *Rhetoric, Materiality, and Politics*, eds. Barbara A. Biesecker and John Louis Lucaites (New York NY: Peter Lang Publishing, 1982/2009), 17-42; Darryl Hattenhauer, “The Rhetoric of Architecture: A Semiotic Approach,” *Communication Quarterly* 32, no. 1 (1984): 71-77; Lawrence W. Rosenfield, “Central Park and the Celebration of Civic Virtue,” in *American Rhetoric: Context and Criticism*, ed. Thomas W. Benson (Southern Illinois University, 1989), 221-266; as well as the variety of works focused on the Vietnam Veteran’s Memorial such as, Harry W. Haines, ““What Kind of War?”: An Analysis of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial,” *Critical Studies in Mass Communication* 3, no. 1 (1986):1-20; Sonja K. Foss, “Ambiguity as Persuasion: The Vietnam Veterans Memorial,” *Communication Quarterly* 34, no. 3 (1986): 326-340; and A. Cheree Carlson and John E. Hocking, “Strategies of Redemption at the Vietnam Veterans’ Memorial,” *Western Journal of Speech Communication* 53, no. 2 (1988): 203-215; and Carole Blair, Marsha S. Jeppeson, and Enrico Pucci Jr., “Public Memorializing in Postmodernity: The Vietnam Veterans Memorial as Prototype,” *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 77 no. 3 (1991): 263-288.

2. I use the term “rhetorics of materiality” for two specific reasons. First, like rhetorics of social movements or rhetorics of place-in-protest, rhetorics of materiality seek to understand how materiality functions rhetorically, not how rhetoric functions materially (as a materialist rhetoric). Second, I use the plural “rhetorics” to highlight the way that a material or space might have different effects and exert different forces on different bodies. Using the plural instead of singular form allows for more than one reading and attempts to prevent scholars from seeks a



“correct” answer to how something is working. Danielle Endres and Samantha Senda-Cook, “Location Matters: The Rhetoric of Place in Protest,” *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 97, no. 3 (2011): 262. “Indeed, materiality includes physicality and social conditions, but it also includes embodied experiences in place. This understanding of materiality helps us think about the ways in which places as well as the people in them are always in the process of becoming.” Ronald Walter Greene, “Another Materialist Rhetoric,” *Critical Studies in Mass Communication* 15 (1998): 21-41; Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, trans. Donald Nicholson-Smith (Cambridge, MA: Blackwell Publishers, 1991), 160. “I use the plural advisedly, for it is doubtless as correct apropos of space as it is in the cases of philosophical and literary ‘readings’.”

3. Herbert A. Wichelns, “The Literary Criticism of Oratory,” in *Readings in Rhetorical Criticism*, 4 ed., ed. Carl R. Burghardt (State College, PA: Strata Publishing, 2010), 3-28.

4. For an overview of neo-Aristotelian methods and criticism, see Robert J. Croft, “The Functions of Rhetorical Criticism,” *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 42, no. 3 (1956): 283-291; Edwin Black, *Rhetorical Criticism: A Study in Methods* (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 1965/1978) which sought to revoke neo-Aristotelianism’s status as the prominent method of criticism; J.A. Hendrix, “In Defense of Neo-Aristotelian Rhetorical Criticism,” *Western Speech* 32, no. 4 (1968): 246-252; Gerald P. Mohrmann and Micheael C. Leff, “Lincoln at Cooper Union: A Rationale for Neo-Classical Criticism,” *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 60, no.4 (1974): 459-467; and Stephen E. Lucas, “The Legacy of Edwin Black,” *Rhetoric and Public Affairs* 10, no. 3 (2007): 509-519.

5. Edwin Black, “The Second Persona,” in *Readings in Rhetorical Criticism*, 4 ed., ed. Carl R. Burghardt (State College, PA: Strata Publishing, 1970/2010), 68-77 and Charles E.

Morris III, "Pink Herring and the Fourth Persona: J. Edgar Hoover's Sex Crime Panic," in *Readings in Rhetorical Criticism*, 4 ed., ed. Carl R. Burghardt (State College, PA: Strata Publishing, 2002/2010), 595-613.

6. Wichelns, "The Literary Criticism of Oratory," 24.

7. *Ibid.*, 22.

8. Raymie E. McKerrow, "Critical Rhetoric: Theory and Praxis," in *Readings in Rhetorical Criticism*, 4 ed., ed. Carl R. Burghardt (State College, PA: Strata Publishing, 2010), 96-118.

9. Philip Wander, "The Ideological Turn in Modern Criticism," *Central State Speech Journal* 34, no. 1 (1983): 1-18; Philip Wander, "The Third Persona: An Ideological Turn in Rhetorical Theory," *Central States Speech Journal* 35, no. 4 (1984): 197-216; and Brian L. Ott and Carl R. Burghardt, "On Critical-Rhetorical Pedagogy: Dialoging with Schindler's List," *Western Journal of Communication* 77, no. 1 (2013): 14-33.

10. McKerrow, "Critical Rhetoric," 96.

11. *Ibid.*, 97.

12. *Ibid.*, 107-113.

13. McKerrow, "Critical Rhetoric," 107, citing Michael Calvin McGee, "Another Philippic: Notes on the Ideological Turn in Criticism," *Central States Speech Journal* 35 (1984): 43-50.

14. McKerrow, "Critical Rhetoric," 107.

15. *Ibid.*

16. *Ibid.*, 109.

17. Carole Blair, "Contemporary U.S. Memorial Sites as Exemplars of Rhetoric's Materiality," in *Rhetorical Bodies*, ed. Jack Selzer and Sharon Crowley (Madison WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 1999), 23.

18. For a discussion of "reading" a space, see Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, 7, 17-8, 47-8, 92-94, 142-7, and 222.

19. McKerrow, 112.

20. Scholars can also look back in time to Aristotle. Erecting a wall or digging a moat could be thought of as "an available means of persuasion." Aristotle, *On Rhetoric: A Theory of Civil Discourse*, trans. George A. Kennedy (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), 36.

21. Blair, "Contemporary U.S. Memorial Sites," 18.

22. *Ibid.*, 46. Blair's notion on a "readable event" presents difficulties for moving beyond reading as a metaphor for doing material analyses, which I address below. Understandable might be a superior term here. Either way, her focus on rhetoric as something with effect is fundamental to my understanding of rhetorics of materiality.

23. Aristotle, *On Rhetoric*; Wichelns, "The Literary Criticism of Oratory."

24. Greg Dickinson, "Joe's Rhetoric: Finding Authenticity at Starbucks," *Rhetoric Society Quarterly* 32, no. 4 (Autumn 2002): 5-27.

25. Blair, "Reflections on Criticism and Bodies: Parables from Public Places," *Western Journal of Communication* 65 no. 3 (2001): 271-294.

26. Blair, Jeppeson, and Pucci Jr., "Public Memorializing in Postmodernity."

27. Carole Blair and Neil Michel, "The AIDS Memorial Quilt and the Contemporary Culture of Public Commemoration," *Rhetoric and Public Affairs* 10, no. 4 (2007): 595-626.

28. Kenneth S. Zagacki and Victoria J. Gallagher, "Rhetoric and Materiality in the Museum Park at the North Carolina Museum of Art," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 95, no. 2 (May 2009): 171-191.

29. This is certainly not the only article that has leaped into symbolic representations of material conditions while claiming to be keeping its feet on the ground. However, scholars of their caliber and an article that garners praise and attention like this one are deserving of careful scrutiny.

30. Zagacki and Gallagher, "Rhetoric and Materiality," 172.

31. Ibid. While this is a valid claim for scholars to make, Zagacki and Gallagher present it as a material claim when it is a symbolic claim.

32. Endres and Senda-Cook, "Location Matters," 264 and 278.

33. Blair, "Reflections on Criticism and Bodies," 287.

34. Ibid., 286.

35. All quotations in this paragraph are from Victoria J. Gallagher, "Memory and Reconciliation in the Birmingham Civil Rights Institute," *Rhetoric and Public Affairs* 2, no. 2 (1999): 310-313.

36. Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, 11-3, 16-8, 34, 57, 221-2, and 224-6.

37. Endres and Senda-Cook, "Location Matters," 262.

38. Blair, "Contemporary U.S. Memorial Sites," 50. "For now it is imperative that these three characteristics [of rhetoric: material, symbolic, and purposeful] not be allowed to cede their own functions and that their division of rhetorical labor not be conflated."

39. Richard G. Jones Jr. and Christina R. Foust, "Staging and Enforcing Consumerism in the City: The Performance of Othering on the 16th Street Mall," *Liminalities: A Journal of Performance Studies* 4, no. 1 (2008).
40. Greg Dickinson and Brian L. Ott, "Neoliberal Capitalism, Globalization, and Lines of Flight: Vectors and Velocities at the 16th Street Mall," *Cultural Studies ↔ Critical Methodologies* 13, no. 6 (2013): 529-535.
41. Gary Gumpert and Susan J. Drucker, "From the Agora to the Electronic Shopping Mall," *Critical Studies in Mass Communication* 9 (1992): 186-200.
42. Andrew F. Wood, *City Ubiquitous: Place, Communication, and the Rise of Omnitopia* (Cresskill, NJ: Hampton Press, 2009).
43. Scholars and artists outside communication studies have also turned their attention to malls such as Jon Goss, "The 'Magic of the Mall': An Analysis of Form, Function, and Meaning in the Contemporary Retail Built Environment," *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 83, no. 1 (1993): 18-47; Michael Galinsky, Margaret Hundley Parker, Bela Koe-Krompecher, *Malls Across America* (Setidl-Miles, 2013); Jennifer Price, "Looking for Nature at the Mall: A Field Guide to the Nature Company," in *Uncommon Ground: Rethinking the Human Place in Nature*, ed. William Cronon (New York, NY: Norton and Company, 1996), 186-203; Eric Nelson, *Mall of America: Reflection of a Virtual Community* (Lakeville, MN: Galde Press, 1998). *The American Historical Review* published a forum on malls in 1996 consisting of Lizabeth Cohen, "From Town Center to Shopping Center: The Reconfiguration of Community Marketplaces in Postwar America," 1050-1081; Thomas W. Hanchett, "U.S. Tax Policy and the Shopping-Center Boom of the 1950s and 1960s," 1082-1110; and Kenneth T. Jackson, "All the

World's a Mall: Reflections on the Social and Economic Consequences of the American Shopping Center," 1111-1121.

44. McGee, "A Materialist's Conception of Rhetoric."

45. None of these individual practices are necessarily "wrong" or "bad." However, each approach highlights some aspects of materiality and rhetoric while hiding or downplaying others. Therefore, it is important to delineate them so that the proper or best approach can highlight the issues with which are authors are engaging.

46. Barbara Biesecker and John Louis Lucaites, "Introduction," in *Rhetoric, Materiality and Politics*, eds. Barbara A. Biesecker and John Louis Lucaites (New York: Peter Lang Publishing, 2009), 3.

47. McGee, "A Materialist's Conception of Rhetoric," 23. Emphasis in original.

48. Biesecker and Lucaites, "Introduction," 3.

49. McGee, "A Materialist's Conception of Rhetoric," 18.

50. Biesecker and Lucaites, "Introduction," 3.

51. Greene, 25.

52. Dana Cloud, "The Materiality of Discourse as Oxymoron: A Challenge to Critical Rhetoric," *Western Journal of Communication* 58, no. 3 (1994): 141-163.

53. John M. Sloop, "People Shopping," in *Rhetoric, Materiality, and Politics*, eds. Barbara A. Biesecker and John Louis Lucaites (New York NY: Peter Lang Publishing, 2009), 70. Emphasis in original.

54. Cloud, "The Materiality of Discourse as Oxymoron," 142.

55. *Ibid.*, 145.

56. Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, 38-39, 73, and 193.

57. Greene, 22.

58. Cindy L. Griffin, "Rhetoricizing Alienation: Mary Wollstonecraft and the Rhetorical Construction of Women's Oppression," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 80 (1994): 293-312; Aimee Marie Carrillo Rowe, "Whose 'America'? The Politics of Rhetoric and Space in the Formation of U.S. Nationalism," *Radical History Review* 89 (2004): 115-134; and Jones Jr. and Foust, "Staging and Enforcing Consumerism in the City."

59. See, for example Blair and Michel, "The AIDS Memorial Quilt;" Thomas R. Dunn, "Remembering 'A Great Fag': Visualizing Public Memory and the Construction of Queer Space," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 97, no. 4 (2011): 435-460; and Andrew Wood, "A Rhetoric of Ubiquity: Terminal Space as Omnitopia," *Communication Theory* 13, no. 3 (2003): 324-344.

60. See, for example Andrew F. Wood, "'What Happens [in Vegas]': Performing the Post-Tourist *Flâneur* in 'New York' and 'Paris,'" *Text and Performance Quarterly* 25, no. 4 (2005): 315-333; Blair and Michel, "The AIDS Memorial Quilt;" Dunn, "Remembering 'A Great Fag.'" For examples outside the rhetorical discipline see: Erin Diana McClellan, "Making Sense of the City: Place, Space, and Rhetoric in Portland's Pioneer Courthouse Square," *Liminalities: A Journal of Performance Studies* 4, no. 1 (2008); Cristina Moretti, "Places and Stages: Narrating and Performing the City in Milan, Italy," *Liminalities: A Journal of Performance Studies* 4, no. 1 (2008); and Giorgia Aiello and Irina Gendelman, "Seattle's Pike Place Market (De)constructed: An Analysis of Tourist Narratives about a Public Space." *Journal of Tourism and Cultural Change* 5, no. 3 (2008): 158-185.

61. See, for example Wood, "A Rhetoric of Ubiquity;" Andrew F. Wood, "Two Roads Diverge: Route 66, 'Route 66,' and the Mediation of American Ruin;" and Dickinson and Ott, "Neoliberal Capitalism, Globalization, and Lines of Flight." In their introduction to a special

issue of *Critical Studies in Media Communication* titled *Space, Matter, Mediation and the Prospectus of Democracy*, Donovan Conley and Greg Dickinson posit that “texts are neither beginnings, nor copies of beginnings, nor the last word; they are relay points, mediators, intermediaries.” Donovan Conley and Greg Dickinson, “Textural Democracy,” *Critical Studies in Media Communication* 27, no. 1 (2010): 1-7. Emphasis in original.

62. Morris, “Pink Herring and the Fourth Persona.”

63. Blair, Jeppeson, and Pucci Jr., “Public Memorializing in Postmodernity.”

64. See Michael Calvin McGee, “Text, Context, and the Fragmentation of Contemporary Culture,” *Western Journal of Communication* 54, no. 3 (1990): 274-289.

65. Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1984), 33.

66. Ibid.

67. Blair, “Contemporary U.S. Memorial Sites,” 19.

68. Dickinson, “Joe’s Rhetoric,” 5.

69. Ibid.

70. Not only would a viewpoint in which rhetoric is only signification limit the ability to engage with rhetoric’s consequentiality, as Dickinson claims, but it would also prevent the critic from addressing the conditions and material relationships that make it possible to signify in a particular way. Material conditions and symbols are not only co-constitutive, in that one gives rise to and makes the other possible, but they are also intertwined so that a symbol cannot escape its material existence any more than an object could escape its symbolic potential.

71. Dickinson, “Joe’s Rhetoric,” 11.

72. Ibid., 6.



73. Zagacki and Gallagher, "Rhetoric and Materiality," 177.
74. Ibid.
75. Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, 172.
76. Blair, "Contemporary U.S. Memorial Sites," 23.
77. Ibid., 50.
78. Conley and Dickinson, "Textural Democracy," 3.
79. Lawrence Grossberg, "The Circulation of Cultural Studies," *Critical Studies in Mass Communication* 6 (1989): 413-421.
80. Blair, "Reflections on Criticism and Bodies."
81. Giorgia Aiello, "From Wound to Enclave: The Visual-Material Performance of Urban Renewal in Bologna's *Manifattura delle Arti*," *Western Journal of Communication* 75, no. 4 (2011): 341-366.
82. Blair, "Reflections on Criticism and Bodies," 287.
83. Ibid., 286.
84. Aiello, "From Wound to Enclave," 355. Pillars mark the boundaries of redeveloped areas, but the material object make entering by a car impossible and paving stones instead of concrete make things such as skateboarding more difficult.
85. Blair, "Contemporary U.S. Memorial Sites," 23.
86. Henry Glassie, *Material Culture* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1999). Lawrence Grossberg, "The Circulation of Cultural Studies," *Critical Studies in Mass Communication* 6 (1989): 417. "Ideas are real because they transform realities; they make a difference. But it is often less a matter of the content of ideas than the practices by which ideas are constructed and transformed and placed into the world." Carl Knappett, *Thinking Through*

*Material Culture: An Interdisciplinary Perspective* (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2005). See also, *Matter, Materiality and Modern Culture* ed. P.M. Graves-Brown (New York, NY: Routledge, 2000) and *Rhetoric, Materiality, and Politics*, eds. Barbara A. Biesecker and John Louis Lucaites (New York, NY: Peter Lang Publishing, 2009).

87. See de Certeau's theory on strategies (spatial control) and tactics (temporary use of a space often in resistance to power structures) in de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*. For a more detailed analysis of the strategies of a particular place, see Aiello, "From Wound to Enclave."

88. Blair, "Contemporary U.S. Memorial Sites," 34.

89. Most notably the works of Henri Lefebvre and Doreen Massey.

90. Blair, "Contemporary U.S. Memorial Sites."

91. Blair, "Contemporary U.S. Memorial Sites," 30. Her questions were: "(1) What is the significance of the text's material existence? (2) What are the apparatuses and degrees of durability displayed by the text? (3) What are the text's modes or possibilities of reproduction or preservation? (4) What does the text do to (or with, or against) other texts? (5) How does the text act on people?"

92. Blair, Jeppeson, and Pucci Jr., "Public Memorializing in Postmodernity," 272-3 and Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, 199 and 216.

93. For examples of mixing reading and exploring see Blair, Jeppeson, and Pucci Jr., "Public Memorializing in Postmodernity;" Dickinson, "Joe's Rhetoric;" Zagacki and Gallagher, "Rhetoric and Materiality;" Wood, "What Happens [in Vegas];" Joan McAlister, "Material Aesthetics in Middle America: Simone Weil, the Problem of Roots, and the Pantopic Suburb," in

*Rhetoric, Materiality and Politics*, eds. Barbara A. Biesecker and John Louis Lucaites (New York: Peter Lang Publishing, 2009), 99-129; and Wood, “Two Roads Diverge.”

94. Lefebvre defines discourse about space as “restricted to words and signs, images and symbols while defining discourse in space as “in one particular space, dated and located.” *The Production of Space*, 104.

95. Wood’s “Two Roads Diverge” takes the tension between general discourse on Route 66 as a relic of Americana and the road itself as it exists today and places it at the center of the article.

96. McAlister’s “Material Aesthetics in Middle America,” shows how a general discourse or text on suburbia is picked up and made into a text about specific suburban subdivisions.

97. By “official” I mean materials that have been authorized by someone or some organization that has some degree of force, even just the force of owning something supposed to be “authentic.” John Bodnar, *Remaking America: Public Memory, Commemoration, and Patriotism in the Twentieth Century* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1992) and Dunn, “Remembering ‘A Great Fag,’” 441.

98. Vernacular meanings are created by people to better account for how a space is or feels than how it is supposed to be. Bodnar, *Remaking America*; Aaron Hess, “In Digital Remembrance: Vernacular Memory and the Rhetorical Construction of Web Memorials,” *Media, Culture and Society* 29, no. 5 (2007): 812-830; Amy Heyse, “Women’s Rhetorical Authority and Collective Memory: The United Daughters of the Confederacy Remember the South,” *Women and Language* 33, no. 2 (2010): 31-53.

99. See, for example Wood, “What Happens [in Vegas].”

100. See, for example Aiello and Gendelman, “Seattle’s Pike Place Market (De)constructed” and Moretti, “Places and Stages.”

101. This is not meant to eliminate the possibility of an unplanned (critical) moment of inspiration or realization. These experiences certainly can and do happen. However, the process of gathering more information and digging into the experience should search for something beyond the initial inspirational spark or realization that something is happening here.

102. Blair, “Reflections on Criticism and Bodies,” 286-7.

103. Zagacki and Gallagher, “Rhetoric and Materiality,” 176-7.

104. Blair, “Reflections on Criticism and Bodies.”

105. Dickinson, “Joe’s Rhetoric.”

106. Wood, ““What Happens [in Vegas].””

107. For a discussion on constructing material and symbolic boundaries of a text and the importance of personal history and knowledge on an experience, see Greg Dickinson, Brian L. Ott, and Eric Aoki, “Spaces of Remembering and Forgetting: The Reverent Eye/I at the Plains Indian Museum,” *Communication and Critical/Cultural Studies* 3, no. 1 (2006): 29-30 and their discussion of Barry Brummett, *Rhetoric in Popular Culture* (New York, NY: St. Martin’s Press, 1994), Blair and Michel “The AIDS Memorial Quilt,” and Gaynor Kavanagh, “Making Histories, Making Memories,” in *Making Histories in Museums*, ed. Gaynor Kavanagh (New York, NY: Leicester University Press, 1996).

108. “History,” MOAC Mall Holding LLC, accessed August 1, 2015, <http://www.mallofamerica.com/about/moa/history>.

109. Associated Press, “Simon Plans Biggest Mall,” *Saint Louis Post-Dispatch* (Saint Louis, MI), May 30, 1989.

110. S.J. Diamond, "Nation's Biggest Mall Has Roots in Medieval Market; Minnesota Project Puts New Spin on Old Concept by Combining Entertainment, Retailing and Social Activities," *Washington Post*, July 23, 1989.

111. Kara Swisher, "A Mall for America?; Minnesota Mega-Shopping Complex Combines Stores and Theme Park," *Washington Post*, June 30, 1991.

112. Ibid.

113. Ibid.

114. Craig Wilson, "Mega Mall of America: Retail Resort Indulges Urge to Shop," *USA Today*, July 14, 1992.

115. Ibid. Note the existence of a mall *tourism* manager. The Mall of America is destination, experience, and shopping center all at one time and in one place.

116. Ibid.

117. Goss, "The 'Magic of the Mall,'" 19.

118. The Associated Press article "Simon Plans Biggest Mall," mentions an exterior wall, but only so far as it facilitates those outside to witness the shopping available to them inside. "A glass wall on the Avenue of the Americas side will give pedestrians a view of dozens of stores on seven levels."

119. "Facts: Mall of America by the Numbers," MOAC Mall Holdings LLC, accessed July 29, 2015, <http://www.mallofamerica.com/about/moa/facts>.

120. Kendall R. Phillips, *Projected Fears: Horror Films and American Culture* (Westport, CT: Praeger Publishers, 2005).

121. Brian Massumi, "The Autonomy of Affect," *Cultural Critique* 31 (1995): 83-109.

122. Thomas Rickert, *Ambient Rhetoric: The Attunements of Rhetorical Being* (Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2013).

123. Michael K. Middleton, Samantha Senda-Cook, and Danielle Endres, “Articulating Rhetorical Field Methods: Challenges and Tensions,” *Western Journal of Communication* 75, no. 4 (2011): 386-406.

124. Carole Blair, “Reflections of Criticism and Bodies: Parables from Public Places,” *Western Journal of Communication* 65, no. 3 (2001): 271-294 and Greg Dickinson and Giorgia Aiello, “Being Through There Matters: Materiality, Bodies, and Movement in Urban Communication Research,” *International Journal of Communication* 10 (2016): 1294-1308.

125. Carole Blair, “Contemporary U.S. Memorial Sites as Exemplars of Rhetoric’s Materiality,” in *Rhetorical Bodies*, ed. Jack Selzer and Sharon Crowley (Madison WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 1999), 34 and Thomas Rickert, *Ambient Rhetoric: The Attunements of Rhetorical Being* (Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2013), *xii* and 33-4.

126. By using this example, I do not mean to assert that rhetoric or music is some kind of magic that can be exerted upon helpless victims, as it appears to be in the *Encomium of Helen*. Instead, I want to focus the reader on the difference between meaning and effect. Gorgias, *Encomium of Helen*, trans. George A. Kennedy in *The Rhetorical Tradition: Readings from Classical Times to the Present* 2 ed., eds. Patricia Bizzell and Bruce Herzberg (Boston, MA/ New York, NY, Bedford/ St. Martin’s, 2001), 44-46.

127. Blair, “Contemporary U.S. Memorial Sites,” 23.

128. Although, as this chapter aims to make clear, this is not to say that symbolism and meaning should be disregarded.

129. Greenblatt, *Learning to Curse: Essays in Early Modern Culture* (London: Routledge, 1990) and Kendall R. Phillips, *Projected Fears: Horror Films and American Culture* (Westport, CT: Praeger Publishers, 2005).

130. "Resonance, n." OED Online. September 2015. Oxford University Press. <http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/163743?> (accessed November 17, 2015).

131. Ibid.

132. For example, this intra-action is evident in a plethora of crime dramas and police procedurals when law enforcement spray luminol to detect blood at a scene. The combination of luminol, blood, and black lights creates a glow.

133. Greenblatt, *Learning to Curse*, 161, 170-2.

134. Karen Barad, "Posthumanist Performativity: Toward and Understanding of How Matter Comes to Matter," *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 28, no. 3 (2003): 801-831; Jane Bennett, "The Force of Things: Toward a Political Ecology of Matter," *Political Theory* 32, no. 3 (2004): 347-372; Jane Bennett, "The Agency of Assemblages and the North American Blackout," *Public Culture* 17, no. 3 (2005): 445-465.

135. Greenblatt, 170.

136. Phillips, 5.

137. Ibid., 6.

138. Ibid.

139. Michael Calvin McGee, "A Materialist's Conception of Rhetoric," in *Rhetoric, Materiality, and Politics*, eds. Barbara A. Biesecker and John Louis Lucaites (New York, NY: Peter Lang Publishing, 1982/2009), 17-42 and Darrel Allan Wanzer, "Delinking Rhetoric, or

Revisiting McGee's Fragmentation Thesis through Decoloniality," *Rhetoric and Public Affairs* 15, no. 4 (2012): 647-658.

140. Everyone may not be able to do all these things or in the same way, but bodies can encounter material components directly.

141. Thomas Carter and Elizabeth Collins Cromley, *Invitation to Vernacular Architecture: A Guide to the Study of Ordinary Buildings and Landscapes* (Knoxville, TN, The University of Tennessee Press, 2005), xiii.

142. Greenblatt, 170.

143. Greg Dickinson, "Joe's Rhetoric: Finding Authenticity at Starbucks," *Rhetoric Society Quarterly* 32, no. 4 (2002): 5-27 and Greg Dickinson, *Suburban Dreams: Imagining and Building the Good Life* (Tuscaloosa, AL: The University of Alabama Press, 2015).

144. Dickinson, *Suburban Dreams*, 23-28.

145. Carter and Cromley, xiii.

146. Airport lounges and security checkpoints, national borders, and political conventions also provide opportunities to see how materiality and symbolicity exert their forces differently.

147. I will complicate the notion of encouragement in the next section.

148. Greg Dickinson and Giorgia Aiello, "Being Through There Matters: Materiality, Bodies, and Movement in Urban Communication Research," *International Journal of Communication* 10 (2016): 1294-1308; Brian Massumi, "Strange Horizon: Building, Biograms, and the Body Topologic," in *Parables for the Virtual: Movement, Affect, Sensation* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2002), 203 and 206; and Brian Massumi, "The Autonomy of Affect," *Cultural Critique* 31 (1995): 95-96.

149. Massumi, "Autonomy of Affect," 87.



150. Rickert, 8 and 34.

151. The systemic discrimination against marginalized groups by government entities has been well documented and the subject of multiple rhetorical essays. Karma Chavez addressed these issues in “Spatializing Gender Performativity: Ecstasy and Possibilities for Livable Life in the Tragic Case of Victoria Arellano,” *Women’s Studies in Communication* 33, no. 1 (2010): 1-15. This essay attempts, and sometimes even succeeds, to reach the raw material consequences of these practices. Rhetorical resonance takes special care to ask questions such as, What material components enabled this interaction to take place? What led to those components being located in that place and in that time? What were the physical and material consequences to that meeting? How did that body and that mechanism of cultural control attune to one another? Additionally, rhetorical resonance aims to open up investigations into how these features worked together to produce particular outcomes.

152. See, for example, Blair, “Contemporary U.S. Memorial Sites; Carole Blair, “Reflections on Criticism and Bodies: Parables from Public Places,” *Western Journal of Communication* 65 no. 3 (2001): 271-294; Dickinson, “Joe’s Rhetoric;” Danielle Endres and Samantha Senda-Cook, “Location Matters: The Rhetoric of Place in Protest,” *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 97, no. 3 (2011): 257-282; Victoria J. Gallagher, “Memory and Reconciliation in the Birmingham Civil Rights Institute,” *Rhetoric and Public Affairs* 2, no. 2 (1999): 303-320; and Kenneth S. Zagacki and Victoria J. Gallagher, “Rhetoric and Materiality in the Museum Park at the North Carolina Museum of Art,” *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 95, no. 2 (May 2009): 171-191.

153. Massumi, “Strange Horizon,” 205.

154. Massumi, “The Autonomy of Affect,” 89.

155. Ibid., 88.
156. Ibid., 87.
157. Ibid.
158. Ibid., 90.
159. Barad, "Posthumanist Performativity," 814-818.
160. Ben Anderson, *Encountering Affect: Capacities, Apparatuses, Conditions* (Dorchester, UK: Ashgate Publishing, 2014), 10-11.
161. Massumi, "The Autonomy of Affect," 89.
162. Bennett, "The Force of Things;" Bennett, "The Agency of Assemblages and the North American Blackout;" and Endres and Senda-Cook.
163. Massumi, "The Autonomy of Affect," 91. Italics in original.
164. Ibid., 91 and 93. In Massumi's theory of affect, actions and expressions emerge from the realm of possibility by simultaneously not being turned away from and being turned toward. They are not necessarily selected, but allowed to emerge without being contained within the virtual.
165. Rickert, x.
166. Ibid., xii.
167. Ibid., xiii and 160.
168. See especially Rickert, 162, 164, and 175-6.
169. Ibid., xii.
170. Ibid., xii-xiii.
171. Ibid., xv, 3, and 5.

172. Ibid., 9. Rickert, drawing from Heidegger's *The Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics*, also notes that, "We are always already attuned; there are only changes in attunement."

173. In this case, by rhetorical systems, I mean both symbolic and material systems that have been in place and dominant long enough to become hegemonic.

174. Carole Blair, "Reflections of Criticism and Bodies: Parables from Public Places," *Western Journal of Communication* 65, no. 3 (2001): 271-294.

175. Sandra Harding, "Is There a Feminist Method?" in *Feminism and Methodology: Social Science Issues* ed. Sandra Harding (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1987), 2-14.

176. Michael K. Middleton, Samantha Senda-Cook, and Danielle Endres, "Articulating Rhetorical Field Methods: Challenges and Tensions," *Western Journal of Communication* 75, no. 4 (2011): 386-406. I use this essay as an exemplar of a line of methodological approaches. While these essays have their differences, they point in generally the same directions. See also, Karma R. Chávez, "Counter-Public Enclaves and Understanding the Function of Rhetoric in Social Movement Coalition-Building," *Communication Quarterly* 59, no. 1 (2011): 1-18; Dwight Conquergood, "Rethinking Ethnography: Towards a Critical Cultural Politics," *Communication Monographs* 58, no. 2 (1991): 179-194; Dwight Conquergood, "Ethnography, Rhetoric, and Performance," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 78, no. 1 (1992):80-123; Dwight Conquergood, "Performance Studies: Interventions and Radical Research," *The Drama Review* 46, no. 2 (2002): 145-156; Dwight Conquergood, "Lethal Theatre: Performance, Punishment, and the Death Penalty," *Theatre Journal* 54, no. 3 (2002): 339-367; Danielle Endres and Samantha Senda-Cook, "Location Matters: The Rhetoric of Place in Protest," *Quarterly Journal of Speech*

97, no. 3 (2011): 257-282; Art Herbig and Aaron Hess, "Convergent Critical Rhetoric at the 'Rally to Restore Sanity': Exploring the Intersection of Rhetoric, Ethnography, and Documentary Production," *Communication Studies* 63, no. 3 (2012): 269-289; Aaron Hess, "Critical-Rhetorical Ethnography: Rethinking the Place and Process of Rhetoric," *Communication Studies* 62, no. 2 (2011): 127-152; George F. McHendry Jr., Michael K. Middleton, Danielle Endres, Samantha Senda-Cook, and Megan O'Byrne, "Rhetorical Critic(ism)'s Body: Affect and Fieldwork on a Plane of Immanence," *Southern Communication Journal* 79, no. 4 (2014): 293-310; Phaedra C. Pezzullo, "Performing Critical Interruptions: Stories, Rhetorical Invention, and the Environmental Justice Movement," *Western Journal of Communication* 65, no. 1 (2001): 1-25; Phaedra C. Pezzullo, "Touring 'Cancer Alley,' Louisiana: Performances of Community and Memory for Environmental Justice," *Text and Performance Quarterly* 23, no. 3 (2003): 226-252; and Kenneth S. Zagacki and Victoria J. Gallagher, "Rhetoric and Materiality in the Museum Park at the North Carolina Museum of Art," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 95, no. 2 (2009): 171-191.

177. Blair, "Reflections of Criticism and Bodies," Blair somewhat relies upon a Benjaminian framework of aura from Walter Benjamin's "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction" essay to make her argument. Greg Dickinson and Giorgia Aiello, "Being Through There Matters: Materiality, Bodies, and Movement in Urban Communication Research," *International Journal of Communication* 10 (2016): 1294-1308. For other essays within this general methodological vein see, for example, Giorgia Aiello, "From Wound to Enclave: The Visual-Material Performance of Urban Renewal in Bologna's Manifattura delle Arti," *Western Journal of Communication* 75, no. 4 (2011): 341-366; Carole Blair, Marsha S. Jeppeson, and Enrico Pucci, Jr., "Public Memorializing in Postmodernity: The Vietnam Veterans

Memorial as Prototype,” *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 77, no. 3 (1991): 263-288; Carole Blair and Neil Michel, “Reproducing Civil Rights Tactics: The Rhetorical Performances of the Civil Rights Memorial,” *Rhetoric Society Quarterly* 30, no. 2 (2000): 31-55; Carole Blair and Neil Michel, “The AIDS Memorial Quilt and the Contemporary Culture of Public Commemoration,” *Rhetoric and Public Affairs* 10, no. 4 (2007): 595-626; Greg Dickinson, “Joe’s Rhetoric: Finding Authenticity at Starbucks,” *Rhetoric Society Quarterly* 32, no. 4 (2002): 5-27; Greg Dickinson and Brian L. Ott, “Neoliberal Capitalism, Globalization, and Lines of Flight: Vectors and Velocities at the 16th Street Mall,” *Cultural Studies ↔ Critical Methodologies* 13, no. 6 (2013): 529-535; Thomas R. Dunn, “Remembering ‘A Great Fag’: Visualizing Public Memory and the Construction of Queer Space,” *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 97, no. 4 (2011): 435-460; and Robert J. Topinka, “Resisting the Fixity of Suburban Space: The Walker as Rhetorician,” *Rhetoric Society Quarterly* 42, no. 1 (2012): 65-84.

178. Middleton, Senda-Cook, and Endres, 387.

179. Ibid.

180. Ibid.

181. Ibid., 399 and 400.

182. Ibid., 388.

183. Dickinson and Aiello argue that despite not being “social scientific,” that rhetoricians have important research to contribute. Dickinson and Aiello, 1303.

184. Middleton, Senda-Cook, and Endres, 392. Italics in original.

185. Ibid.

186. Especially Blair, Jeppeson, and Pucci Jr.; Greg Dickinson, Brian L. Ott, and Eric Aoki, “Memory and Myth at the Buffalo Bill Museum,” *Western Journal of Communication* 69,

no. 2 (2005): 85-108; and Greg Dickinson, Brian L. Ott, and Eric Aoki, "Spaces of Remembering and Forgetting: The Reverent Eye/I at the Plains Indian Museum,"

*Communication and Critical/Cultural Studies* 3, no. 1 (2006): 27-47.

187. Middleton, Senda-Cook, and Endres, 392.

188. Kelly E. Happe, "The Body of Race: Toward a Rhetorical Understanding of Racial Ideology," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 99, no. 2 (2013):131-155; Philip C. Wander, "The Rhetoric of Science," *Western Speech Communication* 40, no. 4 (1976): 226-235; and Richard M. Weaver, "Language is Sermonic," in *Language is Sermonic: Richard M. Weaver on the Nature of Rhetoric* eds. Richard L. Johannesen, Rennard Strickland, and Ralph T. Eubanks (Baton Rouge, LA: Louisiana State University Press, 1970), 201-225.

189. Robert Asen, "A Discourse Theory of Citizenship," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 90, no. 2 (2004): 189-211; Thomas M. Lessl, "Science and the Sacred Cosmos: The Ideological Rhetoric of Carl Sagan," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 71, no. 2 (1985): 175-187; Thomas M. Lessl, "Naturalizing Science: Two Episodes in the Evolution of a Rhetoric of Scientism," *Western Journal of Communication* 60, no. 4 (1996): 379-396; Thomas M. Lessl, "The Culture of Science and the Rhetoric of Scientism: From Francis Bacon to the Darwin Fish," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 93, no. 2 (2007): 123-149.

190. Harding.

191. Fisher, Walter R., "Rhetorical Criticism as Criticism." *Western Journal of Communication* 38, no. 2 (1974): 75-80, Lucas, Stephen E., "The Schism in Rhetorical Scholarship." *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 67, no. 1 (1981): 1-20; Jeffery L. Bineham, "Pedagogical Justification for a Theory-Method Distinction in Rhetorical Criticism," *Communication Education* 39, no. 1 (1990): 30-45.

192. I return to this point in more detail in the next section.
193. Middleton, Senda-Cook, and Endres, 391. Emphasis added.
194. Ibid., 392.
195. Walter Benjamin, "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction," in *Illuminations* ed. Hannah Arendt trans. Harry Zohn (New York, NY: Schocken Books, 1968), 217-252.
196. Blair, "Reflections of Criticism and Bodies," 276.
197. Blair makes a similar point with Mount Rushmore. Ibid.
198. Ibid., 275.
199. Dickinson and Aiello.
200. Ibid., 1295.
201. Ibid., 1301-3 and Dickinson and Ott.
202. Blair, "Reflections of Criticism and Bodies," 276 and Dickinson and Aiello, 1304.
203. Patricia Bizzell and Bruce Herzberg, "Introduction," in *The Rhetorical Tradition: Readings from Classical Times to the Present*, 2 ed., ed. Patricia Bizzell and Bruce Herzberg (Boston/New York: Bedford/ St. Martin's, 2001), 21-2.
204. Thomas Rickert, *Ambient Rhetoric: The Attunements of Rhetorical Being* (Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2013), 182-190 and Dickinson and Aiello, 1297.
205. Kenneth Burke, "The Five Key Terms of Dramatism," in *A Grammar of Motives*, (New York, NY: Prentice-Hall, 1945), x.
206. Mari Boor Tonn, Valerie A. Endress, and John N. Diamond, "Hunting and Heritage on Trial: A Dramatistic Debate over Tragedy, Tradition, and Territory," in *Readings in Rhetorical Criticism*, 4 ed., ed. Carl R. Burghardt (State College, PA: Strata Publishing, 2010),

253-270. For other uses and extensions see James W. Cheseboro, "Extensions of the Burkian System," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 78, no. 3 (1992): 356-368; Celeste Michelle Condit, "Post-Burke: Transcending the Sub-Stance of Dramatism," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 78, no. 3 (1992): 349-355; and Clarke Rountree, "Instantiating 'The Law' and its Dissents in *Korematsu v. United States*: A Dramatistic Analysis of Judicial Discourse," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 87, no. 1 (2001): 1-24.

207. Kenneth Burke, "Container and Thing Contained," in *A Grammar of Motives* (New York, NY: Prentice-Hall, 1945), 3-20.

208. Burke, "The Five Key Terms of Dramatism," xii-xiii.

209. Tonn, Endress, and Diamond, 254-255.

210. Kendall R. Phillips, *Projected Fears: Horror Films and American Culture* (Westport, CT: Praeger Publishers, 2005), 6.

211. Kenneth Burke, "Terministic Screens," in *Language as Symbolic Action: Essays on Life, Literature, and Method* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1966), 44-62.

212. Lloyd Bitzer, "The Rhetorical Situation," in *Readings in Rhetorical Criticism*, ed. Carl R. Burghardt, Fourth Edition (Pennsylvania: Strata Publishing, 2010), 46-55.

213. Dickinson and Aiello, 1301.

214. David Harvey, "A View from Federal Hill," in *Spaces of Capital: Towards a Critical Geography* (New York, NY: Routledge, 1992/2001), 150.

215. James J. Farrell, *One Nation Under Goods: Malls and the Seductions of American Shopping*, (Washington D.C.: Smithsonian Books, 2003), 24.

216. Harvey, 150.

217. Personal Interview, Mall of America Construction Division, Jan. 25, 2016.



218. Andrew F. Wood also notes the importance of Minnesota's climate when discussing Victor Gruen's decision to enclose the Southdale Mall, which Wood claims is the prototype of the modern enclosed mall. Andrew F. Wood, "Malls," in *City Ubiquitous: Place, Communication, and the Rise of Omnitopia*, (Cresskill, NJ: Hampton Press, 2009), 135.

219. "Facts: Mall of America by the Numbers."

220. Retail anthropologist Paco Underhill, in his memoir to mall visitors, writes, "Next time you're at a mall, instead of going directly inside, stroll around the perimeter of the place. It will be one of the more joyless promenades you'll ever make. You'll be very alone out there, on a narrow strip of sidewalk, assuming it has a sidewalk—many malls don't—with maybe a security guard or two to keep you company. (They'll be watching you closely, since someone who walks around a mall is, by definition, an odd character)." Paco Underhill, *Call of the Mall*, (New York, NY: Simon and Schuster, 2004), 21.

221. Mary Divine, "Mall of America Threatened in al-Shabaab Video," *Pioneer Press* (St. Paul, MN), Feb. 21, 2015 and John Bacon and David Jackson, "Threatened Mallgoers Told to be 'Vigilant,'" *USA Today*, Feb. 23, 2015.

222. "Hours," MOAC Mall Holdings LLC, accessed April 16, 2016.

223. "One adult may supervise up to 10 youth. During the Parental Escort hours, anyone 21 years or younger should be prepared to show a Mall of America employee an identification card . . . No form of college or high school I.D. will be accepted, even if accompanied by a state driver's license permit application." "Parental Escort Policy," MOAC Mall Holding LLC, accessed April 14, 2015, <http://www.mallofamerica.com/guests/escorts>.

224. Underhill, 33-4 and 157-170.

225. “Mall of America and Bloomington, MN 2016 Visitors Guide.” Mall of America and Bloomington, MN. 26, emphases in original.

226. “Mall of America and Bloomington, MN 2015 Visitors Guide.” Mall of America and Bloomington, MN and “Mall of America and Bloomington, MN 2016 Visitors Guide.”

227. Greg Dickinson and Brian L. Ott, “Neoliberal Capitalism, Globalization, and Lines of Flight: Vectors and Velocities at the 16th Street Mall,” *Cultural Studies ↔ Critical Methodologies* 13, no. 6 (2013): 529-535.

228. Wood, “Malls,” 135.

229. Carole Blair, Marsha S. Jeppeson, and Enrico Pucci Jr., “Public Memorializing in Postmodernity: The Vietnam Veterans Memorial as Prototype,” *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 77 no. 3 (1991): 263-288.

230. Audience does not necessarily mean human in this case.

231. For rhetorics to actualize they do not have to be successful, only encounter an audience and coalesce around them.

232. While not necessarily a new argument, this thesis has gone beyond the symbolism of Michael Calvin McGee’s landmark essay on fragmentation. Michael Calvin McGee, “Text, Context, and the Fragmentation of Contemporary Culture,” *Western Journal of Communication* 54, no. 3 (1990): 274-289.

233. Sandra Harding, “Is There a Feminist Method?” in *Feminism and Methodology: Social Science Issues* ed. Sandra Harding (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1987), 2-14.