V IS WHAT DEMOCRACY LOOKS LIKE:

IMAGE POLITICS AND THE

GUY FAWKES MASK

By

BRYAN L. JONES

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Dissertation Approved:

Lynn C. Lewis

Dissertation Adviser
Ron C. Brooks

Joshua Daniel-Wariya

Denni Blum

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iv

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Abstract: How do political demonstrators use the Guy Fawkes mask from *V for Vendetta* to persuade viewers to engage in actions of dissent in both online and corporeal environments? In seeking an answer, I identify important connections among public writing, visual rhetoric, and digital activism that allow me to understand how dissident rhetors communicate their views and construct ethos in online and corporeal spaces. Political demonstrators use the Guy Fawkes mask to construct ethos and transform spaces into protest arenas. I argue that visual rhetoric contributes to the building of activist movements by alerting potential participants to the transformative possibilities inherent in the environments they inhabit, helping to forge dwelling places for emerging dissidents. Understanding ethos as the creation (or transformation) of a rhetorical space is more effective than merely seeing it as an appeal to some platonic form of universal good character, as most textbooks still define it. For me, an appeal to ethos is better thought of as what Michael J. Hyde, in *The Ethos of Rhetoric,* calls a dwelling place, which refers to the way "discourse is used to transform space and time into 'dwelling places' where people can deliberate about and 'know together' some matter of interest." (xv). I add to the discussion of ethos as a dwelling place by showing how activist rhetors build a sense of dwelling through their visual rhetoric. Ethos develops visually in the concept of our appearance to others, not only in the masks we wear when we construct our persona, but also in the ways in which our personas are constructed through the masks we adopt in specific situations. The V mask as used by protesters and the hacktivist collective Anonymous has become a dwelling place, with clues as to specific ethics taking shape for the wearer in the way the mask is presented. Rather than seeking to directly persuade powerful actants to behave in certain ways, they seek to gather others into their dwelling as they slowly transform what it means to live in the environments they inhabit.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER I

Masking Mischief: Ethos, Visuality and the Guy Fawkes Mask

On November 5th, 1605 Guy Fawkes, dressed in his iconic wide-brimmed hat and long

black cloak, pushes a wagon filled with thirty-six barrels of gunpowder through a tunnel

he and his co-conspirators have dug in order to provide a secret route to the cellars under

London's House of Lords. Fawkes sets his fuse and is about to strike the fatal match

when he is apprehended red-handed by the King's men, who proceed to torture him for

information before convicting him of treason. Fawkes is soon set to be drawn and

quartered. But he denies them the satisfaction, leaping to his death from the executioner's

stage and breaking his neck. November the 5th is declared a holiday, seen by some as a

way to further oppress Catholics but celebrated by many as a way of displaying loyalty

to England. So goes the romanticized tale of Guy Fawkes, whose attempt to blow up a

government building earned him the ironic title of the only man to ever enter parliament

with honest intentions. Never mind that he never made it to parliament, but was instead

apprehended outside his residence on his way to the tunnel, the story recounted above is

more or less how the gunpowder plot has persisted in the popular memory. But why is the

image of Guy Fawkes popping up at political rallies in the 21st century that have nothing

to do with theocracy?

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Today, it would make no sense to trace the image back to a 17th century terrorist bent on installing a Catholic theocracy, point out the inconsistencies with using the image as a symbol of protest, and call the issue settled. The factual record of Guy Fawkes isn't what is important. What is important is Guy Fawkes: the image. Ever since the King's men spoiled the plot, the image of Guy Fawkes has been reworked in several interesting ways. Each reworking of the Guy Fawkes image has brought something different. The first reworking of this image emerged through bonfire night, where Guy Fawkes was burned in effigy every November the 5th. In the 1980s, Alan Moore and David Lloyd created a comic book called *V for Vendetta* intended to subvert current trends in superhero stories by bringing the notion of the superhero more in line with left-wing anarchist political theory. They named their hero V, and gave him a wooden mask of Guy Fawkes to wear while he fought against a tyrannical government (based on the rise of radical UK conservatism of the late 70s) and inspired the citizens of a future dystopia to revolt (Colter). When Warner Bros. released a major motion picture adapting the comic to film in 2005, the directors decided to recount Fawkes' plot in a manner very close to the romantic version I give above, showing his actions in a slow motion montage as Natalie Portman reads the famous rhyme in voice over:

Remember, remember, the Fifth of November, the Gunpowder Treason and Plot. I know of no reason why the Gunpowder Treason should ever be forgot... But what of the man? I know his name was Guy Fawkes and I know, in 1605, he attempted to blow up the Houses of Parliament. But who was he really? What was he like? We are told to remember the idea, not the man, because a man can fail. He can be caught, he can be killed and forgotten, but 400 years later, an idea can still change the world. I've witnessed first hand the power of ideas, I've seen people kill in the name of them, and

die defending them... but you cannot kiss an idea, cannot touch it, or hold it... ideas do

not bleed, they do not feel pain, they do not love... And it is not an idea that I miss, it

is a man... A man that made me remember the Fifth of November. A man that I will

never forget.

But, how is it that today's protesters have donned a mask bearing the visage of a terrorist

from 400 years ago? What if anything does it have to do with Moore and Lloyd's creation

and the notion of radical politics? In short, what rhetorical elements are in play when a

protester wears the Guy Fawkes mask? What ways of seeing are engaged? Disrupted? These

questions fuel the rhetorical analysis of the Guy Fawkes mask presented in this dissertation.

The goal of this dissertation is to determine the ways in which image politics function

in both corporeal and noncorporeal environments in order to ascertain how ethos develops in

different situations of resistance. The book centers on one image, the Guy Fawkes mask,

comparing its use among different protests in both online and real life settings. Today's

protesters have made the Guy Fawkes mask *the* image of outrage in political demonstration.

As David Lloyd put it in an interview with the BBC, "The Guy Fawkes mask has now

become a common brand and a convenient placard to use in protest against tyranny - and I'm

happy with people using it, it seems quite unique, an icon of popular culture being used this

way" (Waites). Lloyd is correct. The mask is used for a number of political ends. Beginning

sometime after the release of the film *V for Vendetta*, the mask began to appear in protests in

a number of different ways. Two examples can provide an idea of the range of political

philosophies in play when the mask makes an appearance. In 2007, supporters of then

presidential candidate, Ron Paul, a conservative libertarian who supports free-market

principles, broke a single day record for Republican fundraising by asking for donations on

November the 5th. The New York Times reported that Paul supporters posted a video clip of the candidate on the website ThisNovember5th.com that included phrases that appeared to be in conjunction with the goals of a revolutionary like Fawkes. The video appeared to show Paul saying "The true patriot challenges the state when the state embarks on enhancing its power at the expense of the individual" (Kirkpatrick). The move contradicts not only how the mask might symbolize Fawkes, who is remembered as a supporter of catholic theocracy, but also the possible symbolic connection to comic book protagonist created by Lloyd and Moore. These contradictions were not lost on the staff of *The New Republic*, who reposted a blog by Jacob T. Levy attempting to keep "track of the number of symbolic inversions" in play. Levy, a professor of political theory at McGill University, wrote, "Just to finalize the weirdness: notice that V portrayed a fable of a fascistic British state in the 1980s. Anti-Thatcherism ran through the work, in big, boldfaced, highlighted, and underlined subtext. Ron Paul is an anti-statist of an entirely market-oriented variety, who has said of Thatcher that she 'embraced American values such as freedom and limited government,' and Thatcher is wildly popular among Ron Paul's conservative-libertarian fan base."

On the other end of the spectrum lies the Occupy Wall Street protesters. Comics commentator Rich Johnston recounted a story to BBC News magazine of a group of comics fans dressed as V passing through an Occupy protest on their way to a comic book convention who were harassed by police thinking they were part of the protest merely because of the mask (Waites). Even though the message may have been different in each setting, there are a few similarities. The mask is anti-authoritative and non-representational. It fosters resistant ethos in this way. Not as an authority, but as a role to play in a battle of competing realities. As Nelda Reynolds has argued, "Ethos in fact, occurs in the

'between'…as writers struggle to identify their own positions at the intersection of various communities and attempt to establish authority for themselves and their claims" (333). The collectively resistant ethos at home in the mask emerges at the intersection of competing communities.

The Guy Fawkes mask is a disruptive image event, one that calls for rhetoric scholars to rethink assumptions that have limited the power of protest. The rhetorical and political power of protest is limited through common assumptions, common ways of seeing protest as merely a mode of expression rather than a mode of transgression. Rather than arguing that protest can change minds, I argue that protest is rhetorical in indirect ways that may not be understood as persuasive in the usual sense of arguing for an opponent to accept a certain view of reality.

Instead of viewing protest as mere expression, protest rhetoric should be seen as displaying new realities, new ways of seeing and living together. In *Rhetoric for Radicals,* Jason Del Gandio makes an argument familiar to those who follow activist studies. According to Del Gandio, a new sense of how and why protests are needed has emerged among the newest social movements in the face of globalization after the 1999 World Trade Organization (WTO) protests in Seattle. Del Gandio argues that a sense that the work of social movements no longer hinges on notions of representation has emerged among the newest social movements. That is, the rhetoric deployed in the protests of the newest social movements "creates rather than represents reality" (183). Protest is no longer about making one's view heard, it is about showing onlookers what democracy looks like. That picture of democracy is not one of polite deliberation and exchange in the marketplace of ideas. But it is also anti-representational in a different way. It promotes direct democracy in ways that are

evident in the very structures these organizations take. According to Richard Day, Christina Foust, and Del Gandio, the newest social movements don't promote singular causes nor do they abide by leaders. Anonymous, an internet based collective who sometimes engage in acts of computer mediated activism (or hacktivism), even insists on eschewing terms like member, group, and leader in order to function as a direct democracy. In addition, those who engage in this type of protest tend to promote direct democracy with an understanding that the underrepresented cannot rely on representational politics to be free. The underrepresented must be able to present their own reality directly. In order to do that effectively, protest actions must directly disrupt operations whose continued deployment results in the unequal distribution of power. This understanding of the role of protest in society is evident in actions like occupying buildings, blocking traffic, striking, and other forms of direct action. Researchers who study these direct actions and the rhetoric deployed by the groups who partake in them must take into account the complex relationship between images, words, and environments in order to understand its transformative power.

It has long been accepted that images influence political decision making. Here, I include a brief short survey of scholarship in order to address the complexities of the interrelationship of images, words, and places. Kevin DeLuca wrote the first book on the subject of *Image Politics*, giving rhetoric scholars the term Image Event: "staged acts of protest designed for media dissemination" (Delicath and DeLuca, 315). DeLuca had in mind a literal event, an action taking place between agitators and the dominant social order. His book relies on the words of a veteran Greenpeace activist to help define image events and display their rhetorical goal: "success comes in reducing a complex set of issues to symbols that break people's comfortable equilibrium, get them asking whether there are better ways to

do things" (3). DeLuca explained image events with examples drawn from environmentalist groups like Greenpeace who among other acts, "simultaneously hung banners from smokestacks in eight European countries in order to create a composite photograph that would spell out 'STOP' twice, dressed as penguins to protest development of Antarctica, delivered a dead seal to 10 Downing Street (home of the British Prime Minister), and used drift nets to spell out 'Ban Drift Nets Now' on the Mall in Washington, DC" (3). For DeLuca, these actions provide "a model that demonstrates how to exploit the immense possibilities of television for radical change" (3). However, this model suits a broadcast model of information dissemination, and that does not appear to be what demonstrators wearing the Guy Fawkes mask intend to harness. New media scholars usually point out the differences between the one-to-many broadcast model of old media and the many-to-many broadcast power of new media in ways that call DeLuca's assumption into contention (Shirky, Castells, Anderson).

In addition to the differences in how messages are disseminated today, the use of the Guy Fawkes mask -- although most famously attached to the work of the hacktivist collective, Anonymous -- is used for several different activists ends by several (sometimes competing) activists collectives. In fact, participants in Anonymous constantly argue about the direction they should take and what it means to be Anonymous. In addition, as Galia Yanoshevsky points out "If the impact of image event on public argumentation depends, as Delicath and DeLuca claim, 'on how the audience encounters, assembles, and utilizes the fragments,' then we need to account for the ways in which image events *become* arguments when disseminated in the media" (paragraph 2). This means looking at how words are used in relation with images, but also, I argue, other contextual and material factors according to

where and when the mask appears as well as how the message is disseminated. Yanoshevsky exposes overlooked complexities of the image event in the aftermath of dissemination by focusing on how image events are framed by media outlets: both in print and online. She shows how a message can be distorted through the frame deployed by those who disseminate the image. In addition, she shows how using certain "stereotyped" images in image events to recall older acts of resistance have both positive and negative effects on audiences.

Yanoshevsky's notion of the sterotyped image helps expose some of the complexities of the Guy Fawkes mask. Her analysis demonstrates that "the stereotyped image event produced trite, battered arguments that did not contribute to the expansion of public discussion. On the other hand, the same appeal to stereotyped images produced a critical outlook on the current state of opinion. By referring them to the stereotypical element in the image event, readers are asked to question their current assumptions in a given conflict" (paragraph 5). The Guy Fawkes mask holds similarities to what Yanoshevsky considers a sterotyped image in that it evokes a past instance of resistance: the gunpowder plot. But it also calls for its own framing of issues by juxtaposing the image of the character V against their target, who in the analogical reasoning inspired by this juxtaposition may be framed as tyrannical in certain instances. In addition, both Yanoshevsky and DeLuca take an uncomplicated view of messages between a sender and a receiver as one would in a one-to-many broadcast format. Though Yanoshevsky looks at the way image events are framed by internet users after they receive the image, she does not explore the many-to-many broadcast model that allows internet activists to frame their own messages more directly. In contrast, Anonymous does this by promoting their actions in videos they create and disseminate themselves. While wearing the mask, they close these videos with the same phrase: "We are

legion. We do not forgive. We do not forget. Expect us." This is significantly different from hanging banners urging people to stop an environmentally harmful action, as covered by DeLuca in *Image Politics*. The appeal here is to the power of legion itself. One can join them, or appeal to them for help, or try to stop them, but they are going to directly hinder the actions of those whom they find to be harmful.

The use of the Guy Fawkes mask connotes a move to take matters into one's own hands while their words frame action in a way that relies on the fears people have of the internet and the information age in general. With the phrase, "We do not forgive. We do not forget," Anonymous takes on the persona of the internet itself, inverting the commonly used phrase "forgive and forget." In addition, the phrase taps into a widely-held view concerning digital permanence, the idea that once something is uploaded to the internet it is there forever. For example, an often repeated claim holds that a video or picture may be uploaded to the internet by its owner, where some other internet user can view it and copy it for her own use. The original owner may take their material off the net, but they can do nothing about the copies held by other internet users. In an article from New York Times magazine, Jeffrey Rosen warns, "It's often said that we live in a permissive era, one with infinite second chances. But the truth is that for a great many people, the permanent memory bank of the Web increasingly means there are *no* second chances — no opportunities to escape a scarlet letter in your digital past. Now the worst thing you've done is often the first thing everyone knows about you." Via the many-to-many broadcast environment, Anonymous forces its target to face the reality that Rosen warns of.

Anonymous put this notion of digital permanence into play as they composed their first video messages. Tom Cruise had produced a video with the Church of Scientology

9

wherein he said some things that later embarrassed him when the video appeared online. He tried to take down the video, but through the actions of many people who would eventually become the hacktivist collective known as Anonymous, copies of the video were put back up almost as soon as Cruise could take them down (Stryker 240-3). In fact, the assumptions behind DeLuca's image events differ from the assumptions of media in online environments. The phrase used by Anonymous in videos mocking Tom Cruise may appear as to some a mere reworking of the phrase "forgive and forget," but taking into account Cruise's failed attempts to remove the embarrassing video from the internet makes Anonymous' deployment of the image/text something else: the voice of a living internet seeking revenge for taking away a source of amusement. So, images, words, and places are interrelated in highly complex ways that impact meaning making, which become visible when emphasis is placed on environment and disruption.

Place and community further complicate the meaning of image events. Ways of seeing one's self in relation to society can be disrupted through the political image, especially through the Bakhtinian notion of the carnivalesque. The notion of the carnivalesque, and especially the use of laughter, is an important aspect of ethos in disruptive protests like the ones examined in this dissertation. In his book, *Rabelais and his World,* Bakhtin develops the concept of the carnivalesque though a close examination of how folk humor develops through the ages, leading him to the literature of Rabelais and an examination of art in his day. The notion of the carnivalesque is touched on in Christina R. Foust's *Transgression as a Mode of Resistance: Rethinking Social Movement in the Era of Corporate Globalization*, where she notes that "Bakhtin's carnival names a ritual practice of transgression, as well as an analytic or interpretive system to account for transgression" (11). To build her case, she

cites Lane Bruner, in "Carnivalesque Protest and the Humorless State," who argues that "the inversion of hierarchies, the reversal of binaries, the wearing of masks … are also ultimately capable of serving a much greater purpose: allowing subjects to enter a liminal realm of freedom and in so doing create a space for critique that would not otherwise be possible in 'normal' society" (in Foust 16). But Foust doesn't go on to examine the nature of masks as visual rhetoric: how they disrupt, how they offer more than merely the concealment of identity, how they transmit transformative qualities to not only the static notion of the self, providing a more interconnected understanding of individuals in society, but to the very spaces they enter. My own work stays with this notion of the carnivalesque by focusing on the ways in which protesters in the newest social movements use the Guy Fawkes mask in their rhetoric to not only display dissatisfaction but also to promote collective ethos. For Bakhtin, "Carnival is not a spectacle seen by the people; they live in it, and everyone participates because its very idea embraces all people. While carnival lasts, there is no other life outside it" (7). However, Foust notes a hint of what she considers an undesirable or old fashioned hegemonic mentality in Bakhtin that doesn't conform to the non-hegemonic rhetoric of the newest social movements. But I don't think that hegemony is lurking in Bakhtin's understanding of the mask. Bakhtin writes,

> "The mask is connected with the joy of change and reincarnation, with gay relativity and with merry negation of uniformity and similarity; it rejects conformity to oneself. The mask is related to transition, metamorphoses, the violation of natural boundaries, to mockery and familiar nicknames. It contains the playful element of life; it is based on a peculiar interrelation of reality and image…" (39-40).

11

For Foust this notion of hegemony she sees in Bakhtin is overcome when the philosophy of Nietzsche and the Rhizome of Deleuze and Guattari are added to Bakhtin's carnival transgressions. But, I want to take things in a different direction. Rather than adding Nietzsche and Rhizomes, as Foust does, I wish to focus on theories of visual rhetoric supplied by Kristie Fleckenstein so that a transgressive theory of visual rhetoric might be made in a way that furthers Foust's work on transgression in the newest social movements.

The mask is a visual piece of rhetoric, an unruly object that holds a transformative power that must be understood in ways that links to notions of the self, identity, and space. What is needed is a study of visual protest rhetoric that combines theories of transgression through the carnivalesque with theories of ethos as location. This dissertation provides such study though a close rhetorical analysis of the Guy Fawkes mask as used by protesters during the Maple Spring and the hacktivist collective Anonymous. I argue that the work of Christina Foust when mixed with Kristie Fleckenstein's notion of symbiotic knots forms a theory can help researchers understand how the rhetorical appeal of political images transforms ways of seeing one's relationship with place. In *Vision, Rhetoric, and Social Action in the Composition Classroom,* Fleckenstein develops a complex metaphor of a knot containing three threads, each representing a habitual element: vision, rhetoric, and place. These habits are interlocking and organic, emerging for people as they go about their daily lives. People are thus, sutured or stitched into their roles through the habitual relations formed with the images, words, and spaces that they interact with on a daily basis. This might lead one to think that people lack agency, but this is not what Fleckenstein argues. Building off the notion of the habitual male gaze, which she aligns with John Berger's comment that women have developed the habit of "watch[ing] themselves being looked at" (In Fleckenstein,

12

Vision, 29), Fleckenstein argues that habits formed by these knots are as much "formative" as they are "transformative." Discussing her theory of a visual knot of habit, she argues that "because there is no isomorphic match between image and experience or image and visual habit, the stitches suturing image to reality, image to visual habit unravel, opening up gaps where the possibility of new images and new ways of seeing can flourish" (29). She explains that such is the case for all the threads in her knot metaphor. Because there is no direct link to reality supplied by either an image, a word, or a place, people are not slaves to the habitual relations formed through interactions with images, words, and spaces. Although she describes how a knot of silence and "ingrained ways of seeing" the body can tie people up and bind them to racist and sexist ways of seeing, she also shows how a symbiotic knot of contradictions "provides options for subversion, options for shocking self and other into new ways of seeing" (112). It is with the symbiotic knot of contradictions that I take up this thread, tugging at it in ways intended to help rhetoric scholars better understand the ways in which subversive actions, like the direct actions I describe above, account for a creation of new ways of seeing.

Chapter Overview

After analyzing how visual rhetoric operates in today's social protests, I can argue that it does so in three distinct ways: as disruptive power, as open transgressive resistance, and as affinity-based ethos. In order to show this, I develop each of these arguments over three chapters. Chapter two, Ways of Seeing disruption: The Guy Fawkes Mask and New Political Possibilities, argues that the notion of disruptive power complicates common assumptions concerning the way protest is seen by offering a case study of the appearance of the Guy Fawkes mask at the Maple Spring, a student-led protest against increases to college

13

tuition that soon became a mass social movement. A disruptive protest is an act that isn't directly persuasive and doesn't conform to notions of allowing the people a way of speaking truth to power. Political theorist Frances Fox Piven shows that connecting protest to speech is a fairly new idea. The point of political demonstrations is to disrupt. In fact, it will become clear in the examination of the Maple Spring protests in my second chapter that governments and other authoritative institutions elide the disruptive power of protest by concealing it under the rhetoric of allowing protesters a voice. I argue that the disruptive power on display in unruly protests transforms ways of seeing both power and truth.

Chapter three, Dwelling in Lulz: Open transgressive disruption in the grotesque imagery of the Guy Fawkes mask, defines lulz as an ethos and develops the notion of open transgressive resistance by looking showing how certain metaphors have placed limitations on both protest rhetoric and rhetoric in general, leading rhetorical studies to miss the contributions visual protest rhetoric makes to the study of rhetoric. Building on the conclusions reached in the second chapter, I argue that metaphors resting on an open/closed binary overlook how systems thought to be open contain invisible barriers that become visible through acts of protest. Allowing protesters a chance to speak their mind so that ideas can be critically debated in the open marketplace of ideas elides the fact that many minorities have been denied the ability to speak and must rely on interruption to be heard at all. In addition, systems that may look closed are never actually fully closed. Although acts of protest may appear to be closed, they are more open than they might at first appear. This openness is exposed by applying both of the notion of ethos as a dwelling place rather than an appeal to good character and Bakhtin's carnivalesque to the Guy Fawkes mask.

Chapter four, Hacking Community: Spectacle, Vision,and Affinity in the Guy Fawkes Mask, develops the notion of affinity-based ethos. I demonstrate how differences in environment and use of resistant visual art contribute to major differences in ethos by contrasting the visual rhetoric of hacktivist collective, Anonymous against a 60s group called Black Mask. Building off of the notion of ethos as dwelling, which is defined in the previous chapter, I argue that the image of the mask and its connotations of rebellion offer not merely a way of concealing identity, but a role to play in a battle concerning clashing realities. Usually, scholarly inquiry leads to a discussions seeking a definition for hacktivist community, but I think it's better to ask how hacktivists hack the very concept of community. I argue that hacktivists are beginning to transform notions of collectivity into something based less on patrolling boundaries and more on a shared affinity -- a notion that Richard Day has defined as "that which always already undermines hegemony" (From Hegemony to Affinity 717). In this chapter I trace the history of the word affinity back to Ben Morea of Black Mask, and uncover new insights into how affinity allows for a more nuanced way of seeing collectivity in online environments.

My fifth and final chapter, Transforming Advanced Composition: Radical teaching in the computer-mediated classroom, moves beyond the mask to the underlying strategies of protest in order to display what I learned while putting these ideas into pedagogical action in an advanced composition course. In an advanced composition course, I developed a curriculum that leads students to understandings of public writing through the theme of protest rhetoric. The course was unique because the students were also aspiring teachers, allowing me to delve more deeply into the issue of politics in the writing classroom. Students learned to apply rhetorical and critical theory to activist texts, research issues and approaches

15

to activist pedagogy, and present effective activist rhetoric (in writing, speech, and pictures)

in order to develop writing and rhetorical skills

CHAPTER II

V for Visual Rhetoric: Ways of Seeing Disruption

> Seeing comes before words. The child looks and recognizes before it can speak.
> But, there is also another sense in which seeing comes before words. It is seeing
> which establishes our place in the surrounding world; we explain that world with
> our words, but words can never undo the fact that that we are surrounded by it.
> The relation between what we see and what we know is never settled.

> John Berger from *Ways of Seeing*

When the Guy Fawkes mask appeared during Canada's Maple Spring, a student-led

strike against higher tuition, which soon become a large social movement through acts of

solidarity, the mayor justified banning masks by asking, "If a cause is just, why is it

necessary to wear a mask?" (Montreal bans). The Mayor's question calls rhetoricians to

consider the rhetorical strategy of wearing a mask at a political demonstration as a way to

understand the visual rhetoric of dissent. Disruptive, this form of rhetoric calls into

question issues of power and normalcy in ways that clearly go beyond limits of rhetoric

as conceived merely as a more or less verbal exchange in an attempt to persuade a

receiver to accept one's view of reality. This is not to suggest that rhetorical theory is still

locked into these concerns. Contemporary rhetorical theory takes account of elements

beyond verbal exchange as evidenced by such scholars as Fleckenstein, Reynolds, and

Rickert. I discuss these theories as they pertain to protest rhetoric in more detail in future chapters. For now, it is important that rhetoric scholars that efforts to limit protest to verbal conceptions of rhetoric limits the power of disruption because disruption, as a means of practicing politics, is on the rise. It has been for some time now. And attempts to limit the power of protest rhetoric stem from an attempt to limit protest rhetoric to a verbal exchange between a sender and a receiver. Groups from all walks of life are now taking to the streets, even shutting those streets down in some cases, to make their political views known. This is not to say that protest action is anything new. Protesting has been around for a very long time. But as I write, the amount of protests appears to be increasing. And the amount of media attention gained by protests also seems to be on the rise. For example, Time magazine named The Protester as their person of the year for the year 2011 (Andersen). But, how are we compelled to see disruption when it comes to political demonstrations? And how do political disruptions, in turn, allow viewers to see the surrounding world differently?

To answer, I rely on a close reading of the government's rhetoric for amending protest actions on the campus and a close look at this mask, while I seek to put protest action into a historical frame by relying on the work of Frances Fox Piven, who has written extensively about the changes such actions have undergone thought the history of the United States. It shall become clear that ways of seeing disruption as either of no real political consequence, barely rising above a minor nuisance, or as a way of speaking truth to power and hoping they listen are both based on previous actions of government to make political demonstrations less disruptive. To interpret my findings, I rely on theories of rhetoric that take up a more visual/spatial view of rhetoric. In addition, I shall argue

that disruptions like the Maple Spring are rhetorically engaging and lead to more political engagement on the part of viewers because such demonstrations take advantage of the unique means of persuasion at work when demonstrators disrupt the so-called normal flow of everyday life. The means of persuasion in play are disruptive. Further, they are deployed in strategic ways and help to transform environments and create solidarity. In this case, a college campus is transformed into a carnivalesque space for practicing radical democracy.

With a close look at the use of the Guy Fawkes mask in protests generating from the Maple Spring, I intend to show how this act of disruptive rhetoric embodies an idea, inviting others to see things their way by displaying alternative values that threaten the order of the established body politic. By questioning "if a cause if just, why wear a mask?" the mayor reveals what is important about using masks to display values obscured by official rhetoric. When a cause is just, a mask doesn't merely conceal identity; rather, it reveals an interconnectedness calling for solidarity through displays of disruptive power. To be sure, all causes are just in the eyes of their beholders, but a close look at the way protestors used this particular mask at the Maple Spring can help expose ways of seeing disruption and generate new ways of seeing political possibility through the transformation of space. We are compelled, guided, habituated to see disruption as bad, antithetical to deliberation and discourse. Why lump all disruptions into the same category? The Guy Fawkes mask and the Maple Spring touch on a number of tensions present in the current understanding of disruption, a close look at the festive and comical disruptions on display during the Maple Spring make it clear that different disruptive acts have different discursive qualities and effects.

Students and workers who engage in protest as well as audiences for such protests are guided to see disruption in certain ways by institutions who have sought to limit the rhetorical and political power of protest by limiting its power to disrupt. The goal of this chapter is to explain more fully how protest generates rhetorical power through the power to disrupt, that institutions that limit disruption harm the possibility of seeing political possibility beyond the limited scope offered by the powerful, wealthy, and well connected, and that efforts to disrupt the everyday happenings can generate ways of connecting with people and practicing politics. I aim to expose the ways in which placing emphasis on voice while concealing rhetorics involving vision and the body are also present in discussions taking place in the field of rhetoric and how working against those boundaries helps expose how the rhetorical power of rhetoric as a tool for creating new forms of solidarity lies in the rhetoric of disruption.

Bill 78 and the Maple Spring

In May of 2012, Bill 78 was passed by the National Assembly in reaction to one of the largest student protests in Canadian history. Before I go into a close reading of the bill and a description of its limitations on protest and the available means of persuasion, I want to give a short overview of the events as they unfolded chronologically. The protests began in February as a result of the Liberal Party's announcement of plans to increase tuition by 75% (Tomesco). The move sparked one of the largest student protests in history when more than 250,000 students gathered in downtown Montreal. Reports from the time tell of protesters blocking non-protesting students from class, disrupting traffic on two major bridges, and generally bringing the city to a standstill (Taylor). The protesters could be seen wearing red in order to signify that the tuition hike would put

students "squarely in the red," as one student put it (Horgan). Protests continued to escalate until May 6th when, according to reports, "vandals began throwing projectiles at the crowd," leading to a riot and violent clashes between police and protesters. Several people were hurt; one protester even lost an eye (Teisceira-Lessard).

In response to police violence, the hacktivist group Anonymous, a group famous for wearing the mask from *V for Vendetta*, released a video set to the music of the film *Inception* depicting scenes of police brutality and making the statement that "Freedom of expression is an inalienable right on which no government can walk without paying a heavy price for this misdeed. Anonymous requires the government of Quebec to put an immediate end to repression, and to stop the police violence against peaceful demonstrators." Anonymous also claimed responsibility for hacking several Quebec government websites ("Anonymous Video"). After this riot the National Assembly passed "The act to enable students to receive instruction from the postsecondary institutions they attend," and the Montreal city council banned masks from social protests. The Liberal Party's reason for passing the emergency law was to ensure that no one could impede a student's right to go to school. Critics of the act, which became known as Bill 78, complained that the bill seriously limited acts of civil disobedience by capping the number of protesters participating in spontaneous protests to only 50, greatly increasing the power of government to interfere in protests (Marshall). The passing of Bill 78 sparked another gathering that reached proportions so large that organizers called it "the single biggest act of civil disobedience in Canadian history" (Gershon). In response to Bill 78, protesters began wearing red squares to show their dissatisfaction. One famous instance of this occurred on Saturday Night Live when the band Arcade Fire

wore the squares while backing Mick Jagger (Brophy). In response to the ban on masks, protesters organized the Million Mask March in order to call attention to their view that the actions of the government had severely limited the right to protest. In the end, the students won their fight. They stopped the tuition increase and won the right to engage in masked protest (Pindera).

A close look at Bill 78 and the rhetorical power of protests shows that limiting the unruliness of protest also places limits on the rhetorical and disruptive power of protest under the guise of maintaining order while allowing protesters a voice. Bill 78 was passed on May 18th 2012. The reported goal of the Bill was to "maintain peace, order and public security" (2). That may well be the reported goal of the bill, but a close and careful look at how certain groups are privileged and others marginalized in the language of the bill helps scholars of rhetoric understand how social protest and higher education's role in society are seen by those in power and how the powerful seek to enforce their vision. Article 13 of the Act reveals how the National Assembly defines both the relationship between the students and the teachers at the university as well as social protest. The article reads:

> No one may, by an act or omission, deny students their right to receive instruction from the institution they attend or prevent or impede the resumption or maintenance of an institution's instructional services or the performance by employees of work related to such services, or directly or indirectly contribute to slowing down, degrading or delaying the resumption or maintenance of such services or the performance of such work (6).

What is of note here is that students "receive instruction" from the institute, and teachers perform an "instructional service." While it may seem like the goal is to maintain order, the language reveals a very limited view of the roles people are expected to perform in a college space. In other words, the National Assembly sees this relationship as something close to what Paulo Freire calls the banking model. According to Freire, this notion of banking "transforms students into receiving objects. It attempts to control thinking and action, leads men and women to adjust to the world, and inhibits their creative power" (77). According to the Bill, students merely "receive instruction" at the academe; they do not teach or engage in research to create new knowledge. Further, Bill 78 advances a corporatized view of the university by focusing on the private needs of hypothetical students rather than the public good. In a 2010 editorial for the website TruthOut, critical pedagogy theorist Henry Giroux wrote: "As schooling is increasingly subordinated to a corporate order, any vestige of critical education is replaced by training and the promise of economic security." It appears that the members of the National Assembly see the university primarily as a place to train, not a place to create new knowledge -- and certainly not a place to engage in protest.

When the government acted to limit the unruliness of the student protests with the passage of Bill 78, they did so while justifying it as not limiting the voice of the students; however, their actions also limited what Frances Fox Piven has referred to as the disruptive power of students. And, as will become clear, these actions also limited the rhetorical power of students by limiting the nonverbal forms of communication that the protesters were engaged in. Piven describes the nature of disruptive power as "a specific way to denote the leverage that results from the breakdown of institutionally regulated

cooperation, as in…student strikes where the young people withdraw from the classroom and close down the university" (21). Piven also shows how government actions to limit disruptions limit what can be gained from acts like student protest. She writes that "the response of authorities to disruptive protests is frequently to profess to allow *voice* while preventing the disruption itself. Thus the picket line, originally a physical strategy to obstruct the scabs who interfered with the shutdown of production, has been turned by courts into an informational activity, with requirements that limit the number of pickets, that the picketers must keep moving, and so on" (24). Following Frances Fox Piven, Bill 78 predictably takes the view of protest as disruptive and purports to limit that disruption but not the voice of protest.

Frances Fox Piven is best known for the Cloward-Piven strategy, but I am focusing on her work on the nature of disruption in order to show how ways of seeing disruption are embedded in institutional power dynamics that have sought, over time, to limit the power of protest to affect social change by limiting the power of protest to voice alone.[1] Today, Piven is probably best known for studying protest and broadcaster Glenn Beck's feverish attempts to label her "an enemy of the constitution" (Stelter). Piven helped make the study of protests into a respected subfield of academic study, one that has recently made its mark on rhetorical studies. Focusing on Piven's theory of disruptive power will show how institutional definitions of protest limit protest action and its ability

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[1] Starting in the 60s and working until very recently, she and her partner, husband Richard Cloward, famously devised a way for poor people to overload the welfare system and force the redistribution of wealth through a universal basic income. This strategy became known as the Cloward-Piven strategy and eventually led Glenn Beck to declare her as somehow dangerous enough to link to a series of outrageous conspiracy theories.

to affect change and build solidarity through its rhetorical action by limiting protest to voice rather than paying due to protest's transgressive power to disrupt. Building off Piven's insights, I argue that the popular, commonplace view of protest taken outside the field of rhetoric starts to resemble the view commonly taken of rhetoric by the same audience. Those outside the field might define rhetoric as "all noise and no signal" or "sound and fury signifying nothing" or worse yet, underhanded manipulation. Those within the academy understand that rhetoric, following Aristotle, is the ability to examine any situation and find all the means of persuasion. But, when it comes to protest rhetoric those in institutional positions professing to protect the voice of protestors while helping to establish order are limiting rhetoric to verbal expression. As Lee Artz has argued, seeing "'all the means" *means* 'all' of the means" (49).

When rhetoricians take account of all the means, the message disruption sends is not limited to a persuasive action wherein the powerful are called to account by the less powerful (as in the oft-repeated phrase "speak truth to power)," but rather, as Lee Artz has suggested, disruption allows protesters to "speak power to truth" (54). And, as we shall see, that power is both disruptive and persuasive in an environmental sense, meaning it has the power to change habitats and habits (even if temporarily). Artz argues that "understanding democracy as a political goal and a social process, rather than a pre-existing political condition, repositions social movement rhetoric from an oft-conceived role in appealing to established power to a more radical position as a means of mobilizing public action against power." His goal is to expose the limits of thinking that persist in "some assumptions deeply ingrained in the communication discipline, liberal arts in general, and the larger US society." I agree with Artz in that rhetoric conceived as taking

place under ideal conditions in order to persuade powerful audiences to work on behalf of those in minority positions leads to some wrong-headed assumptions about the types of rhetoric the minority must practice. Ideal conceptions like the "open debate" within the "marketplace of ideas," where arguments compete in such a way that arguments of the greatest value automatically win out, miss a crucial component. As Artz argues, political rhetoric often "occurs under less than ideal conditions of palpable social inequality and disparity in communication resources, skill, and access" (47). Taking these less than ideal conditions into account, it is not hard to see why minority rhetoric -- rhetoric practiced by composers under less than ideal material conditions with less political power than audiences working within institutional positions of power -- must use disruptive means of making their power seen. This rhetoric is accounted for in several subfields of rhetorical studies, including but not limited to African American rhetoric, feminist rhetoric, labor and class rhetoric, and several others. "Unless a powerful social movement intervenes to disrupt the social relations of power and its ideological practices," then the material conditions that influence people to see certain social practices as inevitable and natural will go on to habituate dominant cultural values (49). Artz uses several examples to illustrate his point, asking, in effect, what exigency exists for a runaway slave that doesn't exist for a slaveholder? His point is that an alternative rhetoric must be practiced if messages counter to prevailing viewers are to resonate with audiences. That is, to speak power to truth rather than truth to power, calls rhetors to make palatable to their audiences the very inequality of material conditions that give rise to inequality in the ability to affect change within institutions. Therefore, students wishing to stop an increase in tuition must use all the available means of persuasion and not limit themselves to

official channels of debate and reason. That is, a rhetor under material conditions of oppression, must use those conditions to compose a rhetoric that has any chance of resonating with an audience, compelling action, or changing minds. An application of Frances Fox Piven's theory of disruptive power makes this clear.

Disruptive Power and Rhetoric

Rhetoricians should take notes of the disruptive power of protest because a close look at Piven's theory of institutional power as dependent upon subordinated groups makes it possible, as she puts it, to see that "power from below is possible" (Who's Afraid 216). Piven defines disruptive power as interdependent, "the kind of power that people can wield because they play a role in many social relations; if they refuse that role, whether it is the role of a worker, a mother, or merely the role of conforming to the rules of civic life, things stop" (208). She originally wrote about this form of power in her book, *Challenging Authority*, and has since decided that she likes the term interdependent power better. She reasons that the power exerted by protesters when they break the rules works because it stems from the fact that people live in a state of interdependence upon each other though the networks of society. And so, she uses disruption "to describe a power strategy that rests on withdrawing cooperation in social relations" (212). But she also means to imply the noisiness and rule breaking needed to deploy power in a direction that is contrary to power inherent in institutional authority. As she puts it, "the reverberations of disruptive actions, the shutdown of highway blockages or property destruction, are inevitably also communicative. But, while disruption thus usually gives the protestors voice, voice alone does not give protesters much power" (213). For Piven the radical notion of disruptive power lies in the need to break rules and disrupt habits.

Piven argues persuasively that voice alone does not give protesters much power. So, when institutions claim to allow protesters a voice while denying them the ability to disrupt, they elide the communication that inevitably takes place through disruption. But, Piven's theory stops there. The theory can be extended through the addition of current visual and rhetorical theories found in the field of rhetorical studies.

Disruptive power also has a rhetorical dimension but to see it, scholars must turn to contemporary theories of rhetoric based on the visual and spatial dimensions of rhetorical expression. I do not mean to suggest that rhetoric has nothing to do with persuasion. But, I do want to point out how rhetoric's visual and spatial dimensions have transformative power beyond representation. Stephen R. Yarbrough attempted to expose the consequences of limiting rhetoric to the study of the means of persuasion by noting that this leaves rhetoric unable to produce knowledge on its own. He argues that knowledge needs to be reached via some other means, and that rhetoric can only be deployed to convince audiences of this knowledge. In *After Rhetoric*, Yarbrough calls for something closer to studying the "material conditions" through "object oriented analysis" that give rise to acts of persuasion in the first place. He calls this "discourse studies" (Vivian, Review of *After Rhetoric* 337). I have found in this early attempt towards an object-oriented rhetoric the twin concepts of rhetorical force and discursive power that will help expose how disruptive rhetoric, particularly through the image of the Guy Fawkes mask, generates a rhetoric beyond stale conceptions of mere persuasion. Yarbrough's notion of discourse studies moves beyond rhetoric as conceived by Lee Artz in the above section. When Artz argues that protest rhetoric can speak power to truth in his essay, he doesn't go on to trouble or problematize what truth means. Where Artz

ends, Yarbrough begins. Yarbrough would say that Artz' depiction of rhetoric shares a

commonly held view with philosophy's view to rhetoric. As is the common view of

rhetoric held by Plato himself, truth is sought out by some other means, then rhetoric may

be deployed to disrupt it at worst and convince audiences to agree with it at best. Artz

appears to display this view of rhetoric in the essay I quote from above. Yarborough

attempts offer a view of rhetoric that stems from his reading of Nietzsche, a view of

rhetoric that display the rhetoricity of truth claims as they relate to power relations.

Yarborough offers the following paraphrase of Nietzsche: "Once Nietzsche determined

for himself that there was no Truth and that the goal of pursuing the Truth was only a

supreme rhetorical ploy, he then saw that what was presumed to be the means of pursuing

Truth and Justice -- that is, power, residing in institutional and personal authority -- was

the actual goal, the only goal" (18). Yarborough's point is that so-called non-rhetorical

ways of knowing that are supposedly deployed in order to discover Truth before rhetoric

can be deployed to suay and audience are in fact rhetorical themselves. Not only that, but

this Nietzschean view of knowledge creation exposes a gap between philosophy and

rhetoric than can only be bridged with his "discourse studies." He reasons that rhetoric

and philosophy thus, are not separated by a disagreement on fundamental issues or

evidence but by what counts as an issue and what persuasion means in the first place.

Although there is much to admire in the work of Yarbrough, I agree with Vivian's

assessment that there is no need to leave rhetoric behind in order to understand the

materialist and object oriented contributions to the construction of knowledge. Of course,

it would be saying too much of Yarbrough's argument that he is in effect arguing for

leaving rhetoric behind, but as Vivian reasons "the rhetorical tradition has, in many ways,

been shaped almost in its entirety by sustained attention to the very metaphysical problems with which Yarbrough grapples" (337). Yarbourgh's conceptions of rhetorical force and discursive power are important though.

Yarbourgh's notions of rhetorical force and discursive power move rhetoric scholars "to develop a theory of the interaction between particular acts of persuasion (contingency) and the conditions that make them possible (structure)" (Matheson 466). And focusing on the unruly and disruptive actions of protest is one way to further develop a theory of this interaction. In the often cited "Uncivil Tongue," Nina M. Lozano-Reich and Dana Cloud argue convincingly that invitational rhetoric cannot be fully considered until structural power relations vis `a vis political minorities such as laborers and women are taken into account. Much like Piven, who argues for the need to break rules, they show that political minorities are at a disadvantage when civility is the measure of good rhetoric. They write, "it is irresponsible to displace more confrontational models for social change in favor of a politics of civility that has been proven to leave those already disempowered in a continued state of conformity, punishment, and/or silence" (224). And so, if we are to add to the discussion of rhetoric beyond words, beyond mere persuasion, then we need to consider the rhetorical act disruption and its influence on relationship between contingency and structure. This is where Yarbrough's notions of rhetorical force and discursive power can help.

For rhetoricians, the National Assembly's move to keep the voice of protesters but limit the disruption is telling. Bill 78 limits protest to acts of voice without taking into account the use of disruption as a visual and spatial form of rhetoric. Protest's rhetorical force comes from its ability to disrupt, even disturb. Important here are the notions of

rhetorical force and discursive power. Both are required for a protest to be effective. And both are seriously hampered by Bill 78. Sections 16 and 17 of the bill significantly reduce the rhetorical force of protest. In a short article in the book *Activism and Rhetoric,* Rebecca Jones expertly paraphrases Stephen Yarbrough's distinction between rhetorical force and discursive power: "To have rhetorical force, for Yarbrough, means others believe you have the real force (whether physical, material, or mental) to back up what you are saying. However, to have discursive power means that readers/listeners believe you have the power to convince others to believe in and act on your rhetoric" (183). Jones goes on to argue that rhetorical force is not enough. For Jones, discursive power provides a missing ingredient for social activism. While discursive power is something that all rhetoricians need to pay attention to, it is worth pointing out just how rhetorical force is manifested in acts of protest because the example of Bill 78 so clearly shows how governments act to limit rhetorical force by cutting protesters off from disruptive power. Conveniently, Bill 78's attempt to temper the disruption caused by student protest also cuts it off from its rhetorical force. Section 16 reads in part:

> When it considers that the planned venue or route poses serious risks for public security, the police force serving the territory where the demonstration is to take place may, before the demonstration, require a change of venue or route so as to maintain peace, order and public security. The organizer must then submit the new venue or route to the police force within the agreed time limit and inform the participants (7).

This section of the Bill concerns "demonstration[s] involving 50 people or more…in a venue accessible to the public" (7). It seems harmless enough to ask that public security

not be placed at risk during a demonstration and of course the obvious objection here is that the definition of public safety is left to the imagination, but the rhetorical concern here is that protestors are robbed of their rhetorical force without the ability to show the average citizen that they have the ability to disrupt the normal flow of life at a public venue. Further, limiting protests to only 50 participants severely limits discursive power. The limits placed on protesters in the name of maintaining order directly limits the power of students to withdraw their labor power from the school structure.

So far, I have discussed only one facet of visuality in the disruptive rhetoric of protest, the sight of bodies enmasses under a singular visual marker. But the mask as a visual object is itself capable of generating rhetorical force because protest also manifests rhetorical force through its visual elements that disrupt what Kristie Fleckenstein calls visual habits. Fleckenstein defines visual habits as

> systems of perception that, through an array of habituated conventions, organize reality in particular ways leading us to discern some images and not others, to relate those images in characteristic ways to each other and ourselves, and to link those images to language in a uniform dynamic. Just as rhetorical habits are implicit within rhetoric, so are visual habits implicit within images, and those visual habits are integral to social action (10).

Protest's rhetorical force stems from its ability to disrupt the ways in which we routinely *organize reality*. Protest slinks harmlessly into the background without the ability to disrupt, *prevent*, *impede*, *slow down*, *degrade*, or *delay* the normal everyday workings of

society. Without its ability to disrupt, protest becomes one of those images that we as citizens don't *discern*.

Protesters have developed ways of breaking these habits. In a chapter devoted to Saul Alinsky in Lawrence J. Prelli's *Rhetorics of Display*, Jerry BliteField discusses how the "public showing or proof of collective power becomes more compelling the larger the gathering's size; yet…numbers alone do not tell the whole story" (255). The sheer numbers of a protest might provide its discursive power, but its ability to disrupt visual habits gives it its rhetorical force. For example, the protests in Montréal reached numbers into the tens of thousands (Gerchon). The sheer number of protesters provides discursive power because the people are able to see how many have been swayed to join in. It is rather easy to understand the discursive power of activism because we only have to remember that there is strength in numbers because numbers are what gives a protest its discursive power, what shows on-lookers that the protesters have the power to sway others to join them. This discursive power is further displayed by the protesters in Montreal through the use of the color red. Choosing to wear the color red at this protest sends a very clear message as to what side of the debate a person has taken up. Thus the protesters engage in what has been called "visibility politics." In "The Precarious Visibility Politics of Self-Stigmatization: The Case of HIV/AIDS Tattoos," Dan Brouwer suggests a definition of visual politics "as theory and practice which assume that 'being seen' and 'being heard are beneficial and often crucial for individuals or a group to gain greater social, political, cultural or economic legitimacy, power, authority, or access to resources" (209). The editors of *Visual Rhetoric: A Reader in Communication and American Culture,* Lester C. Olson, Cara A. Finnegan, and Diane S. Hope point out that

resistance "occurs more symbolically when groups enact "visual politics" by performing in public, painting murals, or marking their bodies to publicly announce their refusal to be invisible" ("Confronting and Resisting" 200). For the Maple Spring protesters, wearing red marks the body and makes both their grievances and their bodies visible. The more people who are seen wearing red, the greater the discursive power of the protest. To reiterate, discursive power is the power to show that you can persuade others to believe your discourse, therefore when deployed in the form of protest the use of visual rhetoric, as when a group wears the same mask or color, clearly establishes that group's shared power to suay others see their truth. As Lee Artz would agree, it speaks power to truth. But it does much more than that. As Yarbrough argues, "all of the concepts used by our reason -- including that of *logos* itself -- are the answers to what were once questions, now forgotten, but questions that can be re-opened and made problematical once again" (21). Thus, when protesters wear masks they display discursive power with their numbers. It is worth noting here that similar crackdowns on masked protest have only served to popularize the now annual Million Mask March. By sheer numbers, these protesters have opened up closed questions concerning a number of issues including but not limited to demilitarization, police abuse of authority, and self-governance (Harbisher).

But, numbers don't tell the whole story. Rhetorical force is key to understanding the disruptive power of protest, for as long as state's and institutions hold a monopoly on the legitimate use of force, then they are free to limit the rhetorical force of protest. The National Assembly acted to limit the rhetorical force of the protest in the name of establishing order. They suggested that protests on or near campus could inconvenience

citizens and non-protesting students. The language of the Bill disallows anyone from "directly or indirectly contribut[ing] to slowing down, degrading or delaying" the instruction students receive. Further, the Bill makes illegal "any form of gathering that could result in denying...access…inside any building where instructional services are delivered by an institution, on the grounds of such a building or within 50 meters from the outer limits of such grounds" (6). Acts of protest are barred from campus because such activities may disrupt campus life, effectively removing the ability to generate rhetorical force. In this protest, rhetorical force is shown in several ways, but one very distinct way of seeing the protest's rhetorical force comes in its ability to clog traffic on the bridge and bring downtown Montréal to a standstill. The National Assembly cuts off access to rhetorical force by denying activists a change to protest on campus grounds where their actions have the best chance of disrupting the dominant, habitual definition of proper campus activity.

The National Assembly's view of protest as disruptive is the latest in a long series of moves that have led to a dwindling of space available for social protest -- the image of the Guy Fawkes mask captures the disruptive power and anarchic potential of rhetoric because wearing the mask defies attempts to legally limit rhetorical force. As Nancy Welch points out, "the question of how ordinary people reach and persuade influential audiences has taken on intensified exigence as teachers find that the venues in which students' (and our own) arguments might gain a hearing have become noticeably policed and restricted" (in Jones 183). When it comes to venues for social protest, it is becoming increasingly necessary to ask: if not at the University, then where? When protests are barred from campus grounds, this is a problem because it seriously hinders the free

exchange of ideas and limits the role of the University to mere service learning. Previous ways for understanding rhetoric as informative and persuasive limit rhetoric to a useful tool in that service. At a time, when governments are acting to limit student power, why help by limiting rhetoric's ability to create alternate views of reality. That Bill 78 attempts to limit disruptive rhetoric in the name of establishing order is very telling. I am reminded of how Howard Zinn once problematized the concept of order in the introduction to Herbert Read's book *Anarchy and Order*, Howard Zinn writes,

> The word *anarchy* unsettles most people in the Western world; it suggests disorder, violence, uncertainty. We have good reason for fearing those conditions, because we have been living with them for a long time, not in anarchist societies (there have never been any) but in exactly those societies most fearful of anarchy—the powerful nation states of modern times (703).

Guy Fawkes may not have been an anarchist, but his attempt to blow up Parliament was certainly taken that way by Alan Moore when he created the character V. In fact, he asked for his name to be left off the credits for the film because he thought the film's omission of the theory of Anarchism failed to capture the point of the story. Of course, not every person that wears V's mask supports anarchy, but they do mean to shock onlookers into realizing the how arbitrary and fragile notions of normalcy really are. And the visual rhetoric of social protest contributes to the disruptions of normalcy; their very rhetoricity is defined by this power to disrupt common assumptions. Zinn's point in the above quotation is that the powerful, the very ones who stand to lose the most if conceptions of the normal order are overturned, instill chaos through their establishing of order. Wearing the mask breaks the habits forced on us through daily routine, limiting the

thoughts and actions possible in a given location. As Fleckenstein puts it, "People *enact* visual habits and rhetorical habits, and in the process they decide how to combine various threads, a dynamic that sometimes creates new symbiotic knots or disrupts an established knot" (21). To illustrate this point Fleckenstein refers to the work of Michel de Certeau by pointing out that "people are low-level mischief makers" (21). Certeau's point is that people often use objects in ways that are not intended by their creators—finding creative ways to invite new uses for objects and products. One example of this would be using a butter knife for a screwdriver. While the V mask is not used in any way that is unintended by its maker—it is meant, after all, to conceal identity—the use of the V mask in acts of civil disobedience does highlight another way that people are mischief makers.

V for Visual Rhetoric

The mask disrupts visual habits by entering spaces where it does not belong. We don't expect to see a person wearing a mask on a college campus, and so the sight of a masked person disrupts our everyday routine, forcing another interpretation of space onto ours—an interpretation we may not have known was possible. It is in this way that the mask's rhetorical properties share attributes with what Craig Stroupe calls the rhetoric of irritation. Stroupe argues that "this sense of disruption calls attention to interpretive dilemmas and cultural instabilities that exist socially beneath the veneer of appropriate assumptions (that is, ideology) at any moment in history, and which these dialogues echo and enact explicitly in the visual/verbal texts" (245). This is true of the mask because merely wearing it in public creates an interpretive dilemma because the mask wearer is doing something inappropriate, forcing a gap in understanding for the viewer. The mask disrupts what is considered normal for the viewer, forcing a reinterpretation of self and

setting and making dissent a possibility in a space otherwise reserved for activities that usually fall into the daily routine of what some might call manufactured consent.

A close look at the visual rhetoric of the mask shows how solidarity is evoked through the act of remixing. The actions of the Maple Spring protesters can lead to new understandings of ethos and the embodiment of ideals in the age of corporatized education. Wearing V's mask at a political demonstration is a clear way to mark the body in order to exhibit distinct and justified values that counter prevailing views. In the case of the Maple Spring, the views on display through the mask counter marketized views of how the University ought to function in society. In *Rhetoric for Radicals*, Jason Del Gandio describes political demonstrations as "collective actions [that] rely on bodies rather than words, language or straightforward logical claims." He goes on to argue that "verbal communication is of course used, but it's peripheral to the embodied communication" (151). *Rhetoric for Radicals* is best described as a how-to book for social activism that instructs readers in the use of rhetorical principles for activism. In his section on using bodies rhetorically, he advises readers to "create a picture-bomb" and "think of the clothes, colors, actions and non-verbal expressions of the participants." He even advises readers to "dress people in strategic costumes" (154). The body is an important rhetorical element in protests because, as Sharon Crowley has argued, "the body both writes and is written upon; it is the scene as well as the aegis of representation" (178). By this she means that the body is always already determined by the cultural lens in which it is viewed, but knowing this allows the viewed subject a certain level of agency. At protest the scene of the body becomes something quite different. The body is marked upon knowingly by the viewed subject—making the body a rhetorical site.

Crowley argues that rhetoricians should pay particular attention to the body "because of its habit of pointing up the interestedness of boundary drawing and distinction making." She goes on to remind us that "distinctions and boundaries are never disinterested: when someone is named a supporter of the Confederacy, *a protestor*, a homosexual, an environmentalist, or a patriot, someone profits from that distinction and, under capitalism, someone else pays for that gain" (186). How these bodies are marked, where they appear, and how they are labeled are of great concern, and so is who is doing the marking and labeling.

Of course, all of this is not to say that persuasion is not a factor in the rhetoric of the mask. The more protesters don the mask, the greater their ability to convince an audience to believe in their cause. The mask is divisive. Sharply dividing the crowd between masked and unmasked, the schismatic image automatically establishes one group as pitted against another. Add the character of V, a superhero embodying the virtues of anarchy against the oppressive forces of a tyrannical government, and the message is clear. In his introduction to *Rhetorics of Display*, Lawrence J. Prelli argues that "image events" allow protesters to "demonstrate or act out preferred identities and conceptions of self through words and deeds that enact, with varying degrees of virtuosity, self-portrayals exhibiting the 'right' attitudes and feelings or proving the 'right' commitments and allegiances" (15). But there is more going on here because most protesters never dress as V, they wear his mask and mix it with other attire to create a more complex message. Anonymous, for example, clearly evokes V when they make their videos appear as take over a broadcast network. But by mixing V's mask with business attire, they challenge what they see as an unjust system. Though Stroupe doesn't

go on to link his notion of irritation to action, he explains that the rhetoric of irritation

generates two types, each resulting in "irritating" juxtapositions [that] represent a[n]

ideologically expressive dialogue…this dialogue among normally unrelated voices and

contexts, produces both an irritation in the *text* as a kind of discursive friction between

these perspectives…as well as a social irritation in the *audience* who registers this

friction as a kind of disruption of "normal" discourse (245). The first of these irritating

juxtapositions can be found in Anonymous' use of the mask. Clearly they evoke V,

taking the character from his dystopian future and putting in the context of a present

political issue, but they remix the mask by juxtaposing it a black suit and tie that causes a

discursive friction. They can also create a picture bomb by having, say, over nine

thousand people wear the mask, evoking the end of the film where the oppressed citizens

of the fascist society wear the mask en masse in a display of solidarity and defiance.

Understood visually, the rhetoric of demonstrations like student strikes is an act

that persuades through an act of disruptive power. However, the question rhetoric

scholars should be concerned with is how the text displays the number of people already

dwelling in the same space. The invitation is secondary to the display of power. And

when the mask is worn by protesters in the act of shutting down and/or taking over a

college campus, the act of unruly rhetoric displays both rhetorical force and discursive

power. Jerry Blitefield has argued that "those seeking power rather than just attention

know that power requires demonstrations of the kind that [he calls] 'premonitory proof.'

If power is enacted effectively today, it creates the anticipation that it can be reenacted

effectively again tomorrow" (269). Writing about the Occupy movement in *The Nation*,

Maria Sitrin, a sociologist who has written extensively about Occupy and Horizontalism,

evokes the question often chanted at today's protests: What does Democracy look like? In her short article, Sitrin writes that when the protesters shouted their answer – this is what democracy looks like – they did so while "singing, jumping up and down, full of joy and a sense of our own power." She writes that while reflecting on that moment she was "filled with the same joy and power. It is not a reminiscent or retrospective joy but a very real and present joy of our mutually discovered power." This power is rhetorical, discursive, and, following Piven, disruptive. It is the power to withdraw from institutions that do not act in the interests of the people. The mask embodies this power. As Sitrin puts it, this power is "inherently outside the framework of institutional power." As such, the actions of protesters are actions meant to display "a different value system, one based on solidarity and real democracy. These relations break with capitalist production and create new values. The movement accumulates not capital or surplus but affect and networks of solidarity and friendship" (17). And so, even as we are guided to see disruption as uncivil activity, it can also be a powerful way of displaying networks of solidarity.

Seeing disruption as rhetorical power

The rhetorical power of the Guy Fawkes mask lies in its disruptive nature, in its ability to force issues based on order and normalcy in oppressive apparatuses. The government's response to the student strike and citizen uprising comprising the Maple Spring exposes what is at stake when an innocuous space, such as a College campus, is transformed into a protest space. In addition, the actions of the school and the city council show how efforts to limit disruption also limit rhetorical power. I have shown that Bill 78 furthers attempts to limit the disruptive power of student protest while also revealing how

this limits the available means of persuasion. The bill's language shows that this government defines students as passive receptacles, expecting the university to function the premise of logical arguments supporting capitalism and free-market are not questioned and alternatives are not entertained. After all, from the government's point of view, it was simply the market's invisible hand that led to a rise in student tuition. For them, the disruptive behavior of protesters needed to be stopped because it threatened order. And this is precisely why it is so important to understand the ways of seeing disruption.

The disagreement between protesters and corporatized institutions during the Maple Spring happened to be more sharply divided than are most modern clashes; however, I don't want to paint a simple picture of one group pitted against the other so that the various world views shaping and informing action can be traced. At its root what we have is a fundamental disagreement over what protest is. Canada's government may understand protest as an informative act. But I argue, it is better understood as an act of rhetorical force -- an act of power that is at once disruptive and discursive. The ethos of rhetoric as verbal discourse seeking to persuade a single audience has limited the field's ability to understand the rhetorical force of student protest. The rhetoric of social protest, when considered from a more visual/spatial point of view, seeks to disrupt commonly held views of what takes place in certain places. As we have seen, the goal of such rhetoric is not so much to persuade those in power to make a change -- that can happen, and it is something to admire when it does -- but the disruptive rhetoric can also create new ways of seeing, ways that transform space and reality in ways that are beneficial to those wishing to offer alternative ways of living together. Left unexplored in this chapter

are the complexities of the mask as a rhetorical object in relation to similar ones. How does the Guy Fawkes mask function differently than, say, the famous Pussy Hat worn by protesters at the recent Women's March against Trump? Or, say, a KKK hood? These questions, and others, are considered in the remaining chapters, as I take a close look at the binary of open and closed systems and come to an understanding of the importance of the Bakhtinian notion of the carnivalesque as a way of understanding the ethos of the Guy Fawkes mask

CHAPTER III

Dwelling in Lulz: Open Transgressive disruption in grotesque imagery of the Guy Fawkes

Mask

In the last chapter, protesters transformed the normally neutral space of the college

campus into a space of protest, bringing the notion of protest back in line with a much

more dangerous and disruptive way of seeing. This way of seeing protest conforms to

Frances Fox Piven's theory of disruptive power and Saul Alinsky's theories of

organizing. During 2012's Maple Spring, the mask was fast becoming the face of social

protest. It wasn't just Anonymous wearing the mask back then. Efforts to ban it, as we

saw in the last chapter, limited the rhetoric of protesters. In order to understand the

rhetoric of disruption as a way of seeing and knowing, a view of rhetoric atypical of the

usual way of understanding the relationship between messages and receivers needed to be

in place.This meant showing how the work of visual rhetoric scholars such as Kristine

Fleckenstein and others can help make it clear that wearing the mask at a protest can

transform the space -- in this case transforming the space from a college campus in the

business of monetizing education to a protest space where reality of student life under

capitalism is contested. In addition, visual rhetoric can create new ways of connecting

with others. But what does it mean and how does it differ from other images at protest,

and how does the visual image of protest count as rhetorical in the first place?

In this chapter, I examine how the Guy Fawkes mask uses grotesque imagery to evoke open transgressive disruption by exposing how past rhetorical metaphors limited the scope of what rhetorical resistance can do. Images that link to classical rhetoric, such as those used by Edward P.J. Corbett in his early writing on student protest, limit the available means of persuasion variously: chiefly a privileging of verbal communication, an avoidance of the collective, and a reliance on a binary between open and closed systems. I draw on Bakhtin's thoughts on grotesque imagery to show that privileging verbal rhetoric also reinscribes the very power structures that protest rhetoric challenges. In addition, I aim to expose how limits placed on protest exposed by Christina Foust in her book, *Transgression as a Mode of Resistance: Rethinking Social Movement in an Era of Corporate Globalization,* can be furthered through an intimate examination of how image functions in protest.

Controlling metaphors meant to instill civility limit the available means of persuasion by not only reinforcing power structures by also limiting protest rhetoric to counter-hegemonic goals. Foust's book exposes this tendency and shows how this misunderstanding of the rhetorical goals of protest also limits the available means of persuasion on two counts: it forces minority rhetoricians to maintain a 'civility' that works against their goals to reject their material existence by marking transgressive rhetorical moves as unethical and it limits protest rhetoric to counter-hegemony, the need to establish a hegemony that is different from a previously held hegemony. As we know, hegemony can be defined in part as "the inculcation of the populace in the ideals of the hegemonic [or dominant] group through education, advertising, publication, etc" (Felluga). Foust is helpful in understanding how alternative forms of rhetoric involving

45

the transgressive form, but she leaves the role of visual rhetoric unexplored. Foust is right that counter-hegemonic goals would entail the need to establish a new dominant ideal through which the populace can be inculcated. The need to establish a counter-hegemony should be decentered in conceptions of protest rhetoric. In addition, the need to think of rhetoric as the civil exchange of ideas between persons of more or less equal status also needs to be decentered. Decentering counter-hegemony, as Foust and Richard Day have argued, brings the goals of protest more in line with the newest social movements. However, the role of visual rhetoric in social protest offers important lessons in how this is done and should not be overlooked. Although Foust touches on Bakhtin's notion of the carnivalesque as an important component of transgressive rhetoric, she doesn't spend enough time with the notion of the image. In contrast, Bakhtin's notion of the carnivalesque emerges through the mask in ways that undermine established order and creates new ways of seeing the world.

Protest rhetoric was first analyzed rhetorically when student protests broke out on campus in the 60s. In 1969, Edward P.J. Corbett missed an opportunity to understand the rhetorical strategies and ethos of the New Left because he didn't develop his understanding of rhetoric in a way that ventured away from language-centric conceptions of rhetoric as attempts to persuade in clear and direct ways between parties of more or less equal political status. Unpacking Corbett's argument is worthwhile because applying Fleckenstein's advancements in the theory of visual rhetoric and student protest with an eye towards Foust's understanding of transgression allows an opportunity to explore what Corbett doesn't. Corbett made serious contributions to the field of rhetoric, but his interpretation of student protest springs from a devotion to classical rhetoric as it was

understood at the time. Although Foust doesn't analyze Corbett, many of the ideas expressed in his early writings on protest align with the limitations that Foust explains are routinely placed on the rhetoric of protest. But, Corbett has a few more. And looking closely at the limits that Corbett doesn't cross can help rhetoric scholars develop alternative rhetorics. Thus, one goal for this chapter is to extend the work of Foust by focusing on visual rhetoric, which is something she leaves underdeveloped in her book. In addition, Foust's thoughts on the notion of transgression complicate Fleckenstein's view of social action in interesting ways. Fleckenstein doesn't trouble the notion of good ethos in the same way that Foust does. The trollish humor of the Guy Fawkes mask as an imageword allows for the very notion of ethos to be understood differently: as a dwelling place rather than an appeal to good character. After I take note of how binaries between open and closed systems can limit the scope of rhetorical theory when it comes to understanding the role of protest demonstrations, I provide a discussion of how the Guy Fawkes mask creates a dwelling place and a role to play in social action.

A close look at Corbett's first encounter with protest shows that a centrality of language over visual acts of rhetoric and an assumption that protesters must supply a counter-hegemony form the barriers of his understanding of protest rhetoric. Writing in 1969, Corbett argues that the rhetoric of student protesters can be boiled down to four characteristics that contrast sharply with the rhetoric of the open hand. Corbett identifies four characteristics of the rhetoric of the "raised closed fist." Corbetts four characteristics are

    1) It relays on on-verbal forms of communication

    2) It is collectivist

3) It is coercive (rather than persuasive)

4) It is antagonistic

Writing at a time when the New Left was beginning to form and social protesters were routinely demonstrating on college campuses, Corbett argues why each characteristic falls short of the standard set by an "ancient art which taught that a man was most persuasive when he displayed himself to as a man of good sense, good will, and good moral character" (296). Corbett is relying upon an understanding of persuasion as the goal of rhetoric (counter-hegemony). For now, I want to focus on the limitations inherent in thinking of counter-hegemony as the goal of protest rhetoric. These views align with the observations that Foust makes about the ways in which protest rhetoric is dismissed.

Corbett concludes his condemnation of the rhetoric of the raised fist by complaining, "the open hand has at least a chance of being grasped cordially. The closed fist just prompts another closed fist to be raised" (295). He is right. But it's the newly energized vox populi who will be inspired to raise their fists. Richard Marback has also exposed the hasty assumptions made by Corbett. In "Detroit and the Closed Fist: Toward a Theory of Material Rhetoric," Marback argues that the image of the closed fist should not be so quickly dismissed. He writes, "Unlike the open hand, the closed fist figures fourth in rhetoric the irreducibility and interdependence of corporeality, spatiality, and textuality…[, making] tangible the dynamic embodiment of race, democracy, and citizenship that unsettle current textualizations of urban (dis)order and civic (in)justice" (88). Marback is concerned with the black power fist, an image Corbett mentions but does not fully explore. I am reminded of one of my favorite images from the Industrial

Workers of the World (IWW), the image of workers coming together to form one huge fist.
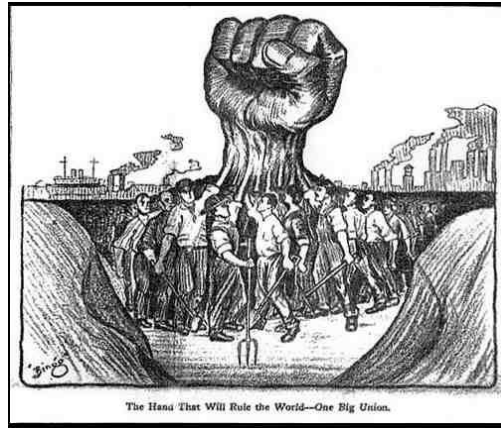

Figure 1

I don't wish to diminish the work done on black power, nor do I want to suggest that the workers of circa 1920 can claim ownership or centrality to the image and its meaning. Instead, I want to point out how beautifully the image appears to display Marbark's conclusion: all these people coming together to form one big fist, as they would in the IWW's big union. Marbark showed that the shift to the rhetoric of the raised closed fist marks the passage to a conception of trust that falls outside the bounds offered by Corbett's commitment to rhetoric as an open hand. I agree with Marbark that the raised closed fist should be analyzed on its own terms. The development of the New Left's ethos can be understood in the image of the raised closed fist. And this fist is a display of power, one that should show viewers that they have power and that they are not alone. Corbett misses these points when he dismisses this new rhetoric as non-persuasive. He writes, "Shouts, threats, obscenities do gain attention. Whether they elicit conviction or action from anyone not already committed to the speaker's point of view is another matter" (295). They aren't supposed to. The raised closed fist is symbolic of the power of

the dissident vox populi. Corbett effectively creates a straw-man argument because his points don't align with the actual goals of the radical, unruly rhetoric of dissent. The point of these protests were not to persuade those holding an opposite view, they were meant to embolden those in agreement to understand that they were more powerful than they knew.

Corbett's reliance on a binary of open and closed systems also limits the understanding of protest. Corbett tried to understand the new rhetorical nature of student protest via the use of two controlling metaphors: Zeno's open hand and closed fist. The closed fist once represented the work of the philosopher; the open hand, the orator. Corbett argued that "raised closed fist of the black-power militant may be emblematic of this whole new development in the strategies of persuasion in the 1960's" (288). However, Corbett concludes that this new rhetoric must be indicative of the fact that student protesters have not learned some of the basic tenets of rhetoric or have willfully turned away from them (295). To his credit, Corbett does point out that "a third possibility is that they are seeking to develop a new technique of ethical appeal" (295). But he leaves this avenue unexplored, preferring to keep with the thesis that these new tactics are best understood in contrast to his understanding of classical rhetoric, rather than taking the opportunity to find out what these new tactics could tell us about the emergence of an alternative rhetoric. Although Corbett cast student rhetoric as non-verbal (and therefore lacking) rather than seeing the largely visual appeals as something entirely new, he did remark in passing that it was possible that "the generation under thirty realize more than the rest of us just how much the world has changed, senses, if it does not realize, that we exist in a world dominated by the electronic media" (295). The rhetoric

of the mask provides a better fit for understanding the relationship between rhetoric and dissent than the metaphor of the open hand or the closed fist, a point that will become clear as I turn my attention to Bakhtin's writings on grotesque imagery and the carnivalesque. As a grotesque image, the Guy Fawkes mask exposes what is problematic about the binaries in play between classical/alternative and open/closed. The privileging of classical forms in both rhetoric and art freezes them, disallowing alternative ways of communicating, leading to views of open systems containing invisible boundaries and closed systems that are not as closed as they appear.

Guy Fawkes mask as grotesque image: Bakhtin and the Carnivalesque

In this section, I deploy Bakhtin's carnivalesque to help expose what is hidden by a view of protest rhetoric as a closed system. Bakhtin's notions of the grotesque image and the carnivalesque help expose how the mask develops a transgressive rhetoric by violating notions of hierarchy and social order. In *Rabelais and his World,* Bakhtin wants to understand folk humor and the ways in which it changed as a new social order came into place. He argues that Rabelais would be understood as the greatest writer in the world, on par with Shakespeare, were it not for the fact that our cultural understanding of laughter has changed so much that it is unrecognizable from the laughter that Rabelais' folk humor could inspire. The loss of this type of laughter comes from privileging classical forms of art over folk art forms, what Bakhtin calls "canons." Bakhtin notes that when the term grotesque first came into use it was relegated to low culture because it didn't conform to expectations put in place through the privileging of the classical canon. The term Grotesque first appears in the Renaissance when some previously unknown Roman artifacts were discovered in Italy: Titus' baths. They were called *grottesca* from

the Italian word *grotta* (32). All of these artifacts appeared to share the same features, and these features were not consistent with the classical form. As Bakhtin points out, "The borderlines that divide the kingdoms of nature in the usual picture of the world were boldly infringed. There was no longer the movement of finished forms...in a finished stable world; instead the inner movement of being itself was expressed in the passing of one form into the other, in the ever incompleted character of being" (32). Bakhtin goes on to show how this form went on to influence Raphael's Vatican loggias. Bakhtin is quick to point out that the name grotesque was given to this type of style when applied to art, but that it was a form of art that was still alive and well, developing outside the scope of roman classicism which dominated definitions of what counted as art. He writes, "In reality, this form of art was but a fragment of the immense world of grotesque imagery which existed throughout the Middle Ages and the Renaissance. The fragment reflected the characteristic features of this immense world, and thus a further productive life was ensured for the new term, with gradual extension to the almost immeasurable sphere of grotesque imagery" (32-3). But, this type of art was harshly criticized by artists of the time; thus, the first theoretical understanding of the grotesque by the art world was written in the negative, as a type of art not worthy of reverence because it didn't conform to classical sensibilities. According to Bakhtin a critic named Vetruvius is responsible for both bringing the grotesque to the attention of scholars and setting them on a trajectory for condemning it. Bakhtin argues that Vetruvius condemned "the new 'barbarian' fashion of covering walls with monsters instead of the 'bright reflection of the world of objects'" (33). Bakhtin argues that Vetruvius criticized the grotesque's depiction of the world as unnatural, but he did so from a classical standpoint which privileged classical

understandings of what counted as art. Therefore, Vetruvius found the grotesque

displeasing because it didn't conform to his a priori sense of what art should look like,

how it should depict the world, and what the world itself was like. In short, Vetruvius

held art to an official standard. In this way, we might begin to see the grotesque as a

development of folk art outside the bounds of officialdom, as a way of exercising

collective political power in and through the image. If we are to understand a developing

rhetoric outside classical rhetoric, then we need to look closely at how the grotesque

image helps create a sense of renewal through collective ridicule of officialdom.

Just as Bakhtin notes that definitions of grotesque art have been written in the

negative, we can also see that discussions of protest stemming from Corbett's application

of Zeno's metaphors also lead to a negative view of protest rhetoric. Bakhtin's notion of

the carnivalesque helps disrupt Corbett's view of protest as non-rhetorical. Despite

Bakhtin's critical view of rhetoric, he has been quite useful in rhetorical studies. In fact,

Key Halasek has argued that Bakhtin's hostility towards rhetoric provides precisely the

avenue with which to access his work for rhetorical studies. To clarify, Halasek argues

that Bakhtin relies on a narrow definition of rhetoric as polemic and hegemonic, but he

also sees rhetoric as playing an important part in the "evolution of the novel." Leading

Halasek to conclude that there can be such a thing as a dialogic rhetoric that is "informed

by both polemic, hegemonic forces and parodic, subversive forces" (2). I see this

happening to. However, I am focusing on notions of the visual in Bakhtin's

carnivalesque, which he developed through study of folk art. By looking at folk art

through the ages, Bakhtin argues that official culture based on notions of classical forms

narrows and inhibits folk art while also contributing to new developments in folk art. To

develop his argument, he focuses on two concepts: the grotesque and the carnivalesque. Bakhtin cites L.E. Pinksy as providing an "excellent definition" of the grotesque, "Grotesque in art is related to the paradox in logic. At first glance, the grotesque is merely witty and amusing, but it contains great potentialities" (32). For Bakhtin the potentialities of the grotesque offer a folk humor that is useful in breaking habits, leading to a life outside the bounds of expectations for decor placed upon people by the dominant social order: what we might call an official culture. This happens through mixing the grotesque and a folk celebration called carnival in what Bakhtin calls the grotesque-carnival or the carnivalesque. There is a sense of liberation achieved in the grotesque when it puts elements of a so-called high culture into contact with the low. Bakhtin sees this happening in a mixture of grotesque imagery and a celebration that began to be suppressed under the state: the carnival. Bakhtin notes that official culture gradually narrowed folk humor and "the carnival spirit with its freedom, its utopian character oriented toward the future, was gradually transformed into a mere holiday mood." In particular "we observe a process of gradual narrowing down of the ritual, spectacle, and carnival forms of folk culture, which became small and trivial. On the one hand the state encroached upon festive life and turned it into a parade" (33). Thus, in Bakhtin's analysis of Rabelais, we see how an official culture, with its notions of what counts for classical in art and what counts for low or grotesque art, can impede upon folk culture. In many ways, the imagery used in today's rebellious demonstrations appear to deploy the same strategies as folk art when used to break the habits of official culture.

The grotesque can be seen in the exaggerated features of the Guy Fawkes mask. When Bakhtin writes about the use of grotesque imagery to break away from the habits

instilled in official culture, he sees the mask as the most important theme. Bakhtin's first remarks about the importance of the mask are worth quoting in full:

> "Even more important is the theme of the mask, the most complex theme of folk culture. The mask is connected with the joy of change and reincarnation, with gay relativity and with the merry negation of uniformity and similarity; it rejects conformity to oneself. The mask is related to transition, metamorphoses, the violation of natural boundaries, to mockery and familiar nicknames. It contains the playful element of life; it is based on a peculiar interrelation of reality and image, characteristic of the most ancient rituals and spectacles" (39-40).

The Guy Fawkes mask does not have features that conform to human proportions. The chin is elongated to a point, the nose is enlarged, and the cheeks are comically rounded and painted with a pink hue against a ghostly white skin. These distortions are consistent with the grotesque in that they are so largely distorted from reality.

The appearance of the mask adds a sense of the carnivalesque to the actions of protest through its grotesque appearance and transgressive humor. As the *Guardian*'s Jonathan Jones has written, the appearance of the mask marks not a revolution, but "a carnival. That does not make it false, but wise. Real revolution is bloody and cruel and mad. A carnival is entertaining and opens up questions that cannot usually be asked. Guy Fawkes has become the king of a carnival of questions. Far from being sinister, his mask is a jokey icon of festive citizenship." The distorted features mark it as a grotesques representation of the human face, but the image is also jokey and festive. In this way it is quite different from, say, a Klu Klux Klan hood, which evokes terror rather than laughter.

The Guy Fawkes mask evokes an illicit, transgressive type of laughter. We may not laugh out loud at the sight of it but, depending on its relationship with other images and words, the mask can produce the type of festive laughter that defeats terror in a way that Bakhtin describes as at work in the work of Rabelais.

One way the Guy Fawkes mask evoke festive laughter is through the concept of lulz, a deliberate reworking of the popular internet abbreviation: LOL, for Laugh Out Loud. Lulz can be understood as much more mischievous than it predecessor. Gabriella Coleman, a self-described digital anthropologist, who has written prolifically on Anonymous and digital activism, defines lulz as "a deviant style of humor and quasi-mystical state of being" (location 65). Coleman defines lulz as a state of being, which links to Bakhtin's observations "incompleted character of being" (32). For Bakhtin this ability to evoke the incompleted character of being was an important element of the grotesque. And lulz, as a transgressive form of humor, is present in the imageword of the Guy Fawkes mask. Fleckenstein defines imageword as a boundary crossing, boundary blurring literacy practice that calls attention to the ways in which words and images interact to create meaning. She writes, "The theory of imageword is predicated on double logics: the logic of imagery that unmarks boundaries and the logic of discourse that marks boundaries" (6). We cannot rely only on the image of the Guy Fawkes mask alone understand its meaning. Laughter affected by this jokey icon stems from the ecology of meaning at home in the notion of imageword. Therefore, the Guy Fawkes mask can be seen as humorous when the boundaries it crosses are clearly demarcated as part of a festive ritual rather than merely an attack. In her book, *Hacker, Hoaxer, Whistleblower, Spy: The Many Faces of Anonymous,* Coleman recounts an event where she was tasked

with introducing Anonymous to the Canadian Security Intelligence Service (CSIS) so that they could take her knowledge of the hacktivist collective into account while they gathered research for a threat assessment report. She played them an early video made by Anonymous which she refers to as a "lulz litmus test" (Location 208). Nervous that the agents in the room would not understand the lulzy nature of the video, she played the video for them while wondering if the last three sentences would evoke laughter from the agents as it had for everyone else she had played it for. The video she played for the agents was the first viral video of Anonymous, which was made as part of the operation against the Church of Scientology.[2] Here are the three sentences to which she refers:

> Anonymous has therefore decided that your organization should be destroyed. For the good of your followers, for the good of mankind and for our own enjoyment. We shall proceed to expel you from the Internet and systematically dismantle the Church of Scientology in its present form (In Coleman, Location 216).

The video worked. The agents laughed. Coleman's story serves as "proof of the infectious spirit of the lulz" (Location 216). The words of Anonymous contribute to the multimodal meaning of the mask, signifying laughter. But what kind of laughter? Returning to Bakhtin can help us locate the type of laughter present in the imageword of the Guy Fawkes mask.

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[2] I shall devote more time to this operation in the next chapter, for now it is important only that we know Anonymous, as well as hacktivists going back to the early days of the internet, had reason to protest against the Church because of its history of opposing freedom of information. See *Hacktivism and Cyberwars: Rebels with a Cause?* by Tim Jordan and Paul Taylor for more on the relationship between early hacktivists and the Church of Scientology.

Bakhtin describes laughter as an important element in the notion of the grotesque, but the laughter of each age is different; therefore, the laughter of the Guy Fawkes mask must be put into perspective. The carnivalesque emergers through the laughter present in the Anonymous imageword of the mask, but for Bakhtin there is a difference between the grotesque of the romantic age and the grotesque of the medieval and the renaissance. For Bakhtin, the reemergence of the grotesque in the romantic age brought with a subjectivity that was not found in the grotesque previously, a subjectivity that is still present in Corbett rejection of protest rhetoric because it is collective. In addition, the romantic subjective grotesque "was a reaction against the cold rationalism, against official, formalistic, and logical authoritarianism; it was a rejection of that which is finished and completed, of the didactic and utilitarian spirit of the enlighteners with their narrow and artificial optimism" (37). Most importantly, laughter changed from a force of renewal, gaiety, and joy as it was "cut down to cold humor, irony, sarcasm" (38). Bakhtin sees the fullest expression of this transformed laughter of the subjective-romantic grotesque in the "The Night Watchmen," which posits the notion of laughter being "sent to the earth by the devil, but it appeared to men under the mask of joy, and so they readily accepted it. Then laughter cast away its mask and looked at man and at the world with eyes of angry satire" (38). This is an important development in laughter and the grotesque that might still be with us today in the notion of lulz and the appearance of the Guy Fawkes mask. But, is this the older, communal renewal laughter of the Middle Ages and the Renaissance, or the subjective satirical laughter of the Romantic grotesque?

When we put the laughter of the Guy Fawkes mask into perspective, we see that the laughter of the Guy Fawkes mask shares some similarities with the laughter of other

ages, identified by Bakhtin; however, the laughter of the Guy Fawkes mask can best be understood as lulz. At the time of the Maple Spring, which provided the backdrop for the last chapter, the Guy Fawkes mask appeared regularly at political demonstrations without evoking a solid political foundation, but it has since become almost synonymous with an online collective of activists known only as Anonymous. I will go into their background in more detail in the following chapter. For now, it is important only to note that they carry out activist projects under the collective identity of Anonymous. They wear the Guy Fawkes mask to hide identities and signal their collective ethos. In an article for the Guardian, PhD candidate in Media Studies at the University of Vienna, Austria, Jana Herwig concluded that "Anonymous, the collective identity, has not only by now become a part of internet lore, it is also already being used by people to nurture a resilient self who would stand up for his or her rights if necessary." Anonymous uses the mask as part of their rhetoric in several videos announcing their illicit and transgressive use of computers to stand up to internet censorship and invasions of privacy. Their use of computers to carry out direct action protest has earned them the label of hacktivist, a moniker meant to denote their ability to hack computers for political causes with a mashing together of hacker and activist. Herwig notes that Anonymous, the collective identity, not only has a carnivalesque edge; it also echoes traditional African mask societies [which] 'exercise of male power and various forms of social control, whether over the youthful initiates or those the maskers perceive as deviant.'" Herwig is correct to view Anonymous as a contemporary mask culture, it is best to understand their adoption of the mask as it fits into a development of the grotesque. Of course, it is important to note a cruel streak in the laughter of Anonymous, but it is just as important to note how

59

the profanation of sacred can serve as renewal, even if it is done for the lulz. Herwig

finds a link to an exercise of male power for social control, as in the Anonymous motto:

"Anonymous. Because none of us are as cruel as all of us." But, I see a link to

Anonymous' use of the mask as carnivalesque in the "carnivalesque gesture" performed

by the character Gargantua in Rabelais' work. Gargantua is a giant who downs the people

in the novel in urine. Bakhtin describes this gesture as a move seeking the "profanation of

the sacred," and it done, in a certain sense, for the lulz (192). Just before all the people in

the novel are drowned in urine, "Gargantua declares that he will do this *par ris*, for sport

or laughter's sake" (192). According to Bakhtin, the declaration of *par ris* is no small

thing. It is actually a "parody of the local legends about the origin of names," which were

composed by rhetoricians and poets of the time, such as Jean Lemaire, meant to suggest

the origin of the name city name, Paris. The profanation of the sacred in the more trollish

behavior of Anonymous is usually justified as being done purely for the lulz. This, of

course, doesn't excuse the actions taken by some who wish to exert dominance in the

name of Anonymous, such as the example used by Herwig when the collective overran

an epilepsy support forum with flashing animation in an apparent attempt to induce a

seizure in someone with photosensitive epilepsy. There is no excusing that. However, it is

worth noting that other lulz inspired hijinks could produce laughter in much the way that

Rabelais' Gargantua was meant to. Even though the carnivalesque changes meaning from

era to era, Bakhtin argued that "in spite of their differences in character and tendency, the

carnival-grotesque form exercises the same function: to consecrate inventive freedom, to

permit the combination of a variety of different elements and their rapprochement, to

liberate from the prevailing point of view of the world, from conventions and established

truths, from cliches, from all that is humdrum and universally accepted." The rhetoric of the mask is fueled by this carnival spirit. Its use "offers the chance to have a new outlook on the world, to realize the relative nature of all that exists, and to enter a completely new order of things" (34). Understanding the mask as a metaphor of rhetoric means understanding how a rhetoric unbound from classical conceptions and prevailing needs for civility has the power to undermine prevailing order.

Metaphors for rhetoric like the open hand (as opposed to the closed fist) should be rethought in light of the work done by rhetoricians studying acts of unruliness of minority rhetoric. This is an important point because rhetoric in cases where rights have been suppressed is anything but polite, so privileging the metaphorical image of the open hand limits what might be revealed about the relationship between rhetoric and dissent. In cases such as a student strike, rhetoric is transgressive, bold, and unruly. Rhetoricians need to ask what can be learned from these disruptive and more frequently anonymous acts of protest rhetoric -- acts where the move isn't always to persuade but rather to display common values, to let the like-minded know they are not alone and see they are more powerful than they know. Christina Foust has argued that Bakhtin's carnivalesque provides a metaphor for understanding the transgressive nature of protest rhetoric. She argues that "the complicated and often incoherent discourses of carnival challenge singular, simple, or prefabricated meanings -- as well as those groups who seek to use the logic of singular, simple, and prefabricated meanings to maintain power" (11). Protest rhetorics are not closed in the same sense that Corbett might suggest that they are. They are open in the way that Bakhtin sees the carnivalesque as "incompleted," as a becoming, as metamorphosis. Corbett's criticism of protest rhetoric is fascinating in that many of his

points are still leveled at protest today. However, a close look at these points show how they conform to a paradigm exposed by Foust: that criticism of protest falls under an unexamined need to offer a counter-hegemony and to see rhetoric as primarily a way of persuading an audience to accept that hegemony. However, Foust, like Corbett, doesn't think beyond the limitations of verbal-centric rhetoric and misses that visual rhetoric can decenter hegemony and open new possibilities for understanding protest rhetoric. I now turn to other ways of opening protest rhetoric.

Rhetoric of the open Mask: Welcome to V's parlor

The power of disruptive rhetoric lies in its call for future participants to take up a role in the unfolding drama of modern discourse. The mask does this not through a lumping together in a single agenda or hegemonic ideal, as we might find in the IWW fist, but through the carnivalization of protest discourse, opening up gaps in closed rhetorics and clearly establishing the presence of boundaries in rhetorics that are thought to be open already. Byron Hawk also examined the open and closed metaphors in Corbett's work. The Hawk published the video after I had finished my own evaluation of Corbett's argument, I see that we are of like mind on more than a few points. In a video for *Enculturation* called "Re-Opening Public Rhetoric," Byron Hawk returns to Corbett's essay in order to gain perspective on how the metaphors Corbett deployed appear when viewed in light of advances in communication and participation offered by the internet. Hawk begins by summarizing Corbett's argument in much the same way that I do above, but points out how much Marshall McLuhan influences Corbett's views of student protest rhetoric, allowing Hawk to discuss the medium in play when the internet is used to re-open rhetorical messages. Hawk summarizes Corbett's view on embodied rhetoric as a

return to the rhetoric of the closed fist, pointing out that for Corbett this rhetoric takes the form of "marches," "sit-ins," and other forms of demonstration – forms that Corbett would say are coercive rather than persuasive. Hawk also points out that Corbett sees this type of closed rhetoric as being tied to "symbols" and "costumes," which is something that McLuhan sees as part of "a shift away from cognition to affection" in education; something McLuhan called "emersion." It is easy to see how V's mask would fit into this discussion as another example of closed rhetoric leftover from sixties rebellion. But I suggest that this mask offers a side of rhetoric that needs to be in view if we are to understand the disruptive power of public rhetoric. Hawk recalls that Corbett feared that this closed form of embodied rhetoric, a rhetoric that "goes out of its way to antagonize," would "lead to the oppositional rhetoric that we see today." Hawk implies that such a thing is present in actions like throwing a shoe at President Bush and in the rhetoric of right-wing pundits like Glenn Beck by showing clips of these figures after describing oppositional rhetoric. Hawk argues that the internet offers ways of opening this closed rhetoric in ways that Corbett could not have imagined. I agree with Hawk's point that remixing, the ability to change and appropriate messages, is the key to seeing how the internet re-opens messages that were meant to be closed but, the element of transgression in antagonizing those in seats of power is missing if we don't look closely enough at the disruptive potential of public rhetoric. And for me, that disruptive potential lies in the visual rhetoric of the mask.

Hawk is right to call attention to the use of remix in today's public rhetoric, but missing is the embodiment of a disruptive, resistant ethos. Hawk points out how YouTube viewers of punk band Refused's "New Noise" video take its closed message

63

and remix it into something new, thereby re-opening the closed rhetoric through the medium of YouTube.Hawk is right to argue that we should take this action into the classroom. But what about rhetoricians taking our knowledge of composition and rhetoric outside the classroom to join our students in protest? Or better, instead of taking a prescriptivist view, what if rhetoricians took up a more descriptivist view of the types of rhetoric going on in the streets? The mask calls attention to the ways in which resistant messages can be remixed to suit the needs of composers who wish to disrupt the status quo of their local campuses or communities. What makes the mask a meaningful metaphor for modern public rhetoric is the component of ethos as a dwelling place. The mask is an open form waiting for embodiment. We need to take into account both the closed nature of the display of power embodied by the use of the mask and the persona created through the openness offered by the role of V from *V for Vendetta*.

The V mask is indicative of a new rhetorical development in the actions of dissidents. Non-verbal, collective, disruptive, decentered, and anonymous, this is the unruly rhetoric of the protest. The emergence of the mask can show us a lot about the character and values of this new stage of student protest -- not because its goal is to persuade in the normalized structure imposed upon students by higher education, but rather because it seeks to display new structures by disrupting old ones. In his introduction to *The Ethos of Rhetoric*, Michael J. Hyde invites readers to think beyond the commonplace understanding of ethos regularly made by scholars, that ethos denotes "'moral character' and 'ethics.'" Hyde asks rhetoricians to explore the boundaries of the notion in its "more 'primordial' meaning…to refer to the way discourse is used to transform space and time into 'dwelling places' (*ethos; pl. ethea*) where people can

deliberate about and 'know together' (*con-scientia*) some matter of interest. Such

dwelling places define the grounds, the abodes or habitats, when a person's ethics and

moral character take from and develop" (xiii). The student uprising during the Maple

Spring of 2012 is an example of a dwelling place in transformation, and a close look at

how the student display of ethos present in V's mask can make clear the importance of a

much needed shift in metaphor if rhetoricians are to fully understand the relationship

between rhetoric and dissent.

Understanding ethos as a dwelling place brings its rhetorical elements into sharp

focus while also showing that language-centric views of rhetoric and notions of rhetoric

as mere persuasion don't allow for the insights needed to fully understand the

relationship between rhetoric and dissent. In *Rhetoric and Resistance in the Corporate*

Academy Christopher Carter evokes the classical notion of ethos as a dwelling place as a

way of showing labour unions and student social movements need to seek solidarity with

an ethos outside the state if they are to successfully challenge the corporate academy. V's

mask offers a way to bridge several divisions that Carter sees. Carter is right to point out

that "without a commitment to democratization, unions replicate the paternalistic

institutional politics they aim to displace" (69). Carter argues effectively when he

paraphrases William Vaughn and "encourages graduate workers to 'organize first' rather

than wait for legal authorities to validate their identities" (136). But Carter's view of

ethos as a dwelling rests on conceptions of rhetoric as language-centric and persuasive.

Citing Michael J. Hyde and a few contributors to his important book, Carter shows how

the notion of ethos as a dwelling place compels rhetoricians to discover ways of

"enlarging" (Warnick), "evoking" (Hyde), and "improving" (C. Smith, Kenny) that

dwelling. (137.) Carter is concerned with how the rhetoric of unions attempts to widen their dwelling place, allowing more to enter, when what is needed is a display of power.

Where the raised fist seeks recognition and inclusion, the mask doesn't seek any such restitution because the mask conceals identity, shielding activists from punishment enacted by mechanisms of power. Where the raised fist makes a demand, the mask reveals an interconnected system of resistance outside the boundaries of both the state and the corporation, yet willing to use the appendages of both to meet their ends. This is the true metaphorical power of the mask, which should replace both the raised fist and the open hand as images of rhetoric. The mask can be remixed to show solidarity with movements that might help it achieve short term goals, but it is also outside those movements and willing to take other actions (actions perhaps deemed too dangerous by those willing to work within the system for reform) to achieve long term goals. When Shantz analyzes current social movements he notes that they appear to share the goal of the old IWW (Wobblies): "forming the structure of the new world in the shell of the old." The main point being that the power of these movements lies in both their ability to withdraw their power from oppressive apparatuses and in their ability to "begin 'contracting other relationships'" (14). Among the key principles of these new anarchist movements, Shantz lists "affinity-based organizing," which he has linked to the work of post-structural anarchist Richard Day. Day's account of the formation of today's resistant communities includes "that are discounted or actively warded off in moral discourse: affects such as passion, strategy, rhetoric, and style" (23). Put simply, if rhetoricians are interested in the rhetoric of today's social movements, anarchism offers a window into how it is used. I argue that affinity in these groups is traceable through visual rhetoric.

Further, the use of V's mask is an important node in reconstructing this affinity and its ties to (post)modern conceptions of anarchy.

Where the raised closed fist captured the sentiments of those activists who wished to push the state (or other controlling bodies) to act on their behalf; the mask offers something much more anarchic in nature. The presence of a raised closed fist might prompt another fist to be raised, but the power of this metaphor is limited to mere recognition of the disruptive power by the powers that be and thus has only the power to "stand up and be counted." Such rebellion can effect change for social groups, but always at the behest of the state. Thus, it must be understood as counter-hegemonic. The rhetoric of the mask offers the ability to undermine established truth and order through the carnival spirit. In *Active Anarchy*, Jeff Shantz takes a close look at how activist groups develop in the interim between the shift from Keynesian economies to neoliberal ones, seeking to trace how developments in their actions take these shifts in economic philosophy into account. He argues that anarchists today seek something different from recognition and inclusion. Indeed, such demands merely legitimize powerful apparatuses like the corporation or the state. Put simply, it is one thing to demand to be recognized as a contributing member of a corporation, as when the oppressed seek higher-wages or the right to work in or run a corporation, but it is quite another to create a new system. Shantz writes that the disruptive tactics of current social movements "express a striving for autonomy and self-determination rather than a politics of dissent or demand" (30). This shift has an obvious impact on discussions seeking to understand the relationship between rhetoric and dissent because it shows that current social movements are breaking the mold. This notion that dissidents can bring about change through dissent and demand

stems from a commitment to counter-hegemonic goals. Christina Foust has argued that this adherence to the counter-hegemonic elides the ways in which protesters have sought other goals.

Just as Bakhtin sees the carnivalesque as developing outside the confines of the classical canon, V's mask has taken its place in a succession of images developing as transgressive modes of resistance outside officialdom. Further, this comes in the form of a mixture of approaches to political theory that supports the idea that, starting with the New Left, protest rhetoric has not sought counter-hegemony as its goal. As such the mask displays a developing value system – a value system that can be most easily understood through a more classical conception of ethos as a dwelling; however, any conception of ethos as a dwelling must take into account the visual display of its power. Under the metaphor of V's mask, rhetoric as conceived as Burke's parlor also fails to cover the unruliness of disruptive rhetoric. V's parlor is more fitting. V's parlor is the inherited space of the New Left as it undergoes transformation into a more anarchistic dwelling. Writing about the ethos of the new left in the late 60s, Howard Zinn noticed then a shift in ideology that differentiated it from the old left. For Zinn,

> In America, liberalism and radicalism alike were beguiled into cheering for state
> power because under F.D.R. it seemed beneficent: it enacted various economic
> reforms and it waged war against Hitler. The New Left, we must hope, will
> continue to recognize that a state cannot be trusted, as a "liberal America" could
> not be trusted to carry reforms far enough or to drop bombs only on Nazi invaders
> and not on Asian peasants in their own countries. The New Left, therefore, will
> create constellations of power outside the state to pressure it into humane actions,

to resist its inhumane actions, and eventually to replace it by voluntary

associations that seek to maintain, in small groups, individuality and cooperation

(Black Power, in its best aspects, suggests such an endeavor). The New Left in

America has the job of publicly demonstrating that the state, whether a proletarian

dictatorship or welfare capitalism, is fundamentally an autonomous special

interest and thus deserves not loyalty, but criticism and resistance intermittently,

and watchfulness always' (*Marxism and the New Left* 365-6).

The parallels between Zinn's words and student activists wearing V's mask are easy to

draw: to quote V himself, "People shouldn't be afraid of their government. Governments

should be afraid of their people" (McTeigue). This sentiment that the people should turn

the tables on the government is echoed when Anonymous says, "We are watching"

(Wagner). The outcropping of this ethos is visible everywhere V's mask is present. V's

mask marks the passage from working inside the system and supporting representative

democracy to the use of disruptive power to enact the will of the people. As Sitrin puts it,

these actions mean "that instead of proposing legislation or getting behind a candidate

who is against foreclosures (as one is supposed to do in a representative 'democracy'),

the movement disrupts foreclosures and occupies people's homes so they are not evicted"

(17). For rhetoricians, the emergence of the mask represents the newest stage in the

development of rhetorical metaphors, progressing from the open hand to the raised closed

fist of the black power and new left movements – the mask is not a sign of liberal

democratic faith in representative democracy. It is a sign of disruptive dual power that

springs from an ethos embodying a direct democracy, seeking affinity and mutual aid.

The dwelling place of ethos on display in the visual rhetoric of protest is missed when

emphasis is placed on voice and maintaining order. Older metaphors of closed fists and open hands do not allow for theories concerning the embodiment of ideals to be given the attention they need; therefore, we should focus on the view of rhetoric as carnivalesque that is developed outside the official culture and on display in the mask -- a task I take up in the next chapter.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I looked back on the field of composition and rhetoric's first encounters with protest rhetoric through the work of Edward P.J. Corbett as he struggled to understand protest rhetoric of the 60s on college campuses. It should now be clear that holding limited views on the boundaries of rhetoric itself while also holding hegemonic-centric, as Richard Day and Christina Foust term it, views of protest movements led them to reach their conclusions on the effectiveness of student protest rhetoric. To improve upon these limitations, I turned to the work of Bakhtin and his understanding of the carnivalesque. Especially useful, is Bakhtin's consideration of the grotesque image of the mask. Bakhtin, in *Rabelais and his World,* posits a rhetorical theory that seeks to go beyond standard thinking of rhetoric as representational, but despite his goals, he doesn't venture far into the theories of the rhetoric of image. And while Christina Foust exposes the rhetoric of transgression beyond these limitations, she doesn't give enough attention to the contributions made through visual rhetoric. In short, Foust's attempts to go beyond hegemonic-centric conceptions of protest rhetoric fall short because she doesn't see how visual rhetoric can take us beyond the limitations she mentions. Going beyond representational limits in the field of rhetoric can also be seen in the ways that current democratic protest appears to seek a more radical sense of democracy that also lines up

with the thoughts of anarchists, like Foust invokes in her book. However, in order to meet protest rhetoric on its own terms we must rethink our preconceived notions of what constitutes both rhetoric and power. When we do that we see the carnivalesque nature of disruptive power. This is a call to understand the power of grotesque imagery to disrupt notions of hegemony. Once that is understood, the mask can be seen as open, transgressive resistance and an invitation to inhabit a common dwelling place.

I have in mind a visual rhetoric of transgression and disruption that goes beyond a rhetorics of representation. In this chapter, I want to look at some of the work of foundational scholars of rhetoric's reemergence, a time when arguments towards a definition of rhetoric were abundant as scholars tried stake claim to what the area's discourse would cover. Activism brushed against this tendency in the field in the 1960s, and Edward P.J. Corbett sought to understand the rhetoric of protesters at that time. My goal is to expose and overcome some limitations in how rhetoric was understood by these scholars in order to make room for a metaphor of rhetoric that is not bound by notions of representation and the usual ways of conceiving of ethos that comes along with it. Much of the ground work for this project has been laid by Bradford Vivian and other visual rhetoric scholars, such as Kristine Fleckenstein. But I also wish to acknowledge the work of Thomas Rickert and Christina Foust who also seek ways, albeit very different from one another, of going beyond rhetorics of persuasion and decorum. I am thinking of a rhetoric that is more environmental and ambient, much like the type conceived by Rickert. But there needs to be room for the ways in which acts of transgression and disruption affect the meaning of the environments in which they occur. These concerns are taken up in the next chapter, where I delve into the notion of affinity in network

culture and show how the mask invites protesters to join the collective without espousing a counter-hegemonic narrative.

In the next chapter, I take a close look at affinity as an organizing feature in digital activism by comparing the hacktivist collective Anonymous' use of the mask to a group who may have coined the term affinity back in the 70s: Up Against the Wall, Motherfuckers! The group used art in ways reminiscent of Guy Debord's Situationist Internationale to inspire what they called "a street-gang with analysis." Affinity can be understood as something that holds a collective together without hegemony or conformity. But so much of what has been written about affinity and the carnivalesque ways in which it emergers have centered on the body. It is important to ask, how can affinity exist in a digital environment? As we shall see, it is not surprising that the carnival spirit lives online in the work of Anonymous. As Geoffrey Sirc has noted, electronic discourse has a way of carnivalizing the classroom (223). It stands to reason then, that online political engagement would also take on this trait.

CHAPTER IV

Hacking Community: Vision and Affinity in the Guy Fawkes Mask

In the last chapter, I argued that hegemony should no longer be understood as the main

goal of protest rhetoric and that binaries of open and closed systems limit rhetorical

theory. The Guy Fawkes mask as a carnivalesque political image calls attention to the

need for a new guiding metaphor for rhetoric that allows ill-perceived boundaries, made

through the centrality of counter-hegemony, to be crossed.

In this chapter, I turn my attention to the collective use of the political image

online by comparing the use of the Guy Fawkes mask by Anonymous to the radical art of

60s group Up Against the Wall Motherfucker, who coined the term affinity group. I take

a close look at how the notion of affinity developed at its inception with the Up Against

the Wall Motherfucker, a self-proclaimed "street gang with an analysis," who wanted to

unite all the struggles in a total revolution. Then I compare affinity as it appears in

Anonymous, a hacktivist collective who behave in a fashion similar to the Motherfuckers

albeit in a mostly non-corporeal sense.

Just as Kevin DeLuca found when he began writing and researching about social movements for his book, *Image Politics*, I find that most of the work on hacktivism is concerned with understanding it from a sociological point of view, rather than a rhetorical one. That is, most scholars, save for Fleckenstein and Warnick & Heineman, were more interested in describing hacktivist community while either justifying or condemning their ethics rather than understanding how rhetoric shapes those communities in the first place. With this in mind, I began to ask, how does the rhetoricity of images like the Guy Fawkes mask evoke a collective ethos in online environments? Seeking an answer to this question calls for a careful definition of ethos. Static conceptions of ethos as an appeal to good character in standing with communities falls short of the mark for understanding ethos. Ethos defined as a dwelling place offers a better understanding for how ethos operates in online environments. With this in mind, the imageword of the Guy Fawkes mask produces what Carolyn R. Miller calls a "persona effect." When the mask appears in online environments it produces this persona effect in ways that are similar to the one produced by artificial intelligence in closed and open systems that Miller found in her contribution to Michael J. Hyde's *The Ethos of Rhetoric*. The persona effect offered by the V mask is non-static and not bound to a physical location or even a body, allowing for participants to slip into the role of disrupter in ways that can problematize conceptions of community and collective agency. However, analyzing the use of the mask by Anonymous to help evoke a collective ethos brought other concerns to the forefront. Drawing on the work of Christina Foust and her influence from Richard Day I intend to show that the need to apply community standards along the lines of offering a counter-

hegemony springs from conceptions of ethos that are in turn limited to appeals to good

character. An understanding of hacktivist ethos, needs to understand hacking.

Rather than view hacking as an illegal activity performed for the purposes of

extortion, the notion of hacking traces back to actions perform to solve problems via a

clever reworking of computer code. Hacking, according to Jordan and Taylor's

Hacktivism and Cyberwars: Rebels with a Cause?, stems for the image of people typing,

hacking away at a keyboard, as they worked with computer code. It has since evolved to

mean a clever reworking of apparent limitations in the a piece of technology in order to

make the object perform functions it was not designed for (5-12). An example I use with

my students is the clever hack guitarist Tom Morello of Rage Against The Machine

performed on his instrument for the song "Bullet in the Head." The hack involved using

the limitation in the technology of the electric guitar to create a new way of soloing by

unplugging the instrument and placing the jack onto a pickup in order to produce

feedback. By taking the jack on and off the pick up, Morello was able to compose a

melody. Such is the spirit of the hack. Just as hackers hack tools in order to perform tasks

outside the limitations of the original conception of a tool's use, so do hackers working in

hacktivist collectives hack the notion of community.

Instead of asking what hacktivist community is, as one might in cultural studies,

researchers interested in rhetoric and social action should ask how hacktivists hack

community – how they change it in order to perform tasks outside the limitations brought

about by the original conception of community. When we turn to this question, we find

that *affinity* becomes the operative term in creating collective notions of ethos in network

society. And a close look at how hacktivists use visual rhetoric to entice affinity has

implications for rhetorical scholars because understanding affinity impacts our collective understanding of the role visual rhetoric plays in building politically radical ethos. At stake in this argument is a new conception of collectivity. Broadly speaking, there are two ways of understanding ethos. One is based on character. The other, dwelling. As stated in the last chapter, ethos as a dwelling place offers an advantage in that people are asked to dwell and learn together some a matter of importance, allowing for a way of decentering the need to establish a counter-hegemony. The two ways of seeing ethos correspond to two conceptions of collectivity: community and affinity. Below, figure two shows a diagram illustrating how ethos as based on character corresponds to collectivity as based on community, with persona understood as static and hegemony understood as the chief means of establishing new conceptions of society. Contra this, I posit an understanding ethos as the construction of a dwelling place. In this way, ethos, following Michael J. Hyde, "refer[s] to the way discourse is used to transform space and time into "dwelling places" where people can deliberate about and "know together" some matter of interest" (xiii). I argue that ethos based on creating a dwelling place establishes affinity, which aligns with a persona effect and sets carnival as the chief means of establishing new conceptions of society.
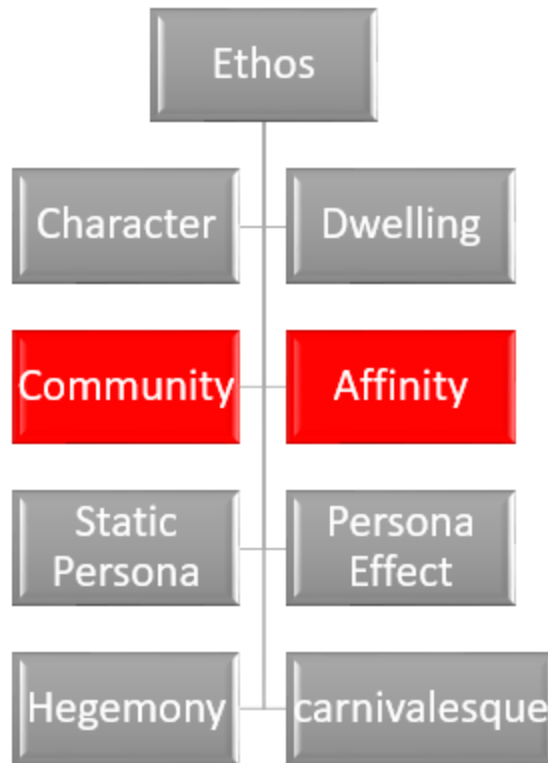
Figure 2

The notion of carnival supplies the fun and laughter crucial for creating a dwelling place free of systemic oppressions that usually go unnoticed. It shall become clear that what is missing in the art and revolution of Black Mask and Up Against the Wall Motherfucker is supplied, if only in a few fleeting instances in some of its operations, by the Guy Fawkes mask in Anonymous. Carnival supplies the crucial element of play and fun, making the attempt at collectivity rhetorical without supplying counter-hegemony. Black Mask, though sometimes capable of evoking this sense of togetherness in some of their art, ultimately seeks to establish an undergirding truth rather than what Richard Day has called a groundless solidarity. Ironically, the man who coins the term affinity fails to establish it in his own collective. This doesn't happen in Anonymous. Though some of their operations transgress boundaries we may like to see remain in place, Anonymous'

active pursuit to maintain a groundless solidarity allows it to retain an active affinity without counter-hegemony. When the hacktivist collective underwent a crisis of identity, it retained affinity through the carnivalesque of the Guy Fawkes mask because the mask decentered so much of what is conforming about community and activist rhetoric. The following case study offers insight into the ways in which affinity has developed in online environments.

In online environments, the notion of affinity supplies an important way to theorize collective ethos. James Paul Gee's initial thoughts on the limitations of community align with my view of ethos understood as appeals to character and ethics. Gee suspects that "the key problem with notions like "community of practice", and related ones like "communities of learners", is that they make it look like we are attempting to label a group of people. Once this is done, we face vexatious issues over which people are in and which are out of the group, how far they are in or out and when they are in or out" (Semiotic Social Spaces and Affinity Spaces 215). Just as Gee suspects that notions of community as bound up in notions of belonging, so too is ethos, understood merely as appeals to character and ethics, locked in static positions concerning order, humanity, ethics, and hegemony. Hacktivists hack notions of community, enacting the notion of ethos as a dwelling place to create politically active affinity. Participants come together in affinity by taking on the role offered through the persona effect of the affinity group's use of the political image.

Ben Morea, who coined the term 'affinity,' resisted any attempt to impose political order on the actions of his affinity groups. Despite his efforts, affinity groups soon cooled from being "street gangs with analysis," as he put it, to becoming more or less training

groups for community organizing as activism became concerned with memberships in

movements based on community rather than the more radical notion of affinity. However,

the information age allows for a shift in focus from identity to style as a means of

producing affinity. Affinity, consists of a core group of a few participants who create

links and build a wider collective in pursuit of creating a more just society; in order to get

a deeper understanding of the term. The following case study compares and contrasts

affinity as it first appeared in the work of 60s radicals Up Against the Wall

Motherfuckers and as the term applies to the hacktivist collective Anonymous in order to

come to an understanding of how visual rhetoric contributes to the composition of the

collective self.

Naming Affinity

I am not the first writer to trouble the term community when writing about digital

activism. Warnick and Heineman point out in *Digital Rhetoric: The Politics of New*

Media that using the term "implies a self-contained discursive space in which certain

forms of civic discourse (as defined by 'community standards') prevail. Furthermore, it

suggests that any 'effects' of community discourse are then limited to members of the

community" (24). They evoke Jodi Dean as one theorist who troubles the use of

community, showing that, for Dean, "the web itself has been detrimental to the formation

of traditional communities: 'Rather than fulfilling community, the Web seems to threaten

it as it enables people to play with identities, forfeit responsibilities, and indulge in

potentially dangerous fantasies'" (Dean quoted in Warnick and Heineman 24). Dean's

complaints lead Warnick and Heineman to understand that any work equating online

collectives with community fails automatically. Warnick and Heineman correctly argue

that the environment of the internet is so different that a new term is needed. Warnick and Heineman are right to argue that community is a problematic term. To rectify this error, Warnick and Heineman suggest adopting Kahn and Kellner's term post-subcultures." Warnick and Heineman like "post-subculture" because the notion of the subculture, following Dick Hebdige, allows them to see the political elements of online collectives because it overcomes the shortcomings of community by emphasizing the ways in which their rhetoric is meant to have an impact beyond an insulated community. They argue that "the notion of 'post-subculture' posits [online collectives such as] slash fan fiction writers and readers as subjects directly opposed to the mainstream ideologies, norms, and so forth" (25). I that it is important to emphasize these elements because they help to better develop theories of digital rhetoric by focusing attention on "the potential to provoke and persuade others outside of the subculture into changing their own cultural beliefs" (25). But I think focusing on overcoming the limits of outsider/insider status in order to understand these collectives as rhetorical only partially fulfills Dean's call for a new term over and above community. That is, if the real-world differs so greatly from the digital environments where collectives are formed that online environments disrupt qualities that have traditionally been used to define community in the first place, then any attempt at defining online collectives should take into consideration the differences in the key elements Dean refers to or risk missing an opportunity to more fully construct knowledge of these emerging new collectives as political entities. In short, Dean has a point that communities formed in online are done so in a manner that basic understandings of identity are played with in mischievous and fantastic ways. But rather than see this as potentially detrimental and dangerous, the new term should allow for a more rhetorical

view of these elements. Therefore, this chapter will address the need to rhetorically analyze the ways in which collectives form online and engage in politically subversive social action by constructing new and broader boundaries for composing the collective self.

The term affinity better addresses the needs of scholars to take note of the differing approaches to building politically radical ethos in the information age. James Paul Gee opened up discussions among teachers and theorists on affinity by noting that what he called the affinity space has a way of transcending the concepts of a community of practice. Tracing the notion of affinity back to Ben Morea, who coined the term when he founded the group Up Against the Wall Motherfuckers in the 1960s, shows that affinity was meant to replace notions of community, creating a new way of living together. Morea's notion of affinity has not been the one dominantly deployed by our discipline of rhetoric and composition. This, despite the efforts of James Paul Gee when he began to theorize about affinity spaces and their impact on literacy (*Semiotic Spaces and Affinity Spaces*). I seek to underscore Gee's efforts to move beyond notions of groups and community by offering Morea's understanding of affinity as a more politically radical term. In this way, reconnecting affinity to Morea's more radical definition can help to further uncouple rhetorics of resistance from notions of community. My goal is to further research in the important area of the rhetoricity of affinity by helping to supplant community with affinity in the work of rhetoric and composition. I aim to do this by exploring how Anonymous came to use the Guy Fawkes mask, not in order to help solidify the term affinity or help to organize and categorize our knowledge ontologically, but rather to theorize how the limitations constraining the available means of persuasion

when resistance becomes coupled with community might be seen to transcend those limitations via an affinity. The multimodal compositions of Anonymous provide a key to unlocking the potential to craft subversive messages that break what Fleckenstein calls visual habits of submission by providing affinity, a way of sharing agency and working towards common goals on the basis of shared ethos – in short, affinity provides the means for composing ethos as a dwelling in ways that move beyond typical conceptions of community. Rather than rely on the ambient culture to provide ethical practices for subversive politics, affinity calls for an ethics beyond the institutions that typically provide them.

Gee's notion of the affinity space goes a long way toward describing the term in ways much more useful to the field of rhetoric, and adding to his work on affinity spaces by focusing on the way Anonymous has created affinity through visual rhetoric of the mask can push notions of affinity further by considering how the notion of ethos as a dwelling space complicates this discussion even further. Gee lists the following as limitations inherent in the centralization of community:

- "The idea of "community" can carry connotations of "belongingness" and close-knit personal ties among people which do not necessarily always fit classrooms, workplaces or other sites where the notion of a community of practice has been used.

- The idea of "community" seems to bring with it the notion of people being "members". However, "membership" means such different things across different sorts of communities of practice, and there are so many different ways and

degrees of being a member in some communities of practice that it is not clear

that membership is a truly helpful notion.

- While Wenger has tried to be careful in delineating just what is and what is not a

  community of practice, distinguishing it from other sorts of affiliations, the notion

  has been used by others to cover such a wide array of social forms that we may be

  missing the trees for the forest" (214-5).

Gee is right to see community as a limiting factor and affinity as a way of avoiding these

limitations. He is also right to point out that this notion of affinity (by as many names)

appears to be pervasive given in today's mode of production, where communication

technology allows affinity to transcend space (216). For Gee affinity spaces, such as

video game fan sites that become so popular that they actually impact decisions

concerning the composition of the game itself, "capture one characteristically modern and

important form of social affiliation" (217). He goes on to add that "affinity spaces are

particularly common and important form today in our high-tech new-capitalist world"

(223). In this early article, in which he first seeks to define affinity spaces, he even points

out how everyone from corporations to self-help groups to social activists use them as a

new way of structuring relationships between participants and constructing identities

(228). He points out how businesses who use the affinity space model even substitute the

word "partner" for "worker" in an attempt to avoid "a traditional boss-worker

relationship in which one party 'bosses' the other' (228). But what is lost when affinity

spaces ignore the political implications of affinity groups?

Given than traditional relationships of domination are disrupted, or at least

diminished, when entering affinity spaces, it behooves researchers to become acquainted

with affinity's origin in a politics on non-domination. With this in mind, I turn to a close and careful look at the imageword deployed by Black Mask and Up Against the Wall Motherfuckers (hereby referred to as the Motherfuckers) in order to better understand how they conceived of the term and to learn how it helps further the study of collective political ethos. I should also mention the work of Richard Day in sociology and Christina Foust in rhetoric and communication as contributing to the study of affinity. Both have written about affinity as a way of decentering notion of counter-hegemony as a chief way of achieving activist goals. And both appear to miss a critical link to affinity by overlooking the work of Ben Morea and the Motherfuckers in coining the term. For Day, affinity is best defined as "that which always already undermines hegemony" (From Hegemony to Affinity 717). But I wish to show that carnivalesque does that, while affinity creates rhetorical ways of knowing the other and living together. In short, affinity is the notion of ethos as a dwelling place rather than a counter-hegemonic appeal to a universalized constructs of ethics.

Affinity then and now

Then, the Motherfuckers

Up Against the Wall, Motherfuckers, were a self-proclaimed "street gang with analysis," who organized a series of direct action political activities in New York's Lower East Side beginning around 1966. The original group was called Black Mask, and it was focused on art as it could be conceived outside the gallery. This radical group was formed around painter Ben Morea's idea that art had become something privileged only by the wealthy, and should be liberated for the people (Morea, Newman). Black Mask printed an eponymous underground magazine (or zine) for the purposes of alerting

people to their political actions and publishing radical art, poems, essays, and comics. Due to conflicting accounts, it is unclear when the groups began calling themselves Up Against the Wall, Motherfuckers (or simply the Motherfuckers), but accounts agree the the name stems from a poem by Amiri Baraka called "Black People!" Most of the history of the Motherfuckers has been recounted by the radical artist Ben Morea and Osha Newman. Newman, it should be noted is the stepson of Herbert Marcuse, a theorist associated with the Frankfurt school of critical theory and what is roughly defined as the New Left. According to Morea and Newman, much of the formation of the group is owed to frustrations both men felt toward what appeared to them to be nothing more than intellectual posturing on the political left, which was too bogged down in theory and needed to take action. The direct actions performed by the group range from the communal, such as setting up crash pads (free housing for runaways and refuges), setting up free stores and block parties, to the more politically disruptive such as forcefully occupying a building on a college campus, dumping trash piled up from the city worker garbage strike outside of a high profile art event at Lincoln Center on opening night, breaking into the Pentagon during an anti-war protest, and organizing free concerts at the Fillmore East.

By looking closely at the visual rhetoric of the Motherfuckers and Anonymous I am in a position to uncover emergent notions of political engagement in the form of creating new ways of defining the collective self. I will begin with the Motherfuckers because Morea coined the term affinity, then I will look at how affinity emerges through the visual style of Anonymous. Affinity, as I stated in the introduction, consists of a core group of a few participants who then seek to include others as they begin working to

85

realize their goals. In order to get a deeper understanding of the term, I take a close look

at how it developed at its inception with the group Up Against the Wall Motherfucker, a

self-proclaimed "street gang with an analysis," that wanted to unite all the struggles in a

total revolution. Because both the Motherfuckers and Anonymous use visuals in their

rhetoric, the following case study compares and contrasts affinity as it first appeared in

the work of 60s radicals Up Against the Wall Mother Fuckers and as the term applies to

the hacktivist collective Anonymous in order to come to an understanding of how visual

rhetoric contributes to rhetorics of resistances. The Motherfuckers were founded by Ben

Morea and Osha Neumann, both former artists. They incorporated visual aesthetics into

their dissident texts in the pages of their journal, Black Mask, and their costumes and

street performances. Anonymous is a hacktivist collective that have repurposed the visage

of Guy Fawkes, bringing it in-line with their own agitational practices and goals without

having to follow those set by the historical figure. By looking closely at the style of the

Motherfuckers and Anonymous, I am in a position to uncover emergent notions of

political engagement in the form of creating new ways of defining the collective self

through the affinity evoked by visual style.

For the Motherfuckers, affinity it is deeply linked to the arts and its attempts to

use visual arts to persuade others to join the group makes this very clear. Art Historian

Gavin Grindon introduces them this way: "[The Motherfuckers] represent a neglected

moment of the 'communization of the avant-garde' in which radical Dadaist and

Surrealist ideas and practices are woven through the actually existing political

organizations and direct action in North America. The history of this moment and its

lasting influence in contemporary activist-art casts a critical light on the debate around

the legacies and successes of the avant-garde's revolutionary ambitions." He goes on to

point out that "accounts of the May 1968 events in Paris…have tended to be reduced to a

merely cultural 'explosion,' a romantic myth eviscerated of its everyday political basis"

(173). Ben Morea coined the term Affinity group. He saw them as the anglophonic

version of what anarchist Murray Bookchin would call the non-hierarchical groups using

direct action and spreading horizontalism the Spanish speaking countries. Morea was

neighbors with Bookchin and they were part of a reading and discussion group together,

where Morea would routinely become frustrated with the overabundance of theory and

talk and storm out of the room (Numann 2). Though seldom written about, the

Motherfuckers have a lasting mark on activist art and social movements (Grindon).

Visual rhetoric contributed to the creation of affinity for the Motherfuckers and

led to the construction of the collective ethos as adversarial, even dangerous when

contrasted – as they often did in the text accompanying their art – with flower power. An

example can be seen in the figure below.

Flower Power?

On May 30th the police assaulted a group of 300 people in
Tompkins Square Park. Was this only the beginning?
Two days earlier tanks passed through the lower east-side.
Vietnam, Santo Domingo, Harlem, Watts…
Their struggle is our struggle.
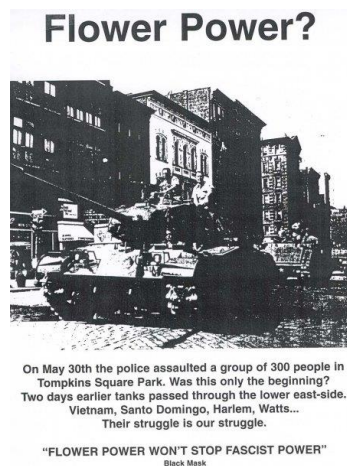
"FLOWER POWER WON'T STOP FASCIST POWER"
Black Mask

Figure 3

Note the captions above, "Flower power won't stop fascist power." Just as art historian Gavin Grindon has done, I want to insure that my account of the Motherfuckers' work "demonstrate[s] the crucial impact of arts groups in the growth and success of social movements, and counters the elision of their role which can occur in political histories and social movement studies" (173). Grindon understands the importance of Motherfuckers' visual rhetoric when he writes that the Motherfuckers' "neo-avant-garde redeployment of Dadaist and surrealist artistic tactics served as a political language for imagining the other identities and ways of living which now seemed possible. In this situation, the 'aestheticization of politics' was not, as in Walter Benjamin's famous formulation, a catastrophe, but a site of radical potential" (175). Morea saw the affinity group as a model for a functioning society, one that could eliminate class and racial oppression by subverting status quo conceptions of togetherness, through revolution.

In my attempt to develop a deeper understanding of affinity, I am taking up a different path than that of Gee – a path toward affinity as a way to transcend the limitations placed upon the available means of persuasion by concepts of community. Gee never referred to Morea in his writing. I have traced the term affinity group back to Morea. Gee is concerned with literacy and classroom work given the ability of affinity spaces to rework the construction of knowledge and knowing. Adding Morea's definition of affinity to Gee's early work in affinity spaces can help show more ways of overcoming limitations in the research by uncoupling notions of resistance from community. In the following section I will turn to a discussion of resistance in networked culture, for now I wish to extend the notion of affinity as a replacement for community by showing how Morea thought of affinity when he coined the term. In general, the term affinity is

synonymous with passion and so the term affinity space might slip into an understanding that the space is the significant thing rather than the affinity, causing a misconception that affinity space is merely a space centered on a particular passion or a space that allows passion to drive curiosity in the creation and distribution of knowledge. This is troubling because, following Morea, affinity it much more than passion or drive.

Ben Morea coined the term affinity after discussing Spanish anarchist activity with his friend Murray Bookchin. According to Morea, Bookchin was interested in how this non-hierarchical collectives were using direct action to carry out a new vision for society. Morea recounts that Bookchin wanted to use the Spanish term for these collectives: "aficionado de vairos," but Morea thought it best to use the English word and call them affinity groups (Morea and Hahne 156). Morea, an artist and activist, went on to form Black Mask and Up Against the Wall Motherfuckers! He saw the affinity group as a model for a functioning society, one that could eliminate class and race oppression. An early leaflet is worth quoting in full:

> The affinity group is the seed/ germ/ essence of organization. It is coming-together out of mutual Need or Desire. Cohesive historical groups united out the shared necessities of the struggle for survival, while dreaming of the possibility of love. For man's nature is not bounded by necessity alone — Desire appears in all its forms & man desires to desire — he seeks to fulfil himself on every level of his complex life. & it is in this psychological sense that the affinity group is a pre-organizational force, it represents the drive out of which organization is formed & in so far as it fulfills men's desires it becomes the post-revolutionary form, the organization of satisfaction. But the immediate need is for mutual desire to

> manifest itself as the organization for revolutionary struggle, for a new
> technological organization of resources, a new distribution of wealth, re-
> establishment of ecological principles (to recreate harmony in a disrupted nature),
> to create a whole new complex of free relations between people, that can satisfy
> all our complex needs for change & our consuming desire to be new & to be
> whole. (*Brown Paper Bag*).

For Morea, affinity was not merely a passion, but rather a new way of organizing society and the means of production and distribution of wealth. The affinity space as described by Gee is helpful in that it lists many qualities shared by Morea but without pushing it toward this radical conclusion, it threatens to become merely a practice, something to be reified by the dominate culture in which it appears. This is evident in the way that affinity groups and the newest social movements could be seen as merely a symptom of new-capitalist culture. If Gee is right in concluding that "in such spaces, people who share little, and even differ dramatically on other issues, affiliate around their common cause and the practices associated with espousing it" (229), then a close look at how affinity manifests in the ways of espousing it is in order because such an investigation allows researchers to understand how resistance is transformed under this organizational model.

The Motherfuckers deployment of the visual and its rhetoric of dissent through affinity appear to fall victim to the warnings of Kristian Fleckenstein, providing a wonderful case study when they forcibly occupied the campus of Columbia. The Motherfuckers were largely the source of the violence in that famous '68 event, though it is Mark Rudd and the Students for a Democratic Society (SDS) who appear in most of the histories. In *Vision, Rhetoric, and Social Action in the Classroom*, Fleckenstein warns

that the three threads of her symbiotic knot of contradictions (antinomy, digressio, and radical place) "can become so tightly intertwined that the pleasure of fragmentation and seduction of lawlessness becomes ends in themselves" (115). The Motherfuckers member Osha Neumann echos this sentiment when he reflects on his time with The Family; "Infantile rage is a fuel that is easily exhausted. Only structure in the personality and organization in the movement allows growth over time" (164). He argues that civil disobedience "became progressively less civil," leading to the conclusion that many reached: "only a total transformation of society would do. And the only organizations worthy of allegiance was one that was committed to that total transformation and which required its members a corresponding total commitment. These organizations risked becoming cults" (163). So, when the SDS, led by Mark Rudd, made the move to march against the university's establishment, the MotherFuckers (including the woman who would eventually shoot Andy Warhol, to the praise of Ben Morea) occupied the several buildings and even took the dean hostage (Neuman 75-6). What is remarkable about all of this is that Neuman recounts that "the 'issues' that sparked the takeover were secondary. We were the vanguard of the new order, vandals of liberation sworn enemies of all hierarchical institutions...we came to break down walls, not to repair them" (84). Thus, it is clear that tearing down wall had become an end in itself for the group by the time they learned about the student led strike.[3]

I argue that Bakhtin's notion of carnivalesque can keep this knot from becoming so tightly intertwined by providing an element of fun. Though the the Motherfuckers

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[3] For more information on this, see the anthology Up Against the Ivy Wall: A History of the Columbia Crisis by Jerry L. Avron

were able to achieve some instances of carnival and metamorphosis, their privileging of action over everything else led them to take up more violent tactics like the occupation of Columbia. As Gavin Grindon points out, much of the art produced in the early pamphlets of the Motherfuckers shows a capacity to inspire some form of fun. Osh Neumann recounts that the Motherfuckers wanted desperately to distance themselves from the performative and symbolic rebellion of Abbie Hoffman while also contrasting themselves with the overly intellectual side of the academy. When Morea decided that the Motherfuckers should become a defacto chapter of Rudd's SDS, Neuman saw that their "role as apostles from the street to the student movement was not to argue ideology, but to instill into the movement's moribund theoretical discussions the urgency and anarchy of the streets" (88). For Neuman, there was no blurring of boundaries, as we find in the carnivalesque, just the explosion of one in service to another. The Motherfucker became increasingly militant after the occupation of Columbia. And by the time the Yippies staged their "festival of life" at the Democratic Convention in Chicago on August of '68, they had decided to take that opportunity to lead the revolution by example. Their actions led to Morea being named an unindicted co-conspirator in the the famous Chicago seven trial (102). Again, we see no blurring of boundaries, no notion that fun is of any value, just the need for more violent militant action. In sum, this appears to be due to a loss of art in the group. Even though "many of the 'experimental' or 'activist-art' practices that Black Mask and their milieu were involved in were widely adopted and emerged as normalized forms of social movement action" they themselves failed to see the value that such art contained in affecting affinity (Grindon 174). In the April/ May '68 issue of Black Mask, they made the bold statement to their readers that they had decided "to give

up on publishing and focus on direct action" (188). It would be a direct action with no sense of the carnivalesque.

Given that the Motherfuckers were active in the 1960s, Fleckenstein's proposed limits to disruptive visual discourse don't appear to be a limited to today's digital discourse. In the next section I will examine the ways in which visual rhetoric is deployed by Anonymous through its multi-modal propaganda to evoke affinity beyond the corporeal and transcend the limitations on the means of persuasion found in the usual goal of building community. As I discuss above, these limitations are listed in Gee's work: community presents an insider/outsider status, and so on appear to have been exposed previously in the work of the Motherfuckers; however, the work of the Motherfuckers also presents its own limitations through its white male-centric rhetoric. Thus the imageword found in the work of the Motherfuckers presents a call of revolution that is far from total due to its limitations on the role of women and its assumptions regarding racism.

Now, Anonymous

Affinity for Anonymous is different from affinity for the Motherfuckers because Anonymous affinity moves in the direction from style and chaos to the political, the reverse of the Motherfuckers who trended towards the chaotic. Both seek a collective ethos at the level of dwelling in a way that breaks through the limitations of community and both have distinctly visual ways of establishing this collective ethos; however, Anonymous affinity has adapted to online environments and a closer look at Anonymous' visual style will make clear how affinity in networked culture allows digital activists to "hack the multitude," to borrow phrasing from Tiziana Terranova. This is not to suggest a

93

techno-deterministic view. As hackers, Anonymous display some form of agency over techno-determinism, allowing them to use the mask in a way that creates affinity through the construction of a persona that transmits suggested themes of tyranny combated through a collective anarchy. Through what Tim Jordan and Paul A. Taylor call the "spirit of the hack," researchers interested in understanding how collective resistance takes place online can begin to see how Anonymous contributes to a hacking of the multitude though the use of the imageword of the Guy Fawkes mask from *V for Vendetta*. I contend that the imageword of the mask evokes a persona that suggests resistance and allows for affinity to take place not as a struggle for dominance in ideals but through a style-centric solidarity that typifies the rhetoric of resistance in networked culture.

The story of Anonymous

Before I get started, I need to introduce Anonymous because there are conflicting discussions concerning their nature. For this chapter, I am limiting Anonymous to their first actions in project Chanology in order to show how the mask became a part of their visual rhetoric. As I do this, I shall discuss the rhetorical significance of using a mask in networked culture by relating Anonymous' style to the notion of ethos as a dwelling place and theories of network culture by Tiziana Terranova. Much of the research for this section stems from Cole Stryker's *Epic Win for Anonymous*, Parmy Olsen's *We are Anonymous*, Gabriella Coleman's *Hacker, Hoaxer, Whistleblower, Spy: The many faces of Anonymous*, the documentary film *We are Legion: The Story of the Hacktivists*, and my own interviews with one of the original eight participants, Gregg Housh. I am not aiming for a comprehensive view that encompasses all of what Anonymous means for everyone. My concern is the visual rhetoric of the imageword that I see at play in the use

94

of the Guy Fawkes mask. A close look at how the imageword conveys meaning reveals a lot about the relationship between rhetoric and resistance, particularly how resistance is bound up in the available means of persuasion when those means are themselves constrained by notions of community. Through the mask's ability to construct and evoke affinity in its fully radical form as an alternative to community, Anonymous (to borrow a phrase from Terranova) hacks the multitude.

Anonymous has their start in the imageboard known as 4Chan. On a small forum called /b/, where anything goes, 4Chan visitors can post anonymously about anything they want. The sites runs on what is called a "bumb" program (Stryker 75-6). New information is always going onto the site and bumping old information off the server. But old information can stay on the site as long as visitors are contributing to the thread and "bumping" up its popularity. It was important for the sites creator, Moot/Christopher Poole, that all visitors be allowed to post anonymously because he felt, as many pre web 2.0 users felt, that the ability to be anonymous in discussions allowed for intellectual growth without risking failure (Stryker). Anonymous, a decentered, non-hierarchal hacktivist collective, take their name from an in-joke among 4Chan users. The joke goes: what if one day in the future a new civilization stumbles upon 4Chan and sees all this stuff posted by anonymous, would they think that they were all put there by one crazy person named "Anonymous?" (*We are Legion*). When Gregg Housh and his friends began playing with the idea of attacking Scientology, it was this joke they we referencing. This action against Scientology was not the first action taken under the name Anonymous, nor was it the first to use many of the aspects of style now associated with

them; however, this action against the Church of Scientology did ultimately lead to the use of the Guy Fawkes mask and significantly boosted Anonymous' recognition factor.

What became known as project Chanology began, as most Anonymous actions did, as a joke. Housh and his friends were upset that the Church of Scientology were taking down an embarrassing video starring Tom Cruise and threatening legal action against anyone caught distributing the video. The video first appeared on YouTube and shows Tom Cruise making outrageous claims about what it means to be a Scientologist while the theme from Mission Impossible plays in the background. Frequent visitors to 4Chan's /b/ forum (already calling themselves Anonymous from prior collective actions) were having a field day making fun of Cruise and the Church of Scientology. Scientology officials claim the video was leaked and edited to make them look like fools, so they threatened legal action against anyone posting the video. For Gregg Housh and his friends, the whole thing was preposterous. So they thought it would be funny to create a video and post it to YouTube, making it look like the internet itself was angry with Scientology for yanking the video. These early videos show images attempt to evoke notions of collective internet action through a series of images appearing as a computerized voice reads from a manifesto pinned by Housh and his friends.

The computerized voice was already a part of Anonymous' style and we will see also that the mask from *V for Vendetta* was also already in use by at least one /b/ user by the time Housh and friends launched project Chanology. But these ways of evoking an Anonymous persona was largely a cultural phenomenon rather than a fully formed game plan. Each participant in Anonymous will construct their own meaning for the style and make their own political commitments. Multiple origin stories exist concerning the origin

of the mask and other attributes of Anonymous style. Anonymous is, in this way, a product of the current way social movements form. Although Gregg Housh contributed significantly to the popularity of Anonymous his work was by no means the first action of Anonymous. He and his friends didn't so much as invent Anonymous style as remix it from ready-made components. Gabriella Coleman recounts and early video attributed to Anonymous that shows a hooded figure reading a different manifesto with a computerized voice (1). And although Housh and friends contributed to the popularity of using the V mask to help construct a persona, at least one other video precedes his that uses the mask and attributes it to the imageboard /b/. Because Anonymous is a decentered, non-hierarchical hacktivist collective, notions like origin become meaningless. Coleman suggests taking a more rhyzomatic approach to understanding how Anonymous operates; However, I think focusing on Fleckenstein's visual knots will help us better understand this mask by helping to extend theories of ethos and resistance. Anonymous uses the mask to evoke persona, and understanding how that feat is managed rhetorically can help uncouple resistance from the restrictions laid upon the available means of persuasion by an over exuberant commitment to creating or cultivating community.

It was several videos after Housh and friends threatened action against the Church of Scientology that the mask from *V for Vendetta* became the defacto brand of Anonymous. Housh has said that the reason for picking the mask was not meant to be taken symbolically. He advances a narrative where the mask was chosen purely for practical reasons. When Housh and friends were organizing an in-person rally against Scientology, they wanted people to wear masks in order to remain anonymous. The idea

was that all participates (or at least most) would wear the same mask in order to show that they represented each other. Housh says that the Guy Fawkes mask was way down on the list of possible masks, and that it was selected mainly because it was easy to get. Warner Bros. had manufactured a lot of these masks in order to promote the film and Housh and friends soon realized that almost every town had a costume shop or a comic book store where Anonymous could acquire the mask (Walker and my own interactions with Housh).

Anonymous composes affinity through the use of the V mask in its multimodal propaganda by projecting a persona as a role to play in political altercations in a way that deviates from Fleckenstein's visual knots in important ways. In *Vision, Rhetoric, and Social Action in the Classroom,* Fleckenstein used hacktivism to illustrate her point about the role of visual habits in the rhetoric of subversive social action. She warned that the three threads of her symbiotic knot of contradictions (antinomy, digressio, and radical place) "can become so tightly intertwined that the pleasure of fragmentation and seduction of lawlessness becomes ends in themselves" (115). She saw in hacktivism an illustration of her idea of digressive rhetoric (the production of fragmentation) as it interacts with antinomy (a sort of playful lawlessness). Were Fleckenstein's logic extended to Anonymous, one might begin to see in them the perfect example of a group lost in such pleasures. The third thread in the knot of contradictions is not immediately present for Anonymous; therefore, they lack what Fleckenstein sees as key for maintaining a healthy and progressive knot, "stable locations of recovery" (115). This assumption relies on body centric logos, something that the Motherfuckers were unable

to transcend. However, the non-corporeal nature of Anonymous affinity allows for this, I argue.

The affinity created by Anonymous is non-corporeal and relies more on the shared sense of persona constructed through the multi-modal rhetoric of Anonymous. The fact that Anonymous has no solid political foundation nor even a permanent cast of participants displays the current nature of affinity. Anyone can be Anonymous. All that is needed is to evoke Anonymous ethos and carry out anonymous style. To best understand this, ethos should be thought of in terms of a dwelling rather than the standard way of appealing to ethics or standards of good character. For Anonymous, ethos is composed via a "persona effect" which occurs in visual representations of artificial intelligence. It is important to note that the word persona traces back to the Greek word for mask. And so, Anonymous' use of the Guy Fawkes mask evokes a persona that compels some to "feel more at home with others and [their] surroundings," as Hyde would put it. (xiii). Hyde argues that ethos properly understood as a dwelling place calls on composers "to invite others into a place where they can dwell and feel at home" (xxi). It was Carolyn Miller who first drew a connection between ethos as a dwelling and the persona effect. In Hyde's book, Miller explores the concept of ethos as a dwelling place as it applies to cyborg discourse and artificial intelligence. Although she is talking about computation systems in order to understand whether an AI can be capable of persuasion, I find that her observations can also help researchers understand how ethos functions in networked culture for digital activists. According to Miller this class of animated AIs with personalities emerged in the 80s, we might see Max Headroom as perhaps a more well-known version of this. Or possibility that talking paperclip from older versions of MS

Word. Miller concludes her section on the persona effect by pointing out that "in order to function as agents, computational systems must be interactive and therefore must be social; and in order to engage as social interactants, they must offer an ethos that promises empathy and invites trust" (210). Anonymous certainly offers an ethos of empathy, but the thought that they invite trust will leave many readers cold. They are, after all, an internet hate machine. They are proudly trollish, and sometimes they are downright mean. Who could trust them?

I argue that the sense of fun inspired by the carnivalesque of the Guy Fawkes mask invites truth in Anonymous participants. As I show in the last chapter, the grotesque image of the Guy Fawkes mask aligns well with the theories of Bakhtin in that the mask's enlarged features and disproportionately pointed chin are indeed elements of what Bakhtin called the grotesque image. At this point, I would like to add that Christina Foust has written extensively about the problems inherent in the mind-body split. In addition the mind-body split is overcome in the visual rhetoric of Anonymous precisely because it is digital and hence, non-copporial. The mind-body split can be overcome by disallowing an overemphasis on either the mind or the body. And this happens in online environments. In her chapter on performing resistance, Foust reaches the following conclusion about the relationship between the body and materiality: "re-asserting material embodiment calls attention to the very real transgressions bodies may perform" (152). Now, I wish to be very careful here because I don't want to suggest that Foust is arguing that only material embodiment (what we might think of as in-person or in real life forms of protest) can be truly transgressive. She is merely pointing out that corporeal presence has a particular power in that it can lay bare the forms of oppression real bodies face in

acts of resistance to structural oppression. An example of this might be found in

#BlackLivesMatter protests because the presence of black bodies force a taking account

of how blackness has been erased as a contributing factor in oppression. When black

bodies appear en masse, chanting "Hands up! Don't shoot!," for example, viewers and

authorities must recognize that there are a number of people who disagree that police shot

and killed another black body simply because orders were not followed properly. Foust's

ultimate point in that section is that "transgression re-materializes social movement as a

rhetorical agency and invention by exceeding representation through a heightened (but

not exclusive) corporeal presence" (145). Although she notes that corporeal presence

isn't needed exclusively, she leave non-corporeal resistance underdeveloped. In fact, her

book ends without analyzing digital activism. I want to extend her theory by analyzing

Anonymous as a hybrid corporeal/non-corporeal collective because their actions in online

and corporeal environments can show researchers a lot about the mind-body split. With

real world actions like Chanology and the Million Mask March to go along with its

online transgressions Anonymous proves itself both a corporeal and non-corporeal actant.

In addition, the transgressions it enacts online are no less real than many of the

transgressions in which one may partake in real life. That much is evident in that fact that

Anonymous' actions have landed many participant in jail. As a hybrid itself, Anonymous

cannot place anymore emphasis on the mind than it can the body. And it does this chiefly

through the grotesque image of the mask as a way of establishing a persona effect.

  The persona effect produced by the mask in the work of Anonymous maintains

transgression without giving into hegemonic impulses because of its unnamed

commitment to affinity. Though they do not use the term, Anonymous maintains affinity

by not allowing their collective to be spoken of in the usual ways of naming, such as group or organization. Through the use of the mask Anonymous is able to produce a persona effect that compels would be participates to take on the role it offers, but their avoidance of words like group or member help to put the politics of non-domination back into the notion of affinity. By not using words like member or group, Anonymous is "taking the aesthetic returns of Bakhtin and Nietzsche one step further [by] acknowledging [that] the hybrid power of body and mind continues to unsettle institutional authority and hierarchy -- in part, by inspiring its own interpretive practices" (154). By not becoming a group, they cannot be grouped. They maintain a perpetual state of becoming. In other words, they practice maintaining affinity by disallowing the language that reify community. Their obligatory phrase, "We are legion. We never forget. We never forgive" exposes their shared persona and the affinity of the collective. And this is precisely how anonymous can be seen as hacking the multitude because there is no central axis to Anonymous. Anyone can be Anonymous, just put on the mask (the persona) and play the role. What this means for researchers in computers and writing is a new way of conceiving affinity and persona. Persona is an effect of affinity, and affinity, following Murray Bookchin and Ben Morea, is not a way of building community but rather an alternative to community. Returning to Morea, affinity offers a way "to recreate harmony in a disrupted nature), to create a whole new complex of free relations between people, that can satisfy all our complex needs for change & our consuming desire to be new & to be whole." In networked culture *this* means taking the nature of disruption and focusing it on creating and participating in networks of disruption – networks that

function by withdrawing and remixing what it means to live together: affinity that is oppositional, intersectional, and welcoming in its exclusionary stance.

Conclusion

Affinity belongs in a class of social groupings where collective notions of self are created, such as a community, a public, or an identity. Affinity, following the Motherfuckers, attempts to create that collective notion of self on the basis of common interests, goals, and styles rather than space, race, class, gender, sexuality or nationality, without negating the importance of all of these in creating political alternatives. Affinity places emphasis on ethos as a dwelling, making it always rhetorical because it can be said that anyone can belong so long as they share an interest in obtaining certain political goals and recognize the importance of sharing a common style in obtaining those goals. In order to fully understand affinity in its radical sense as an alternative to community in creating a collective sense of self, it is important to consider ethos as a dwelling rather than in the standard way we understand ethos as an appeal to ethical standards or shared ethical assumptions. This differs from Gee's use of the word because Gee understands space to be external to affinity, people gather to express shared interest in an affinity space which could be an online forum or a club house or a classroom. As Thomas Deans has argued, "while place can be promising locus of analysis, location runs up against its limits rather quickly because it is rooted in a spatial metaphor" (290). Deans calls for less attention on place and more on activity, but I think that activity, while certainly important, doesn't get to the core compositions of social movements formed in the age globalization and post-scarcity information. I prefer to place more emphasis on ethos in order to understand the stylistic and visual components of the newest social movements.

For me, affinity is ethos in the sense of dwelling which complicates our understanding of self and the relationship between image and politics.

Naming affinity in a sense that draws upon the Motherfuckers' meaning allows for collective radical politics to transcend some of the limitations Gee writes about that are present in community – these limitations on the means of persuasion are logo-centric and the visual rhetoric of Anonymous' use of the V mask shows how the collective sense of self in radical politics is suasive, not in the sense of coming to believe or coming to know, but in the sense of becoming, learning to dwell. This learning to dwell is image-centric. Understood in the sense that the Motherfuckers means the term, affinity presents an alternative to community because affinity extends beyond the body, beyond space, and beyond the common political strategies for overcoming difference and creating alternatives to dominant ideologies. The newest social movements like Reclaim the Streets, Zapatista, Pussy Riot, and the hacktivist collective Anonymous all extend this notion of affinity as a way of creating a collective self beyond the body in ways that collapses or breaks the boundary of space in ways that are not fully similar to the way that the Motherfuckers theorized. All that is required to participate as Anonymous is to share style in a way to invokes Anonymous persona. James Paul Gee has complicated the notion of affinity by coining affinity spaces, showing that notions of community have limited how researchers have understood the power of knowledge creation in the classroom and online. His notion of Affinity spaces has been widely accepted by researchers interested in computers and literacy, but much more can be done to help supplant the limitations and connotations of community with the notion of affinity as a replacement for community rather than a synonymous term.

Instead of seeking to understand hacktivist community, researchers focusing on affinity or e-ffinity, which we might think of as ecological affinity rather than merely electronic affinity, are in a better position to understand how visual rhetoric might hack the very notion of community by more exclusively offering ethos as a non-corporeal dwelling place rather than a geographic location. The visual rhetoric of Anonymous and Up Against the Wall Mothefucker both display the ways in which spectacle and affinity impact notions of ethos. Affinity began as a "street gang with analysis," meaning that a group of people could work together to raise awareness to the oppressive conditions of modern capitalism though acts of spectacle and appeals to think through limitations of reason brought about by habitual reinforcement of the system. This is not merely fit throwing or rhetoric understood in the colloquial way, as sound and fury signifying nothing. As activist and political theorist, Stephen Duncombe argues, "spectacle can be staged in order to dramatize the unseen and expose associations elusive to the eye" (156-7). The Motherfuckers strove to do just that, but their lack of a developed theory more than their lack of space led them see Fleckenstein's three threads in the symbiotic knot of contradictions (antinomy, digressio, and radical place) as "so tightly intertwined that the pleasure of fragmentation and seduction of lawlessness becomes ends in themselves" (115). In short, their lack of theory left them with little to offer in the way of analysis, but they did spur care thought about the notion of affinity as a way of developing a collective sense of self. In addition, Fleckenstein's "overarching argument" in *Vision, Rhetoric and Social Action in the Composition Classroom* "is that social action – and the forces conspiring against it – emerge from the interplay of visual and rhetorical habits transacting in specific places" (14). Anonymous demonstrates, contra Fleckenstein, the

ability of visual rhetoric to create a non-corporeal dwelling place though their use of the

V mask – an ethos in the form of a dwelling that offers a role to play. Finally, the notion

of affinity offers an important way to theorize the multitude. In the end neither

Anonymous nor the Motherfuckers were able to hack the multitude. But it is still an open

game. And Anonymous' commitment to play could make a crucial difference in that

game.

CHAPTER V

Transforming Advanced Composition: Radical Teaching in the Computer-Mediated

Classroom

The argument I have made so far rests on a few major themes: ways of seeing disruption, ethos as a dwelling place, and protest rhetoric as a mode of creating knowledge. In the previous chapters, I have attempted to show some of the complexities of thinking through these themes as they apply to the rhetorical act of demonstration. In this chapter, I ask how these themes might lead to pedagogical strategies for writing students in a composition course. My goal is to provide students with the ability to understand protest as a rhetorical genre, one with which they can deploy several composition techniques. I took it as the goal for my course, Advanced Composition, to introduce students to concepts and strategies for writing outside the classroom and outside professional settings. I wanted my students to engage in public writing. Typically, an advanced composition course would focus on composing an academic argument, but I wanted the students to engage in public writing and rhetoric in order for them to learn how to make writing a social action rather than merely an academic exercise. In addition, the course was unique from the First Year Writing classroom because I was able to teach writing to a number of students who were aspiring to become teachers themselves. This provided an

opportunity to engage with pedagogy as topic for my overarching argument in this dissertation.

I designed my course around the theme of protest, dividing it into several units: Activism and Rhetoric, Activist Genres, Radical Teaching Activities, and Evaluating and Composing Protest Campaigns. I will focus on two: rhetorically evaluating protest and composing radical teaching activities. I also invited a number of guest speakers to speak with the class and answer questions. The list of speakers included authors and local activists. But one guest drew a vast amount of student attention, so I will recount at length our meeting with Gregg Housh from Anonymous and draw some conclusions about what I learned through the experience of inviting such a controversial figure into my classroom. Through various readings and activities, I led students through rather tough terrain. But, the course provided me with the data upon which I build this chapter. In the end, students left the course with the ability to analyze, evaluate, and participate in protest rhetoric. Students learned to do the following:

1. Apply rhetorical and critical theory to activist texts

2. Research issues and approaches to activist pedagogy

3. Present effective activist rhetoric (in writing, speech, and pictures) in order to develop writing and rhetorical skills

Students learned to apply rhetorical and critical theory to activist texts by analyzing instances of activism recounted in a visual history book of protest action called, *Fight the Power*. Student's selected a protest action, then applied principles of rhetoric they learned through class activities and Jason Del Gandio's book *Rhetoric for Radicals*. One student wrote a particularly illuminating analysis of the rhetoric of fragging, after reading about the action in a wordless comic published in *Fight the Power*. Fragging is the act of killing or attempting to kill a commanding officer with a fragmentation grenade. My student produced a rhetorical analysis of the rhetoric deployed surrounding the act, uncovering how the US government was pressured to end the Vietnam War because of the action of disgruntled and exploited solders.

Students also learned to research and develop approaches to what I referred to as activist pedagogy. I recount this in detail below. I introduced the concept of George Hillocks' notion of the gateway activity to my students, but I tried to give it an activist twist by demonstrating classroom activities designed to raise awareness to issues of wealth and power inequality. Gateway activities offer an important way for students to learn skills and strategies necessary for completing writing tasks, but they can also help with invention because they call for students to explore complex issues as lived, embodied experiences. Hillock's recounts a story of his daughter's success with a middle-school class, who explored the issue of immigration. He argues "that without such activities, students may learn what the immigrants to the US suffered, but they will

understand it only as a distant set of facts that will be easily forgotten" (148). The gateways activity is crucial to creating pedagogy that allows students to not only practice skills needed to complete a writing task but also make an "imaginative leap" in order to write "from the point of view of another person enduring difficult circumstances" (148). This meant having students engage with notions of racism, sexism, and classism though gateway activities like the privilege walk, which I discuss in detail later in the chapter. A privilege walk has students line up for a race, where the prize is an upper middle class job. But before the race can start, students must take a step either forwards to backwards according to advantages or disadvantages lost they may have obtained simply by being born. Students are then asked to write about the experience. I added a layer of reflection on the pedagogical merit of each activity we engaged in so that students could learn to evaluate these activities as future teachers.

Finally, students learned to evaluate and compose activist campaigns. This assignment allowed them to learn about audience analysis, rhetorical strategies, and visual design in a group effort to raise awareness of fellow students on campus to a political issue of their choice. Students presented their activist campaign to the class (or to the student body if they decided). Materials for the campaign consisted of what Del Gandio called a Rhetorical Package, which is described in *Rhetoric for Radicals* (57-68). Students also produced an 8 to 10 page pamphlet (complete with images that help convey the message) that explains the focus of the campaign and provides additional research

and arguments to help persuade people to join the cause. Students also used folding poster board (like one used in elementary school science fairs) to promote their campaign. This board was decorated with images that help convey their message.

In this remainder of this chapter, I will show how learning to evaluate protests led to new ways of seeing -- ways that establishes the need for protest rhetoric to compose disruptive events that establish a clear link to between the disruption and the message of the protest. This need to understand the ways of seeing protest is also present in the ways in which radical teachers should engage in classroom activities meant to raise awareness to political issues. However, it is not enough that students merely gain awareness of a given political issue, they also need a pathway towards learning to dwell rhetorically. That is, they need politically engaging classroom activities that call for them to view society from another person's point of view. In addition to sections committed to establishing ways for students to evaluate political protests and explaining the need to compose classroom activities that teach rhetorical dwelling, I also include a section that recounts what it was like for my students to meet Anonymous face-to-face because it broaches issues of academic freedom and establishes a way for students in a computer mediated classroom to be introduced to new forms of activism.

Evaluating Meaningful Protest: Ways of seeing protest

Since the final project allowed students the option of creating and performing a protest on campus, it was important that students learned to evaluate protests on their

own before trying to compose a protest campaign. Although the students and I relied on the writing of rhetoricians who study protest rhetoric in order to have some basic understanding of what makes a protest successful, it is much more interesting and important that I share what we discovered together through class discussion on the issue of protest evaluation. The writing of Jason Del Gandio in *Rhetoric for Radicals* provided the bulk of student resources for evaluating protest rhetorically, but I felt it was important to keep open the question of how one should evaluate protest. That is, I gave students a resource to refer to when evaluating so that they could easily apply what they had read to any protest they wanted. However, I pushed them to discover other ways of evaluating by posing reflective writing questions at the end of several class sessions.

Learning to evaluate protests wasn't a free for all. As I stated above, students learned to apply many of the conclusions that Del Gandio reached in *Rhetoric for Radicals*. For this chapter, I am focusing one criterion: the need to design protests that embody the meaning of the argument protesters are trying to make. On a practical level, learning to evaluate protest helped make it clear to students what the grounds for evaluating their own protests were. On another level, students were able to practice public rhetoric while learning rhetorical strategies that would help them determine how to create effective public arguments that included words on the page but also messages composed with images, sounds, and bodies. I now move to what we discovered together after reflecting on the need to evaluate protest.

112

Although students were exposed to ways of evaluating protest actions through Del Gandio's book, it is important that students are given a chance to see these principles in action and work through problems in communication as a way of showing them rather than merely telling them. It is true that Del Gandio advises protesters to "design a collective action that evokes the meaning of the argument" (154). Although he lists several great ideas for staging such protests, without focused classroom activities such advice, no matter how good, risks being lost among the many words students read that week. In addition, the need to connect what I call the mode of disruption to the message of the protest could be lost to a less nuanced understanding: that protesters simply needs to be creative. I wanted to teach them important elements of rhetoric through the theme of protest. And since I wanted to prepare them for public writing, I brought attention to the relationship between disruption and message in order to highlight important aspects of rhetoric. I wanted to alert them to invention, audience awareness, and help impart to them an embodied, ecological view of the rhetorical situation. That is, I wanted to move them beyond a view of the rhetorical situation as abstract and provide for them an understanding of importance of space and dwelling. And so, I devised a class effort wherein we would compare and contrast two creative modes of disruption in order for students to draw their own conclusions about the relationship between the mode of disruption and the message it was meant to send.

Through student analysis and reflection, it became clear to students that the mode of disruption that a protest takes needs to have a direct and clear connection to the message of the protest or it may risk being lost to the theatrics of the protest. After spending one class analyzing and discussing the rhetoric of Black Lives Matter, I noticed that several student reflections contained the same complaint. More than a few student reflections asked what stopping traffic had to do with making a statement that black lives were in danger of being lost due to police abuse of authority. It would have been easy to dismiss their questions as a way of privileging the ease of driving to a given destination over the lives of black people. That point was made by other students when I brought the complaint up for class discussion, suggesting that some audience members were able to make the connection between the means of disruption and the persuasiveness of the message while others were not. In the interest of inquiry based pedagogy, I posed the question to students: how should the means of disruption relate to the message of protest in order to be persuasive?

Evaluating protest is difficult because students usually want to critique the aim of the protest or the material means of the protest without thinking about how the two relate to one another. This is not the fault of students lacking the ability to understand protest so much as it is the protest itself not making an immediate connection with the lives of its audience. For a rhetoric of protest to be meaningful, its message must conform to its disruption in ways that make the abstract meaning of the message concrete through the

114

material existence it disrupts. A demonstration may fail if the audience (understood not as those in power, but the bystanders and interlocutors witnessing the disruption) notices only the disruption created by the protest. Students need to take the relationship between the means of disruption a protest takes and the message of the protest into account when composing their own protests. I would like to share two more examples of disruptive protest that my class discussed. One of them merely baffled them, while the other made a clear connection. Of course, it is possible for any audience to reject any argument on the basis of its goals or its composer's perceived identity rather than the internal logic of the argument itself. It would be remiss to suggest otherwise. Barring that sort of rejection, students were able to clearly see how the means of disruption played a significant role in the persuasiveness of each argument. Protest one was lost on them due to its means of disruption. Protest two made a clear connection between the means of disruption and the message, even if some students still rejected its political goal of instigating a policy change.

After watching a video of a man flying a single-person helicopter onto the lawn of the White House in order to deliver letters to the congress, the students in my class were left scratching their heads as they tried to understand what one had to do with the other. Doug Hughes, a Florida mailman, piloted the single-passenger gyrocopter in an attempt to deliver sacks of letters calling for government officials to take action against money in politics by landing the aircraft on the White House lawn (Jaffe). As a class we discussed

the various elements in play: a funny looking aircraft, mailbags filled with letters, money in politics (what did that even mean?), and, as one student joked, the fact that this could be just another "Florida man story." In the end, we decided that all the elements were too disparate to resonate with a public audience. The course took place in a computer-mediated classroom, allowing students to research topics quickly in order to contribute to class discussion, so several students remarked that most news stories were about the crazy scene the protest created rather than Hughes' reasoning for causing the disruption. In contrast, the Black Lives Matter (BLM) die-in protest appears to resonate well with public audiences. A die-in is a public act of protest wherein several people occupy a public place and pretend to die on the spot. The goal of a die-in is to render visible to onlookers the life and death stakes of inaction in the face of a singular political issue. In the 60s, Anti-war demonstrations used them to draw attention to the deaths of civilians and soldiers in Vietnam. Today, Black Lives Matter use them to address deaths caused by police abuse of authority. Despite the fact that more than a few students wrote their reflective papers on allegations that BLM blocked traffic rather than BLM die-ins, a class discussion on their use of the die-in showed that the technique (what I referred to in the classroom as a genre of protest) showed that the die-in made a clear connection between the disruption and the message.

The two examples above illustrate the importance of making a clear connection between the means of disruption and the protest message. The two examples helped guide

students through the invention process as they discovered strategies for making the connection clear for their audience, which was preselected as the university's student body. One group of students took the notion of engaging with ways of seeing protest quite literally, including full length mirrors in their campaign to raise awareness about rape culture on campus.

Radical Teaching: Activist Pedagogy and Dwelling Rhetorically

Since the majority of students taking advanced composition at OSU would themselves go on to become teachers, I was advised to take that into consideration when preparing for the course. I wanted to provide a section of the course for them to theorize their own approach to an activist pedagogy. By activist pedagogy I do not mean that teachers should lead students in a riot or teach students the proper ratios for mixing molotov cocktails. I mean simply that teachers wishing to raise certain issues for the purposes of writing invention could learn a lot by researching, testing, and evaluating classroom activities designed to raise student consciousness. My goal stems from a desire to motivate future teachers to use the classroom space to allow students to gain a perspective on political issues not readily available to them. Taking his theory a step further, I wanted to introduce students to activities explicitly designed to address political issues.

George Hillock's notion of the gateway activity is central to my own pedagogy, and I wanted to impart that practice to my students. In order to do so, I demonstrated

117

several pedagogy techniques designed to raise awareness to issues of inequality, racism, and gender oppression; however, it wasn't enough to merely have students participate in these gateway activities, they needed to evaluate them, then research and develop their own activities. At the very least, I wanted my students to discover gateway activities that they had faith in and wanted to use in their own classrooms, even if they didn't develop their own from scratch. So, I designed an assignment calling for students to research classroom exercises in order to develop a gateway activity that they could use in a future writing assignment in their own classroom.

I wanted students to be able to distinguish a good classroom activity from a bad one, so I lead them through several different examples, giving them ample time to write reflections on each one and devoting a portion of classroom time to an open discussion about what we liked and disliked about each one. I will give two examples of these types of activities, both have their strengths and weaknesses. I took the first exercise from a meme that received a lot of attention on Facebook across my circle of friends, which included activists, government officials, teachers, and rhetoric scholars. The second is the privilege walk that I described at the beginning of this chapter, which calls for students to line up for a race that adjusts the starting line according to unearned advantages obtained merely through birth.

The exercise in the meme recounted the actions of a nameless teacher who devised a clever way to teach students about the concept of privilege. According to the

well-known meme, the teacher set a waste paper basket somewhere in the room (usually the front) and called for students to toss wads of paper into the basket from their seats. Whoever makes their shot wins. When some students objected, saying that students who just happened to be setting closest to the basket had an unfair advantage, the clever teacher explained how the concept of privilege was not lost on them. The teacher explained that privilege merely means unearned advantage and some people in society just happen to have it due to where they are relative to others. Some iterations of the meme make it clear what the type of privilege is in play by marking the wastepaper basket as different prizes, usually it is simply entrance into the upper class of society. The meme probably received the most attention when Buzzfeed published an animated video describing the pedagogical experiment (Melchior).

When I tried this in class, my students objected in just the same way that the students in the Buzzfeed video did. Those furthest away complained about fairness, while some of the students closest to the basket gloated. Just as the teacher in the meme had, I explained how the exercise demonstrated privilege. Student reflections and the ensuing class discussion showed that one problem with the exercise stemmed from its inability to display how students with privilege got there. Sure, we agreed, it is clear that privilege is unearned, but there is still a lot missing. And the exercise doesn't help make the notion of privilege very clear. One student suggested that the age and cultural awareness of the students should be taken into account, saying that the wastebasket experiment might

serve as a good introduction to the concept for younger students. The student made a good point about age appropriate activities, but I also wanted to show students a more robust exercise that might help make the intricacies of the privilege concept more attainable. So, in another class session, I lead the students on what is known as a privilege walk.

The privilege walk also appears to be a well-known exercise but unlike the wastebasket exercise, it provides insight into the conditions that give rise to privilege in the first place. The version I used in my class comes from the website of educator and activist, Paul Kivel. This exercise bridges the gap between what privilege looks like and what privilege is. The privilege walk calls for a lot of room, so I took my class outside. The instructor calls for students line up shoulder to shoulder some distance away from a wall, informing the students that the act of touching the wall symbolizes obtaining a well paying job. Then, the instructor says that the race to the wall will begin as soon as some adjustments are made to the starting line. Kivel lists forty three adjustments that call for students to take a step forward if their background yields a certain privilege and a step backward if their background yields a disadvantage. One example is "If pimping and prostitution, drugs, or other illegal activities were a major occupational alternative in the community you were raised, take one step backward" Another adjustment reads, "If your family had more than fifty books in the house when you were growing up, take one step forward." After the adjustments, some of my students ended up very close to the wall

while others were very far away. Kivel suggests that students should take a few minutes to scan the field and look for patterns in what they see, taking note of who is in front of them and who was behind them. A few of my students ended up mere steps away from the wall. And one student, the first of her family to go to college, had taken a step back for nearly every disadvantage without taking a step forward once. After giving students a few minutes to observe the field, I yelled, "Go!" and the students ran for the wall. After the race, students are called to reflect on several questions meant to spur thought about the distribution of opportunity in our society. Kivel suggests that students should "pair up and talk for a few minutes about whatever feelings came up during the exercise" (Kivel). And I did this, too. However, I added a written component, where students wrote down their feelings and thoughts and turned them in, if they felt like sharing. It is important that students are given this time for reflection because the exercise can evoke quite a few hard feelings. So, asking them to ponder a question as they return to the classroom to write down their thoughts gives them ample time to reflect.

The student in my class who started the race at the largest disadvantage was noticeably shaken by the experience. She wrote about how seeing the distance between her and her classmates had made them concrete for her, then went on to describe her need to overcome these disadvantages through hard work. Another students lamented that he felt guilty for ending up so close to the wall, and confided that he could take over the family business if he had not decided to make a living as a teacher instead. Several

121

students wrote that the privilege walk provided a more powerful example of privilege than the wastebasket exercise. In the class discussion students were critical that the exercise may not inspire students to take action because it left so many students feeling guilty of their privilege. During the next class, I highlighted these shortcomings (that students at a disadvantage merely put a burden on themselves to try harder, while students with an advantage merely felt guilty about it), then challenged them to engage in research and development in order to compose a gateway activity that allows students to inhabit the role of another human being and reflect upon notions of systemic disadvantage from a different point of view. Students who took up the challenge composed some very interesting and informative gateway activities that would allow their future students to write effectively about issues of disadvantage.

At the end of my unit on radical teaching, the majority of students saw the benefits of composing gateway activities explicitly designed to dwell in another's ethos. However, a few of my students wrote that they thought it was wrong somehow to bring political issues into the classroom. Some argued that their future students (middle-schoolers mostly) would not be equipped with the cognitive abilities to deal with the complexities of political issues. Others, that administrators wouldn't appreciate their efforts. Although students were mixed on the idea that political issues can and should be explored in the writing classroom, all of my students recognized the benefits of using

gateway activities. As Hillocks might say of my experience, getting students to recognize the importance of gateway activities is "something of an accomplishment in itself" (148).

Face-to-Face with Anonymous: Reflections on my class meeting a Hacktivist

I took advantage of the unique capabilities of my computer-mediated classroom by inviting several guest speakers to interact with my class via Skype, but one made me nervous: Gregg Housh, de facto spokesman of Anonymous. Skype is a computer application that allows users to video chat with each other. I have found it to be a useful tool in the classroom because it allows for guest speakers to easily and cheaply converse with a class who would otherwise be separated by long distances and economic restraints. I could not afford to fly Gregg in, nor would he be able to without being out lots of money.

The element of Gregg's Skyping experience that gave me the most anxiety was my fear that the students would hate that I brought such a controversial figure into the classroom and let him corrupt their impressionable minds. Anonymous' reputation preceded Gregg's introduction to my class by vast expanses. Much of what students knew about Anonymous stemmed from the amount of media coverage they were able to generate for themselves. And very few students held a favorable view of the collective. They were disruptive, frequently rude, openly referred to themselves as cruel, and they engaged in illicit direct action against their opponents. And they didn't appear to deny this reputation. In fact, they reveled in it. And here I was bringing the rudest of political

activists into the classroom to greet students. As soon as I received word that Gregg had

time in his schedule to meet with the class, I began mentally drafting my letter of apology

to the head of the department, another to the dean, and yet another the president of the

university. And I began rethinking the Do It Yourself spirit of Direct Action that lived in

the phrase, "It's easier to ask for forgiveness than to ask for permission" -- a phrase I had

spent the better part of a few weeks introducing to my students. My fears and worries

faded within the first few minutes of Gregg's talk. Gregg introduced himself and joked

about being part of a notorious band of rebel hackers who are at once trolls, activists, and

terrorists but was not yet able to convince his own son to do his homework. The students

laughed. The ice was broken.

To my surprise, students were not upset in the least that I brought such a rogue

figure into the classroom. In fact, they celebrated that I had invited this rogue element

into the classroom in a special way that shows an appreciation for academic freedom.

Students were able to learn about a side of Anonymous seldom exposed to them through

mass media. The question and answer session with Gregg was particularly illuminating in

regard to academic freedom because up until then, students only had knowledge of

Anonymous through what they were able to gain through mainstream media outlets and a

short documentary about them which I assigned. In order to prepare for the Skype, I had

students watch the documentary *We Are Legion*, which takes a favorable view of

Anonymous. Other than that film and a clip from the Colbert Report displaying their

actions against computer safety expert Arron Barr (which I recount in chapter IV),

students had only been presented with an unfavorable view of Anonymous. Many

students were shocked to learn that the hacktivist collective had done anything more than

bully famous people.

During the Skype, Gregg discussed what it was like developing Anonymous'

campaign against the Church of Scientology, and working out what to do when

participants were caught by police. Students were surprised to hear that Gregg spent

almost a month in solitary confinement. And when one student asked Gregg what his

favorite accomplishment had been, I suspect a number students expected him to answer

with a story about some lulzy action he had participated in. But he surprised them with a

story about helping to democratize Tunisia. He explained how Anonymous played a role

in keeping citizens connected to the internet, allowing them to keep track of the

government's actions. Gregg explained that the Tunisian army wasn't very big and

couldn't cover the whole country during an uprising. So, they relied on surrounding one

section of a city or a small town (something manageable), then cutting the

communications for that place. After cutting communications, the government would tell

the citizens that the uprising had been stopped. With no way of receiving information to

the contrary, the citizens would have to believe that they were the last pocket of

resistance left and give up in the face of insurmountable odds. However, Anonymous had

played a small but significant role in helping to keep lines of communication open,

informing the citizens that the uprising had not been stopped and that their actions could still make a difference.

Along with crashing government websites and pressuring American and European news outlets to cover the story, Anonymous launched a well organized, multi-layered effort to help the citizens of Tunisia. Working with another group of hacktivists called Telecomix, Anonymous begin working with Tunisians before things got bad. They helped set up a backup system of dial-up service in case the government cut wifi and other ways of connecting to the internet. They even got European companies to donate VPNs (virtual private networks) so Anonymous could keep Tunisians on the internet. Providing all of this helped Tunisian stay connected to each other by staying one step ahead of the government. Anonymous even provided satellite phones to citizens in each of the major cities so that they could communicate after the government cut the phone lines. Gregg's story was captivating. In less than an hour, my students were exposed to more information on new media activism than could reasonably be covered in a semester full of readings. Gregg had elevated the view of hacktivism from crass pranksterism to something much more respectable.

I share this story because it helps establish hacktivism as a legitimate form or political engagement and displays the power of communication. In addition, I want to promote Skype as a pedagogy tool and share a story that touches on the need for academic freedom. No one at my institution stood against my contacting Gregg. Nor was

he an unknown figure before I brought him into contact with the class. An internet search

provides several hits that include interviews with Gregg where he recounts several of the

things he addressed with my class. So, I should have been safe in assuming that Skyping

with him would not present a problem. I had addressed the notion of hacktivism in class

before I even thought of contacting Gregg. But, class reflections showed that their

understanding of this new form of activism was not advanced beyond the surface level.

Until they met with Gregg, many students had equated hacktivism with cyberterrorism,

which was no surprise given that many government officials (both Democratic and

Republican) hold that view and mainstream print and broadcast media have not provided

much nuance. And, it should be noted, my goal wasn't to win them over to hacktivism. I

merely wanted them to know what it was. They were free to evaluate it anyway they

wished. In fact, a number of students expressed a distaste for hacktivism even after

meeting with Gregg. Though, even those students appreciated meeting him. And some

left with a more nuanced view of why they disliked hacktivism suggesting that Gregg's

arguments caused them to qualify their original claims. In addition, I made sure, as I did

with every guest speaker in the class, that other sides of the political debate were

represented. I didn't do this because of a committment to appear fair and balanced. I did

so out of a commitment to rhetorical studies. Students were able to witness the spectrum

of the rhetorical context, and were invited to join the conversation for whatever reason

they wanted. And what we learned was that the context, the rhetorical situation, the

ongoing conversation taking place about any given issue, cannot be represented in its full

scope without the academic freedom to take risks. One student, a student who tended to express the most conservative views in the classroom, wrote that meeting Gregg was one of the biggest highlights of the class because it allowed him to understand a side of hacktivism not readily available in the news or in any of the documentary films available at the time. Though he didn't agree with everything Anonymous did or stood for, he appreciated getting a chance to ask one high-profile participant pressing questions. It is my hope that this enthusiasm for academic freedom extends to his own classroom. I believe it will.

Conclusion

In this chapter I have recounted the events surrounding three elements of the advanced composition course I built around the theme of protest rhetoric. These elements link to the arguments I have made in the previous chapters. In order for students to compose disruptive protests that allow them to contribute to political dialogue in their communities, they must engage with ways of seeing protest. My first chapter focuses on exposing how protesters in Canada's Maple Spring ruptured the very networks of power that were routinely deployed to oppress them. Just as a strike needs to be disruptive in order to gain attention from the public, so to must it be able to bring the power of its place in society and in the network of power to bare on those who benefit from their labor. The students of the Maple Spring were able to do that when they stopped a tuition increase at their university. The lesson this chapter seeks to establish is that what I call

the mode of disruption in a protest action must provide a clear link to its message. I recounted two examples of protest actions that my students analyzed rhetorically, and the lesson is clear: protests can put too much emphasis on gaining the public's attention and risk making a clear connection to their message. This chapter also establishes the need for radical teachers to provide gateway activities for their students that call for them to dwell in another ethos. And finally, I have recounted my class' meeting with Gregg Housh from Anonymous as a way of advocating for academic freedom and using the unique capabilities of a computer mediated classroom to provide students a way of meeting with important figures in society who may be otherwise presented to them in a one-sided manner. It is my sincere hope that readers will learn from my experiences and work to insure academic freedom while providing students lessons in learning to dwell rhetorically. Though it may seem like we live in a binary between closed and open systems, every closed system is more open than it may appear. And every seemingly open system has boundaries that its inhabitant may not be able to perceive. Protest rhetoric has a way of rendering both visible.

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    Print.

VITA

Bryan Lee Jones

Candidate for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Thesis: V is what democracy looks like: Image politics and the Guy Fawkes mask

Major Field: English

Biographical: Lives with his wife, two children, and a handful of pet rats.

Education:

Completed the requirements for the Doctor of Philosophy in your major at Oklahoma State University, Stillwater, Oklahoma in July, 2017.

Completed the requirements for the Master of Arts in your major at Northeastern State University, Tahlequah, Oklahoma in 2009.

Completed the requirements for the Bachelor of Arts in your major at Northeaster State University, Tahlequah, Oklahoma in Year.

Experience: Presented at national conferences, including RSA and CCCC

Professional Memberships: Rhetoric Society of America