ENVIRONMENTAL DISCOURSE IN OKLAHOMA:

EXAMINING RHETORICAL STRATEGIES

IN THREE CASE STUDIES

By

CHRISTINA JOY GRAVES LANE

Bachelor of Arts in Religious Education
Oklahoma City University
Oklahoma City, Oklahoma
2007

Master of Education in TESL/Bilingual Education
University of Central Oklahoma
Edmond, Oklahoma
2010

Submitted to the Faculty of the
Graduate College of the
Oklahoma State University
in partial fulfillment of
the requirements for
the Degree of
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY
May, 2021

ENVIRONMENTAL DISCOURSE IN OKLAHOMA:

EXAMINING RHETORICAL STRATEGIES

IN THREE CASE STUDIES

Dissertation Approved:

Dr. Lynn Lewis
_____
Dissertation Adviser

Dr. An Cheng
_____

Dr. Joshua Daniel
_____

Dr. Tamara Mix
_____

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

When I began my schooling at Oklahoma State University in fall 2015, my goal was to attain a second MA focused on analyzing the impact of religion in border literature. Both Dr. Lynn Lewis and Dr. Rebecca Damron dramatically changed my scholarly trajectory when they introduced me to Writing Studies. I am grateful for their encouragement to pursue a doctorate within this field.

While many faculty along the way—Dr. Ron Brooks, Dr. An Cheng, Dr. Joshua Daniel, and Dr. Tamara Mix—have productively shaped and shifted the direction of my dissertation, I am especially thankful for the guidance of my adviser, Dr. Lynn Lewis, through my coursework, qualifying papers, and this dissertation. She patiently worked with me through draft after draft, providing useful feedback and allowing me the space to ask questions and think through ideas out loud. She did that while simultaneously supporting me as individual who was struggling through all that life threw at me. Thank you, Dr. Lewis.

OSU colleague Jeaneen Canfield has regularly been a helpful source for asking questions I felt too embarrassed to ask faculty members, whether connected to writing, concepts in the field, or teaching. Thank you, Jeaneen. OSU colleagues Katie Rieger and Sarah Lonelodge have been in the trenches with me—from studying together for the first year exam to taking classes to discussing our qualifying papers and dissertations. Our regular accountability check-ins with each other over the past year were vital in helping me finish my dissertation, especially since my son, Luke, was born. Thank you, Sarah and Katie.

My family—my Mom, Dad, and sister Janina--have provided continual support in ways too lengthy to mention here. Thank you all for your love, encouragement, time, and willingness to alter your own lives in order to enable me to finish this dissertation.

And to my husband, Gabe, thank you for your patience as I finished up this degree. After being married for almost 13 years, for the first time, neither one of us will be in a graduate school or residency when the fall begins. Hallelujah.

Name: CHRISTINA JOY GRAVES LANE

Date of Degree: MAY, 2021

Title of Study: ENVIRONMENTAL DISCOURSE IN OKLAHOMA: EXAMINING RHETORICAL STRATEGIES IN THREE CASE STUDIES

Major Field: ENGLISH

Abstract: Despite the acceleration of climate change, figuring out ways to productively talk about it remains difficult in some places. So where do we begin? As rhetoricians, we believe that studying discourse provides insight. Herndl and Brown describe environmental discourse as a historically developed cultural form maintained by rhetorical activity (9). Guided by the type of situatedness encouraged by Cultural Rhetorics, this project interrogates the environmental discourse used in Oklahoma by three actors within the hegemonic public of the non-renewable energy industry—Devon Energy, Scott Pruitt, and the Oklahoma Energy Resources Board (OERB)—as well as one actor within a counterpublic—the Oklahoma Renewable Energy Education Program (OREEP). These particular actors were selected due to their influence within different arenas—industry, government, education—that impact Oklahomans' lives in different ways. Through three case studies, I explore what rhetorical strategies have been used to create, develop, and maintain the environmental discourse of these actors, as well as how these rhetorical strategies frame the environmental discourse of these actors. In my first case study, I examine the responses of Devon Energy to the Carbon Disclosure Project's Climate Change Questionnaire from 2010-2018 using a unique methodological approach that combines grounded theory, in addition to drawing from scholarship in technical communications and rhetorical studies. In the second case study, I scrutinize the tweets of Scott Pruitt from his tenure as the Environmental Protection Agency Head Administrator from 2017-2018 using grounded theory. In the third case study, I analyze OERB's cartoon character, Petro Pete, who appears in their educational curriculum; I also analyze OREEP's cartoon character, Ree Newable, who is their educational mascot. The findings from these case studies reveal similarities in the ways environmental discourse is rhetorically used: a reliance on benevolence, fundamentalist Christian beliefs and values, and a cultural script of whiteness. These findings enabled me to re-imagine Killingsworth and Palmer's seminal environmental rhetoric model that is still referred to today, most significantly through my addition of a Nature as Creation attitudinal orientation (14).

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES

Table   Page

LIST OF FIGURES

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

My Journey

Born and raised in rural western Oklahoma in the 1980s-early 2000s, I grew up playing outdoors. Digging in the dirt near my Mom's daisies, slipping in the sand-like harvested wheat with my best friend Sam in the back of a truck, and getting up to weed before the sun came out in order to beat the heat are some of my earliest memories. While visitors like drought often overstayed their welcome, I don't ever remember being talked to about our role in those phenomena by my parents, teachers, or other community members. Rather, I remember people lifting up prayers for rain. Because as the farmers said, "this year was just another dry one. And Lord willing, we'd get a good rain before it's too late for wheat, cotton, peanuts," or whatever crop was in rotation.

I was a town girl though. In both rural towns I grew up in, our family wasn't a part of the agriculture community that directly relied upon the land. I didn't even participate in 4-H and FFA, because our family couldn't afford the livestock --- and having grown up milking cows every day at 5am, my Dad emphasized that aggie-related activities weren't as fun as they might appear. So, I can't speak to what specific farming families said or didn't say about phenomena like drought within the confines of their own homes.

Besides being a town girl, I was also a preacher's kid, which certainly impacted what I did or didn't hear from community members, regardless of whether or not they were connected with farming. My Dad served as the local United Methodist pastor in each community I was raised in, while my Mom played the piano, conducted the church choir, gave private music lessons, and taught music in the public school. Because of my parents' roles in these two small towns of under 5000 people, I was always a preacher's kid to whomever I was around, which impacted what people would or wouldn't say around me, as well as how they said it. Perhaps I only heard that climate was outside of the influence of people and in God's hands, because I was a preacher's kid. But looking back now based on what I know of these people and their receptivity to human acceleration of climate change, I doubt it.

Fast forward 13 years. Experiences like seeing the wind sweep away dirt from the cotton fields around Frederick, Oklahoma, paddling through the inlets to the Chao Phraya in Bangkok completely clouded by plastic bags, and sweating through the 100+ days of 100 degree weather in 2011 in Temple, Texas had illuminated quite vividly the impacts of climate change for me. Climate change was real. And it was not just transforming life in faraway places. It was shifting the trajectory of people's lives right here in Oklahoma.

After a lot of life living and teaching in two states and another country dramatically impacted by the changes of the Anthropocene, I decided I wanted to study how the environment was talked about in Oklahoma, because discourse matters. It molds us, just as we mold it. Was the discourse I heard growing up in Okeene and Frederick about and around the environment widespread? Did people talk about weather--and in turn, the climate--as something beyond human influence or control? If I were to take Cushman's call to be a public intellectual seriously, then I should begin with the local exigencies in the place I call home (329). And as Mailloux emphasizes over and over again in *Disciplinary Identities* when talking about the use of rhetoric both as academic and public intellectuals, "we always have to argue our cases in specific times and places" (41).

2

Because of the holistic impact of climate change on Oklahomans' health and livelihood, I felt that focusing on climate change was the most exigent of all the issues facing my home. For as the United States Environmental Protection Agency noted in 2016 in a short publication called "What Climate Change Means for Oklahoma," the significance of climate change should not be ignored.

> In the coming decades, Oklahoma will become warmer, and both floods and droughts may be more severe. Most of Oklahoma did not become warmer during the last 50 to 100 years. But soils have become drier, annual rainfall has increased, and more rain arrives in heavy downpours. In the coming decades, summers are likely to be increasingly hot and dry, which would reduce the productivity of farms and ranches, change parts of the landscape, and possibly harm human health (1).

Furthermore, if I had the opportunity to research the discourse used about the environment in Oklahoma, then perhaps I might be able to learn how to communicate more effectively with my fellow Oklahomans about our role in climate change. Because as climate scientist Katherine Hayhoe argues, the most important thing that we need to do to fight climate change is talk about it.

My Research Questions and Important Terms

Despite the fact that 97% of climate scientists from around the world maintain that humans have accelerated global warming, some people still do not believe humans' actions contribute to climate change (Cook et al. 2). In 2019, the Yale Program on Climate Change Communication estimated that only 59% of Oklahomans believed in global warming and only 46% of Oklahomans believed that global warming is mostly caused by humans. Those are alarming statistics, particularly as the temperature on Earth moves beyond the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change's recommended magnitude of warming of 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels.

People's discourse about the environment can offer insight into what they believe though, and there is the possibility that individuals could be persuaded to think differently. As rhetoricians, we should try to figure out how to communicate with people in culturally relevant ways through doing

the hard work of analyzing, thinking about, and strategically responding to their environmental discourse. In their introduction to *Green Culture: Environmental Rhetoric in Contemporary America*, Herndl and Brown describe environmental discourse as a historically developed cultural form maintained by rhetorical activity (9). In order to interrogate the rhetorical activity that surrounds the environment in Oklahoma, I began my study of environmental discourse in Oklahoma with four broad research questions:

1. What actors are part of the publics and counterpublics engaging in environmental discourse in Oklahoma?

2. What rhetorical strategies have been used to create, develop, and maintain the environmental discourse of these publics and counterpublics?

3. How have these rhetorical strategies been used to frame the environmental discourse of actors within these publics and counterpublics?

4. And finally, as rhetoricians, how can we engage in these discourses in ethical ways through our scholarly practices?

I will develop more explanation and nuance of the terms used in these research questions discussed throughout my dissertation, but I will provide what Phelps refers to as précising definitions here in order to provide clarity for the particular context I am writing in and about. As Louis Wetherbee Phelps stated at the Conference on College Composition and Communication in 2016,

> A précising definition tries to clarify, sharpen, and stabilize the meaning of a term for a particular purpose and context. Trying to constrain the possible interpretations of a scholarly term is justified when you're using it to formulate productive concepts, as long as you realize that a richly polysemous term will always escape our efforts to keep it under our thumbs. You can't erase its history or control its fate—even your own use of the term, and your definition of the concept, will inevitably evolve. Mostly, précising definitions are useful for a very specific

situation, argument, text, or historical moment, not to establish a fixed meaning

across all times and contexts (qtd. in Cobos et al. 144).

Definitions of *publics* and *counterpublics* have shifted in rhetorical theory from Habermas'

idealized bourgeois public in the late 1980s to Hauser's emphasis on the vernacular in the late 1980s

to Warner's more inclusive public in the early twenty-first century to Warnick and Heinemann's

incorporation of how the digital impacts the public in the 2010s. Building upon and responding to

these scholars' definitions, my précising definition of a *public* is a more privileged space where

hegemonic discourse is proliferated by entities in power, while my précising definition of a

counterpublic is a less privileged space where discourse is exchanged by entities not in power.

And as I referenced in Herndl and Brown's definition of *environmental discourse* in the

second paragraph of this section, my study of the rhetorical activity surrounding environmental

discourse in Oklahoma will be inclusive in terms of the activity I will be investigating. Although

rhetorical strategies as a concept is often differentiated from organizational patterns, lexico-

grammatical features, metaphoric frames within various scholarly fields, I use *rhetorical strategies*

more as an umbrella term that can include these concepts and more in both the discursive and non-

discursive realms.

Also important to my understanding of *rhetorical strategies* is the philosophy undergirding

my use of *strategies*. Like DeCerteau in *The Practice of Everyday Life*, I associate *strategies* as linked

with institutions and structures of power that produce, while *tactics* are used by less powerful entities

as a means of resistance while acting within environments often shaped by strategies.

Cultural Influences

Because I have lived in Oklahoma for 31 of the 36 years of my life, I would identify myself

as an insider to understanding various cultures that exist within Oklahoma. A couple of those cultures

I have already referenced in the first section of this chapter: rural and Christian. But, I also have

resided or now reside within several other cultures. I have lived in urban areas. I was a public

educator in middle and high schools for over a decade. I am part of the minimalist movement. I have participated in environmental organizations and activities. I am a part of academia. I have lived below the poverty line and far above it. I would be remiss if I didn't mention the reality that each of these cultures influences how I approach the research of my dissertation.

Within cultural rhetorics, there is no push to disconnect from the cultures we are a part of, but rather an encouragement to embrace those cultures. We are part of those cultures and those cultures have value. In defining concepts within cultural rhetorics in Act I, Scene 1 of "Our Story Begins Here," Powell et al. posit that "cultures are made up of practices that accumulate over time and in relationship to specific places...practices that accumulate in those specific places transform those physical geographies into spaces in which common belief systems can be made, re-made, negotiated, transmitted, learned and imagined" (par. 8). Therefore, my insider status might help in discovering answers to the research questions I presented. Knowledge-making does not need to begin within a detached look at a topic but can begin with a perspective informed by the common belief systems of an area paired with a desire to discover where my perspective lies within the others who are a part of those cultures.

For instance, in order to address my first research question I began quite simply. I had conversations with relatives, friends, acquaintances, and even strangers I came across in the cultural communities that were a part of my daily life here in Oklahoma. I asked questions like *Do you talk about the environment? If so, who do you talk about it with? If not, who do you think talks about the environment? What are some of the topics you discuss in connection with the environment? How do you interact with the environment?* Depending on whom I was talking with--because rural people, particularly ranchers and farmers--don't often use the word *environment* I would regularly use the words *land, animals, plants* instead of *environment.*

After a year of doing more reading and listening to experts and being attentive in listening to what people said, it became clear that the major actors within the publics and counterpublics in Oklahoma are the non-renewable energy industry, the renewable energy industry, farmers and

ranchers, and environmental and environmental justice organizations. The non-renewable energy industry includes people who work for companies whose profit comes from oil, natural gas, and coal, while the renewable energy industry includes people who work for companies who profit comes from solar and wind (hydroelectric is not a part of the renewable energy industry in Oklahoma). Farmers and ranchers are divided into two major camps: those who are dependent upon the monoculture giants like Monsanto and Tyson in using corporate farming practices (i.e. lack of diversity in crops, heavy use of pesticides, reliance on feedlots) and those who push for regenerative agriculture (i.e. eliminating or minimizing tillage, increasing soil fertility through crop rotation and coverage, building biological ecosystem diversity, managing livestock grazing). Environmental organizations included the mainstream Big 10 ones like the Sierra Club, while environmental and climate justice coalitions are predominantly connected to Indigenous Peoples like the Cherokee Waterkeepers Rebecca Jimerson and Earl Hatley and the Ponca Tribe's Casey Camp-Horinek.

Clearly, I could not study the environmental discourse of all these actors and the publics and counterpublics they were involved in. I needed to limit the scope of my dissertation. An often-cited statistic in Oklahoma is that 1 out of every 6 jobs is connected with the non-renewable energy industry. Because the non-renewable energy industry is so intrinsically intertwined with the livelihood of many Oklahomans in rural and urban areas, it certainly fit my definition for a public: a more privileged space where hegemonic discourse is proliferated by entities in power. I determined that the non-renewable energy industry would be the public whose environmental discourse I would examine in three separate case studies that would be the three middle chapters of my dissertation.

Specifically, I looked at the following actors within this public: Devon Energy, Scott Pruitt, and the Oklahoma Energy Resources Board (OERB). I did so because each of these actors holds power within different arenas--industry, government, and education--that impact Oklahomans' lives in different ways. In the first case study, I dive into the environmental discourse of Devon Energy, the largest Fortune 500 non-renewable energy company headquartered in Oklahoma. In the second case study, I analyze the environmental discourse of Scott Pruitt in his official capacity as the former

Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Head Administrator; previously, he had been the Attorney General of Oklahoma with problematic ties to several non-renewable companies including Devon Energy. In the third case study, I scrutinize the environmental discourse of the Oklahoma Energy Resources Board, a nonprofit funded by oil and gas companies like Devon Energy that revolves around providing educational opportunities and restoring areas damaged by oil and gas companies.

By defining a counterpublic as a less privileged space where discourse is exchanged by entities not in power, I needed to look to a variety of actors in these case studies. While several actors existed within the counterpublic in each of these case studies (the Carbon Disclosure Project in the first case study, the #BootPruitt campaign in the second, the Oklahoma Renewable Energy Education Program in the third), I elected to only examine the environmental discourse of one actor, OREEP, within the counterpublic for two reasons. First, the Carbon Disclosure Project (CDP) is a global nonprofit headquartered in England and the #BootPruitt campaigns were directed out of the national Sierra Club in Oakland, California, while OREEP is situated within Oklahoma and targeted toward Oklahomans. Second and more importantly, OREEP's environmental discourse reveals some rhetorical tactics that other actors in the counterpublic might begin to adapt to respond to the discourse of the non-renewable energy industry.

Methodology

Examined Texts

In interrogating the environmental discourse of these actors in my three case studies, I chose three genres to examine: Devon Energy's responses to the CDP's Climate Change Questionnaire, one of the many voluntary environmental disclosure questionnaires the CDP proctors; the tweets from Scott Pruitt's official EPA Administrator Twitter account (the now-defunct @EPAScottPruitt); and children's cartoon characters used by OERB and OREEP in conjunction with their educational curriculum. As my second and third research questions stated, I wanted to examine what rhetorical

strategies have been used to create, develop, and maintain the environmental discourse within these publics and this counterpublic, as well as how these rhetorical strategies have been used to frame the environmental discourse of actors within these publics and counterpublic.

The focus of each of these case studies is connected with the cultural communities I was or am a part of: public education, environmental organizations, urban and rural areas, and academia. I discovered the CDP's voluntary environmental disclosure questionnaires when reading through some non-renewable energy companies' annual reports in connection with rural acquaintances asking about the responsibilities of these companies in the polluting of water sources. Pruitt's tweets showed up on my radar as a topic for study in a History of Rhetoric course themed on propaganda in my PhD work when I began to follow environmental figures on Twitter. The children's cartoon characters in educational curriculum were originally brought to my attention years ago as a secondary public educator being offered free professional development and materials by the Oklahoma Energy Resources Board, then I selected them as a topic for study in a Visual Rhetoric course in my PhD work.

However, I did not select these texts simply because they emerged related to interesting topics in my own cultural communities. As the debate about the non-renewable energy industry's role in accelerating climate change steadily becomes clearer with each passing year, the non-renewable energy industry has had to become more savvy about their environmental discourse. The selection of these texts reflects the power of the non-renewable energy industry's environmental discourse across multiple arenas. Hopefully, my analysis of these texts in the case studies illuminates the non-renewable energy industry's influence both inside and outside the business world at the state level, as well as at the national and international levels. The selection of these texts reflects the non-renewable energy industry's influence both inside (industry and nonprofit) and outside (education and government) the business world at the state level, as well as at the national and international levels.

For instance, how do non-renewable companies headquartered in Oklahoma like Devon Energy frame the narrative about the non-renewable energy industry when filling out increasingly

ubiquitous and public social responsibility genres like the voluntary environmental disclosure questionnaire that might be read by a number of stakeholders? And, how might Pruitt, a former Oklahoma Attorney General with a proclivity for closely working with the non-renewable energy industry, frame the narrative about the non-renewable energy industry via an official social media account when he became the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Head Administrator? Furthermore, what better way to influence the conversation about the non-renewable energy industry than framing the narrative around non-renewable energy sources through a children's cartoon character that appears in the widely used OERB curriculum beginning in kindergarten? And in turn, how would OREEP, an environmental non-profit, respond in framing the narrative around renewable energy sources through their own children's cartoon cartoon?

Theoretical Approach

In their Introduction to a special issue of *Enculturation* focused on cultural rhetorics, Bratta and Powell assert that there does not need to be a universal frame for doing cultural rhetoric work (par. 5). Rather Bratta and Powell emphasize, just as the other scholars in this special issue do, that there is a need for "a more situated scholarly practice in which the particularity of rhetorical practices within specific cultural communities sheds light on the myriad ways that culture and rhetoric emerge" (par. 5). Certainly, research questions help guide us in determining our methodology, but one way we can rethink the typical academic methodologies is through an amalgamation of these methods informed by the situatedness of the rhetoric within the cultural community or communities we are analyzing. Medina-Lopez describes rasquache as cultural rhetorics theory and practice that presents a robust approach to meaning making by allowing users to pull from the compendium of theories, ideas, experiences, tangible tools, and intangible epistemologies they can access (3). Perhaps she might refer to my amalgamation as a white person's attempt at their own kind of upcycling? Whereas most cultural rhetoricians center their methods on story, other methods can also provide insight.

For each of my case studies, I intentionally selected a different method in analyzing the rhetorical strategies used due to the context each case study resided in, although grounded theory was integral to two of the three case studies. My grounded theory approach in these two case studies was informed by Charmaz. As Charmaz asserts grounded theory can address "form as well as content, audiences as well as authors, and production of the text as well as presentation of it" (45). In each case study, I will provide more detailed descriptions of my methodology, as well as the other theoretical approaches I draw from, and how this amalgamation reflects culturally situated methods of collecting data. Here, I simply provide an overview of my methodology in each case study.

Overview of Each Case Study

In the first case study, I analyzed the responses of Devon Energy to the Carbon Disclosure Project's Climate Change Questionnaire from 2010-2018, the first eight years they elected to complete the questionnaire. I conducted an initial and focused round of coding as described by Charmaz. Then, I added two more theoretical steps (what I refer to as layers in this chapter) connected to framing theory from technical communications and rhetoric. First, I compared and contrasted my findings with guidelines that Rademaekers and Johnson-Sheehan developed in "Framing and Re-framing in Environmental Science: Explaining Climate Change to the Public" to re-frame climate change within technical communications. Since Rademaekers and Johnson-Sheehan did not develop rhetorical strategies that could be used in this re-framing, I then looked to the rhetorical strategies that Cloud posits as being helpful in Chapter 2 of *Reality Bites: Rhetoric and the Circulation of Truth Claims in U.S. Political Culture*: She refers to these rhetorical strategies—affect, emotion, embodiment, narrative, and myth—as the big five.

In the second case study, I analyze all the tweets of Scott Pruitt, the former EPA Head Administrator, from 2017 to 2018. Before becoming the head of the EPA, Pruitt served as a State Senator and the Attorney General for Oklahoma with close ties to non-renewable energy companies like Devon Energy. I conducted one round of open coding, then a round of focused coding in order to

determine common themes that appeared. Next, I discussed my findings through scholars directly or peripherally connected to public sphere theory: Hauser, Warner, Warnick and Heineman, and Van Dijck. I also wove in connections to whiteness as defined in the Introduction and Part I Reflection of *Rhetorics of Whiteness: Postracial Hauntings in Popular Culture, Social Media, and Education* by Kennedy et al.

In the third case study, I analyze the use of Petro Pete, a children's cartoon character, in the Oklahoma Energy Resources Board educational curriculum, as well as the design of Ree Nenewable, a children's cartoon character, in the Oklahoma Renewable Energy Education Program curriculum. In this rhetorical analysis, I drew from multiple scholars often situated within the broader field of visual rhetorics—McCloud, Barthes, Berger, Kress and Van Leeuwen, Wysocki, Hum—in order to make a larger point about whiteness as defined by Monzo and McLaren in the Foreword and Kennedy et al. in the Introduction of *Rhetorics of Whiteness: Postracial Hauntings in Popular Culture, Social Media, and Education.*

The Conversations I Enter

After conducting my case studies, I determined that my findings indeed had something significant to offer scholarship in writing studies. These findings enabled me to fill a major gap: a much-needed re-imagining of one of the seminal environmental rhetoric models. Although I used a number of sources from various theoretical approaches within writing studies to conduct my case studies, my dissertation predominantly responds to environmental rhetoric scholarship through invoking a cultural rhetorics approach. While cultural rhetorics as a theory and practice is relatively new within writing studies, environmental rhetoric has been rooted in writing studies since the 1990s. I believe cultural rhetorics as a theory and practice enables a re-imagining of two models that are used within environmental rhetoric to categorize discourse. Why does this re-imagining matter if the models are from the 1990s? In general, models provide an easier means to think through and talk about discourse. That is true of both of the environmental rhetoric models. But, I will only focus on

one of the models, because it is still regularly referred to by major scholars within writing studies (see Kirsch, Rivers, Ross), as well as within other interdisciplinary fields like environmental communication (see Liu and Pezzullo, Schmitt).

While these environmental rhetoric models have been useful to scholars, my three case studies demonstrate serious shortcomings. Therefore, I will describe my re-imagining of one of these models in detail in Chapter 5, along with discussing how the findings from my three case studies informed that re-imagining. Chapter 5 responds to my last research question about how we, as rhetoricians, can engage in these discourses in ethical ways through our scholarly practices. For context though, I will introduce the work of environmental rhetoric and Cultural Rhetorics scholars that I build upon here.

Environmental Rhetoric

The environmental rhetoric models were created in the 1990s with a decidedly eco-humanist bent. (Eco-humanism refers to the belief that humans can transform their societies in ways that will benefit both humanity and the rest of nature.) In Killingsworth and Palmer's important work *Ecospeak,* they introduce first a continuum, then a configuration of perspectives based on their findings of conducting rhetorical analyses on several texts ranging from environmental impact statements to the writings of Rachel Carson and Barry Commoner to environmentalist novels like Edward Abbey's *The Monkey Wrench Gang* (see fig. 1.1). The perspectives on the environment that they identified as existing were traditional or mainstream science, government, business and industry, agriculture, social ecology (what they also refer to as humanistic environmentalism), and deep ecology (what they also refer to as nature mysticism or the wilderness ethic).

In Figure 1.1 below, Killingsworth and Palmer situate these various perspectives, as well as another perspective, holistic ecology, in relationship to one another through these perspectives' attitudes toward Nature. The three attitudinal orientations—Nature as Object, Nature as Resource, Nature as Spirit—reflect the values and beliefs held by the perspectives closest to them. For example,

Killingsworth and Palmer posit that industry sees Nature as a resource to be used for profit, while traditional science sees Nature an object to be studied for the purposes of learning.

Nature as Object   **Nature as Resource**

Traditional Science   Government   Business/Industry

Holistic Ecology

Deep Ecology   Social Ecology   Agriculture

Nature as Spirit
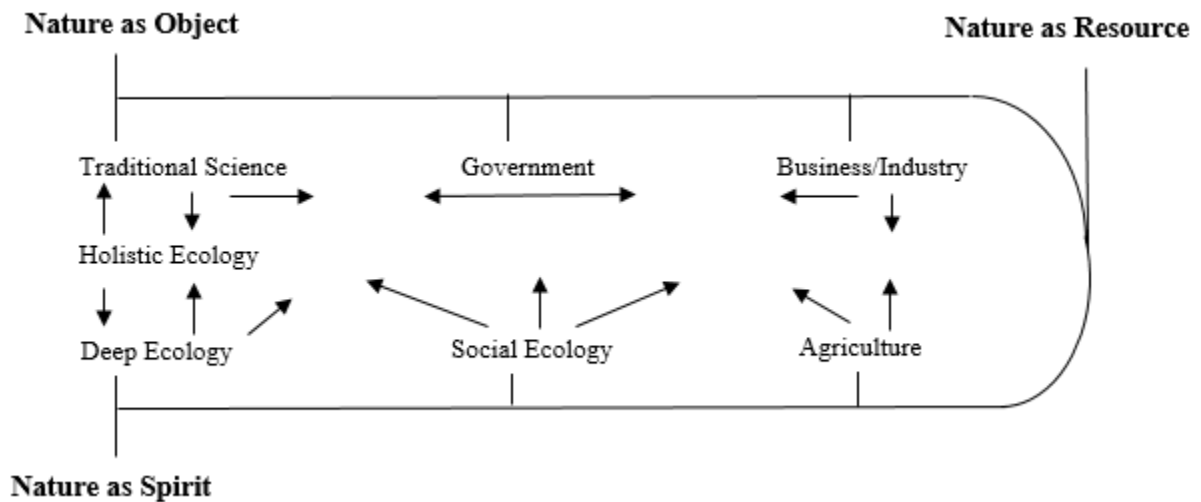
Figure 1.1 Horseshoe Configuration of Perspectives

Source: M. Jimmie Killingsworth and Jacqueline Palmer, *Ecospeak* (Southern Illinois University Press, 1992), p. 14.

Killingsworth and Palmer discuss how the various perspectives represented on their configuration attract and repel one another through their use of rhetorical appeals. The arrows represent the rhetorical appeals that a particular perspective is making toward other perspectives. After conducting my three case studies though, I believe that there are more perspectives and attitudinal orientations that can exist beyond those that are represented on Killingsworth and Palmer's configuration, as well as variations in the directionality of the rhetorical appeals. In order to participate persuasively and effectively in environmental discourse here in Oklahoma, identifying and appealing to the perspectives that hold to these attitudinal orientations is necessary.

Killingsworth and Palmer argue that there is a need for a generally accessible narrative that could transcend these various perspectives that are outwardly marked by their discourse (21). Rhetorically, a generally accessible narrative like Killingsworth and Palmer talk about would certainly make conversation about climate change easier. But, the belief in a generally accessible

14

narrative simplistically erases the differences that might exist in cultural communities. Rather than adjusting texts to broad contexts as Killingsworth and Palmer suggest, we need to adjust texts to specific contexts situated within particular cultural communities if we want those communities to be receptive to what we have to say (279). As I will describe in my third case study, OREEP's attempt at embodying inclusivity through Ree Newable was not as successful as OERB's attempt at embodying benevolence through Petro Pete. Why? Because OERB adjusted their text (Petro Pete) to a specific context via the particularities of Oklahoma as a locale and common accompanying perceptions about race, gender, socioeconomic class, and the environment, while OREEP attempted to adjust their text (Ree Newable) to a broad context.

Herndl and Brown begin their introduction by accurately stating that "discourse shapes our relations to the world" (5). As seen in Figure 1.2 below, Herndl and Brown offer up an eco-humanist rhetorical model for environmental discourse that provides a means to determine the motive of a particular text (10-11). They categorize the motive or intent of a text based on its primary rhetorical appeal, which they connect with possessing a particular attitude toward Nature. For instance, if the discourse is scientific, they categorize its primary rhetorical appeal as Logos, an appeal to a reader's rationality or logic; they believe this type of discourse is anthropocentric and views Nature as an Object. As Herndl and Brown note, the attitudes toward Nature that they include are those defined and used by Killingsworth and Palmer in their configuration (10). They refer to these attitudes toward Nature as attitudinal orientations.
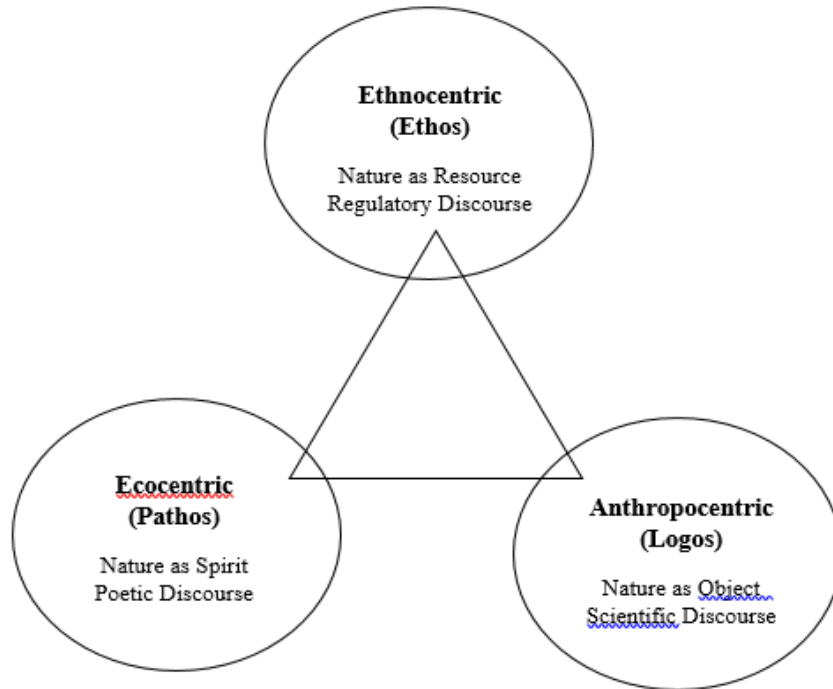
Figure 1.2 A Rhetorical Model for Environmental Discourse

Source: Carl Herndl and Stuart Brown, *Green Culture* (The University of Wisconsin Press, 1996), p.

11.

Just like Killingsworth and Palmer's configuration though, Herndl and Brown acknowledge in describing their model that "these discourses are not pure" (12). They describe successful writing as that which "combines the styles, forms, and rhetorical appeals of more than one of these discourses" (12). Thus, they are moving in the direction of adjusting texts to specific contexts.

My dissertation attempts to build on the work Killingsworth, Palmer, Herndl, and Brown began through complicating their understanding of environmental discourse via the findings of my case studies. While simpler to provide models that attempt to encompass all perspectives on Nature as Killingsworth, Palmer, Herndl, and Brown have done, it is not nuanced enough for discourse in specific contexts within particular cultural communities. For example, in my first case study, Devon Energy's discourse should only possess a Nature as Resource attitudinal orientation based on these models, but as I describe, Devon's discourse incorporates the Nature as Object attitudinal orientation

16

along with another attitudinal orientation that I refer to as the Nature as Creation attitudinal orientation. The theoretical foundation of cultural rhetorics encourages us to interrogate the beliefs that undergird these models, such as: 1) discourse can be easily compartmentalized; 2) discourse is disembodied from those who use it; and, 3) discourse should be generalized in order to effectively appeal to a wider audience.

Another often cited book in environmental rhetoric is *Ecosee: Image, Rhetoric, and Nature* by Dobrin and Morey. Unlike Killingsworth and Palmer and Herndl and Brown, they do not propose a model for environmental discourse, but they open the door on acknowledging the role that images play in environmental discourse, a step that was not taken by either Killingsworth and Palmer or Herndl and Brown. The usefulness of *Ecosee* resides within its attempt at theorizing the relationships that surround, as well as are *in* and *of* images. While Dobrin and Morey do not identify their work as being grounded in cultural rhetorics, their work certainly acknowledges the nuance needed in rooting images and accompanying discourse within very particular contexts. Perhaps Dobrin and Morey took to heart the notion Mailloux advocated for in *Disciplinary Identities: Rhetorical Paths of English, Speech, and Composition*: that all English studies should be rethought of as cultural rhetoric studies (127).

Cultural Rhetorics

This book by Mailloux published in 2006 is often referred to as a grounding work for cultural rhetorics. In it, Mailloux proposes his own theoretical approach to rhetorical analysis: rhetorical hermeneutics, "the use of rhetoric to practice theory by doing history" (42). He looks at the ways in which rhetoric travels, while examining the ways in which power/knowledge relations are shifted and shaped by identity, our interpreted being, via nationality, race, class, generation, religion, ethnicity, sexuality, and gender. In the final chapter, he encapsulates the essence of cultural rhetoric studies, stating that it would "encompass the productive and interpretive aspects of the rhetorical tradition, embracing classical and modern invention in spoken and written rhetorics and including modern and

postmodern hermeneutics applied to oral, print, and digital media as well as various cultural technologies, whether aural, visual, or kinetic" (129).

In 2016, Powell et al. published "Our Story Begins Here: Constelling Cultural Rhetorics" in *Enculturation*. This article illuminates the reality that Mailloux was speaking of and to: that our interpreted being, our identity, is interwoven by and through our rhetoric. Or as Powell et al. states in Scene 1 of Act I of their article, "the project of cultural rhetorics is, generally, to emphasize rhetorics as always-already cultural and cultures as persistently rhetorical" (par. 2). Powell et al. build upon what Mailloux describes to move beyond individual identity to communal identity. They continue on in Scene 1 of Act I to discuss meaning-making within what they deem cultural communities, "any place/space where groups organize under a set of shared beliefs and practices—American Indian communities, workplace communities, digital communities, crafting communities, etc." (par. 2).

Whereas Mailloux briefly touches upon the way power/knowledge relations impacts rhetoric and the individuals involved in the way the rhetoric travels, Powell et al. ruminate on the reality that not all cultural communities are seen as equal, then explain how constelling "allows for all meaning-making practices and their relationships to matter" within Scene 2 of Act I (par. 5). Studying all power relationships and how all bodies embody power is central to cultural rhetorics. So within the case studies of my dissertation, acknowledging the power relationships that exist within and around the public of the non-renewable energy industry as seen in the environmental discourse of Devon Energy, Scott Pruitt, and OERB and within and around the counterpublic of environmental organizations as seen in OREEP is absolutely necessary.

In the introduction to the special issue of *Enculturation* that "Our Story Begins" was published in, Bratta and Powell importantly highlight that a key step in a scholar's study is to build a theoretical framework from inside the particular culture that the scholar is situating their work. So based on this approach, I can and should discuss how the environmental rhetoric models summarized above do and do not apply to my three case studies, but then I have to do the work of thinking through, discussing, examining, analyzing, and critiquing those models to perhaps figure out how to

create a model that fits the particularities of the actors in the publics and counterpublic of these case studies.

Preview of My Findings

Below I briefly summarize the findings from my case studies: the rhetorical strategies used to create, develop, and maintain the environmental discourse of these publics and counterpublic, as well as how these strategies have been used to frame their environmental discourse. The concluding chapter provides much more detail about how the findings from my case studies helped me offer up a re-imagining of Killingsworth and Palmer's environmental rhetoric model

Chapter 2 focuses on environmental discourse that the non-renewable energy industry directly claims as its own through publicly accessible documents. Chapter 2 is a case study of Devon Energy's responses to the CDP Climate Change Questionnaire from 2010-2018. I found that Devon Energy's environmental discourse has been deliberately filtered through the theory, balancing norm, and dominion frames with the use of the rhetorical strategies of emotions, affect, and mythic narrative in order to influence readers' understanding of Devon Energy in a positive manner in relation to their action and/or inaction connected with climate change. Devon communicates that climate change does not and will not impact the company's secure economic future due to their proactive approach toward regulatory compliance with technological innovation and internal and external policy oversight.

Unlike the case study in Chapter 2, Chapter 3 focuses on environmental discourse that the non-renewable energy industry would not claim as its own, even though there are proven, problematic ties between this EPA official and the non-renewable energy industry. Chapter 3 is a case study of Scott Pruitt's official EPA Head Administrator Twitter Account from 2017-2018. I found that his environmental discourse relied upon the use of vernacular as an overarching rhetorical strategy that all other rhetorical strategies-- were interwoven through. He conveyed an articulated concern in working for and with people via sincerity. He emphasized environmental stewardship at the local and

state levels, rather than the federal level. He framed industry, particularly the non-renewable energy industry, as a means to catalyze economic growth

Chapter 4 focuses on environmental discourse that both the non-renewable energy industry and renewable energy industry claim as their own. Chapter 4 is a case study of the OERB's Petro Pete and the OREEP's Ree Newable. I found that the environmental discourse of both OERB and OREEP enacted embodiment as their overarching rhetorical strategy. Because embodiment is created through design and ideology, Petro Pete more successfully embodies benevolence via his race, gender, SES, and the environment, while Ree Newable less successfully embodies inclusivity via her race, gender, SES, and the environment. (Please note that the guiding research questions for each case study will be located at the beginning of each chapter.)

Due to my findings in Chapters 2, 3, and 4, I re-imagine the environmental rhetoric model laid out by Killingsworth and Palmer in Chapter 5. Primarily, my re-imagining will focus on my proposing a new attitudinal orientation, Nature as Creation, to be included within this model. I define this orientation as believing that all of nature--air, land, water, humans, animals, and plants--is created by a deity (or deities). Unlike the Nature as Spirit orientation which assigns the same value to all these biotic entities, this orientation maintains that humans are above all other biotic and non-biotic entities and hold power over all these entities. Based on the findings of my case studies in Chapters 2, 3, 4, I argue in Chapter 5 that the absence of this attitudinal orientation from the existing environmental rhetoric models reveals a significant lack of understanding and/or acceptance of the rhetorical influence of a fundamentalist version of the Christian faith in Oklahoma. (I also speculate that the rhetorical influence of this fundamentalist version of the Christian faith in environmental discourse would extend to other states, but due to the scope of my case studies, I can only make this argument about Oklahoma currently.)

My proposal of and argument for the inclusion of this new attitudinal orientation—as well as the variation in the directionality of rhetorical appeals and inclusion of additional entities—

illuminates that the study and use of environmental discourse can't be compartmentalized, generalized, or disembodied from those who use it. As shown through the findings of my three case studies, the non-renewable energy industry in Oklahoma understands this reality. The non-renewable energy industry does not just stick to the Nature as Resource attitudinal orientation as the existing environmental rhetoric models show. They do not rhetorically appeal to just the government and agriculture perspectives. And, they certainly do not just use regulatory language or ethos. Rather, the environmental discourse of the non-renewable energy industry is contextualized. It speaks to the values and beliefs held by and embodied in particular cultural communities in Oklahoma. If the non-renewable energy industry's environmental discourse were not rhetorically aware, if it were not contextualized and embodied, it would probably be ineffective.

While discussing a myriad of political issues, not just climate change, rhetorician Dana Cloud argues repeatedly in *Reality Bites: Rhetoric and the Circulation of Truth Claims in U.S. Political Culture* that facts are not enough. If anything has been learned over the past few decades in the climate change debate in Oklahoma and on the national or international scale, it is that the non-renewable energy industry has effectively made facts questionable or irrelevant. How? Through their persuasive environmental discourse. As Cloud states, "Truth is supposed to counter power. But what if we realize that we live in a society of contending, perspectival truths, all vying for power. Truth is then not the opposite or counter to power. Rather, we need to put some power behind our truths" (35). If the environmental discourse of the non-renewable energy industry is to be countered, then we will need to learn a lesson from them. We need to put some power behind our truth through contextualizing and embodying our environmental discourse like they have done.

CHAPTER II

FILTERING THROUGH FRAMES: AN INDUSTRY-BASED CASE STUDY

> *1) What rhetorical strategies have been used by this actor (Devon Energy) to create, develop, and maintain the environmental discourse of this public (the non-renewable energy industry)?*
> *2) How have these rhetorical strategies been used to frame the environmental discourse of this actor?*

Context of this Case Study

The discovery of Nellie Johnstone #1 in 1897 near Bartlesville set off a frenzy in Indian Territory causing people to desire Indigenous Peoples' lands yet again. Settlers flooded in from all over the country to see if they could strike it rich. They used whatever means were necessary to try to get their piece of the pie; for some, that meant honest work working in the oil fields, but for many, that meant verbal, economic, and/or physical manipulation and violence toward Indigenous Peoples or other settlers who had arrived earlier than them. Gushers like those that erupted in Glenn Pool (see fig. 2.1) in 1905 only heightened the intensity of emotions and people's willingness to commit brutal actions (Franks, 41-42). Whereas older books like Gregory's *Oil in Oklahoma* paint a rosy picture of successful oil wildcatters whose ventures turned into major non-renewable energy companies like Phillips 66, newer books like Grann's *Killers of the Flower Moon* show a more accurate portrayal of what people were willing to do.
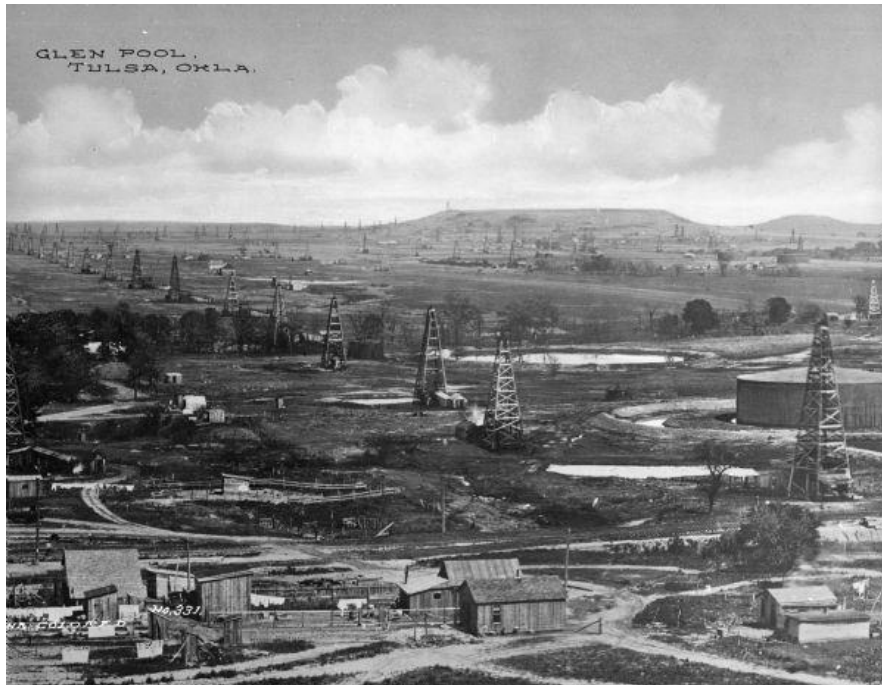
Fig. 2.1 Glenn Pool Oil Field

Source: Glenpool History, "Making Tulsa Famous,"

https://www.glenpoolonline.com/238/Glenpool-History

For many people, intensity and brutality became analogous with the oil industry as a whole.

Unsurprisingly when Oklahoma became a state in 1907 just a decade later, the oil industry had already tightened its grip over the inner workings of Oklahoma. Or, as historian Kenny Franks put it in the late 1970s when describing the history of the oil industry in Oklahoma, "Oil and Oklahoma are synonymous. Oil transformed the state's economy and laid the foundations for financial and industrial institutions that were essential to Oklahoma's future" (*The Oklahoma Petroleum Industry* inner front flap). Over the decades of the twentieth century and into the twenty-first century, natural gas became increasingly important in the state's economy as well.

While some may argue that the non-renewable energy industry is losing its power in Oklahoma, I would disagree. While Oklahoma ranked second in 2019 in terms of wind generation

for electricity, it also was still ranked as the fourth-largest producer of crude and fourth-largest

withdrawer of natural gas in the United States (U.S. Energy Information Administration). Even

though the renewable energy industry has become increasingly influential in Oklahoma's

economy during the 21st century, the non-renewable energy industry remains the more powerful

economic entity. Indicative of this power is what companies headquartered in Oklahoma are

ranked in the prestigious Fortune 500 list that ranks companies based on their financial impact. In

2019, all five Oklahoma headquartered companies ranked in the Fortune 500 were non-renewable

energy companies: NGL Energy Partners, Oneok, Devon Energy, Chesapeake, and Williams

Companies, Inc.

Therefore, the financial power of these companies and other non-renewable energy

companies like Halliburton and Hollyfrontier that have locations in Oklahoma has been and

continues to be substantial. As the Oklahoma Commerce Report in 2019 shows, the non-

renewable energy industry brings in more money than any other industry. The oft-cited statistic

by these companies and the state government is that 1 out of 6 jobs in the Oklahoma industry is

somehow connected to the non-renewable energy industry. One need only observe the working

oil well on the capitol grounds in Oklahoma City to see a clear symbol of this interconnectedness

(see fig. 2.2).
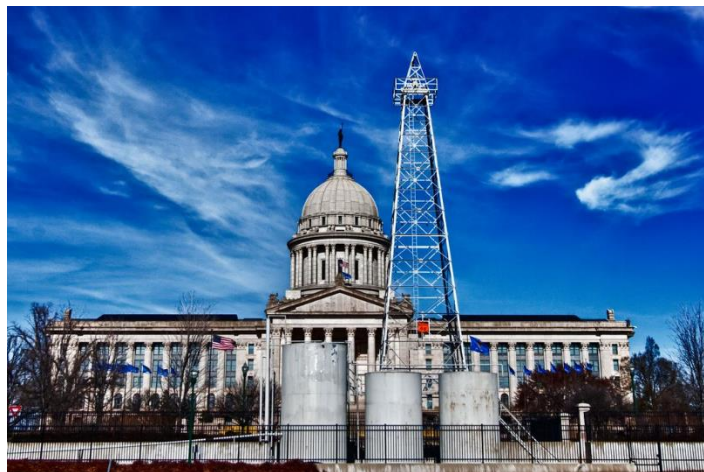
Fig. 2.2 Photo of Working Oil Well on Oklahoma Capitol Grounds

Because of economic reliance on the non-renewable energy industry, the state government in

Oklahoma has been hesitant--and often, resistant--toward regulating this industry or even asking

them to voluntarily disclose the environmental impacts of extracting and producing these non-

renewable energy sources.

Fortunately though, the global influence of nonprofits like the Carbon Disclosure

Project (CDP) has increasingly convinced stakeholders in these non-renewable energy

companies that filling out voluntary environmental disclosure questionnaires should be routine.

The purpose of voluntary environmental disclosure questionnaires is for companies (and

governments) to reveal the impact of their infrastructure on the environment. Within the non-

renewable energy sector, companies are asked to report both upstream and downstream impacts

via questions concerning areas like risk management strategies, involvement in trade

associations, greenhouse gas emission activities, and governance. I wondered--could the

responses of non-renewable energy industries to these questions reveal their attitudes toward

climate change?

Over the past 15 years, the voluntary environmental disclosure questionnaires proctored

by CDP, the largest environmental disclosure nonprofit in the world, have enabled a clearer

measurement and understanding of the environmental impacts of companies from around the

world. The public nature of a voluntary environmental disclosure questionnaire means it is more

readily accessible than other self-disclosure genres. For instance, on the CDP website anyone

can create a login and access any company's responses to the environmental disclosure

questionnaires; that is, if the company chose to complete the questionnaires.

Of the five Oklahoma-headquartered non-renewable energy companies ranked in the

Fortune 500, the participation in CDP voluntary environmental disclosure questionnaires has

varied greatly, particularly with the Climate Change Questionnaire. NGL Energy Partners has never completed any of the questionnaires proctored by the CDP. OneOk started their participation with the Climate Change Questionnaire in 2013. Devon Energy began their participation with the Climate Change Questionnaire in 2010 and has continued to do so. Chesapeake has never submitted the Climate Change Questionnaire, while submitting another questionnaire (the Supply Chain Questionnaire) a few times. Williams Companies, Inc. has either declined to participate or chose to avoid response until 2019.

Focus of this Case Study

My Research Questions

As stated in Chapter 1, after identifying the actors within the publics and counterpublics involved in environmental discourse in Oklahoma, I decided to focus primarily on the public of the non-renewable energy industry. I defined a *public* as a more privileged space where hegemonic discourse is proliferated by entities in power. As I described in the Context of Case Study section, the non-renewable energy industry certainly possesses a tremendous amount of economic power historically, making its discourse hegemonic.

In this chapter, I will focus on Devon Energy as the actor within the non-renewable energy industry public in Oklahoma for two reasons. One, Devon Energy is involved in both the oil and gas industries. Two, Devon Energy has chosen to participate in the CDP Climate Change Questionnaire for almost a decade, allowing me direct accessibility into the ways they frame their discourse. Although I will sometimes refer to questions the CDP asks in the Climate Change Questionnaire, I will not directly interrogate the CDP as the counterpublic.

In this case study, I analyze what rhetorical strategies, both discursive and non-discursive, have been used to create, develop, maintain, and frame the environmental discourse of Devon Energy in the context of their voluntary environmental questionnaire responses to the Carbon Disclosure Project's Climate Change Questionnaire.

Methodological Approach

My methodological approach was conducted through the use of three processes, or what I refer to as layers: first, the use of grounded theory; second, an application of existing technical communications scholarship; third, an application of existing rhetorical theory. I describe these layers in detail below. While the use of multiple processes is unusual, I believe that it enabled me to discover more about the environmental discourse of Devon Energy than a single process would have. It allows me to answer my research questions more thoroughly and carefully.

First Theoretical Layer

In order to examine the discourse being used by Devon Energy in their responses to the CDP Climate Change Questionnaire, I used the grounded theory approach informed by Charmaz, who is considered to be a part of the constructivist grounded theory school of thought. As Charmaz asserts, grounded theory when focused on documents can address "form as well as content, audiences as well as authors, and production of the text as well as presentation of it" (45). Here are the steps I took to briefly analyze the form of the questionnaires and carefully analyze the content produced by the respondent, Devon Energy. Since grounded theory as a process can differ within and across fields in terms of the methods used, I have also included Tables 2.1 and 2.2 with an example to illustrate my process as I describe the steps connected to my coding process.

After creating an account on the CDP website, I was allowed access to the Climate Change Questionnaires and participants' responses. I downloaded and printed the CDP questionnaires and Devon Energy's responses from 2010-2018, the nine years in which they had elected to disclose their information when I conducted this case study. Because I was unfamiliar with voluntary environmental disclosure questionnaires as a genre, I first examined the

questionnaire's title, then structure by modules and accompanying pages from each of those nine years to see how the questionnaire stayed the same and changed.

In approaching the coding phase of my process, I adapted Charmaz's approach that suggests an initial round of coding followed by a focused round of coding. For my initial round, I read through each questionnaire from those nine years and annotated the content within Devon's responses to each of the questions. Table 2.1 below shows: an example of one of the CDP's questions (Question 4.7) from 2010; Devon Energy's response; and the various annotations that I jotted down about what Devon Energy's response revealed.

Year	Question	Devon Energy's Response	My Annotations
2010	4.7 – Please explain why you do not consider your company to be exposed to significant physical risks—current and anticipated. (*This question only appears if the entity selects 'no' as a response to Question 4.1 that asks if the impacts of climate change present risks to that entity.*)	"We do not believe climate change poses significant physical risk to our assets. We understand the issue of climate change has prompted ongoing discussions among scientists and others concerning potential impacts on weather, sea level, and habitat. The issue has prompted an increasing volume of scientific investigation aimed at determining the extent and potential impact global warming might have on our environment over the next century. Obviously, these issues are complex, and there is disagreement among scientists. Based on the uncertainty of the available science, we are not in a position to make an accurate assessment of physical risk pertaining to our company. Regardless of the physical impacts associated with climate change, our facilities are constructed and sited to withstand the elements and to reduce the potential for environmental harm. Furthermore, with the divestiture of Devon's Gulf of Mexico and international	-Dismissal of climate change -Misleading statements about ongoing debate amongst scientists regarding climate change -Ignoring scientific studies about climate change -Dismissal of climate change impacts -Just dealing with impact on facilities, ignoring the impact on the actual product (hydrocarbons) that their business makes a profit from -Moved away from ocean-oriented

		properties, Devon has repositioned itself for production growth with a balanced portfolio of onshore North American oil and gas assets. With this strategic repositioning, Devon has effectively mitigated the risk of facility damage from offshore storms."	production (perhaps due to surge in hurricanes recently?)

Table 2.1 Example of My Round 1 Coding Process

After I completed this first round, I wrote some informal notes to myself about noticeable patterns, particularly in regard to content themes that I saw emerging. For instance, the most obvious pattern I saw emerging in Devon Energy's discourse was a consistent denial of climate change.

In order to examine the content again, I conducted a second round of focused coding through re-reading and making additional annotations on the questionnaire responses from each of those nine years and identifying the content themes I saw. Table 2.2 below illustrates how the focused round of coding builds upon the initial round of coding by showing the additional annotations I made that zoom into the details of Devon Energy's discourse, as well as identifying the content themes that I developed from that discourse (Denying the Impact of Climate Change and Confirming a Secure Economic Impact).

Year	Question	Devon Energy's Response	My Annotations	Additional Annotations	Content Themes

| 2010 | 4.7 – Please explain why you do not consider your company to be exposed to significant physical risks—current and anticipated.

(*This question only appears if the entity selects 'no' as a response to Question 4.1 that asks if the impacts of climate change present risks to that entity.*) | "We do not believe climate change poses significant physical risk to our assets. We understand the issue of climate change has prompted ongoing discussions among scientists and others concerning potential impacts on weather, sea level, and habitat. The issue has prompted an increasing volume of scientific investigation aimed at determining the extent and potential impact global warming might have on our environment over the next century. Obviously, these issues are complex, and there is disagreement among scientists. Based on the uncertainty of the available science, we are not in a position to make an accurate assessment of physical risk pertaining to our company. Regardless of the physical impacts associated with climate change, our facilities are constructed and sited to withstand the elements and to reduce the potential for environmental harm. Furthermore, with the divestiture of Devon's Gulf of Mexico and | -Dismissal of climate change

-Misleading statements about ongoing debate amongst scientists regarding climate change

-Ignoring scientific studies about climate change

-Dismissal of climate change impacts

-Just dealing with impact on facilities, ignoring the impact on the actual product (hydrocarbons) that their business makes a profit from

-Moved away from ocean-oriented production (perhaps due to surge in | -Use of 'global warming' in addition to 'climate change'

-Use of adjectives that connote uncertainty: ongoing discussion, increasing volume of scientific investigation, complex, disagreement, uncertainty, risk | Denying the Impact of Climate Change

Confirming a Secure Economic Impact |
|---|---|---|---|---|

		international properties, Devon has repositioned itself for production growth with a balanced portfolio of onshore North American oil and gas assets. With this strategic repositioning, Devon has effectively mitigated the risk of facility damage from offshore storms."	hurricanes recently?)		

Table 2.2 Example of My Round 2 Coding Process

Then, I organized the broad content themes I was developing into a table by chronologically and numerically listing every response that fit that theme by year and page from all nine years of questionnaires Devon Energy completed.

Second Theoretical Layer

Because the voluntary environmental disclosure questionnaire is categorized as a technical document, in addition to grounded theory I also wanted to bring in scholarship from technical communications that had dissected the discourse of the non-renewable energy industry about climate change. Although much work has been published analyzing environmental genres and their accompanying rhetorical moves and discourse for decades, surprisingly, not much scholarship has been published that specifically dissects discourse about climate change (see Coppola, Dayton, Killingsworth and Palmer, Mason and Mason, Patterson and Lee, Donald Ross, Rude, Willerton). The most relevant work has been published by Rademaekers and Johnson-Sheehan (in addition to Jaworska, who published her article at the end of 2018 after I had already

completed this case study initially). Rademaekers and Johnson-Sheehan put out a case study of the infamous Exxon-Mobil press release published in response to the Union of Concerned Scientists (UCS) January 2007 report. In this report, the UCS attacked the disinformation about climate change that Exxon-Mobil was putting out through their marketing campaign; the UCS correlated Exxon-Mobil's misinformation with the type of campaign that the tobacco industry conducted when trying to mislead the public about the effects of smoking. Exxon-Mobil fired back their press release with sophisticated marketing that Rademaekers and Johnson-Sheehan thought was interesting enough to analyze.

Before sharing the findings of their case study, Rademaekers and Johnson-Sheehan provided some of the fundamentals of framing theory via communications and linguistics scholarship (see Corbett and Durfee, Entman, Caragee and Roefs, Lakoff,). They concluded that frames are used to construct a hegemonic perspective. Furthermore, they also concluded that frames should be referred to as 'metaphoric frames' to highlight their basis in metaphors, rationalizing this designation through Burke's idea in *Grammar of Motives* that for metaphor one could substitute perspective. Johnson-Sheehan and Rademaekers then described how using facts, data, and reasoning alone are not enough to convince people to change their opinion about climate change. Instead, environmental communicators must use metaphoric frames to counter the frames being used by non-renewable energy companies.

After discussing their thoughts about frames, Rademaekers and Johnson-Sheehan identified guidelines for how technical communicators and environmental scientists can re-frame climate change in response to discourse used by the non-renewable energy industry. These six guidelines were: use the 'progress' frame and avoid the 'trade-off' frame; use the 'scientific debate' frame and avoid the 'balancing norm' frame; use the 'land ethic' frame and avoid the 'dominion' frame; use the 'truth' frame and avoid the 'theory' frame; use the 'problem-solving' frame and avoid the 'catastrophe' frame; use the 'adaptation' frame and avoid the 'costs vs

32

benefits' frame. So, after coding the content themes of Devon Energy's responses to the CDP's Climate Change Questionnaire from 2010-2018, I then compared and contrasted my content themes with the six frames that Rademaekers and Johnson-Sheehan identified.

Third Theoretical Layer

Although Rademaekers and Johnson-Sheehan provided these six guidelines to re-frame climate change, they did not go in-depth on the rhetorical strategies that can or should be used in this re-framing. As technical communicators, how are we to re-frame the conversation about climate change if we do not identify the rhetorical strategies that are effective? Because of this gap, I looked outside the field of technical communications to the field of rhetoric for scholarship that did just that. In 2018, Cloud examined the circulation of truth claims in U.S. political culture through her argument that the rhetorical strategies of the reality-based community are ineffective. Like Johnson-Sheehan and Rademaekers, Cloud posited that facts are not enough, because people do not experience reality outside of their subjective perspectives which are formed by episteme, knowledge people have due to experience, and doxa, commonly held beliefs. Cloud went beyond simply suggesting that facts are not enough due to hegemonic frames though. She articulated that rhetoric can serve as a mediating force between episteme and their doxa through five rhetorical strategies: narrative, myth, affect, emotion, and spectacle. Therefore, my last methodological step or third layer applied Cloud's approach to identify and analyze the frames my themes were developing in, as well as the rhetorical strategies invoked in the use of those frames.

Findings

Genre

In familiarizing myself with the voluntary environmental disclosure questionnaire as a genre, I first noticed the title change from "Investor CDP (2010-2014) - Devon Energy

33

Corporation" to "Climate Change (2015-2018) - Devon Energy Corporation." Notably, this shift occurred in 2015, the year that the Paris Agreement was ratified by a majority of countries within the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.

In assessing how the genre of a voluntary environmental disclosure questionnaire was structured based on the organizational modules and their accompanying page names, I quickly discovered that some modules were absorbed into other modules as the years passed, abbreviating the amount of page names in each module. (One example of this absorption would be how Governance served as a module only in 2010 and 2018, but was absorbed as a page into the Management module during 2011-2017.) The organizational modules and their accompanying page names, as well as the year they appear, are included in Appendix A. Notably within almost all of these modules throughout the years analyzed, participants were required to report their processes for handling climate change risks and opportunities (see modules like Management or Risks and Opportunities) or their data from activities that cause climate change (see modules like GHG Emissions).

Therefore, following Cloud's approach in this brief genre analysis of the CDP's Climate Change Questionnaire has me: 1) identify that the stasis, the central issue in dispute, is whether or not climate change is occurring; 2) acknowledge that climate change was portrayed as reality within the questions by the CDP via their use of the phrase 'climate change' and framing all their questions in regard to companies' responses to climate change. Whereas that conclusion cannot necessarily be extended to the entire genre of voluntary environmental disclosure questionnaires, this finding does perhaps provide an initial step toward examining the underlying assumptions that might guide the crafting of this genre.

Themes

While coding the CDP Climate Change Questionnaire responses for Devon Energy from 2010-2018, the themes I developed are denying the impact of climate change, validating their internal and external policy oversight, confirming a secure economic impact, adhering to regulatory compliance, and promoting their technology innovation. Here are my designated definitions for each of these themes as referred to in this case study.

- Denying the impact of climate change = denying risk incurred by the shift in global climate patterns.

- Validating their internal and external policy oversight = proving their monitoring, supervision, review, and creation of policies that impact the business.

- Confirming a secure economic impact = stabilizing through change in business revenue and/or profit.

- Adhering to regulatory compliance = following the laws, regulations, guidelines, and specifications relevant to the way a business functions.

- Promoting their technology innovation = publicizing their invention via research development.

Table 2.3 below provides an example for each theme I developed in order to illustrate the discourse being used. Notably, some of the exact wording from many of these examples appeared over the course of several years. Thus, in the third column of Table 2.3, the years and questionnaire response page number are noted, as well as whether or not the exact wording stayed the same.

35

Theme	Example Number	Example	Years – Page/s
Denying the Impact of Climate Change	1	"We [Devon Energy] do not believe climate change poses significant physical risk to our assets. We understand the issue of climate change has prompted ongoing discussions among scientists and others concerning potential impacts on weather, sea level and habitat. The issue has prompted an increasing volume of scientific investigation aimed at determining the extent and potential impact global warming might have on our environment over the next century. Obviously, these issues are complex, and there is disagreement among scientists. Based on the uncertainty of the available science, we are not in a position to make an accurate assessment of physical risk pertaining to our company."	2010 – 6 2011 – 7/9 2012 - 20/21 2013 – 27/28 2014 – 28 2015 – 22 (reworded) 2016 – 21/22 (reworded) 2017 – 23 (reworded)
Validating Their Internal & External Policy Oversight	2	"Devon engages with policymakers both directly and through industry trade associations to communicate our position on global climate change."	2010 – 12 2013 – 9 (reworded) 2014 – 8 (reworded) 2015 – 9 (reworded) 2016 – 8 (reworded) 2017 – 8 (reworded) 2018 – 64 (reworded)

Confirming a Secure Economic Impact	3	"The company's portfolio of gas and oil properties provides stable, environmentally responsible production and a platform for future growth."	2010 – 1
			2011 – 1
			2012 – 1
			2013 – 1
			2014 – 1
			2015 – 1
			2016 – 1
			2017 – 1
			2018 – 1
Adhering to Regulatory Compliance	4	"Devon continues to proactively search for opportunities to mitigate the risks associated with emissions regulations through continued voluntary reduction efforts."	2010 – 4
			2011 – 4
			2012 – 5 (reworded)
			2013 – 5 (reworded)
			2014 – 4 (same as 2013)
			2015 – 5 (reworded)
			2017 – 5 (reworded)
			2018 – 20 (reworded)

Promoting their Technology Innovation	5	"Devon was the first to develop a carbon market methodology for methane reductions in the oil and gas sector, which was developed collaboratively with the Verdeo Group, Inc.."	2010 – 5 2011 – 7 (worded differently) 2012 – 18 (worded differently)

Table 2.3 Some Thematic Examples from Devon Energy's Responses to the CDP's Climate Change Questionnaire

Frames

Although Rademaekers and Johnson-Sheehan provide a useful start in describing frames as hegemonic and metaphoric, their descriptions are not as useful in the context of this case study. Cloud's definition is a bit more useful, although it also does not fit completely. She defined frames as socially produced and relatively stable mechanisms of organizing public interpretation of truth claims in political culture (62). This definition emerged through her investigation of the discourse of political conservatives. Because of the effectiveness of the truth claims in conservatives' discourse, she encouraged liberals to adopt and adapt the strategies conservatives used, including the use of frames. Although I am not classifying the environmental discourse of Devon Energy (or the non-renewable energy industry as a whole) as politically conservative necessarily, Cloud's definition for frames does move productively toward describing what the discourse of Devon Energy does. Therefore, whenever I reference frames in this chapter, I am referring to Cloud's definition.

Each of the above themes—denying the impact of climate change, validating their internal and external policy oversight, confirming a secure economic impact, adhering to regulatory compliance, and promoting their technology innovation—I developed could be

categorized as fitting within three of the six frames that were identified in Johnson-Sheehan and

Rademaekers' case study: the theory frame; balancing norm frame; the dominion frame. I retain

the same definitions of these frames that Johnson-Sheehan and Rademaekers provided. Here are

those definitions.

- Theory frame = scientists are guessing or speculating about climate change (16).

- Balancing norm frame = tells both sides of the climate change debate for the
purpose of objectivity and fairness (14).

- Dominion frame = expresses a set of values in which humans are seen as the reason
why the environment is here (15).

In Table 2.4, I provide the positioning of the themes within these frames.

Frame/s	Themes
Theory Frame Balancing Norm Frame	Impact of Climate Change Internal and External Policy Oversight
Dominion Frame	Regulatory Compliance Economic Impact Technology Innovation

Table 2.4 Position of Themes within Frames

An explanation of how the themes fit within the frames will be given within the Discussion

section.

Rhetorical Strategies

Each of the above frames--theory, balancing norm, dominion--that I identified could be categorized as using three of the following Big Five rhetorical strategies identified by Cloud: narrative; myth; emotion and affect. Due to the genre constraints of CDP's voluntary environmental disclosure questionnaire (i.e. inclusion of linguistic modality only), the use of spectacle and embodiment would have been difficult to incorporate without the inclusion of visual, aural, gestural, and spatial modalities. Furthermore, incorporation of these rhetorical strategies would most likely have been detrimental to Devon's purposes, since spectacle involves a performative and ritualistic display and embodiment enables people to experience a communicative act in a sensory manner. There are very few positive opportunities for spectacle and embodiment via any of Devon's responses to the questions within the questionnaire.

In discussing the rhetorical strategies that Devon does use, I retain the same definitions that Cloud puts forth. Here they are:

- Mythic Narrative = a story that broadly tells a collective tale about origin, purpose, and destiny as set against villains and obstacles (43).

- Affect = one's inchoate feelings before they are given the names of emotions (41).

- Emotions = mediated affects (41).

In Table 2.5 below, I identify which of these rhetorical strategies fit within the theory, balancing norm, and dominion frames.

Rhetorical Strategies	Frames
Affect and Emotions	Theory Balancing Norm Dominion
Mythic Narrative	Dominion

Table 2.5 Use of Rhetorical Strategies within the Frames

An explanation of how the rhetorical strategies fit within the frames will be given within the Analysis and Discussion section.

Analysis and Discussion

As revealed in the themes, the environmental discourse used in Devon Energy's responses to the CDP Climate Change Questionnaire unsurprisingly appears to be used to influence readers' understanding of Devon Energy in a positive manner in relation to their action and/or inaction connected with climate change, the disputed issue at hand. Devon Energy's responses communicate that climate change does not and will not impact their secure economic future due to their proactive approach toward regulatory compliance with technological innovation and internal and external policy oversight.

But, more interesting is how Devon communicated these discursive choices. They seemingly focus in on the staseis of conjecture and definition in regard to climate change, ably using the following rhetorical strategies—mythic narrative, affect and emotions—within the theory, balancing norm, and dominion frames. As Rademaekers and Johnson state when describing the savvy of non-renewable companies as seen in ExxonMobil's PR release, "Fossil

fuel companies know that they will be allowed to continue manufacturing and selling their product as long as they can redirect and reframe the problem of climate change rather than deny its existence." I would add to this statement that non-renewable energy companies like Devon know that they will continue to retain the support of investors and consumers if they reframe their discourse, particularly within the increasingly public genre of an environmental disclosure questionnaire like the CDP's Climate Change Questionnaire. Why? Because outright denial of the impact of the non-renewable energy industry on climate change is becoming increasingly unacceptable to more and more people, even investors and consumers of the non-renewable energy industry. Therefore, reframing is a more powerful rhetorical strategy.

In this section I will explore how each of the themes (denying the impact of climate change, validating their internal and external policy oversight, confirming a secure economic impact, adhering to regulatory compliance, and promoting their technology innovation) appears within the frames (theory, balancing norm, dominion) via the purposeful use of specific rhetorical strategies (mythic narrative, affect and emotions). I will strive to guide this Analysis and Discussion using the philosophical approach Cloud recommends, moving beyond the stases of conjecture and definition to also considering how the stases of quality and jurisdiction underlie Devon Energy's responses.

Theory and Balancing Norms Frame

Denying the Impact of Climate Change

Despite the CDP Climate Change Questionnaire literally containing the phrase 'climate change' within its title, Devon Energy quite effectively dismisses the reality of climate change through the theory and balancing norms frames that Johnson-Sheehan and Rademaekers identify. In Thematic Example #1 from Table 2.3, the use of these two frames is unveiled. Perhaps the most commonly used non-renewable energy company strategy is acting as if human acceleration

of climate change is still a topic of debate among scientists despite the fact that 97% of climate

scientists assert that climate change is indeed being exponentially and dangerously accelerated by

human action (Cook et al.). Rademaekers and Johnson-Sheehan refer to this type of discourse as

fitting within the theory and balancing norm frames. Since the public's interpretation of theory is

speculation, the theory frame promotes ambiguity. A balancing norm frame enables the illusion

that two sides exist equally in an issue, when in reality, the overwhelming majority are situated on

one side.

Devon uses these frames in Thematic Example #1 from Table 2.3 when stating the

following phrases: "the issue of climate change has prompted ongoing discussions among

scientists," "prompted an increasing volume of scientific investigation," "the issues are complex,"

and "the uncertainty of available science." As Rademaekers and Johnson-Sheehan emphasize, the

non-renewable energy industry likes to "imply that climate change science boils down to a

difference of opinion," which is exactly what Devon is doing in their discourse. Climate change is

merely speculation proliferated by a select group of people.

In her large-scale study of corporate social responsibility reports and other corporate

environmental reports, Jaworska describes how climate change is often framed as unpredictable

by oil companies through distancing and softening strategies. Within the theory and balancing

norm frames used in the above example, distancing and softening strategies are clearly identified.

Although an obvious strategy, Devon distances the reality of climate change through discussing

its possible impact at the global level, rather than looking in the specific countries, regions, and

states--like Oklahoma--where their company actually conducts business. Softening strategies can

be seen through the use of hedging and qualifying words like "might" and more neutral

connotative words like "complex" and "uncertainty," rather than the use of definitive words like

"will" and more negative connotative words like "obvious" and "certainty." Devon has used

distancing and softening strategies skillfully in order to invoke the theory and balancing norm frames. Climate change is not a part of and will not disrupt the status quo of Devon's business.

Within these distancing and softening strategies, Devon Energy is invoking the persuasive rhetorical strategies of affect and emotions. Through distancing climate change by discussing its possible impact at the global level, rather than the local level, Devon relies on the more predictable, mediated emotions of a reader that focus on self when it comes to social issues. Devon's detached manner of discussing climate change as a matter of scientific debate enables climate change to be dismissed as unimportant to the average person. Due to the lack of localization, it is more likely that the reader will not respond to climate change as an issue that impacts them on a daily basis, rather climate change is a topic of conversation at the global level between scientists in lab coats.

Because of their desire to mediate the reader's emotions in this way, Devon Energy also obviously avoids the use of embodiment and spectacle as mentioned in the Findings section. Embodiment and spectacle are common rhetorical strategies used by environmentalists about climate change at a global level (see DeLuca, Dobrin and Morey, Pezzullo). Embodiment and spectacle are used to more directly appeal to and mediate people's emotions. They zoom in on the effects of climate change, showing how climate change affects specific places, animals, and people. This zooming in enables people to experience climate change on a more localized and personal level. Devon completely avoids even the possibility of moving toward embodiment or spectacle through its total lack of imagery. For instance, in the example quoted above, the reader sees no description of melting glaciers in Alaska, the slowly creeping water submerging parts of Miami, the migration of animal families to find new homes, or the shaking and cracking of earthquakes caused by fracking in Oklahoma. Rather, Devon simply speaks of the possibility of climate change and its "potential impacts on weather, sea level and habitat." There is no sensory

language used by Devon, even at the level of adjectives in this sentence. The lack of sensory language pushes a neutrality that does not exist with the physical realities of climate change.

Validating Their External and Internal Policy Oversight

Revealing their presence in politics, Devon repeatedly and unabashedly acknowledges its role in attempting to influence climate change policies that will impact their business through internal and external policy oversight. Through this acknowledgement, Devon continually relies upon the theory and balancing norm frames in order to justify its involvement and influence in politics. Via the balancing norm frame, the number of those who maintain climate change as truth is similar to the number of those who maintain climate change as theory. In Thematic Example #2 in Table 2.3, "Devon engages with policymakers both directly and through industry trade associations to communicate our position on global climate change," Devon invokes the balancing norm frame by citing their "position on global climate change," implying that more than one position exists.

But just as they did within the denial of climate change theme, Devon continues to use distancing and softening strategies in order to frame the possible impact of climate change at the global level, rather than the local level. They discuss their position on "global climate change." They also rely on regulatory discourse and avoid sensory language, creating a detached and seemingly more objective tone.

In addition, Devon uses distancing when they speak about their engagement in national and international industry associations, rather than referring to their influence at the state or local level. For instance, some of the associations Devon identifies itself as being a part of in its 2010-2018 CDP Climate Change Questionnaire responses are the American Petroleum Institute, America's Natural Gas Alliance, American Exploration and Production Council, Independent Producers Association of America, and the Canadian Association of Petroleum Producers. But,

the CDP Climate Change Questionnaire does not specifically ask industries to disclose their

donations to politicians. Therefore, readers are unaware of Devon's influence at the state or local

level. For instance, in connection with the context of this case study, at the state-wide level in

2018 in Oklahoma, Devon donated to every major Republican candidate running for office,

including current Governor Kevin Stitt, Lieutenant Governor Matt Pinnell, and Attorney General

Michael J. Hunter, as well as the long-serving Corporation Commissioner Bob Anthony. All

these politicians advocate pro oil and gas stances, supporting legislation that contributes to

climate change. (An example of when an Oklahoman politician supported this type of legislation

was when Governor Stitt signed SB 1003 in April 2019. This bill allows companies like Devon

Energy to "self-audit" their environmental efforts.) Pairing this distancing move with the

rhetorical strategy of emotion, Devon perhaps rightly assumes most individuals will be less

concerned about Devon's involvement in these large associations than they might be with

Devon's involvement in politics closer to home.

Dominion Frame

Confirming Secure Economic Impact

Acknowledging their investors, the assumed target audience who would read their

responses to the CDP Climate Change Questionnaire, Devon Energy also dismisses the looming

reality of climate change through consistently emphasizing the security of their business

portfolio. In Thematic Example #3 in Table 2.3, "the company's portfolio of gas and oil

properties provides stable, environmentally responsible production and a platform for future

growth," Devon stresses their economic security through the use of the adjective "stable" in

correlation with present production and the use of the adjective "future" in correlation with

growth. Devon Energy wants to persuade their investors that gas and oil will remain a viable

source for profit and revenue for the foreseeable future despite the reality that fossil fuels are a

depleting resource. Readers need only look to the U.S. Energy Information Administration's Annual Report of Proved Reserves to see this depletion, especially when considering the amount of unburnable carbon that will have to be left untouched due to climate change. As one of the Stanford Millennium Alliance for Humanity and the Biosphere administrators, Gioietta Kuo, stated in his article "When Fossil Fuels Run Out, What Then," oil will run out a little after 2050 and natural gas will run out a little after 2060, while coal will run out by 2090. By using "environmentally responsible" as a descriptive phrase, Devon implies their wise use of resources. The land, air, and water of Earth exists for the benefit of humans, and Devon is doing all they can to be good stewards of their resources.

In stressing this economic security despite impending depletion via responsible stewardship, Devon invokes the dominion frame as described by Johnson-Sheehan and Rademaekers. The dominion frame relies upon literal readings of the Judeo-Christian scriptures in Genesis where God gives the first humans dominion over the Earth. As it states in the New Revised Standard Version of Genesis 1:28, "God blessed them [Adam and Eve], and God said to them, 'Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the air and over every living thing that moves on earth.'" Reading this scripture through a literal lens, the Earth was created first and foremost for humans to use, rather than humans simply being part of the ecology of Earth. Unfortunately, within the literal interpretive lens, humans are the God-ordained stewards of Earth and whether or not they choose to be responsible stewards with the resources on Earth is up to their discretion.

Devon Energy relies upon the values-oriented association between possession of dominion and the bestowal of benevolence. Since they are in a position of dominion, then whatever good they decide to do is seen as an act of benevolence. But, their benevolence is malevolent in reality. While Devon is emphasizing their bestowal of benevolence in confirming secure economic impact for investors, they simultaneously receive through their extraction from

the earth and the tax breaks they have received for decades in Oklahoma. It was not until 2017 and 2018 that the Oklahoma State Legislature authorized a more standardized tax rate commiserate to other states. As Blatt reported for the Oklahoma Policy Institute, "Until 2017, some older wells were taxed at just 1 percent during their first three years of production while new wells were taxed at just 2 percent for three years. In 2017, the Legislature restored the rate for all existing wells to 7 percent and then in 2018 restored the rate on new wells to 5 percent for the first 36 months."

This belief in responsible environmental stewardship via the dominion frame is rooted in the use of mythic narrative as a rhetorical strategy. As Cloud asserts, "stories, even mythic ones (like religious narratives and Star Wars), tell truths that are of a different order, truths about belonging, social order, and shared commitments" (43). Certainly, the dominion frame's established social order has humanity ruling over all the Earth and its inhabitants. This social order then alleviates the burden of the negative consequences that might result from Devon's actions and/or inactions while being "environmentally responsible" in their extraction, production, and transport of oil and gas.

Within the dominion frame, a shared commitment to the flourishing of the human race can be identified through the promise of economic security. Therefore, Devon's use of "stable...production" and "a platform for future growth" in its responses to the CDP Questionnaire from 2010-2018 appeal to that shared commitment. Whether or not this production and growth truly is environmentally responsible is irrelevant. For instance, in connection with the context of this case study, the booming shale oil play that began as a result of the surging use of horizontal drilling technology in these fields in Texas and Oklahoma could be considered when thinking about environmentally responsible practices. The horizontal drilling technology in this play has enabled Devon's stable production and future growth. Rather than using the vertical or slightly angled drilling of years past, horizontal drilling goes across an oil and gas formation,

increasing the yield of a well exponentially. This increased yield results in increased money made for investors, although not for an extended period of time.

Ignored are the environmental ramifications of hydraulic fracking that enable horizontal drilling to occur. While this project's focus is not on fact-checking, Devon's description of their production process as "environmentally responsible" is a far stretch from actuality, but describing the process in that way feeds into the stewardship frame Devon is using. Hydraulic fracking is a process that requires the injection of a highly pressurized liquid into rock formations deep below the surface of the earth in order to form cracks in which petroleum, natural gas, and brine will flow more easily. This process enables companies like Devon the opportunity to make money from previously inaccessible resources. Labeling this process as "environmentally responsible" dismisses the numerous instances of ground and surface water contamination, as well as the exponential increase in seismic activity in these areas. For instance, the SCOOP (South Central Oklahoma Oil Province) and STACK (Sooner Trend, Anadarko, Canadian, & Kingfisher) shale play have relied heavily upon hydraulic fracking over the past few years while Oklahoma has experienced record numbers of earthquakes. Even the Office of the Secretary of Energy and Environment in Oklahoma now admits that "there is broad agreement among seismologists that the disposal of water into or communication with basement rock presents a potential risk for triggering seismicity" as revealed on the earthquakes page. (This page was removed from the Office of the Secretary of Energy and Environment website in Oklahoma during 2020.) Still though, if humans are indeed the stewards of Earth, then this water contamination and seismic activity is excusable as a means to an end.

Adhering to Regulatory Compliance

Devon Energy continues their reliance upon the rhetorical strategy of mythic narrative within the dominion frame by repeatedly asserting their adherence to environmental laws and

regulations. Devon is following the laws and regulations that help maintain the social order dictated by the dominion frame. Thematic Example #4 in Table 2.3, "Devon continues to proactively search for opportunities to mitigate the risks associated with emissions regulations through continued voluntary reduction efforts," highlights their approach to dealing with regulations. Devon presents itself as proactively and voluntarily trying to mitigate risks. But why? Are they mitigating the risk in order to be a more responsible environmental steward as rulers over the Earth? Emissions that are a part of the extraction and production of non-renewable energy sources are a substantial contributor to the greenhouse gases exponentially accelerating global warming, and in turn, climate change. Or is Devon mitigating risk so that investors' pocketbooks will not suffer? Even with the latter question, the dominion frame is still in play since economic security contributes to the maintenance of social order.

Regardless, Devon is not voluntarily reducing emissions, they are "mitigat[ing] the risks associated with emissions regulations." As Mason and Mason point out in their section on the macrostructure of corporate environmental reports, one of the two key moves in delivering the reporting and promotional functions of the genre is introducing sustainability initiatives. Spearheading and enforcing sustainability initiatives within one's business model illustrates responsible environmental stewardship that will increase economic security, in this case, through anticipating how to comply with regulations. Directly after the appearance of Thematic Example #4 from Table 2.1 in their responses to the CDP Climate Change Questionnaire, Devon mentions the uncertainty that exists in the future around whether United States facilities will be covered by the Clean Air Act GHG rules. Devon is first and foremost proactively engaged in legislative activity, while secondarily looking for improvement opportunities and continuing emissions reduction initiatives. Outside of mentioning alterations to their transportation fleet--for example, eight vehicles that will run on cleaner, more efficient natural gas vehicles in the Oklahoma City area--and pneumatic retrofits to natural gas vents, a vast majority of the sustainability initiatives

described were connected to Devon's operations in Canada, where much stricter environmental regulations exist (see the Environment and Climate Change Canada government website). Yet because the dominion frame has been invoked through Devon's illustration of responsible environmental stewardship and increased economic security via regulatory compliance, readers are invited to consider Devon's actions positively.

Promoting Technology Innovation

Devon continues its reliance upon responsible stewardship via the dominion frame when technological innovations are discussed. How? Devon perpetuates a common myth that has been circulated by the non-renewable energy industry for years: if humans are the rulers of the social order (as the dominion frame invokes), then they will be intelligent enough to come up with the technology to address the consequences of dealing with climate change if indeed it becomes an issue as some scientists claim it is. As Ferns asserted in his *Newsweek* article in 2018, the non-renewable energy industry falsely implies that "climate change can be solved with the same thinking that created it" through emphasizing their technological savvy.

In Thematic Example #5 in Table 2.3, "Devon was the first to develop a carbon market methodology for methane reductions in the oil and gas sector, which was developed collaboratively with the Verdeo Group, Inc.," an emphasis on diligently working with others for the good of others is highlighted in Devon's response in 2010. Methane, one of the most potent greenhouse gases, is emitted during the production and transport of oil, gas, and coal. Therefore, Devon's role in developing this methodology seems responsible, since their revenue and profit is generated through the production and transport of oil and gas. Devon seems to be addressing at least part of their role in climate change as perceived by particular entities.

Problematically though, Devon's emphasis on working with others for the good of others disappears in 2011 and 2012 where they do not acknowledge a collaboration with anyone else in

developing this technology. They simply state "Devon was the first to develop a carbon market methodology for methane reductions in the oil and gas sector." They leave out the phrase "which was developed collaboratively with the Verdeo Group, Inc.," dismissing the partnership they had with Verdeo Group, Inc., at that time, the leading emissions reduction technology company in the United States. Why does this omission matter? From a fact-checking perspective, it dishonestly erases a collaboration with a company that focused on attempting to mitigate the impact of climate change.

Conclusion

Recap

Through this case study of Devon Energy's responses to the CDP Climate Change Questionnaire from 2010-2018, I have shown their environmental discourse has been deliberately filtered through the theory, balancing norm, and dominion frames with the use of the rhetorical strategies of emotions, affect, and mythic narrative in order to influence readers' understanding of Devon Energy in a positive manner in relation to their action and/or inaction connected with climate change. Devon communicates that climate change does not and will not impact the company's secure economic future due to their proactive approach toward regulatory compliance with technological innovation and internal and external policy oversight.

Contextualization of Findings for Oklahoma

But why does this discourse matter within the context of Oklahoma specifically? In discussing the mediation that occurs within and across public spheres, Cloud (2018) states that "dominant groups manage for their partial version of reality to become common sense and to thus cultivate cooperation with the status quo." As described in the opening section of this case study, the non-renewable energy industry's supreme reign in Oklahoma would certainly classify them as

economically dominant both in the past and present. So, what version of reality are they proliferating with their environmental discourse? Primarily, that they are not accelerating climate change.

In using the rhetorical strategies of affect, emotion, and mythic narrative through the theory, balancing norms, and dominion frames, Devon effectively taps into the doxa of Oklahoma. While 59% of Oklahomans believed in global warming in 2019, only 46% believe that climate change is caused by humans (Yale Program on Climate Change Communication). So, it is not a far stretch for Devon to push a disbelief in climate change, especially when they use the mythic narrative within the dominion frame.

Why might the mythic narrative rhetorical strategy with the dominion frame be so effective in Oklahoma? The last time the Pew Research Center conducted their Religious Landscape Study in 2014, 79% of Oklahomans identified as Christians. 47% of these Oklahomans identifying as Christians were categorized into the Evangelical Protestant category, a category dominated by Southern Baptist groups (Pew Research Center, Religious Landscape Study, 2014). And as a denomination per their last published resolution on climate change in 2007, Southern Baptists believe that humans should exercise dominion over the earth. Early in the resolution, the following statement is made: "Christians are called by God to exercise caring stewardship and dominion over the earth and environment." Other phrases like "reaffirm our God-given responsibility to care for the Earth" and "stewardship of the Earth's resources" also appear in the resolution (Southern Baptist Convention, "On Global Warming"). Therefore, Devon's appeal to a particular interpretation of Genesis 1 and 2 is persuasively aligned with the denominational stance of a substantial number of Oklahomans.

As shown in this case study, Devon relies upon an assumption that stakeholders hold particular beliefs and values. Therefore, Devon grounds its environmental discourse in an image

of benevolence. But as I have shown, this image reflects responsible environmental stewardship, while simultaneously eliding the detrimental impacts of some of their business decisions regarding the extraction, production, and transport of non-renewable energy sources. Devon is portraying themselves as benevolent indeed, but they do so from a place of privilege wherein they take more than they give. Their benevolence is malevolent in reality.

In the next case study, an actor in the non-renewable energy industry public will also rely upon the assumption that individuals and entities hold particular beliefs and values that resonate deeply with Oklahomans. While acting as the Head Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency, former Oklahoma Attorney General Scott Pruitt will also ground his environmental discourse in benevolence, albeit less explicitly religiously-oriented.

CHAPTER III

RELYING ON THE VERNACULAR: A GOVERNMENT-BASED CASE STUDY

> 1) *What rhetorical strategies have been used by this actor (former Environmental Protection Agency Head Administrator Scott Pruitt) to create, develop, and maintain the environmental discourse of this public (the non-renewable energy industry)?*
> 2) *How have these rhetorical strategies been used to frame the environmental discourse of this actor?*

Context of this Case Study

Just prior to the United States presidential administration change on January 19, 2017, the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) website was archived by both insiders within the federal organization and outsiders in environmental, environmental justice (EJ), and climate justice (CJ) organizations. Individuals were concerned that data that had been readily available to the public for decades would be eliminated, or at the very least, made more inaccessible. Since 2011, Trump had been quite vocal about his disbelief in global warming (see the Trump Twitter Archive). His tweets ranged from equating cold weather as evidence of no global warming to making fun of those who believed in climate change to proliferating fake news or science about climate change (see fig. 3.1).
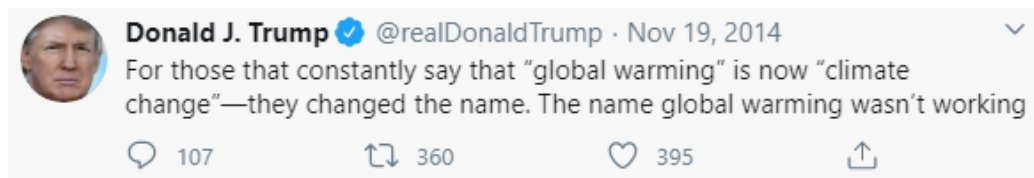
Fig. 3.1 Donald J. Trump Global Warming Tweet - 11/19/14

Source: Trump Twitter Archive https://www.thetrumparchive.com/

Therefore, insiders and outsiders' fear of data being eliminated or made more inaccessible was not unfounded.

After only a week in office, on January 25, 2017, President Trump instructed the EPA to remove the Climate Change page from the website. As reported by Volcovici online for Reuters in 2017, this page contained links to scientific global warming research, as well as detailed data on emissions. Information like the inventory on greenhouse gas emissions by individual industrial facilities and the Climate Change Indicators multi-agency report, which provides an overview of trends related to the causes and effects of climate change, were removed. While this information is still available on other pages of the EPA website, only the inventory provides up-to-date data currently, since it is required by the United Nations. The Climate Change Indicators report on the EPA's website is still the 2016 report. (With the transition to the Biden administration in January 2021, the Climate Change page was restored on the EPA website.)

But, elimination and inaccessibility of data was not the only fear held by EPA insiders and environmental, EJ, and CJ organizations with the incoming new president. A much larger fear was President-elect Trump's nomination to head the EPA. On December 7, 2017, Trump announced he would be nominating Scott Pruitt as the EPA Head Administrator. For years, Pruitt had gained notoriety within environmental, EJ, and CJ organizations, as well as the EPA itself, for actively leading the legal charge against the EPA. He was a vocal climate change denier. As he wrote online in the National Review in May 2016,

Healthy debate is the lifeblood of American democracy, and global warming has

inspired one of the major policy debates of our time. That debate is far from

settled. Scientists continue to disagree about the degree and extent of global

warming and its connection to the actions of mankind. That debate should be

encouraged — in classrooms, public forums, and the halls of Congress. It should

not be silenced with threats of prosecution. Dissent is not a crime (par. 3).

This perspective had been a part of Pruitt's discourse for years--both as a Republican politician in

Oklahoma, then as the Attorney General.

When he became Attorney General of Oklahoma in 2010, Pruitt dissolved the EPA unit

within the Attorney General's office. Over the next six years, Pruitt sued the EPA numerous

times (see Killman par. 1, Gaby par. 1). While all of these lawsuits are important, particularly

notable lawsuits include ones to block the Clean Power Plan and the Waters of the United States

Rule signed into action during President Obama's administration. Internationally and nationally,

both the Clean Power Plan and the Waters of the United States Rule had been lauded as landmark

steps toward the curbing of greenhouse gases and reducing pollution. But a coalition of states led

by Pruitt filed a case against the EPA to block these regulations.

This coalition was often a part of the Rule of Law Defense Fund (RLDF), a public policy

organization backed in a not-so-secret manner by many non-renewable energy companies.

Supposedly, the purpose of RLDF was to try to fight back against the federal overreach in various

legal matters. As the Rule of Law Defense Fund website states in their "About" section:

RLDF is the public policy organization for issues relevant to the nation's

conservative attorney generals. RLDF promotes the rule of law, federalism, and

freedom in a civil society. RLDF was created in 2014 to provide a forum for

conservative attorneys general and their staff to study, discuss, and engage on

important legal policy issues affecting the states. By convening stakeholders

around their interests in federal and state legislation, rule-making, and other legal

57

policy developments, RLDF fosters communication with federal regulators and

policymakers regarding state interests (par. 1).

Pruitt was a major spokesman of this public policy organization prior to being nominated as EPA

Head Administrator. Pruitt had been promoted by a former Virginia attorney general, Andrew P.

Miller, who had retired to take on clients like TransCanada, the backer of the Keystone pipeline.

As outlined by Lipton in the *New York Times* at the end of 2014, the RLDF often publicly

partnered with non-renewable energy industry companies to fight back against federal

environmental regulations.

Another notable lawsuit Pruitt put forth as Attorney General of Oklahoma attempted to

increase methane levels that the oil and gas industries would be allowed to emit at their facilities.

These newer regulations included in the Obama administration's Clean Air Act were requiring

the oil and gas industries to not only lessen the methane levels, but also report the methane that

was being released. If methane levels exceeded the maximum, penalties were incurred (EPA

Enforcement: Clean Air Act). The petition filed by Pruitt on the behalf of Oklahoma and thirteen

other states in the U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit included the

following statement:

> Petitioners will show that the final rule is in excess of the agency's statutory
>
> authority and otherwise is arbitrary, capricious, an abuse of discretion and not in
>
> accordance with law. Accordingly, Petitioners ask the Court to hold unlawful and
>
> set aside the rule, and to order other such relief as may be appropriate. See 42
>
> U.S.C. § 7607(d).

Terms like *excess* and *abuse* showed up often in the documents of the lawsuits Pruitt filed. In

these lawsuits, he repeatedly spoke of an overuse of environmental regulations by the federal

government.

Even more troublesome was Pruitt's cozy relationship with the non-renewable energy

industries in the process of filing these lawsuits. Not only did the lawsuits filed by Pruitt benefit

these industries, but he even used memos that had been written word-for-word by industry

representatives from Oklahoma-based Devon Energy (Dennis and Mufson, par. 3). Figure 3.2

below shows the email a non-renewable energy industry representative wrote on the left and the

memo Pruitt wrote on the right.

Fig. 3.2 Sample of How Pruitt Used Devon Energy's Memo

Source: Eric Schaeffer, *New York Times,* December 7, 2014,

https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2014/12/07/us/politics/oklahoma-attorney-general-letter-

written-almost-entirely-by-energy-company.html

Quite disconcerting... considering that he was serving as the elected Attorney General of

Oklahoma. But when confronted with his word-for-word use of industry discourse in 2014, Pruitt

showed no remorse. As the New York Times reported on December 7, 2014, "His interaction

with the industry, Mr. Pruitt said during an interview at his Oklahoma City office, has been

motivated by a desire to gather information from experts, while defending his state's longstanding

tradition of self-determination."

Committee individuals like Senator Whitehouse of Rhode Island made clear their disgust with Pruitt being put forth as a candidate for head of the EPA (see fig. 3.3)
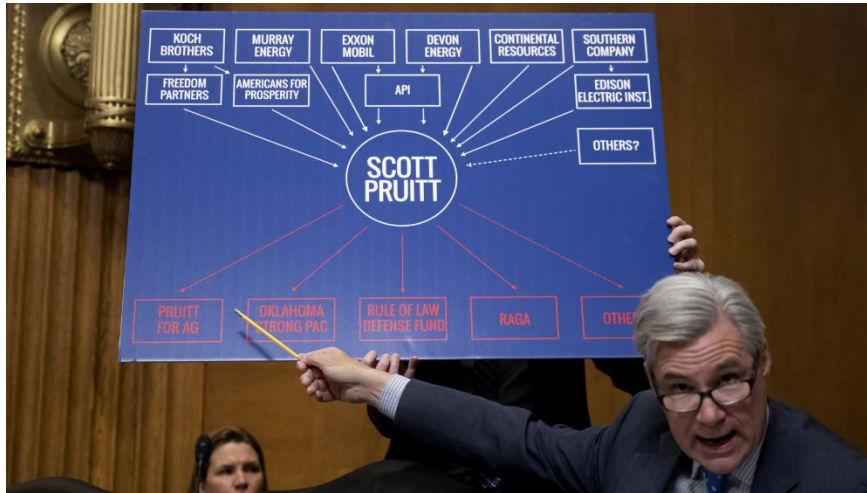
Fig. 3.3 Senator Whitehouse Calling Out Pruitt's Connections with the Fossil Fuel Industry

Source: AP Photo by Scott Applewhite

https://www.mintpressnews.com/epa-head-scott-pruitt-sued-over-ties-to-energy-industry/227768/

Democrats tried to stall Pruitt's confirmation as EPA head so that the entirety of Pruitt's correspondence could be made public, but the Republicans had the majority. Pruitt was confirmed. Just days after the nomination hearing, over 6000 pages of emails between Pruitt and non-renewable energy industry employees and political groups were made public. Their contents were alarming. As Davenport and Lipton reported in the *New York Times* in 2017, "the companies provided him [Pruitt] with draft letters to send to federal regulators in an attempt to block regulations on greenhouse gas emissions from oil and gas wells, ozone air pollution and chemicals used in hydraulic fracturing, or fracking, the technique of injecting chemicals underground to extract oil and gas."

Based on these contents, environmental, EJ, and CJ organizations had plenty of evidence to back up their fears about Scott Pruitt facilitating major damage within and through the EPA. As the EPA Head Administrator, would Pruitt continue with his attempts to loosen or get rid of environmental regulations that slowed down the human acceleration of climate change? And,

would he back up these attempts with a direct denial of climate change or would he take a more indirect approach?

Focus of this Case Study

My Research Questions

As stated in Chapter 1, after identifying the actors within the publics and counterpublics involved in environmental discourse in Oklahoma, I decided to focus primarily on the public of the non-renewable energy industry. I defined a *public* as a more privileged space where hegemonic discourse is proliferated by entities in power. Whereas in Chapter 2 it was clear that the actor, Devon Energy, was part of the public of the non-renewable energy industry, such clarity does not exist in this case study. The designation of the public within this case study is complicated. Scott Pruitt was the EPA's Head Administrator—which might simplistically designate him as part of a governmental environmental organization—but as shown in the above Context of this Case Study section, he also had served as the Attorney General in Oklahoma, repeatedly forwarding the interests of the non-renewable energy industry. As I will show in this case study, Pruitt continued to forward the interests of the non-renewable energy industry—many of whom are headquartered in Oklahoma—while serving as the EPA Head Administrator. Therefore, I categorize Pruitt's discourse as emanating from the non-renewable energy industry public.

In this case study, I analyze what rhetorical strategies have been used to create, develop, and maintain the environmental discourse of Scott Pruitt as EPA Head Administrator, as well as how these rhetorical strategies have been used to frame his environmental discourse.

Methodological Approach

Process

My method for this case study relies upon the use of grounded theory informed by Charmaz. In order to obtain a large sample size, I read all of Pruitt's tweets for his @EPAScottPruitt official account from February 17, 2017 to February 17, 2018, the first year he

61

was in office. Due to the impermanent nature of Twitter, as I read his tweets and retweets, I took

a screenshot of each. (This step became vital when Pruitt resigned and his account became

defunct on July 5, 2018.) Then, I conducted my initial round of coding through the way I saved

each tweet into a folder on my computer. Each tweet was saved as (number of the tweet) (year)

(month) (day) (action/function I saw the tweet doing/performing).

(If I were to conduct my initial round of coding again, I would do it differently. I would

save all the tweets in the same way, except I would take off the action/function part. I would print

each tweet. Then, I would make annotations about the action/function, because saving the tweets

with my initial designation of their action/function more quickly solidified in my mind what they

were doing.)

After this initial round of coding the 416 tweets of Pruitt's first year in office, I conducted

a more focused round of coding as suggested by Charmaz. I went back through all the saved

tweets and wrote down patterns and thoughts connected to the action/function I saw each tweet

doing/performing. See an example of my amateur note-taking below in Figure 3.4.
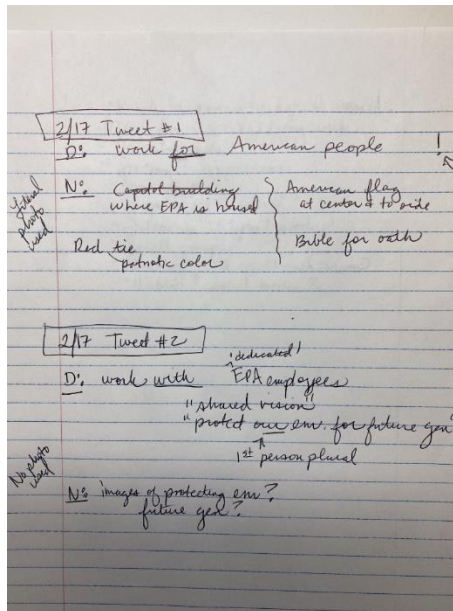
Fig. 3.4 Example of Note-taking from Focused Round of Coding: Tweet #1 & #2 from February

17, 2017

When conducting this focused round of coding, I would take notes in the following order.

1. Write down the date.

2. Write down the tweet or retweet number for that date.

3. Comment on the discursive rhetoric; the 'D' in my notes is shorthand for 'discursive.'

4. Comment on the nondiscursive rhetoric; the 'N' is shorthand for 'nondiscursive.' (As shown in Figure 3.4 in the Tweet #2 notes, I did also comment on the nondiscursive that was seemingly present in 'discursive-only' tweets and retweets.)

Also during this focused round of coding, I often edited the action/function part of the way I had saved each tweet if I felt like I did not identify the tweet's action/function accurately the first time. For instance, see Figure 3.5 below.

Fig. 3.5 One of @EPAScottPruitt's Tweets on February 17, 2017

Originally, I saved this tweet just in the 'working with people' category, because that is what I saw its action/function as. When conducting this focused coding round though, I determined that designation was too simplistic, because its action/function was 'working with people,' but it also had a function in relation to 'stewarding the environment.' Therefore, I felt like its new designation should be 'working with people' and 'stewarding the environment.'

Some Additional Guiding Theory

While using grounded theory as my method, I also theoretically rely upon two scholars whose work centers on the public sphere (Warner, Hauser), two scholars whose collaborative work revolves around the ways the digital world has reshaped our discourse (Warnick and Heinemann), and one scholar whose work interrogates the impact of social media (Van Dijck) to

discuss my findings with Pruitt's tweets and retweets. Warner argues that a public creates and is created by a reflexive circulation of texts. He posits that the unity of a public depends on the ideology set forth in its discourse. Pruitt's discourse through his tweets and retweets provides glimpses into how the context of domination (in this case, his discursive identity as the EPA Head Administrator while representing the interests of the non-renewable energy industry) enables elements of distortion about climate change to grow exponentially (Warner 63).

While Hauser's work on publics and the public sphere is older than Warner's work, importantly, Hauser talks about the role of the rhetor when it comes to narrative, cultural memory, and the appropriation of historicity: "at the level of praxis, society's rhetors are custodians of history's story" (112). Ideology is illuminated through narrative, cultural memory, and historicity. We, as rhetoricians, have a responsibility to examine the ways in which narrative, cultural memory, and historicity are recomposed through discourse like @EPAScottPruitt's tweets and retweets. I argue that Pruitt's discourse could be classified as vernacular discourse grounded in a cultural script of whiteness. Drawing from Hauser's understanding of vernacular discourse in the 1999 edition of *Vernacular Voices*, I define vernacular discourse as a contextualized language of common meanings that calls upon collectively held beliefs and values. I do not rely on one definition of whiteness, but instead weave in references to two descriptions of whiteness by Kennedy et al. and Powell from the anthology of *Rhetorics of Whiteness.*

Pruitt's vernacular discourse is particularly potent when proliferated online. In describing their approach to critiquing new media discourse, Warnick and Heinemann outline three considerations of how online media has altered communication: how rhetorical persuasion is developed and used, how rhetorical construction of identity is built, and the rhetoric of the technology being used (40-50). These considerations provide some helpful ways to discuss @EPAScottPruitt's discourse. Van Dijck's seminal model is also helpful in its foundational idea that social media platforms like Twitter are built on overlapping spheres of influence—cultural constructs (technology, users and usage, content) and socioeconomic structures (ownership,

governance, and business models). Not only should @EPAScottPruitt's discourse be considered in terms of its online nature, but also specifically as 'connective media' shaped by the platform it appears on (Van Dijck 18-23).

Findings

I counted each tweet of @EPAScottPruitt by token count (1 tweet or retweet = 1) based on its action/function. Then, I created Table 3.1 showing the token count of tweets and retweets based on action/function. I did not include an action/function row of tweets or retweets with value totals under 10.

Action/Function	Original Tweets – Number of Occurrences	Retweets – Number of Occurrences	Total
Working For/With People	78	32	110
Repealing or Revising Existing Laws or Introducing New Laws	38	11	46
Balancing Governmental Power	34	4	39
Supporting the President	23	9	32
The Triad- Stewarding the Environment + Balancing Governmental Power + Growing Economically	21	6	27

Stewarding the Environment + Growing Economically	19	8	26
Growing Economically	11	7	19
Stewarding the Environment + Balancing Governmental Power	20	1	19
Responsible Stewarding the Environment	13	5	18

Table 3.1 Token Count of Tweets and Retweets based on Action/Function

Notably, tweets and retweets with the action/function of working for/with people far outnumbered any other category. Examples of tweets and retweets designated into this action/function include Pruitt speaking to or about a vague 'you' audience, the American people, stakeholders in projects or dealing with regulations, and his EPA colleagues (like in fig. 3.6 below). These tweets and retweets use either the preposition 'for' or 'with,' either literally or figuratively.

Fig. 3.6 Working for/with People: Tweet Example from February 17, 2017

While the second largest category, the category of repealing/revising existing laws or introducing new laws contained less than half the tweets and retweets that the working for/with people did. Examples of tweets and retweets designated into this action/function initially include those that mention rollbacks, loosening of regulations, and balance in regulations, but gradually

included more tweets that centered on Pruitt's #EPABack2Basics campaign (see fig. 3.7), his

agenda to loosen regulations, give more power to states, and encourage economic growth

predominately through the 'energy' sector.

Fig. 3.7 Repealing/Revising Existing Laws or Introducing New Laws: Example Tweet from April

13, 2017

Balancing governmental power was the third largest category. Examples of tweets and

retweets designated into this action/function include those that talk about working together or in

collaboration with state partners, politicians, and governments (see fig 3.8 below). The term

'cooperative federalism' increasingly began to show up the longer Pruitt had been in office.

Fig. 3.8 Balancing Governmental Power: Example Retweet from February 23, 2017

While the supporting the president category contained more tweets and retweets than those categories that contained combinations of stewarding the environment, growing economically, and/or balancing governmental powers, it had little to do with environmental issues. Typically, these tweets and retweets focused on how whatever the POTUS was doing or had done was good (see fig. 3.9).

Fig. 3.9 Supporting the President: Example Tweet from February 28, 2017

Interestingly, adding up all categories that contain some combination of responsible stewarding of the environment, balancing governmental power, and growing economically actually far outnumbers the other categories by token count.

Analysis and Discussion

While much could be said about the above categories mentioned in the Results section, I will only focus on three categories in this section: the working for/with people; balancing

governmental power; and repealing/revising existing laws or introducing new laws. I selected to examine these categories, because of the savvy ways in which Scott Pruitt used rhetorical strategies through and with them in order to forward his particular narrative about the United States. My analysis and discussion will focus on:

1. how Pruitt conveyed articulate sincerity in working for and with people through that category;

2. how Pruitt emphasized environmental stewardship at a local and state level, rather than the federal level through the balancing governmental powers category;

3. how Pruitt framed industry, particularly the non-renewable energy industry, as a means to catalyze economic growth within the repealing/revising existing laws or introducing new laws category.

Pruitt's overarching rhetorical strategy through and within these categories was using vernacular discourse. As stated earlier, I draw from Hauser's work in defining vernacular discourse as a contextualized language of common meanings that calls upon collectively held beliefs and values.

While not as explicitly religiously-oriented as the beliefs and values Devon Energy appeals to in its responses to the Carbon Disclosure Project's Climate Change Voluntary Environmental Disclosure Questionnaire, Pruitt's discourse reveals that he makes similar assumptions about people's beliefs and values about benevolence. Pruitt calls upon benevolence through how he conveyed articulated sincerity in working for and with people, how he emphasized environmental stewardship at the state and local level, and how he framed the non-renewable energy industry as a means to catalyze economic growth.

I argue that Pruitt's use of vernacular discourse enabled a cohesive narrative about the United States to be woven that primes his audience to more readily accept his environmental agenda due to its grounding in the cultural script of whiteness here in the United States. As Powell reflects in "Postracial" in the anthology *Rhetorics of Whiteness* edited by Kennedy et al.,

"whiteness is the normative principle that defines the American experience historically, socially, politically" (25). This cultural script of whiteness relies upon an assumption of particular beliefs and values—like benevolence—that are communicated through a particular discourse. For as Warner asserts, "a public can only produce a sense of belonging and activity if it is self-organized through discourse" (70).

Hauser's elaboration about this complex process of constructing unity through discourse is worth ruminating on when analyzing @EPAScottPruitt's discourse for its grounding in whiteness: "the dominant power's rhetorical practices, which are typically geared toward articulating principles of unity that mask disparate visions of the desirable…always complicate deciphering attempts to define historicity" (118). Although Hauser was not specifically speaking to the concept of whiteness when talking about the "dominant power," he does immediately refer after this quote to the "patterns of dependency, privilege, disequilibriums of wealth or power, or other such asymmetrical conditions" that impact who the dominant power is and is not (118). Certainly, privilege and power are an inherent part of whiteness.

In the three categories that I will analyze and discuss in this section, the most obvious way Pruitt follows the cultural script of whiteness is through an elision of black, indigenous, and people of color (BIPOC) in his tweets. Regardless of whether Pruitt is tweeting with words only or words paired with images, Pruitt directly and indirectly excludes BIPOC from his narrative about the United States. As the BIPOC Project founders emphasize on their website when describing their principles, unlearning the dominant narratives is key in dismantling the cultural script of whiteness.

An Articulated Concern in Working For/With People

How does someone gain the trust of people? Possessing, or at the very least, portraying, an attitude of sincerity is a start. Sincerity is often tied up in the ways people express concern for others. In public office, a place of power and privilege, expressing concern for others becomes a

bit more tricky, but it may begin with showing a desire to relate with others. Relating with others

as a public official is typically connected to working collaboratively with them. If one is

concerned with depicting an image of benevolence though, the discourse surrounding

collaboration often builds upon the notion that the public official holds the power.

Therefore, the very first tweet Pruitt sent out from his @EPAScottPruitt account on

February 17, 2017 (see fig. 3.10) articulated a working *for* mentality toward the American people

in order to start developing his credibility with them.

Fig. 3.10 @EPAScottPruitt's First Tweet

For Pruitt, developing credibility was the first step in constructing his discursive identity as the

EPA Head Administrator. This move by Pruitt to introduce his credibility harkens back toward

the beginnings of the Western rhetorical tradition; many of the ancient rhetoricians—Aristotle,

Plato, etc.—spoke of the need to establish a rhetorically persuasive ethos that resonates with

people. Whereas these more traditional notions of ethos rest upon one's reputation and ability to speak persuasively in-person, Pruitt's tweet demonstrates an acknowledgement of the change enabled by more modern notions of ethos that guide online communication: succinct phrases that encapsulate particular beliefs and values and the use of recognizable symbols. This re-formation by mediated sociality on Twitter enables ethos-building in a speedier manner (Van Dijck 29). Or as Warnick and Heinemann would say, the content of the discourse has not altered, but the form has, enabling an accelerated amplification effect (40-41).

The non-discursive affordances provided by Twitter enable the American flag to be displayed as an obvious patriotic symbol and the Bible as a nod to traditional Christian religiosity in Figure 3.10. But, the initial construction of Pruitt's discursive identity and the public's identity could have been created solely by the discursive discourse present in this tweet: "working for the American people." The use of the preposition 'for' implies that Pruitt is acting on behalf of the American people. Layering in the American flag and Bible—along with the presence of the colors red, white, and blue in his clothing and those around him—provides even more visual weight to Pruitt's ethos, particularly when considering the simultaneous use of the American flag and the Bible as common within the white nationalistic narrative in the United States. Then, there is the fact that Pruitt chose to use a photo wherein no BIPOC are shown.

Within just four days of taking office, Pruitt shifts his discourse from working *for* the American people to working *with* the American people (see fig. 3.11).

Fig. 3.11 @EPAScott Pruitt Tweet on February 21, 2017

This switch in conjunctions implies a clear change in how Pruitt perceives his role as EPA Head Administrator, as well as how the American people should perceive his role. He is no longer working in a subordinate role, but rather in an equitable role with the American people. By enacting this switch, the discourse in this tweet fulfilled one of Warner's rules of a public: the address of Pruitt's speech was both personal and impersonal (76).

The use of first person collective and second person collective in the shown in Figure 3.11 crafts a conversational tone. It indicates that the speaker belongs to and is helping to form what he views as the idealized public sphere, a unified American people. This rhetorical move relies upon what Burke deems consubstantiation. Consubstantiation is rooted in identification through association—as Warnick and Heineman aptly put it, "the rhetor attempts to associate some substantive part of himself or herself with the same part in the members of their audience" (98). In this case, the tweet demonstrates Pruitt's situating himself as a part of a public, a unified American people. All American people face issues that need to be addressed. This step of talking about unity is necessary if he is going to craft a cohesive narrative about the environment that might mediate differences in values and beliefs.

As the weeks passed, Pruitt increased his tweets and retweets about health and safety. What better way to convince people that he is concerned about them than through discourse about their physical well-being? This rhetorical move invokes one of Warner's rules about the establishment of a public--continuous textual production (90). As pointed out by Van Dijck, the technological construct of Twitter, its proliferative capacity, and the widespread acceptance of a 140 character limit followed by a hashtag as the global format of online public commentary makes this repetition about our physical well-being particularly impactful (76). For example, during the first year of his tenure, Pruitt consistently advocated for the clean-up of superfund sites and brownfield revitalization as seen in Figures 3.12 and 3.13. As defined by the EPA, superfund sites are contaminated sites (including manufacturing facilities, processing plants, landfills, and

mining sites) that exist due to hazardous waste being dumped, left out in the open, or otherwise improperly managed; brownfields are properties where their expansion, redevelopment, or reuse may be complicated by the presence or potential presence of a hazardous substance, pollutant, or contaminant.

Fig. 3.12 @EPAScottPruitt Tweet on March 20, 2017 about Superfund Sites

Fig. 3.13 @EPAScottPruitt Tweet on May 31, 2017 about Brownfields

Pruitt's first tweet primarily frames the content through an articulated concern for people's well-being, whereas the second tweet frames the content through specialized terminology. What better way to convince people that he was concerned about our safety and health than through addressing the toxic contamination inherent in superfund sites and brownfields? If they are to be received favorably, acts of benevolence by those in power might do what Pruitt's discourse is

showing here. His discourse reminds the reader of how powerful the organization he is in charge of is through a detailed story that illuminates the impact of these actions—the clean-up of the superfund site in Chicago--and through the scope of the organization's actions—172 communities.

Savvily, Pruitt's discourse does not deal with the source/s of the toxic contamination that created these superfund sites and brownfields in the first place. The problem of toxic contamination—its origins, appropriate responses to the contaminators, the contamination, and those impacted by the contamination—differs among individuals in the United States. According to Hauser, claims to historicity are contested (116). But cultural memory of events like the burning of Cuyahoga River Fire in 1969 and Love Canal in the 1970s has solidified the notion that toxic contamination is indeed harmful. Therefore, Pruitt's advocacy for clean-up was a safe discourse that provided no indication of his personal stance about the origins of the toxic contamination, the handling of the contaminators, and the groups of people--in general, low socioeconomic status and BIPOC--who are impacted by toxic contamination (see Mohai et al., Pellow).

Warner's caution about dominating discourse distorting reality is increasingly revealed. Whereas Pruitt may not distort reality with his tweets about physical well-being and the clean-up of superfund and brownfield sites, he certainly is eliding important facts. One would only be aware of this elision if they knew about Pruitt's historically close connections with the non-renewable energy industry as described in the Context section of this chapter. This elision would be even more obvious when considering Pruitt's dismantling of federal environmental and environmental justice protections that keep us healthier, safer, and cleaner while he served as Attorney General of Oklahoma. Otherwise, the building blocks of safety, health, and cleanliness for the narrative he is relying upon are amplified on Pruitt's Twitter, delivering a message of

75

working with the people that avoids revealing the non-renewable energy industry's influence on

Pruitt's message and environmental agenda.

Emphasis on Environmental Stewardship at the Local and State Levels

After establishing his 'working with' ethos in the first four days as the EPA Head

Administrator, Pruitt only waited two days to inform the public that he valued states' rights over

federal rights as seen in Figure 3.14 where he met with the governors and lieutenant governors of

several states in order to "begin a new partnership with the states."

Fig. 3.14 @EPAScott Pruitt First Tweet on February 27, 2017

If the unity of a public is ideological as Warner posits, then Pruitt was indirectly attempting to

establish the groundwork for his stance about how the environment should be managed (117).

And he is doing so through a vernacular discourse that calls upon collectively held beliefs

regarding states' power.

Whereas the non-discursive rhetoric seen in Figure 3.14—board rooms, white people in suits, focus on Pruitt as a central figure, both literally and figuratively—seems to imply a continuation of reliance upon a federal bureaucratic structure, Pruitt disrupted that assumption soon thereafter. The very next day, he tweeted the term "cooperative federalism," beginning a pattern of using "restore/restoration" in conjunction with it. The intended audience had been primed, so Pruitt now focused his attention on what Van Dijck describes as "practices that simultaneously comprise a passive reflection and active manipulation of social motion" (87). Pruitt's tweet appeals once again to historicity with his vernacular discourse—in this case, the historicity surrounding the formation of the United States as a unification of individual states that work together only when circumstances require it.

Beginning with his discursive rhetoric as seen in Figure 3.15, Pruitt began his attempts to redirect the public away from an acceptance of a powerful federal government that enacts more regulations toward a less powerful federal government that would allow states' governments to rise up and make regulatory decisions. Since Pruitt is a benevolent authority figure, this discursive movement is acceptable.

Fig. 3.15 @EPAScottPruitt's Second Tweet on February 27, 2017

Although cooperative federalism is defined by local, state, and national governments working

collaboratively to handle issues, it is clear that a shift of federal control to state and local control

in regard to environmental regulations is intended due to his sole interaction with state officials

only as seen in Figure 3.15. The non-discursive rhetoric in this tweet communicates a more

intimate setting: a smaller room, fewer people around a smaller table, and a focus on someone

representing a state's interest talking. Both his discursive and non-discursive rhetoric are moving

what Warnick and Heineman refer to as the "mental patterning" of the public toward cooperative

federalism (44). Cooperative federalism as a concept is persuasive, because it feeds into Pruitt's

cohesive narrative—from its formation, the United States has governed itself through a balance of

power. The federal government has taken too much of this power; therefore, the state

governments, led by white people as seen in Figure 3.15, need to take back some of this power.

Only a month later, Pruitt displays a shift in focus from the necessity of federal

environmental regulations in maintaining people's health and safety to a conversation about

overreaching power and control by the federal government (see fig. 3.16).

Fig. 3.16 @EPAScottPruitt Tweet on March 24, 2017

This shift is a clear nod to the cohesive narrative of white American people in relation to the

country's origin as colonies defiantly rebelling against the ruling powers, but it is also

inadvertently a clear nod to southern states seceding from the Union supposedly due to the federal

government's overreach. In this tweet, Pruitt uses 'Washington' as a metonym for the federal

government, encapsulating a large entity with three separate branches into a singular representation; at the same time though, he refers to the 50 states as separate individual entities. Once again, Pruitt appeals to and constructs his cohesive narrative in regard to cooperative federalism. 'Washington' is interfering with the ability of the state governments to care for their own; the states will do a better job overseeing the air, land, and water regulations, because they have more at stake. Unfortunately though, this rewriting of historicity is not accurate. Federal regulations, particularly those like the Clean Air Act and the Clean Water Act put in place since the 1970s, have created more successful oversight.

But it wasn't until July 2017 that Pruitt, as a benevolent authority figure, really began to use the affordances of Twitter and its amplifying capacity when he begins to publicly promote this pro-states' rights stance through his State Action Tour, #StateActionTour.

Fig. 3.17 @EPAScottPruitt Tweet on July 18, 2017

In Figure 3.17, Pruitt paired this hashtag with emblematic non-discursive rhetoric like a rugged frontier setting, an American flag hanging on a barn, and hard-working ranchers (all white),

underscoring Van Dijck's claim that hashtags are the global format for online commentary (76).

Although settler colonization is wrapped up in contested historicity, Pruitt elides the issue through a focus on the vernacular discourse of hard work through the sweat equity of white people, in turn feeding into the cohesive narrative of the U.S. (Hauser 116).

What Pruitt leaves out is what the Bitner Ranch would symbolize to people aware of the history of that area. For unaware people, Bitner Ranch is known as a destination of sorts near the resort area of Park City where the Winter Olympics was held years ago. But to those who know the history of the area, the Bitner Ranch was formerly Kimball land; Kimball was one of the earliest white settlers to take Ute Indian land in the 1850s. President Lincoln then legalized this land grab with the creation of the Uintah Indian Reservation in 1861 and President Arthur finalized it with the creation of the Uncompahgre (Ouray) Reservation in 1882. Surely, Pruitt would not be unaware of this history, coming from a state--Oklahoma--that has the same story written all over every inch of its land.

Then as seen in Figure 3.18, while on the #StateActionTour, Pruitt even occasionally began to drop in the use of "common sense." As Kennedy et al. notes, "whiteness has emerged as a popular category of political value signifying the status quo" (20). This rhetorical move of using "common sense" shifts the focus from the necessity of environmental regulations to a conversation about power and control. Pruitt carefully contextualizes what 'common sense' is in connection with environmental regulations—allowing the states to have more regulatory control. In doing so, Pruitt portrays himself as a moderate facilitator in the discussion of how to improve regulations, rather than an extremist federal administrator instigating a dismantling of regulations. This moderation supports the image of benevolence Pruitt is portraying. He is in a position of power and he is choosing to use this privilege to give back decision-making power to the people.

Fig. 3.18 @EPAScottPruitt Tweet on July 20, 2017

Ironically though, in terms of nondiscursive rhetoric, the attire and setting of the meeting with white state officials appears to reinforce the bureaucratic nature of government that Pruitt calls out as being problematic at the federal level. But, this type of nondiscursive rhetoric is balanced with other tweets that represent the opposite of bureaucracy, as seen in Figure 3.17.

As Warner highlights though, what is deemed common sense by particular publics is indeed unjust (132). De-regulation of federal guidelines in favor of state-controlled guidelines might seem just, but historically, federal regulations have been those that have legalized environmental and environmental justice protections with more success. Examples of successful federal environmental and environmental justice regulations include the passage of the Clean Air Act after decades of polluted air and smog, the Clean Water Act after the Cuyahoga River caught on fire, the Federal Environmental Pesticide Act after the release of Carson's *Silent Spring*, the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act and Superfund Act after the Love Canal incident, and the Clean Power Act after years of scientific research proving climate change.

Framing of Industry, Particularly the Non-Renewable Energy Industry, as a Means to Catalyze Economic Growth

Even before the #StateActionTour began though, Pruitt articulated that his agenda would center on #EPABack2Basics. Due to the widespread effectiveness of hashtags as the online commentary norm, Pruitt rhetorically validated a misleading environmental agenda supposedly based on common sense (Van Dijck 76). He once again enforced the status quo that is wrapped up in whiteness (Kennedy et al 20). How did he promote this agenda?

Beginning in his first week of office, Pruitt began to use vernacular discourse to explicitly refer to the concepts of environmental stewardship, cooperative federalism, and economic growth. He did so through using easier-to-understand language as seen in Figure 3.19.

Fig. 3.19 @EPAScottPruitt's Tweet on February 26, 2017

Despite their loaded nature, each of these concepts seemingly fits into the cohesive narrative of white Americans: environmental stewardship- taking care of the environment in a supposedly responsible manner; cooperative federalism- balancing governmental power by taking away it

away from the federal government and giving it back to the states; economic growth- desiring

wealth, often with a disregard for how that wealth is gained. Although he referred to these three

concepts regularly (and they have a clear connection with President Trump's "Make America

Great Again" slogan that has a discursive implication with a time in the past when America was

predominantly white), Pruitt did not articulate the specifics of his agenda and how these three

concepts fit within it until a couple months later.

Pruitt announced his #EPABack2Basics on April 13, 2017 at Harvey Mine in

Pennsylvania near the West Virginia border surrounded by white workers from the coal industry

(see fig. 3.20).

Fig. 3.20 @ScottPruitt Tweet on April 13, 2017

This location is notable for two reasons. First, per the U.S. Census in 2010, the geographic area

surrounding Harvey Mine is predominantly white, like 95%. And second, per a feature article in

Coal Age, Harvey Mine is one of the newest mines in the United States. While its existence is an anomaly, Pruitt normalizes it.

The tweet in Figure 3.20 above also provided more insight into which of the three concepts—environmental stewardship, cooperative federalism, economic growth—Pruitt's #EPABack2Basics agenda was most focused on. Clearly, economic growth is at the center of his agenda, specifically economic growth tied to what he usually refers to the energy industry. (He conveniently leaves out the descriptor 'non-renewable,' although he never promoted renewable energy.) Pruitt's short-sighted mindset about economic growth in the here and now to the dismissal of environmental concerns illustrated the centrality of Giddens' paradox in environmental discourse. Giddens describes this paradox in the following manner in *The Politics of Climate Change*: "since the dangers posed by global warming are not tangible, immediate, or visible in the course of day-to-day life, many will sit on their hands and do nothing of a concrete nature" (2).

During his first year of tenure, the most prominent way that Pruitt advocated for his #EPABack2Basics agenda was through his emphasis on the repeal/revision of existing laws and the introduction of new laws. Primarily, these repeals/revisions of existing laws and introduction of new laws framed the non-renewable energy industry as a way to catalyze economic growth, appealing to the cohesive narrative of the American people in connection with prospering economically. Within the first month of being the EPA Head Administrator, Pruitt announced a reconsideration of the Waters of the U.S. Rule/WOTUS (2/28/17), a stay on the Risk Management Plan Rule/RMP (3/13/17), and a re-thinking of the Corporate Average Fuel Economy/CAFÉ program (3/15/17) as seen in Figures 3.21-3.23. For many, but especially for those within and connected to the non-renewable energy industry, this deregulation was indeed an act of benevolence.

Fig. 3.21 @EPAScottPruitt's Tweet on February 28, 2020

Fig. 3.22 @EPAScottPruitt's Tweet on March 13, 2017

Fig. 3.23 @EPAScottPruitt's Tweet on March 15, 2017

Pruitt's intentional avoidance of the typical terminology used by and for non-renewable energy

industries and corporations can be clearly noted in his use of "stakeholder" in Figure 3.22, rather

than the cost-benefit analysis that was favoring the non-renewable energy industry interests

behind-the-scenes. In Figure 3.23, Pruitt makes the rhetorical move of putting the consumers on

par with the environment. He creates a discursive disconnection between people and the

environment, separating them rather than acknowledging that people are part of the environment.

In so doing, Pruitt addresses the risk connected to climate change through

contextualization, thereby downplaying climate change's impact on the stakeholders (Giddens

58-59). This contextualization is illuminated even more through a close look at his use of

individual words like 'good.' For example, in Figure 3.23, Pruitt falsely equalized the impact of

fuel efficiency standards on consumers and the environment, describing this equalization as

'good.' In doing so, he separated consumers' needs from the environment, implying that no

overlap exists—when in actuality, this overlap is integral to consumption in relation to how

climate change impacts people, particularly people who are classified as low socioeconomic

status and BIPOC.

Conclusion

Recap

Through this case study of former EPA Head Administrator Scott Pruitt's tweets, I have

shown that Pruitt relied upon vernacular discourse as his primary rhetorical strategy. I argued that

Pruitt's use of vernacular discourse enabled a cohesive narrative about the United States to be

woven that primes his audience to more readily accept his environmental agenda, which is driven

by his ties to the non-renewable energy industry, not by his role as the primary public servant

who should advocate for the environmental interests of the American people. More specifically

though, I argued that Pruitt's narrative is grounded in the cultural script of whiteness, defining the

American experience historically, socially, and politically. Because Pruitt's narrative follows the

cultural script of whiteness, his overarching discursive adoption of benevolence is seemingly

more accepted. If whiteness indeed is equated with power and privilege, then Pruitt's authority to be and to grant benevolence follows the status quo.

Contextualization of Findings for Oklahoma

But why does Pruitt's environmental discourse as the EPA Head Administrator matter within the context of Oklahoma specifically? As described in the opening section of this case study, Pruitt has had historically close ties with the non-renewable energy industry in Oklahoma as a State Senator and the Attorney General. He sent memos to the EPA that had been written word-for-word by non-renewable energy representatives based in Oklahoma. He sued the EPA numerous times. He spoke and wrote publically as a climate change denier who thought the federal government was overreaching with its environmental regulations. Pruitt's environmental discourse did not change when he left his position as the Oklahoma Attorney General to become the EPA Head Administrator; it simply shifted to a different stage.

As EPA Head Administrator, Pruitt's discourse was shaped by the values and beliefs that resonate deeply with many Oklahomans like cooperative federalism, economic growth, and environmental stewardship. One need only to look at the presidential election in 2016 and 2020 to support this assertion; 65.6% of Oklahomans voted for President Trump in 2016, while 65.3% of Oklahomans voted for him in 2020 (Ballotpedia). President Trump's platform in 2016 and 2020 appealed to these values and beliefs (Anderson, par. 2). These values and beliefs are part of the cultural script of whiteness in Oklahoma: balancing governmental power by removing it from the federal government and giving it back to the states because they know how to better take care of their own, desiring wealth often with a disregard for how that wealth is gained, and taking care of the environment in a supposedly responsible manner.

In the next case study, an actor in the non-renewable energy industry public, the Oklahoma Energy Resources Board (OERB), will also rely upon the cultural script of whiteness in attempting to influence people's perceptions of the non-renewable energy industry in Oklahoma. Just as Devon Energy did in their responses to the Carbon Disclosure Project's

Climate Change Voluntary Environmental Disclosure Questionnaire and Pruitt did in his tweets

as the EPA Head Administrator, the OERB grounds their environmental discourse in Petro Pete

in an image of benevolence. An actor in the environmental organization counterpublic, Oklahoma

Renewable Energy Education Program (OREEP), simultaneously relies upon and rejects the

cultural script of whiteness in attempting to influence people's perceptions of the renewable

energy industry in Oklahoma. While attempting to forward an inclusive identity, this concurrent

reliance and rejection of whiteness in ReeNewable creates a more complex and nuanced

discursive identity that is not as effective as Petro Pete.

.

CHAPTER IV

EMBODYING BENEVOLENCE AND INCLUSIVITY:

AN EDUCATION-BASED CASE STUDY

> 1) *What rhetorical strategies have been used by these actors (Oklahoma Energy Resources Board and Oklahoma Renewable Energy Education Program) to create, develop, and maintain the environmental discourse of this public (the non-renewable energy industry) and counterpublic (environmental organization)?*
> 2) *How have these rhetorical strategies been used to frame the environmental discourse of these actors?*

Context of this Case Study

In "Digging Deeper into Public School Enrollment," Palmer reported for Oklahoma Watch that more than 700,000 students enrolled in Oklahoma Public Schools during the 2019-2020 school year, while almost 40,000 were in private schools and numerous more were homeschooled. Although public educators have advocated for more funding for years to lower teacher-to-student ratios, buy classroom materials and books, and access additional professional development, Oklahoma has consistently remained ranked in the lowest five states in the U.S. in

per pupil spending (National Center for Education Statistics 3). Thrust into the national spotlight

due to teacher walkouts in 2018, the deficiencies in funding for public schools became glaringly

obvious to even the average Oklahoman. Yet overall, very little has changed in terms of funding.

Teachers still are paid poorly and pay out-of-pocket to buy supplies for their classrooms.

Why is public education not properly funded? Unfortunately, politicians like Scott Pruitt,

who was a State Senator from 1998 to 2006, consistently have avoided creating or supporting

bills that would provide more educational funding for public schools that would boost teacher

salaries or per pupil spending. For instance, Pruitt only co-authored two bills connected to

education during his entire tenure as a Senator: in 2003, he co-authored HB 1414 to increase

standardized testing in schools; in 2005, he co-authored SB 531 to modify the amount school

districts could carry over in the general fund at the fiscal year end (Oklahoma Senate Session

Summaries). But these same politicians will support legislation that maintains outrageously low

tax rates for the non-renewable energy industry—money that could be directed toward education.

Therefore, when the opportunity for free curriculum, materials, and professional

development is offered, many educators do not think twice about participating. The ideologies of

the entities offering the free curriculum, materials, and professional development seem less

relevant in contrast to the benefits. Or at least, that was the attitude of the secondary educators I

worked with in an underfunded high school in the largest school district in Oklahoma from 2008-

2011, primary educators I volunteered with before and after that time in elementary schools in

urban and rural school districts in Oklahoma, and fellow National Writing Project colleagues

now.

One such free opportunity for primary and secondary educators is regularly offered by

the Oklahoma Energy Resources Board (OERB). Although ambiguously labeled 'energy' rather

than non-renewable energy, the OERB was formed in 1993 by oil industry leaders and the

Oklahoma State legislature. The natural gas industry joined the board soon thereafter. 26 years

later, the OERB continues to be funded by a voluntary one-tenth of 1% assessment on the sale of

oil and gas in Oklahoma by oil and gas producers and royalty owners (OERB "Funding").

Companies like Devon Energy are not only monetary contributors to OERB though; they also

provide direction for OERB. Several of the OERB board members, like David Ferris, are former

Devon Energy employees (OERB Bio, par. 1). And as Devon Energy unabashedly asserts on the

Interest Owner page of their website in the "Make a Difference" section, "Through a powerful,

collective voice, we can combat unnecessary legislation that threatens our future energy supply

and, in turn, our livelihoods…Take a look at the links below and see what is being done in our

industry." One of the links listed is OERB.

OERB's website states that their mission is "to use the strength of Oklahoma's greatest

industry to improve the lives of all Oklahomans through education and restoration" (OERB

"About"). While it does enable environmental restoration projects to areas damaged by the oil

and gas industry through funding and labor, a major portion of OERB's budget is allocated for

funding the development of educational curriculum, holding educational workshops with

accompanying free materials, and providing grants to teachers and scholarships to students. In

their Annual Report, OERB revealed almost $1.3 million was spent exclusively on K-12

classroom materials and curriculum in 2019, while $17,087,235.72 has been spent over the past

25 years.

Foundations, organizations, and companies that support renewable energy have been

slow to provide an alternative to OERB's curriculum and workshops. Funded by the support of

the Kirkpatrick Foundation, the Oklahoma Chapter of the Sierra Club, the Oklahoma Renewable

Energy Council, and Central Electric Cooperative, the Oklahoma Renewable Energy Education

Program (OREEP) was formed in 2018 (OREEP "About: Funding"). OREEP's website

highlights their vision: the future is renewable; the future is bright; the future is free (OREEP

"About: Vision"). Currently, OREEP focuses solely on K-12 classroom materials and curriculum.

I was involved in the initial OREEP Curriculum Committee in summer 2018, helping create the organization of the topic modules and writing the curriculum for the Sustainability Unit.

Focus of this Case Study

My Research Questions

As stated in Chapter 1, after identifying the actors within the publics and counterpublics involved in environmental discourse in Oklahoma, I decided to focus primarily on the public of the non-renewable energy industry, and examine the counterpublic of environmental organizations within this last case study. Specifically, in this case study, I decided to focus on the OERB as an actor in the public of the non-renewable energy industry and the OREEP as an actor in the counterpublic of environmental organizations.

In this case study, I will be analyzing what rhetorical strategies have been used to create, develop, and maintain the environmental discourse of the Oklahoma Energy Resources Board and the Oklahoma Renewable Energy Education Program, as well as how these rheto0rical strategies have been used to frame their environmental discourse.

Petro Pete

Although the staff of the OERB has used various persuasive rhetorical tools over the past 26 years to develop a positive attitude within Oklahomans toward the non-renewable energy industry, their most provocative educational tool is a cartoon character named Petro Pete (see fig. 4.1).

Fig. 4.1 OERB's Petro Pete

Source: https://oerbhomeroom.com/ebooks/

Petro Pete is the protagonist in four children's ebooks funded by OERB: *The Road to Petroville; What's the Risk? The Story of Fuelless Boy; Petro Pete's Big, Bad Dream*; *Boomer Burrow: Home, Clean, Home.*

As my first and second case studies have shown, the non-renewable energy industry portray themselves as benevolent through appealing to particular beliefs and values held by Oklahomans that are rooted in a cultural script of whiteness, but it is in this last case study that this rootedness becomes most apparent. In this chapter, I argue that Petro Pete embodies the entrenched whiteness that undergirds the narrative of the non-renewable energy industry in Oklahoma. As described by Kennedy et al. in the Introduction of *Rhetorics of Whiteness: Postracial Hauntings in Popular Culture, Social Media, and Education*, "Whiteness is a trope with associated discourses and cultural scripts that socialize people into seeing, thinking, and performing whiteness and nonwhiteness" (17). Hopefully, my analysis of Petro Pete in this chapter will illuminate even more how the environmental discourse of the non-renewable energy industry follows the cultural script of whiteness in Oklahoma.

The ebooks Petro Pete stars in are not only available to teachers who have an OERB login account for free, but they can also be read by anyone with Internet access on the OERB website. Here is a quick synopsis of each of the four books.

- In *The Road to Petroville,* Pappy Pete, Petro Pete's grandpa, tells the story of how he came to work in the oil field in Oklahoma as a worm (insider jargon for someone who is inexperienced and does not know enough to be referred to as an oil hand). While tracing his own story, Pappy gives a concise history of the oil industry that shines light on the benefits the oil industry has bestowed upon Okies; in doing so, Pappy emphasizes the benevolence of the oil industry throughout the decades.

- In *What's the Risk?: The Story of Fuelless Boy*, Pappy makes a reappearance to set one of Petro Pete's classmates, Freddie Fuelless, straight about the value and necessity of the oil and gas industry in his life. Supported by Mrs. Rigwell, the classroom teacher, Pappy educates Freddie about how petroleum products are vital. (Similar to the ways Pruitt frames the non-renewable energy industry as a means to catalyze economic growth due to how Americans need fossil fuels.) Pappy also sets Freddie straight about the stupidity in ignoring well site safety, highlighting how the industry has established clear physical and textual warnings to keep people safe.

- In *Petro Pete's Big, Bad Dream*, Petro Pete has a nightmare where he is not able to use any products made from petroleum from the time he wakes up through his school day where they are learning all about petroleum.

- In *Boomer Burrow: Home, Clean, Home*, RePete, Petro Pete's dog, explains to the animals who consult him that the humans who are disturbing their home are completing a oil well restoration project in order to make their home better. (Just like Devon Energy in their responses to the CDP's Climate Change Questionnaire and Pruitt with his tweets, this emphasis on environmental stewardship elides who is responsible for destroying the land in the first place.)

Sponsored and published by OERB, these books are used as part of the OERB-sponsored curriculum for elementary-age schoolchildren.

Although the non-renewable energy industry would probably not admit these books are propaganda, I would disagree. As Stanley argues in *How Propaganda Works*, propaganda "essentially exploits an ideal" (51). Within each of these four books, OERB is exploiting ideals connected to the benevolence of authority figures, economic growth, and environmental stewardship. In addition to these propagandistic books, a life-sized Petro Pete mascot

94

sometimes appears at OERB-sponsored events like the well-site safety -workshop at an

elementary school in Tulsa (see fig. 4.2) or in corny music videos.

Fig. 4.2 Petro Pete Visits an Elementary School

Source: https://www.tulsaworld.com/business/energy/oerb-holds-assembly-to-honor-robertson-elementary-talk-well-site/article_9c2cf171-1f4d-51e9-aec3-594bb05f896b.html

OREEP has a lot of rhetorical ground to make up in order to create a counterstory that can

effectively compete with the ideals that OERB exploits through Petro Pete.

Ree Newable

In direct response to the influence of Petro Pete and his sidekick RePete, OREEP

worked with a design firm in Oklahoma City called Robot House to develop a counter cartoon

character that would represent those who support renewable energy. In this chapter, I argue that

this counter cartoon character, Ree Newable, embodies inclusivity less effectively and

persuasively than Petro Pete embodies benevolence due to her underlying entrenchment in

whiteness. As Monzo and McLaren so unabashedly remark in their essay in *Rhetorics of

Whiteness*, "Whiteness remains at the helm, directing our perceptions of the world—sometimes

strategically and other times even as we attempt to be inclusive and equitable. Indeed, inclusion

can be seen as bringing the Other into compliance—coopting or sanitizing our ability to see the

world differently and destroying our ability to make whiteness visible and to create structure

that decenter it" (10). In the next few paragraphs, I will describe the process that went into

creating Ree Newable. Hopefully, this description will illuminate how whiteness co-opted the ability of the OREEP Curriculum Committee and Robot House to create a character that could truly counter Petro Pete.

Since I was on the OREEP Curriculum Committee at that time and because of my scholarly interest in Petro Pete, I, along with three other members of the Curriculum Committee, was asked to be a part of the initial consultation meeting with Robot House. I provided my input and suggestions, as did the other members. My input focused on the fact that the character should be female, multi-racial/multi-ethnic, and outdoorsy-looking in a way that would appeal to both rural and urban people. The other members also felt selecting a female and multi-racial character was important. They also wanted the character to be a tween, have a cast of non-human friends, and be technology-oriented. The orientation on technology was vocalized repeatedly by the other committee members.

Robot House sent four possible design options to the OREEP Curriculum Committee based on our original input and their expertise (see fig. 4.3).
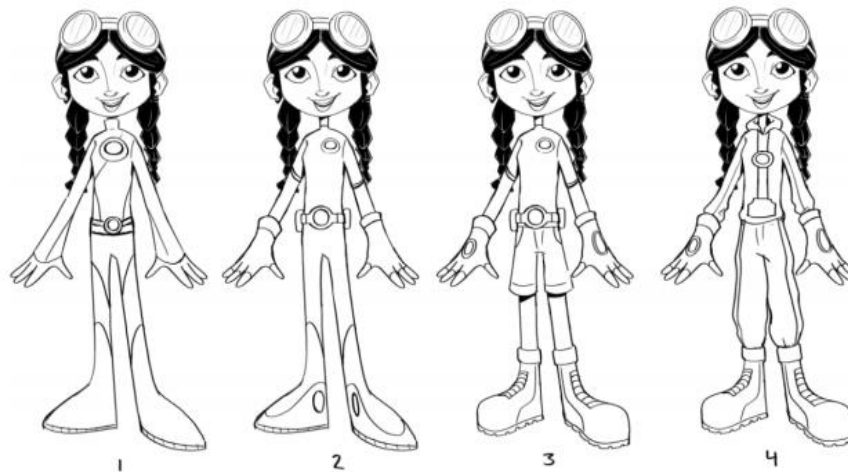

Fig. 4.3 Robot House's Original Design Options of Ree Newable

Source: Email from OREEP Committee Chair forwarding design from Robot House

Option 1 immediately brought to my mind references of the Jetsons, a cartoon from the 1960s that focused on a white family living in space (see fig 4.4). Although, Jane Jetson (the Mom)

and Judy Jetson (the teenage girl) certainly would not have been caught dead in outfits that were not distinctly coded as feminine--i.e. a dress or skirt combo in purple or pink. Robot House felt that Option 1 was the best one.
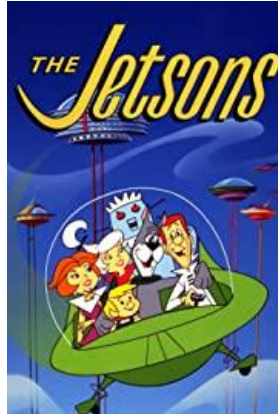
Fig. 4.4 The Jetsons

Source: https://www.imdb.com/title/tt0055683/

Option 2 similarly felt space-like in regard to the boots and belt, but the short sleeves and gloves were reminiscent of those that often appear on women--both women of color and white women--in post-apocalyptic shows like The Walking Dead. Think of Michonne, Rosita (see fig 4.5), or Maggie.

Fig. 4.5 The Walking Dead's Rosita with Gloves

Source: https://walkingdead.fandom.com/wiki/Rosita_Espinosa_(TV_Series)/Gallery

Option 3 appeared more outdoorsy with her hiking boots and shorts, eliciting to my mind no

popular media connections. Option 4 evoked specters of Amelia Earhart that often show up in

costumes of her with goggles and balloon-like pants (see fig 4.6).

Fig. 4.6 Amelia Earhart Costume

Source: https://www.walmart.com/ip/Amelia-Earhart-Child-Costume/130614254

A majority of the committee thought Option 3 was the best out of the four options

given. But overall, the committee felt that this design was lacking in different regards. Since we

emailed our opinion on the shortcomings of the character to the chair of the committee, Jane

Cronin, I can only report what I shared with her: that the character looked too futuristic and

could be read as not racially diverse enough. But, others were not happy either with the design,

so Robot House went back and completed revisions. The revised design option that the chair

selected now serves as the cartoon character who represents renewable energy; that option was

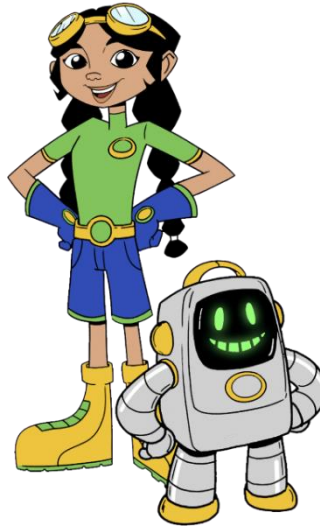Ree Newable and her sidekick Gee (see fig 4.7).

Fig. 4.7 OREEP's Ree Newable and Gee

Source: https://www.oreep.org/characters

This revised version of Option 3 of Ree Newable includes the mock turtleneck of the space-like Option 1, a simplified belt of Options 2 and 3, and gloves that had not shown up on any of the original Options 1-4.

Currently, Ree Newable and Gee act only as mascots for OREEP. No children's books that incorporate Ree Newable and Gee have been written yet, although in early 2019, Robot House developed potential designs along with an estimate for a K-3 comic book that incorporates curriculum activities.

Methodological Approach

My method for this case study is a rhetorical analysis of Petro Pete and Ree Newable. Since only Petro Pete stars in children's books and not Ree Newable, I will focus predominantly on the non-discursive rhetoric, the non-alphabetic text, while occasionally bringing in references to the discursive rhetoric, the alphabetic text. Rhetorically analyzing the strategies used through digitized cartoon characters like Petro Pete and Ree Newable requires attunement to both the design and ideology wrapped up in their embodiment, because embodiment is a powerful rhetorical strategy.

I rely upon Wysocki, Bratta and Powell, and Kennedy et al. when I define *embodiment* as reading a text (in this case study, Petro Pete and Ree Newable) through one's own eyes within a material body that impacts our interpretation of that text and the way that text embodies particular cultural scripts and discourses. Embodiment as a process is cultural--both individually and collectively. As Bratta and Powell emphasize, "if we proceed from the already-voiced assumption that *all* rhetoric is a product of cultural systems and that *all* cultures are rhetorical (i.e., they have meaning-making systems that are meaningful and that can be traced synchronically, diachronically, and achronically), understanding the specificity of the bodies *and* subjectivities engaged in those practices must be central" (par. 8).

In addition to grounding this case study in cultural rhetorics, I also draw theoretically from the field of visual rhetoric, which often calls upon semiotics and visual communications more broadly. Although visual rhetoric as a field might be generalized as a canonical Western methodology, it often focuses on bringing attention to the strategies and tactics employed in creating texts, a necessary move in cultural rhetorics. In Chapter 1, I stated that I would discuss *strategies* and *tactics* as concepts based on DeCerteau's definitions: *strategies* as linked with institutions and structures of power that produce, while *tactics* are used by less powerful entities as a means of resistance while acting within environments often shaped by strategies. But in the case studies in Chapter 2 and 3, I discuss strategies, since I am examining the environmental discourse of actors in the hegemonic public of the non-renewable energy industry. In this case study, I am examining the environmental discourse of actors within the hegemonic public and the counterpublic. Therefore, I go a step further and discuss both strategies and tactics, specifically how strategies and tactics both can be rooted in whiteness--albeit successfully and unsuccessfully.

Understanding strategies and tactics begins with an understanding of the difference between looking and seeing. In his seminal *Ways of Seeing* published in the 1970s, Berger differentiates between looking and seeing. 'Looking' is described as a physiological process, while 'seeing' is described as an interpretive process. Most work claimed within the field of

visual rhetoric would affirm this differentiation. We look through our eyes, but we see through a complex interaction between light, eyes, and the brain. Mirzoeff, a visual cultural expert, provides a clear, easily understandable explanation of 'seeing' versus 'looking' in the introductory chapter of *How to See the World*: "Seeing the world is not about how we see but about what we make of what we see. We put together an understanding of the world that makes sense from what we already know or think we know." (71-72). So when looking at Petro Pete and Ree Newable, what might one see?

Visual rhetoricians can deconstruct cartoon characters via differing approaches. But, as Barthes posits in *Image-Music-Text*, a simultaneous reading of the denotative and connotative meaning of images is a common underlying approach; therefore, I will reflect on both the design of Petro Pete and Ree Newable, as well as the ideologies that are entangled within their design. I will analyze and discuss the design and ideology of Petro Pete first, then the design and ideology of Ree Newable.

Analysis and Discussion

Visual habits move beyond what is designated as looking to what Berger and Mirzoeff deem as seeing. Seeing is perceptual in nature. Two individuals may both look at Petro Pete and Ree Newable, but what they will see might vary greatly. As Barthes argues, images are polysemous (156). But Serafini, a leading children's literature scholar would say, a taxonomic inventory of the parts Petro Pete and Ree Newable are composed of could be identified by all people (96). Maybe, this taxonomic inventory begins with the analysis of what Barthes would identify as Petro Pete and Ree Newable's signifying structure.

In *Understanding Comics,* McCloud illuminates the ins and outs of analyzing comics. His chapter of the "Vocabulary of Comics" provides some insight into how a signifying structure is created within the unique world of cartooning where Petro Pete and Ree Newable belong. Specifically, McCloud highlights what he deems the universal nature of the cartoons.

101

The more cartoony a face is, for instance, the more people it could be said to

describe. But I believe there's something more at work in our minds when we

view a cartoon—especially of a human face—which warrants further

investigation. What are you really seeing? The fact that your mind is capable of

taking a circle, two dots and a line and turning them into a face is nothing short

of incredible. But still more incredible is the fact that you cannot avoid seeing a

face here. Your mind won't let you! (31)

Thus, when one looks at cartoon characters, they are more likely to see themselves in their

faces. Analyzing the design present in cartoon characters begins the deconstruction of the

rhetorical strategies and tactics being used by OERB and OREEP.

But, the reading of Petro Pete and Ree Newable cannot be separated from the contexts

(and thus, the bodies) in which they are read. Ideology is wrapped up in design. One cannot read

an image simply through semiotic signs, but rather one reads through a particular lens informed

and shaped by factors like race, gender, socioeconomic class, place, etc. These factors shape our

identities, and thus, the lens through which we see. As Wysocki states in the introduction to

Composing (Media) = Composing (Embodiment), "we act through the various understandings

we acquire through moving and interacting and engaging, using—being—the bodies we are"

(4).

Whereas many lenses might be helpful in the deconstruction of the visual code that Petro

Pete and Ree Newable are communicating, only a lens that frames a reading through the

particularities of Oklahoma as a locale and common accompanying perceptions about race,

gender, socioeconomic class, and the environment will be used, because Petro Pete and Ree

Newable were created by Oklahomans with the purpose of persuading Oklahoma children. These

particularities and perceptions will illuminate the reliance on whiteness.

Design and Ideology of Petro Pete

Examining the design and ideology of Petro Pete begins with a deconstruction of the rhetorical strategies used by OERB. McCloud's explanation of how cartoony faces are designed provides the first step to understanding the rhetoricity of Petro Pete. Within McCloud's classification of the universality of faces, Petro Pete's face would fall within the 'millions' category, one notch to the left from the '(nearly) all' category (31). Notably, McCloud's Universality Continuum has normalized the white male as the body from which other bodies are judged (see fig 2.8).

Fig. 4.8 Scott McCloud's Universality Continuum

Source: Scott McCloud, *Understanding Comics* (HarperCollins, 1993), p. 31.

Because McCloud himself, a white male, serves as the omniscient narrator throughout his book, he could have used a black, indigenous, or other person of color (BIPOC) to normalize their presence, but he did not. He maintains the status quo.

Based on McCloud's continuum that entrenches white maleness as universal, Petro Pete's face could be said to describe millions of white people due to the rhetorical choice to shift beyond the circle for a face with two dots for eyes and a line for a mouth. Classified just slightly beyond the nearly all category, Petro Pete's face retains an almost perfect circular shape with two circular ears that jut out highlighting the few brown hairs that stick out on his head.

His mouth curves upward into a smile, but his teeth and tongue are simple shapes without details. His eyes are now a smaller, white dot within a larger, black dot. He has a nose, albeit an unrealistic Pinocchio nose. His cheeks contain a slight, rosy apple.

The rest of Petro Pete's body retains the same lack of detail as his face. His arms, legs, and torso are not simple lines, but instead have curvature. His hands and feet protrude in more realistic ways. One hand extends out, while the other rests on his hip. He crosses one knee with one foot remaining at a vertical position. So, Petro Pete's body also falls within McCloud's 'millions' category. Therefore, the signifying structure of Petro Pete's face and body would place him toward the language point of McCloud's Picture Plane (see fig. 4.9); or as McCloud describes as "the iconic abstraction side where every line has a meaning" (51).
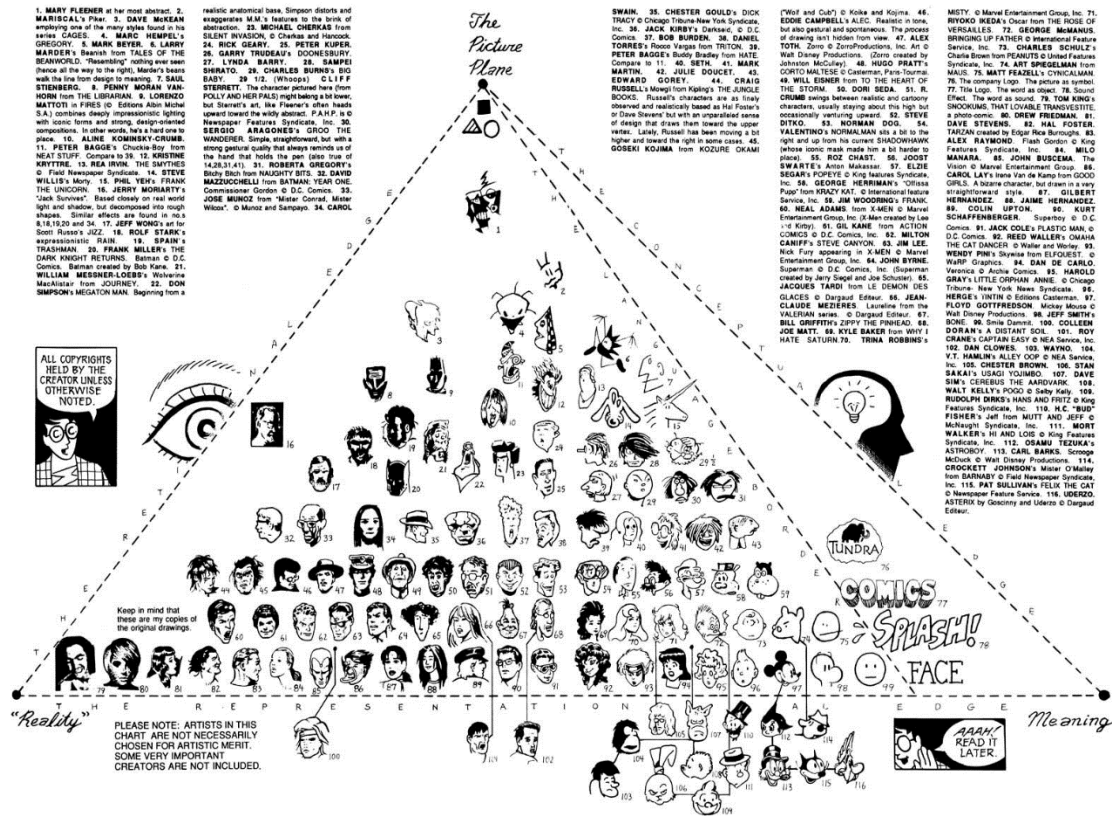

Fig. 4.9 Scott McCloud's Picture Plane

Source: Scott McCloud, *Understanding Comics* (HarperCollins, 1993), p. 52-53.

104

Because there is less detail the closer one gets to the language point of the Picture Plane (labeled Meaning on Figure 4.9), what has been normalized as universal (i.e. the white male) is emphasized even more.

But, isn't there more to Petro Pete's signifying structure? In the composition of Petro Pete, very few straight lines are used to create his shape. He is formed through curved lines that soften him into a more organic, anthropomorphic shape. In addition, varying shades of gray enable the viewer to perceive depth to his shape, whereas a lack of grayscale would have resulted in a flatness to his shape, subtracting from his life-likeness. The three primary colors—red, blue, and yellow—cover a majority of his body. His red shirt, blue overalls, long yellow gloves and hard hat are not garishly saturated though. Their muted value edges toward more realistic apparel and are complemented by the brown work boots and transparent protective goggles.

Although a bit jarring at first glimpse, the disproportionate sizing of Petro Pete's head focuses the viewer in on his almost-constantly amiable features: a smiling mouth, rosy cheeks, and sparkling eyes. The openness of his body language, particularly his arms, also contributes to this amiability. His distinctly muscular arms and chest overshadow his short, rather small legs. This contrast though does not de-emphasize his strength, but fits within the perceptual expectations for a cartoon character. All these elements and principles of composition together—the use of: curved lines to create an organic form, value through shading, muted colors, contrast through size and scale—contribute to what Kress and Van Leeuwen refer to as salience in the reading of Petro Pete as an amiable cartoon character (183).

Although not on his hard hat within the pages of the book, the OERB label is present in their branded all-caps font on Petro Pete's hard hat on the cover of two of the ebooks, *The Road to Petroville* and *Petro Pete's Big, Bad Dream*. The label is large enough to be noticed and in close proximity to his facial features, but small enough not to overshadow his face. Thus, OERB

is clearly connected to how Petro Pete is depicted through the elements and principles of composition. Kress and Van Leeuwen assert that where something is positioned indicates its importance; therefore, because of the position of the OERB label, the viewer reads it as an integral part of Petro Pete (212-213).

But what about that which is missing? In describing the three levels of the coded nature of drawing, Barthes reflects on omissions in drawing, specifically in comparison with photographs:

> Secondly, the operation of the drawing (the coding) immediately necessitates a certain division between the significant and the insignificant: the drawing does not reproduce e*verything* (often it reproduces very little), without its ceasing, however, to be a strong message; whereas the photograph, although it can choose its subject, its point of view and its angle, cannot intervene w*ithin* the object (except by trick effects). In other words, the denotation of the drawing is less pure than that of the photograph, for there is no drawing without style. (43)

Style, as described by Barthes, is created through the elements and principles of composition that enable presence and absence. Therefore, what is absent in the composition of Petro Pete— for example, the lack of more realistic features as identified by McCloud in his Picture Plane— communicates just as loudly as what is present. Petro Pete fits within the perceptual expectations of a children's book cartoon character due to his design being read as universal, with universal being normed as whiteness, specifically white maleness. This "universality" significantly contributes to the viewer's reception of the benevolent frame the non-renewable energy industry is intentionally propagating about themselves.

Clearly, when Petro Pete is seen, he is meant to be read as white. His skin within all the ebooks ranges from a light peach, fleshy color in a majority of the books (like seen in fig. 4.1) to a darkened, tan skin in *Petro Pete's Big Bad Dream.* Whereas some of the characters within

106

the ebooks possess other skin colors, it is notable that Petro Pete, the positively viewed protagonist is white. Data from July 2019 on the U.S. Census Bureau website identified 74% of Oklahomans as 'whites only.' By composing Petro Pete as white, he now has the same skin color as a majority of people who live within Oklahoma. Petro Pete reads as the racial norm. Petro Pete is white, and thus, embodies whiteness on the surface. His whiteness is not only communicated through his own body, but also through the reading of other characters' bodies and the treatment of those characters.

Only one character of color, Little Nellie Johnstone (see fig. 4.10), is given a voice in the ebooks to speak. Although Little Nellie Johnstone has a more ambiguous skin color that would categorize her as black or brown, her perpetual braids might be read as indigenous, especially given the acknowledgement that she is named after a woman adopted into the Osage tribe from the Delaware tribe.
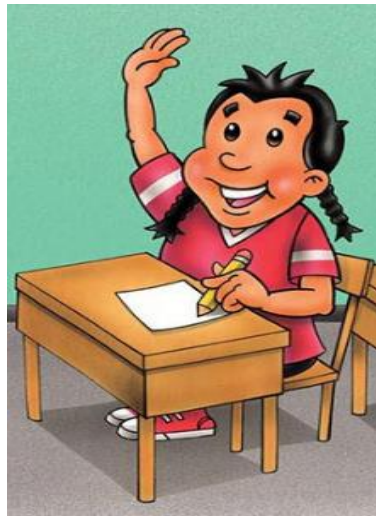
Fig. 4.10 Nellie Johnstone in *Petro Pete's Big Bad Dream*

Source: https://oerbhomeroom.com/ebooks/

Beginning the rush to drill for oil in Oklahoma, the first commercial oil well was drilled on Nellie Johnstone's land in 1897 (Oklahoma Historical Society, Nellie Johnstone Number One).

In contrast to the limited time Nellie is given in ebooks, a white character, Freddie Fuelless (see fig. 4.11), plays a central role in the plotline of *What's the Risk? The Story of a Fuelless Boy.*
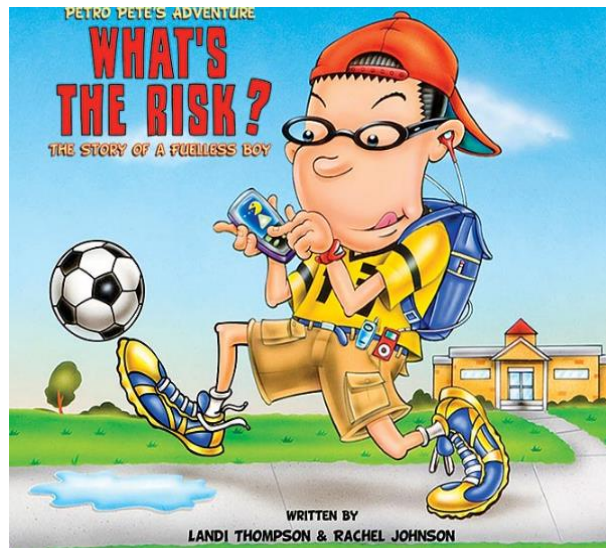

Fig. 4.11 Freddie Fuelless in *What's the Risk? The Story of a Fuelless Boy*

Source: https://oerbhomeroom.com/ebooks/

The BIPOC characters act as minor characters only being shown in the illustrations, but never being given a voice through dialogue in the plotlines. Notably too, Johnstone simply is not named Nellie Johnstone, but *Little* Nellie Johnstone (emphasis mine). The diminutive adjective "little" connotes a childish image. This diminutive adjective's presence is noticeable, particularly since none of the characters read as white are given one.

Racialized norming emerges from power dynamics. In "Between the Eyes: The Racialized Gaze as Design," Hum argues that the racialized gaze "intertwines image and body in a perception-based power relationship of seeing and being seen where race is constrained to visible corporeal differences" (194). These visible corporeal differences may not appear to be demarcated, but comparing Petro Pete with a minor character who is black illuminates the apparent facticity through which race is communicated. Within *What's the Risk? The Story of a Fuelless Boy,* this unnamed black character is portrayed with a larger nose, ears, and lips (see fig. 4.12).

Fig. 4.12 Unnamed Black Character in *What's the Risk? The Story of a Fuelless Boy*

Source: https://oerbhomeroom.com/ebooks/

And if, as Hum asserts, these visible corporeal differences "are believed to signify a host of social attributes of identity, including, breeding, intelligence, morality, and nationalism," then how can this composition of the unnamed minor black character be read in contrast with Petro Pete (194)?

In this unnamed black character, there is no 'haunting' of whiteness as is referred to in *Rhetorics of Whiteness: Postracial Hauntings in Popular Culture, Social Media, and Education.* There is only a direct and clear oppressive caricature of black people encapsulated first in the Jim Crow character of minstrel shows in the 1800s in the United States (see fig 4.13).
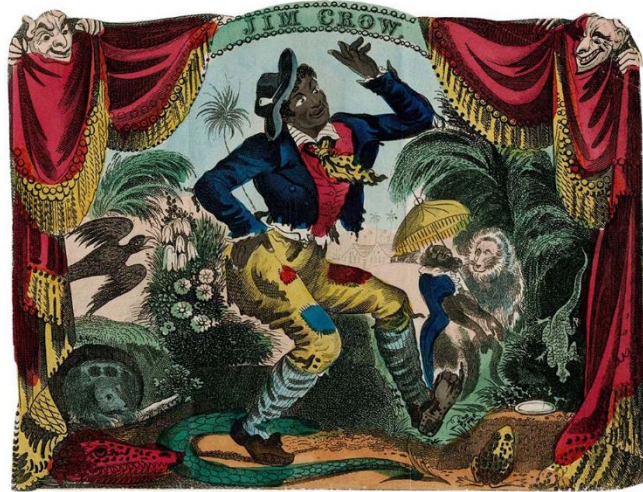
Fig. 4.13 Jim Crow Being Played by Thomas Rice in Blackface

Source: https://www.blackpast.org/african-american-history/jim-crow/

The cultural script that this caricature relies on dictates that white individuals are in power, while blacks (and other BIPOC like Little Nellie Johnstone) are without power. Blacks and other BIPOC must perform a subordinate role that illustrate their non-whiteness. This subordination is even communicated in the body language of the unnamed black character in this scene of the book (see fig. 4.12). His arms are drawn close to his chest, while his hands are folded together.

Not only is Petro Pete read as white, the racial norm, but he is also read as a white working class male. No androgynous features are used in the formation of Petro Pete. Despite being portrayed as an elementary aged kid, he has bulging biceps and a wide chest, characteristics that are usually attributed to grown men who do blue collar work or manual labor on their own. Furthermore, he has little to no hair, like it has been shaved in order to accommodate the ever-present hard hat he wears that is a required part of an oil field worker's gear. He also wears the long gloves associated with the protective gear necessary in the oil field.

Interestingly though, Petro Pete has a corresponding female counterpart, Petro Patti (see fig. 4.14), who serves as a recurring character in *What's the Risk?: The Story of Fuelless Boy* and *Petro Pete's Big Bad Dream*.

Fig. 4.14 Petro Patti in *Petro Pete's Big Bad Dream*

Source: https://oerbhomeroom.com/ebooks/

She too wears the same protective gear as Petro Pete—work boots, overalls, gloves, goggles, and a hard hat. But she has been feminized through the ever-present pink shirt, pink earrings, red lipstick, and perky ponytail. A nod to inclusion of gender diversity, albeit in a stereotypical appearance, Petro Patti's heteronormative presence in this book series balances the male and female dichotomy that often exists in representations of blue collar work, particularly within the grueling realm of oil field work. Notably though, the book series is called Petro Pete's Adventures and Petro Patti has yet to be the protagonist of a book within this series.

The cultural script written into depictions of Petro Pete as a white, working-class male is imbued with implications about the role of whiteness in the history of the non-renewable energy industry, the major institution of economic power within Oklahoma historically. Petro Pete being normed as an Okie with a family history grounded in an economic dependence with oil and gas results in the norming of a benevolent attitude toward the non-renewable energy industry as a whole. Oil and gas has been the hand that feeds for multiple generations.

Whiteness is equated with oil and gas, and thus, is equated with economic security. As is explained in *The Road to Petroville*, the economic relationship between the non-renewable energy industry and people within Oklahoma is long-standing. Kenny Franks' description of the Petroleum Industry on the Oklahoma Historical Society website highlights this history: "Oil ushered Oklahoma into the twentieth century and gave it an economic base that for decades allowed continued development" (par. 1). Working in the oil and gas fields is what drew many people to settle here. When Pappy Pete, Petro Pete's grandpa, tells the story of how he came to Oklahoma to work as a worm, an inexperienced oil hand, the reader might be reminded of this economic relationship on a personal level.

This benevolence extends to towns' reliance upon non-renewable energy as can be seen in the name of the town Petro Pete lives in, Petroville, to the name of the elementary school he attends that's funded by this industry, Petroville Elementary. The influence of the non-renewable energy can even be extended to the names of other characters in the book like: his teacher, Mrs. Rigwell, who teaches them all about the benefits of petroleum in *Petro Pete's Big Bad Dream*; Little Nellie Johnstone, a reference to a woman and the so-named first rich oil well in Oklahoma; and Freddie Fuelless, the boy who is represented as being careless about pump jacks and dismissive of products that are created by petroleum.

Due to this attempt at constructing an identity of benevolence, it is no surprise that the theme of one of the books, *Boomer Burrow: Home Clean Home*, centers on the environmental restoration of an area where a well was. The positively framed characters within this book are portrayed as the people connected to the non-renewable energy industry who are 'cleaning' up the area, whereas the initially negatively framed characters are the ungrateful animals who do not understand why their home is being disturbed. Within the book, no reference is made to the detrimental or irreparable effects of the oil and gas production process from start to finish, no details are given as to why the area had to be cleaned up. Because of this absence of

information, the non-renewable energy industry is once again constructing a benevolent identity—they propagate an image of environmental awareness and responsibility through a dominion frame, much like Devon Energy did in Chapter 2.

Design and Ideology of Ree Newable

Ree Newable's face more clearly shifts beyond the nearly all category than Petro Pete with her features; her face would be classified closer to the left side of the millions category on the continuum (see fig. 4.8). She is more individualized. Her face is oval-like with two slightly pointed ears nestled into her two thick black braids. Her mouth curves upward into a smile too, and like Petro Pete, her teeth and tongue are simple shapes without details. Her eyes though are more expressive with a white sclera, wide black irises, and white pupils that more clearly mimic the thousands category on the continuum. Her shaped eyebrows are partially covered with wavy bangs. Her petite nose has curved nostrils. Her cheeks are framed by wavy hair that has seemingly escaped her braids.

The detail identified in Ree Newable's face is not present in the rest of her body, which would definitely fall into the millions category. Her body is slender with very little curve in her silhouette. Both arms are placed on her hips. Her straight skinny legs turn into really large feet that are turned outward, almost perpendicular to her torso.

In terms of the composition of Ree Newable, the curved lines that form her face create a more life-like appearance, while the sharper lines that form the rest of her body depict a more cartoon-like appearance. Similarly, although grayscale is used throughout her entire body, her face contains more. Whereas Petro Pete's clothing included only the three primary colors, two tertiary colors—yellow green and yellow orange—and one primary color—blue—are used to adorn Ree Newable. The warm color temperatures on this side of the color wheel soften Ree's appearance. Although Petro Pete's apparel is less detailed, the incorporation of details in Ree's outfit does not make her outfit any less cartoonish. Her yellow orange goggles are pushed up on

113

her head. Bordered with a yellow orange trim, her yellow green mock turtleneck has a yellow orange oval in the upper left quadrant. Her long blue shorts end below her knees with a yellow green trim. Her yellow orange belt has a yellow green circle buckle. Bordered with a yellow green trim, her blue gloves repeat the yellow orange oval. Her tall yellow orange boots have yellow green laces and soles.

All parts of Ree Newable are proportional, except her outrageously sized boots which make her feet seem as long as half her legs. But paired with the hands on her hips, chest pushed outward, and chin up, this disproportion results in Ree standing in a power pose similar to Wonder Woman or other female cartoon heroes. This contrast conveys strength, a strong tactic. As Carney, Cuddy, and Yap state in the opening line of their article on power posing, "humans and other animals express power through open, expansive poses, and they express powerlessness through closed, contractive poses" (1363). Ree Newable's sidekick, Gee, is a robot who can convert himself to fit as a backpack on Ree, but in this image mirrors Ree's body language with legs apart and hands on the place where his hips would be.

Although Carney, Cuddy, and Yap maintain that this power position is universal, it does not mean that this pose is always interpreted to be strong by viewers. Embodiment impacts how power is read and interpreted. The cultural script undergirding whiteness in Oklahoma has normalized heteronormative males like Petro Pete to be in positions of power (both literally and symbolically), not females like Ree Newable. Whereas OREEP's intent is to be inclusive, to show the strength that women—particularly BIPOC—can possess, within the white cultural script, this design and ideological choice arguably backfires.

Whereas Ree Newable is drawn in a more realistic manner than Petro Pete in terms of her facial features falling within the thousands category on McCloud's Continuum (see fig. 4.8), the rest of her body falls within the millions category. Her signifying structure, therefore, is equidistant from the language and reality sides on McCloud's Picture Plane (see fig. 4.9).

114

Barthes maintains that presence and absence speak with equal weight when it comes to style. Because Ree Newable does not as neatly fit into the perceptual expectations of a cartoon character, her design is not read as universally as Petro Pete. This position on the Picture Plane matters rhetorically because it is an attempt to move away from the normalized white male and be more inclusive.

When Ree Newable is seen, she is not clearly identified as being a particular race based on her skin color. She could be white, American Indian, Hispanic, or multi-racial. While the U.S. Census Bureau in 2019 estimated 74% of Oklahomans are white, the data shows around 9% as American Indian, 11% as Hispanic, and Two or More Races as 6%. At first glance, Ree's ambiguous skin color could encourage an ahistorical and acontextual reading that might appeal to almost all races in Oklahoma, but inclusivity does not always successfully navigate the cultural script of whiteness. As Mondo and McLaren assert in *Rhetorics of Whiteness*, "inclusion can be seen as bringing the Other into compliance—coopting or sanitizing our ability to see the world differently and destroying our ability to make whiteness visible and to create structure that decenter it" (10).

Besides, the viewer need only look at her thick, dark hair braided into two thick plaits to read the implication: Ree is American Indian. The stereotypical iconography of indigenous women with braids quickly infuses assumptions about cultural differences. When the OREEP website describes Ree as a "born-and-raised Native Oklahoman who's dedicated to local flora and fauna (that means plants and animals), and the natural resources we share that generate clean energy," the romanticized stereotype of American Indian as being more deeply and spiritually connected to nature is invoked. Hum would emphasize that two mutually constitutive, interrelated dynamics--authenticity and universality--are being used in this stereotype.

> The dynamic of authenticity names a practice by which people of color are
>
> depicted through aesthetic and surface markers; those skin-deep differences are

then augmented into significant social distinctions, ones that matter...At the same

time, the dynamic of universality names a practice by which material differences

resulting from the lived experiences of people of color are downplayed or erased

by an assumption of sameness, of a shared common humanity; racial differences

are simply skin-deep (195-196).

Ree is universally and authentically depicted as an Indigenous Person who communes more

closely with nature.

Simultaneously though, this stereotype is disrupted by Ree's attire, which is

predominantly wrapped up in the cultural script of whiteness. Her outfit almost takes on a space-

oriented appearance with the goggles, gloves, and Trek-like mock turtleneck. Gee, her sidekick

that can convert into a backpack, adds to the futuristic look. Therefore, Ree is not read as a

working class person. Unlike Petro Patti who wears the gear of an oil worker and has defined

muscles, nothing about Ree's attire or appearance would communicate that she might use her

hands for a living. When the per capita income estimate for Oklahoma in 2019 was $27,432, one

might assume that someone who uses their hands for a living would be more easily related to by a

substantial amount of people (U.S. Census Bureau).

Furthermore, the economic relationship between Oklahomans and the renewable energy

industry is limited in terms of history and financial impact. Although almost one-third of the

state's installed capacity used renewable resources in 2019, the presence of the renewable energy

industry has been slow to grow (U.S. Energy Information Administration). Why? Legislation has

been repeatedly introduced in the Oklahoma Senate and House that would hinder the growth of

renewable energy like wind and solar. For instance, in 2017, Governor Fallin signed HB 2298

that repealed the relatively new wind tax credit completely. Meanwhile, the oil and gas industry

continues to enjoy only a 2% tax on the first three years of a well and a 7% tax every year

thereafter; the lowest rates of any oil and gas wealthy states in the U.S. (Blatt par. 2). Therefore,

the renewable energy industry has not had the opportunity to cultivate roots in Oklahoma like the non-renewable energy industry.

Furthermore, the renewable energy industry and environmental groups have not historically done as good a job of reaching out to rural areas in Oklahoma. For instance, environmental groups, like the Sierra Club, have struggled to make headway outside of Oklahoma City and Tulsa, because these groups are typically seen as outsiders trying to encourage regulations on land they know little to nothing about. As I have experienced in attending panels hosted by environmental groups, rural communities like those I grew up in are often denigrated for their resistance to regulations or renewable energy. For instance, at an environmental justice panel hosted at the downtown campus of the Tulsa Community College in early 2018, leading figures in the Sierra Club at the national and state level referred to rural peoples' resistance to wind farms as ignorance in the Q & A session, rather than recognizing the complexities involved in wind turbines being installed on people's land.

So perhaps it is good that unlike the OERB label that is present on Petro Pete's hard hat, the oval on Ree Newable's shirt, gloves, and her sidekick Gee would not directly convey a connection to green culture to many people. Kress and Van Leeuwen maintain that the placement of elements endows them with specific information value based on what zone the elements are placed in: left and right, top and bottom, center and margin (183). The oval on the upper left part of Ree Newable's shirt is actually in the center of her from the viewer's perspective, just as the oval on Gee's body is. Kress and Van Leeuwen argue that this centeredness carries visual weight, emphasizing the importance of that symbol. So, the viewer's eyes would be drawn to the oval, even if they did not know what it symbolized.

OREEP might think that the tactic of using an oval that is similar to the ecology symbol on Ree Newable and Gee would imply care for the Earth, but that connection would probably not be obvious to most viewers and/or might negatively be connected to environmentalist groups. The ecology symbol was created by Ron Cobb, an artist and environmental activist, in 1969. Cobb

formed this symbol through the merging of the letter 'e' for 'environment' and 'o' for 'organism.'

This superposition formed a symbol reminiscent of the Greek letter Theta, which has traditionally

connoted 'danger' or even 'death,' conveniently implying the precarious state the environment
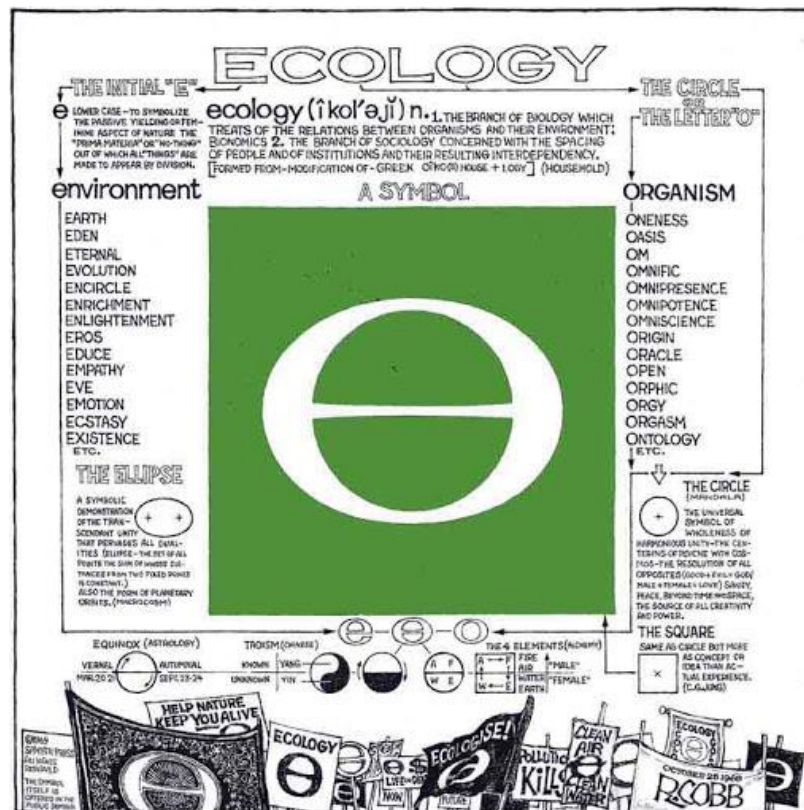
was in.

Figure 4.15 Ron Cobb's Graphic Explanation of His Ecology Symbol

Source: https://www.aiga.org/symbolizing-the-green-movement

Cobb's ecology symbol appeared widely on flags at environmental protests during the 1970s

and has since re-emerged in recent years beginning with the People's Climate March in 2017. In

general though, it is a symbol used by environmentalist groups (which are typically composed

of white people), not environmental justice or climate justice groups (which are typically more

diverse). The use of the ecology symbol on Ree Newable correlates her with environmentalist

groups, not the more inclusive environmental justice or climate justice groups.

Conclusion

Recap and Contextualization of Findings for Oklahoma

Through this case study of OERB's Petro Pete and OREEP's Ree Newable, I have shown

that embodiment is the overarching rhetorical strategy and tactic being enacted by both OERB

and OREEP. I defined *embodiment* as reading texts like Petro Pete and Ree Newable through

one's own eyes within a material body that impacts our interpretation of that text and the way that

text embodies particular cultural scripts and discourses. More specifically though, my findings

revealed that embodiment as a process is cultural--both individually and collectively.

Embodiment is created, and/or one might even say triggered, through both design and ideology.

OERB and OREEP rely upon the embodiment of Petro Pete and Ree Newable to frame the

particular environmental discourse they want to be communicated to Oklahomans. OERB and

OREEP both attempt to use the cultural script of whiteness. I argued that OERB does effectively

due to how Petro Pete embodies benevolence, while OREEP does not as effectively due to how

Ree Newable embodies inclusivity.

Like Devon Energy's responses to the CDP's Climate Change Questionnaire and Pruitt's

tweets as the EPA Head Administrator, the rhetorical strategies of OERB enable the non-

renewable energy industry to portray an image of benevolence. The OERB's digitized Petro Pete

persuasively embodies the benevolent identity that the non-renewable energy industry seeks to

promote about itself due to its reliance on whiteness. Unfortunately, the rhetorical tactics of

OREEP do not enable the renewable energy industry to compete with OERB's rhetorical

strategies. OREEP's digitized Ree Newable less persuasively embodies the inclusive and

innovative identity the renewable energy industry seeks to promote about itself due to ways in

which it still relies on whiteness. If environmental organizations like OREEP want to compete

with the benevolent image of the non-renewable energy industry in Oklahoma, then they will

have to figure out how to decenter whiteness by figuring out how to counter the cultural script of

whiteness, while still appealing to some of the values and beliefs that have been used in this script.

In my concluding chapter, Chapter 5, I will synthesize the findings from all three case studies by highlighting how the findings revealed similar themes in the ways environmental discourse was used by the non-renewable energy industry. Then, I will describe how these themes informed my discussion of the shortcomings of Herndl and Brown's environmental rhetoric model, as well as my discussion and re-imagining of Killingsworth and Palmer's environmental rhetoric model. I will end by listing the possibilities and limitation of my environmental rhetoric model.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

My Research Questions

I began my study with four broad research questions:

1. What actors are part of the publics and counterpublics engaging in environmental discourse in Oklahoma?

2. What rhetorical strategies have been used to create, develop, and maintain the environmental discourse of these publics and counterpublics?

3. How have these rhetorical strategies been used to frame the environmental discourse of actors within these publics and counterpublics?

4. And finally, as rhetoricians, how can we engage in these discourses in ethical ways through our scholarly practices?

In this chapter, I will start the conversation about my last research question in hopes that other scholars may join me in the journey to engage in these discourses.

Synthesis of My Findings

Although there were many actors in the publics and counterpublics in Oklahoma, I decided to primarily focus on the non-renewable energy industry public due to its being so intricately intertwined with the livelihoods of rural and urban Oklahomans. It certainly fit my

definition of a *public*: a more privileged space where hegemonic discourse is proliferated by entities in power. I conducted three separate case studies of three different genres in order to see what rhetorical strategies were used and how they were used. Specifically, I looked at the environmental discourse of the following actors within this public: Devon Energy, Scott Pruitt, and the Oklahoma Energy Resources Board (OERB). I did so because each of these actors held power within different arenas—industry, government, and education—that impacted Oklahomans' lives in different ways. I also looked at one counterpublic, an environmental organization called the Oklahoma Renewable Energy Education Program (OREEP), in the last case study in order to see what its environmental discourse might reveal. It certainly fit my definition as being an actor with the *counterpublic*: a less privileged space where discourse is exchanged by entities not in power.

Theoretically, I turned to cultural rhetorics in order to ascertain a way forward with my research. In their Introduction to a special issue of *Enculturation* focused on cultural rhetorics, Bratta and Powell assert that there does not need to be a universal frame for doing cultural rhetoric work (par. 5). Rather Bratta and Powell emphasize, just as the other scholars in this special issue, that there is a need for "a more situated scholarly practice in which the particularity of rhetorical practices within specific cultural communities sheds light on the myriad ways that culture and rhetoric emerge" (par. 5). So rather than conduct all my case studies with the same methodological approach, I used an amalgamation of methods informed by the situatedness of the discourse I was examining, although grounded theory was an integral part of two of the three case studies.

Despite my seemingly disparate methodological approaches, the findings of these case studies revealed some similar themes in the ways environmental discourse was used. Here are the three themes that are most relevant in informing my re-imagining of the environmental rhetoric model that I will present.

- The non-renewable energy industry portrays themselves as benevolent.

- The beliefs and values rhetorically appealed to by the non-renewable energy industry are oriented around a fundamentalist version of the Christian faith that is common in Oklahoma.

- And, the understanding of benevolence and these beliefs and values is rooted in a cultural script of whiteness.

In this section, I will briefly discuss how each of these themes is woven throughout my three case studies.

By definition, benevolence can be bestowed by an authority figure. Whether or not that benevolence is inherently beneficial to its recipients is irrelevant. In Chapter 2, Devon Energy emphasizes the ways in which they have given back. This benevolence is most clearly seen through two of the themes I developed where the dominion frame is invoked: confirming a secure economic impact and promoting technology innovation. Within the confirming a secure economic impact theme, the reader is repeatedly informed that an investment in Devon Energy is a consistently viable source for profit and revenue. Within the promoting technology innovation theme, the reader is told about the various ways Devon Energy is coming up with new ways to address the emissions of their upstream and downstream infrastructure. So, why might Devon's benevolent portrayal of themselves resonate with readers here in Oklahoma?

Benevolence is an inherent part of the Christian faith, albeit with varied interpretations by different groups. Within a fundamentalist version of the Judeo-Christian faith, beliefs and values are defined through a specific, literal interpretation of the Bible. In *Toward a Civil Discourse: Rhetoric and Fundamentalism*, Crowley (2006) defines fundamentalists as those who want "to restore biblical values to the center of American life and politics" (3). More specifically within the context of the findings of these case studies in Oklahoma, I define this fundamentalist version of faith as being grounded in a dominion orientation. God is in dominion over humans and the Earth, and He has granted humans dominion over Earth. Humans may do what they will with the

Earth as long as it reflects the type of benevolence God has granted to them, because as I described in Chapter 2 (and in my other case studies), humans are stewards of the Earth.

By grounding their benevolence in these fundamentalist beliefs and values, Devon Energy connects with more Oklahomans. In Chapter 2, I stated that Devon Energy uses the Dominion Frame through articulating the following themes within their environmental discourse: Confirming a Secure Economic Impact, Adhering to Regulatory Compliance, and Promoting Technology Innovation. Devon Energy repeatedly refers to themselves as being 'environmentally responsible,' using the mythic narrative rhetorical strategy described by Cloud to invoke the story in Genesis 1 and 2 of Adam and Eve, who God created to be stewards of His Earth (2018).

Now, let me make a disclaimer here. I am not lumping all Christian believers from Oklahoma (or beyond) into one category. There are believers from all across the theological spectrum that would argue against this fundamentalist interpretation of Genesis 1 and 2, including myself. Liberal theologians like McFague who wrote *Super, Natural Christians* (1997)*, The Body of God: An Ecological Theological* (1993), *A New Climate for Theology: God, the World, and Global Warming* (2008), and *Blessed are the Consumers: Climate Change and the Practice of Restraint* (2013) would vehemently argue that humans are supposed to do as little damage to the Earth as possible, while conservative theologians like Brunner et al. who wrote *Introducing Evangelical Ecotheology: Foundations in Scripture, Theology, History, and Praxis* (2014) would argue the same. For the purposes of this discussion, I am just referring to those Christian believers who believe in the specific fundamentalist stance described above.

Through orienting benevolence in these fundamentalist beliefs and values regarding dominion—which is all about power and control—Devon Energy is rooting their discourse in a cultural script of whiteness. Scholars argue that whiteness is entrenched across all institutions (Kennedy et al.). Powell asserts in her "Postracial" essay in *Rhetorics of Whiteness* that "whiteness is the normative principle that defines the American experience historically, socially, politically" (25). But, I would also add that whiteness is a normative principle that defines the

American experience religiously as well. You cannot remove whiteness from these American Christian fundamentalist values and beliefs, because they are so interwoven. Whiteness was and is part of the history of the American Christian fundamentalist institution. As Lawrence Ware, a philosopher of race from Oklahoma, asserted in describing his reasoning for leaving one of the American Christian fundamentalist churches, "not enough has been done to address the institutional nature of white supremacy." In portraying themselves as benevolent by wielding dominion, Devon relies upon fundamentalist beliefs and values dictated by the cultural script of whiteness.

In Chapter 3, Pruitt as EPA Head Administrator also emphasizes the ways he is benevolent, similar to Devon Energy. Pruitt's benevolence is first reified in the Articulated Concern in Working For/With the People theme that I developed. For example, Pruitt's initial tweet literally states he is "working for" the people, then shifts to a "working with" you tweet within just a few days. Pruitt signals that although he is in a position of authority as the EPA Head Administrator he will be a benevolent authority. He continues this emphasis on benevolence within the Articulated Concern in Working For/With the People theme by illustrating a concern through tweeting about their health and well-being in connection with the clean-up of superfund sites and brownfields. Simultaneously while Pruitt signals his benevolence, Pruitt also elides mention of culprits behind the superfund sites and brownfields—predominantly, companies connected to the non-renewable energy industry.

Just as Devon Energy did, Pruitt also relies on beliefs and values oriented around a fundamentalist version of the Christian faith in regard to dominion. Pruitt highlights environmental responsibility too. Ironically though, unlike Devon Energy that emphasized their adherence to regulatory compliance, Pruitt's stance on environmental responsibility revolves around environmental deregulation, an unfitting stance for an EPA Head Administrator, but certainly aligned with the non-renewable energy industry with whom he has had close connections throughout the years. Pruitt's push for environmental deregulation is seen in my

developed theme of an Emphasis on Environmental Stewardship at the State and Local Levels, not the Federal Level.

Does Pruitt's version of environmental stewardship through deregulation fit within a fundamentalist version of the Christian faith like Devon Energy's? Yes, it can, since this fundamentalist version is defined by humans being given dominion over the Earth. Humans are given the authority to determine how to steward the Earth. Pruitt's discourse simply makes the case that the more localized responsibility is, the better the stewardship will be. As the discussion about Figure 3.17 in Chapter 3 highlighted, Pruitt emphasizes that EPA regulations like the Waters of the United States (WOTUS) negatively impact local landowners, concluding that they should be given back the control to dispense water as they see fit.

In orienting this benevolence around humanity's dominion over the Earth, the environmental discourse of Pruitt as EPA Head Administrator follows a cultural script of whiteness. If, as Kennedy et al. notes in *Rhetorics of Whiteness*, "whiteness has emerged as a popular category of political value signifying the status quo," then, Pruitt displays his reliance on this cultural script in a literal manner (20). Only a few months into his tenure, Pruitt begins to use the phrase "common sense" in connection with environmental deregulation. Through careful contextualization, Pruitt makes sure to connect the common sense environmental deregulation with the narrative surrounding the formation of the United States as a unification of individual states that only work together when circumstances require it. His discourse implies that individual states will do a better job overseeing environmental regulations, because they have more at stake. Unfortunately, Pruitt's rewriting of history is not accurate, because it is federal regulations like the Clean Air Act and Clean Water Acts that have had a more successful impact in keeping industries, like the non-renewable energy industry, accountable for their actions.

Like Devon Energy and Pruitt as head EPA Administrator, the Oklahoma Energy Resources Board (OERB) also portrays benevolence. In Chapter 4, the OERB persuasively

embodies the benevolence of the non-renewable energy industry, the American Judeo-Christian fundamentalist version of Genesis, and the cultural script of whiteness through Petro Pete. Through design, Petro Pete is depicted as a white, working-class male, while other characters like Little Nellie Johnstone and the unnamed black character serve to bolster that depiction. When reading Petro Pete, an accompanying ideology is assumed. This ideology follows the cultural script of whiteness which dictates a benevolent white authority figure (the non-renewable energy industry who has been the hand that feeds in Oklahoma for generations) and a fundamentalist version of Genesis (the non-renewable energy industry acting within their God-given dominion over the Earth).

The Oklahoma Renewable Energy Education Program (OREEP) less persuasively embodies benevolence, the American Christian fundamentalist version of Genesis, and the cultural script of whiteness through Ree Newable due to their emphasis on inclusivity. Through design, Ree Newable is depicted as an indigenous, non-working class female, while her sidekick Gee serves to bolster that depiction. When reading Ree Newable, an accompanying ideology is also assumed and it is not one that follows the cultural script of whiteness. No benevolent authority figure is connected with her embodiment. Instead, due to being read as indigenous, she might be imbued with possessing no authority. Or due to not being read as working class, she might be imbued with possessing too much authority. Also due to being read as indigenous, Ree Newable does not fit within the American Christian fundamentalist version of Genesis that represents dominion, rather she could be read as fitting the stereotype of being in some sort of mystical communion with nature.

A Re-Imagining of an Environmental Rhetoric Model

After conducting my case studies and synthesizing my findings, I determined that this project had something significant to offer scholarship in writing studies: a reimagined environmental rhetoric model. Although I used a number of sources from across writing studies to conduct my case studies and invoked a cultural rhetorics approach, I will respond only to

environmental rhetoric scholarship in this chapter. While environmental rhetoric has been rooted in writing studies since the 1990s, little attention has been paid to re-theorizing Killingsworth and Palmer's model (see fig 1.1) and Herndl and Brown's model (see fig 1.2). As I stated in Chapter 1, the theoretical foundation of cultural rhetorics encourages us to interrogate the beliefs that undergird models, because discourse cannot be compartmentalized, disembodied from those who use it, or generalized in order to effectively appeal to a wider audience. Discourse—like the environmental discourse examined in my three case studies for this project—should be studied within particular contexts, because culture infuses all ways of knowing. This reality guided my research.

If we need to examine the situatedness of discourse, why re-imagine any of these models at all? Because these models are still referred to within writing studies (see Kirsch, Rivers, Donald Ross), as well as within other fields like environmental communication (see Liu and Pezzullo, Schmitt). Models offer a place to begin the conversation about discourse; they do not have to end the conversation. If designed in an adaptable manner, they enable people to visualize concepts and relationships perhaps more readily than they would be able to otherwise. Re-imagining at least one of these environmental rhetoric models, while acknowledging the nuance and complexity of discourse in particular contexts, provides a start to answering my last research question. How can we as rhetoricians engage in environmental discourse in ethical ways through our scholarly practices?

In this section, I will discuss the findings of my three case studies in connection with both Killingsworth and Palmer's configuration and Herndl and Brown's model. Then I will re-imagine Killingsworth and Palmer's model in relation to the findings from each of my three case studies. (Due to the fact that Herndl and Brown's model was adapted from Killingsworth and Palmer's configuration and Ogden and Richards's 1923 rhetorical model, I will not re-imagine Herndl and Brown's model.) My critique will illustrate the complexity and nuance that should exist when discussing environmental discourse in specific contexts within particular cultural communities.

Then, I will conclude by providing a model that is easily altered by rhetoricians for use in their own specific contexts, while briefly outlining the limitations and possibilities of this model.

Suggested Change to the Environmental Rhetoric Model

So what would this re-imagining of Killingsworth and Palmer's configuration of perspectives (see fig 1.1) look like? First, the static horseshoe shape should be changed to a revolving circle; that way, the position of the entities (industry, government, traditional science, etc.) in power could easily shift as necessary. Killingsworth and Palmer indicate that a shift in power is inevitable: "We may now, however, be witnessing an attitudinal shift and corresponding power shift that would cause the continuum to roll, leaving a new alliance of deep ecology, science, and government--the environmentalist alliance on the upper axis" (15). While their speculation about what powers (deep ecology, science, and government) will become hegemonic is now inaccurate, they did foresee that possibility, just not within the design of their model.

Next, the Nature as Creation attitudinal orientation should be included. This addition is the most important aspect of my re-imagining. I defined this attitudinal orientation as believing that all of nature—air, land, water, humans, animals, and plants—is created by a deity (or deities). Unlike the Nature as Spirit orientation which assigns the same value to all these biotic entities, this orientation maintains that humans are above all other biotic and non-biotic entities and hold power over all these entities. For the specific context of Oklahoma as seen in my three case studies, I maintain that this deity is understood to be the Christian God with a specific fundamentalist understanding of the creation story in Genesis 1 and 2. While scholars Ross, White, and Capek have identified the role of religion and spirituality in regard to attitudes toward the environment, no scholars that I know of have suggested re-imaginings of the existing environmental rhetoric models. For example, in "Common Topics and Commonplaces of Environmental Rhetoric," Ross highlights the dominion concept within his description of the common topics of religion and man's achievements, but he does not suggest that any changes should be made to environmental rhetoric models (107).

Also, more entities should be included like education and environmental organization, while others could be deleted. In Killingsworth and Palmer's configuration of perspectives, the following entities (or what they refer to as perspectives) are included: traditional science, government, business/industry, agriculture, social ecology, deep ecology, and holistic ecology. For the context of the actors in the public and counterpublic in my case studies, I would include the following entities: traditional science, government, non-renewable energy industry, renewable energy industry, agriculture, education, social ecology, environmental organizations, deep ecology, and holistic ecology.

Then, the directionality of the rhetorical appeals between entities—as seen through the arrows—will alter. As Killingsworth and Palmer state, "the arrows on the figure indicate the general 'direction' of typical rhetorical appeals, the efforts to overcome oppositions and divisions either by forming new solidarities, by reinforcing old ones, or by revealing distances or likenesses in order to transform attitudinal conflicts into political action" (17). While I affirm and use this description, the findings of my case study simply show the need to erase particular arrows from the model and add new ones.

Last, the distance the rhetorical appeals travel from one entity to another on the model will indicate the discursive persuasiveness desired by the entity making the appeal. For example, as seen in the first case study, the actor in the non-renewable energy industry, Devon Energy, rhetorically appeals to the government more than it does to traditional science.

Case Study 1

Re-Imagined Environmental Rhetoric Model

In Chapter 2, the findings of my case study of Devon Energy's responses to the CDP's Climate Change Questionnaire from 2010-2018 illustrated that the environmental discourse of Devon Energy did indeed fit within the non-renewable industry public as Killingsworth and Palmer's configuration predicted, but did not account for Devon's targeting of the fundamentalist

beliefs and values of Oklahomans. Devon's discourse as an actor within the non-renewable

energy industry revealed a positioning near the already-existing Nature as Resource attitudinal

orientation and my newly proposed Nature as Creation attitudinal orientation, while being more

distanced from already-existing Nature as Object and Nature as Spirit attitudinal orientations. An

attempt to show the inclusion of my proposed attitudinal orientation and the directionality of

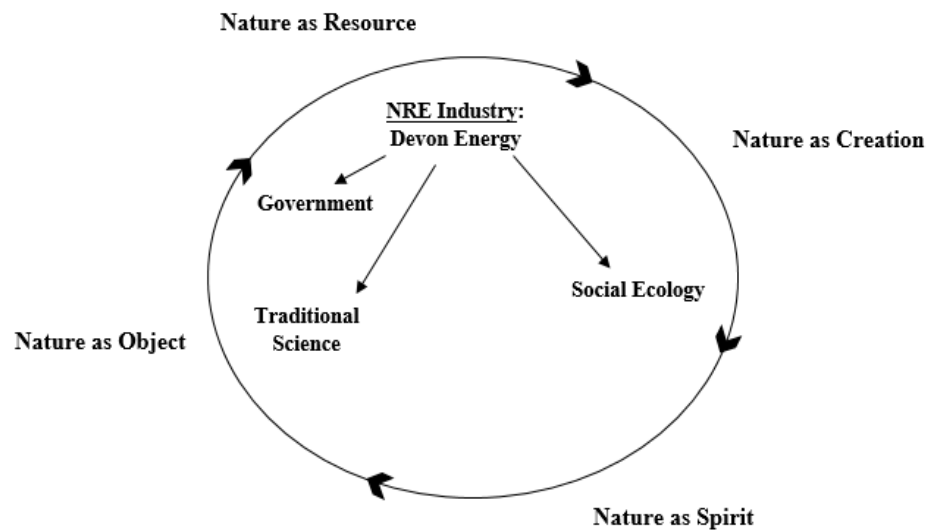Devon Energy's rhetorical appeals is shown in Figure 5.1.

Figure 5.1 My Re-Imagining of K and P's Model for My First Case Study

In Killingsworth and Palmer's model, rhetorical appeals are only directed toward agriculture and

government. But, the findings of my case study show that Devon Energy directed rhetorical

appeals toward government, traditional science, and social ecology.

Rationale for this Re-Imagined Model: Critique of Existing Models

Based on Killingsworth and Palmer's configuration (see fig 1.1), Devon Energy's

environmental discourse in their responses to the CDP Climate Change is categorized as

industrial due to its being a non-renewable energy company. Killingsworth and Palmer emphasize

that the discourse of industry is hegemonic, because it has often had "the greatest success in

winning public support and power" (15). While Killingsworth and Palmer wrote their book in the 1990s, this statement is certainly still true here in Oklahoma decades later.

The configuration shows that the environmental discourse used by industry predominantly portrays Nature as a Resource. Killingsworth and Palmer describe this Nature as Resource orientation as when "natural entities are reduced to objects that can be priced as commodities" (13). In this case study, this attitudinal orientation is seen most clearly through the Confirming a Secure Economic Impact theme. For instance, Example #3 from Table 2.3 highlights the ways in which Devon Energy's environmental discourse reveals a Nature as Resource orientation: "The company's portfolio of gas and oil properties provides stable, environmentally responsible production and a platform for future growth." Nature is plainly referred to as a commodity as shown through the words "portfolio," "properties," "stable," "production," "platform," and "growth."

As Killingsworth and Palmer explain, attitudinal opposition and tension are revealed by location on the configuration. The further an entity—like industry—is from another entity—like traditional science—the more tension and opposition that exists between those entities. In this case study, tension and opposition is revealed in the ways that Devon Energy's environmental discourse portrays Nature as Object through the Denying the Impact of Climate Change theme. Killingsworth and Palmer describe the Nature as Object attitudinal orientation as centering on science:

> First, the view of nature as object is most useful in scientific research because it allows for quantitative analysis. If things are to be counted, then there must be things, even if the very existence of these entities is placed in question by scientific theory. In this practical view, action (as defined by ethics) tends to be reduced to motion (as defined by physics), and all relationships are reduced to correlation, cause, and effect. If such reduction is impossible (as, for example, in

matters of aesthetics and ethics)—if number values cannot be assigned—then

science must yield to softer forms of analysis. (13)

While appropriating the scientific language found within the Nature as Object orientation, Devon

did not just reduce action to motion and relationships to correlation, cause, and effect. Instead,

Devon used the scientific language in a more subjective way for persuasive purposes. Devon

Energy's responses to the Carbon Disclosure Project's Climate Change Questionnaire questions

were consistently denialist in regard to the scientific consensus on climate change.

This denial is illuminated through Example #1 on Table 2.3.

We [Devon Energy] do not believe climate change poses significant physical risk

to our assets. We understand the issue of climate change has prompted ongoing

discussions among scientists and others concerning potential impacts on weather,

sea level and habitat. The issue has prompted an increasing volume of scientific

investigation aimed at determining the extent and potential impact global

warming might have on our environment over the next century. Obviously, these

issues are complex, and there is disagreement among scientists. Based on the

uncertainty of the available science, we are not in a position to make an accurate

assessment of physical risk pertaining to our company.

As this response demonstrates, Devon staunchly maintains that there is still a debate going on

about humans' impact on climate change, despite the fact that 97% of climate scientists from

around the world agree that humans have accelerated global warming (Cook et al. 2). Therefore,

this invoking of frames—theory (scientists are speculating about climate change) and balancing

norm (tell both sides of the climate change debate for objectivity and fairness) frames—is

troubling, but Killingsworth and Palmer's configuration accounts for this discourse possibility.

As my case study showed though, Devon Energy's environmental discourse did not just

refer to Nature as Resource and Nature as Object in alignment with what Killingsworth and

133

Palmer's configuration presents. Devon Energy's responses to the CDP Climate Change Questionnaire also move toward another attitudinal orientation that is not represented on Killingsworth and Palmer's configuration, Nature as Creation. Devon Energy's repeated invoking of the dominion frame via the rhetorical strategy of mythic narrative would certainly require a Nature as Creation attitudinal orientation (Remember, the dominion frame refers to literal readings of the Judeo-Christian scriptures in Genesis 1:28 where God gives the first humans dominion over the Earth, charging them to care for animals, air, water, and land as they see fit.) The most common adaptation of this frame and rhetorical strategy by Devon Energy is seen in their direct and indirect references to responsible environmental stewardship via the Confirming Economic Impact theme (Example #3 in Table 2.3), Adhering to Regulatory Compliance theme (Example #4 in Table 2.3) and Promoting Their Technology Innovation (Example #5 in Table 2.3). Direct references include the use of the phrase "environmentally responsible," while indirect references include "continued voluntary reduction efforts" in regard to emissions and development of methodologies for "methane reductions."

Thus, Killingsworth and Palmer's configuration does not account for the multi-faceted ways in which Devon Energy uses discourse to rhetorically appeal to entities beyond agriculture and government. Even if reading Devon Energy's responses strictly in regards to a non-religious sustainability attitudinal orientation, Killingsworth and Palmer's configuration should show an arrow directed toward social ecology due to its being "driven by a deep-felt commitment to human culture and sustainable technology rather than by a mystic communion with nature" (17). Devon Energy certainly emphasizes their use of sustainable technology as the Promoting Their Technology Innovation theme revealed.

Just as Devon Energy's environmental discourse does not fit smoothly within the Killingsworth and Palmer configuration of perspectives, so too does it not fit into Herndl and Brown's rhetorical model. Because Herndl and Brown built their model upon the attitudinal orientations used by Killingsworth and Palmer, their model also does not include the Nature as

Creation orientation. Moreover, their model is even more rigid, because it assigned each attitudinal orientation an identified primary discourse and rhetorical appeal.

So for instance, because Devon Energy's environmental discourse predominantly revolves around a Nature as Resource orientation, Herndl and Brown's model suggests that this discourse would be ethnocentric, identified as regulatory, and grounded in ethos as its primary rhetorical appeal. As the above paragraphs have illustrated, my findings do not show that to be true. Rather, Devon's environmental discourse is grounded in all three rhetorical appeals and incorporates all three types of discourse (regulatory, scientific, and poetic) to a certain degree.

Herndl and Brown do specify in their introduction of their model that this model simply asks us "to determine the attitude, or in Kenneth Burke's term, the 'motive,' or a particular text regarding an environmental topic" (10). But, the findings of this case study show that attempting to identify the primary motive of a text like responses to a voluntary environmental disclosure questionnaire erases the complexity that actually undergirds Devon Energy's environmental discourse. Just considering the themes I developed—denying the impact of climate change, validating internal and external policy oversight, confirming a secure economic impact, adhering to regulatory compliance, and promoting their technology innovation—illustrates the variety of discourses and appeals.

Case Study 2

Re-Imagined Environmental Rhetoric Model

In Chapter 3, the findings of my case study of Scott Pruitt's tweets from his official account during his tenure as EPA Head Administrator illustrated that the environmental discourse of Pruitt seemingly might be identified as an actor within the government public as Killingsworth and Palmer's configuration predicts, but in actuality his discourse could almost be considered to fit solely as an actor within the non-renewable industry public. His discourse revealed an attitudinal orientation near the already-existing Nature as Resource attitudinal orientation and my

newly proposed Nature as Creation attitudinal orientation, while being more distanced from the already-existing Nature as Object and Nature as Spirit attitudinal orientations. Figure 5.2 shows the inclusion of this new attitudinal orientation and the positioning of Pruitt's discourse.
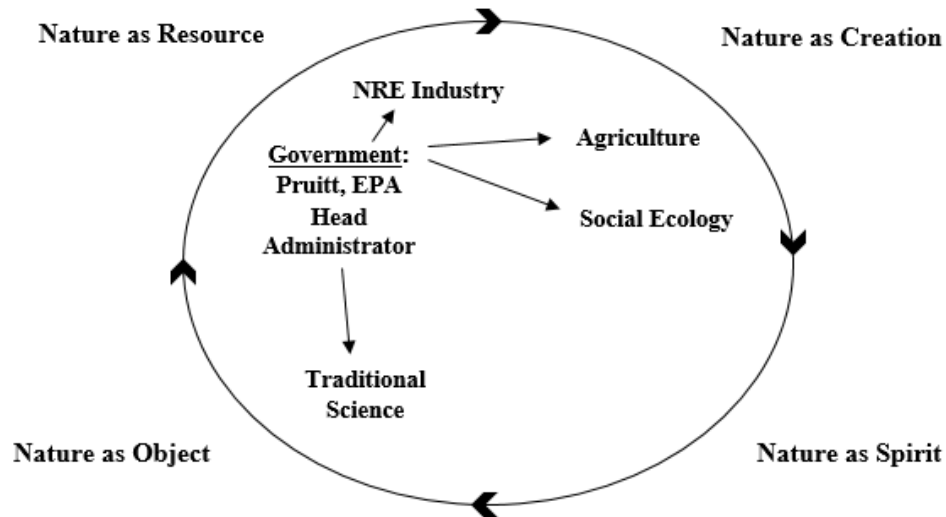

Figure 5.2 My Re-Imagining of K and P's Model for My Second Case Study

In Killingsworth and Palmer's model, rhetorical appeals are only directed toward traditional science and business/industry. But, the findings of my case study show that Pruitt directed rhetorical appeals toward the non-renewable energy industry, agriculture, social ecology, and traditional science.

Rationale for this Re-Imagined Model: Critique of Existing Models

Based on Killingsworth and Palmer's configuration, Scott Pruitt's environmental discourse in his official EPA Head Administrator Twitter account, @EPAScottPruitt, should be hegemonic, since it is the governmental environment organization. (As their description of their model explains, those entities located on the upper portion of the configuration--traditional science, government, industry--are hegemonic.) His discourse should portray Nature as a Resource and Nature as an Object and should appeal to both traditional science and industry. As the EPA's website states ("Our Mission"), the mission of the EPA is to protect human health and

136

the environment. Even under the Trump administration, the EPA website ("Our Mission")

outlines what the EPA will ensure:

- Americans have clean air, land and water;

- National efforts to reduce environmental risks are based on the best available
  scientific information;

- Federal laws protecting human health and the environment are administered and
  enforced fairly, effectively and as Congress intended;

- Environmental stewardship is integral to U.S. policies concerning natural
  resources, human health, economic growth, energy, transportation, agriculture,
  industry, and international trade, and these factors are similarly considered in
  establishing environmental policy;

- All parts of society—communities, individuals, businesses, and state, local and
  tribal governments—have access to accurate information sufficient to effectively
  participate in managing human health and environmental risks;

- Contaminated lands and toxic sites are cleaned up by potentially responsible
  parties and revitalized; and

- Chemicals in the marketplace are reviewed for safety.

A foundation in science is key to what the EPA does: "national efforts to reduce environmental

risks are based on the best available scientific information." Yet, science is rarely mentioned by

Pruitt. The omission in portraying Nature as Object is notable for the head administrator of an

agency that is supposed to be grounded in science. Pruitt's discourse does guide the reader toward

science sometimes, e.g. in Figure 3.13 where he talks about brownfield revitalization with a link

about brownfields from the EPA's official website. But when set amongst tweets that dismiss the

science that has guided the creation of regulation, like in Figure 3.18 where Pruitt dismisses the

science behind the current water regulations, it becomes clear that portraying Nature as an Object is definitively not a part of Pruitt's environmental discourse.

As the closer analysis in my case study revealed, Pruitt's environmental discourse is hegemonic, not because it resides within the government public, but because it actually resides within the non-renewable energy industry public. Pruitt's discourse consistently portrays Nature as a Resource as seen through a majority of the developed themes in this case study. Nature is meant to be used by humans as Pruitt references in his tweets like the example tweet in Figure 3.7. Fossil fuels like coal should be used as humans see fit; for Pruitt in this tweet, that means getting rid of regulations that inhibit energy independence. With its emphasis on repealing/revising existing laws and introducing new laws in order to enable economic growth via the non-renewable energy industry, the sample tweet shown in Figure 3.7 makes explicit the Nature as Resource attitudinal orientation that Pruitt's environmental discourse revolves around.

Based on Herndl and Brown's model, Pruitt's environmental discourse should be strictly regulatory discourse due to its ethnocentric emphasis and Nature as Resource attitudinal orientation. Herndl and Brown define ethnocentric discourse as that which is "devoted to negotiating the benefits of environmental policy measures against a broad range of social interests" (10-11). Pruitt certainly does negotiate the benefits of environmental policy measures against a broad range of social interests, but as the above paragraphs have shown, that negotiation increasingly became detrimental to environmental policy measures in favor of the non-renewable energy industry's interests. Therefore, like Devon Energy's discourse, Pruitt's discourse also does not fit smoothly in Herndl and Brown's model due to the nuance that accompanies his discourse.

Being EPA Head Administrator automatically granted Pruitt credibility, but Pruitt more consistently appealed to people through pathos in his environmental discourse, deviating from the

primary rhetorical appeal, ethos, that Herndl and Brown identify with regulatory discourse. Next, I will briefly provide three examples from each of my three developed themes--an articulated concern in working for/with people, emphasis on environmental stewardship at the state and local levels not the federal level, framing of the non-renewable energy industry as a means to catalyze economic growth--to show how Pruitt more frequently relied upon pathos as the primary rhetorical appeal in his environmental discourse.

In the first example I provide in the articulated concern in working for/with people theme (see fig 3.10) in Chapter 3, Pruitt tweets, "I'm honored to lead @EPA and ready to work for the American people!" He adopts a tone of humility in using the expected "honored" that accompanies an individual accepting a public office, while accentuating that humility in saying "ready to work for." Then, the symbols present within the accompanying photo--red, white, blue clothing, the American flag, the Bible, Pruitt's hands in the oath position--invoke strong emotions connected to patriotism and Christian religiosity.

In the third example I provide in the emphasis on environmental stewardship at the state and local levels not the federal level theme (see fig 3.16) in Chapter 3, Pruitt tweets, "Washington shouldn't get in the way of the 50 states across our nation who care about air, land, and water." Only a month into his service, Pruitt is directly denouncing the power of the federal office he holds by using the first person plural to identify himself with those who disagree with federal regulations. This argument about states' rights is a familiar part of the cultural script of whiteness in Oklahoma; for instance, some individuals argue that they display the Confederate flag as a way to show their support for states' rights or that Confederate monuments should not be torn down in order to show respect for the soldiers who died (Tabar).

In the first example I provide in the framing of the non-renewable energy industry (see fig 3.19) in Chapter 3, Pruitt tweets, "I look forward to working with Western Governors on issues unique to their states, protecting their water & air, & growing their economies." Since he is only a week into his tenure, Pruitt's tone of cooperation and humility through the use of words

like "unique" would not be all that unusual. But because there had been quite a bit of debate about additional regulations connected to the Clean Air Act and Clean Water Act that were mandated during President Obama's administration, Pruitt's use of "unique" along with "protecting their water & air" signals a deviation. Referencing economic growth would signal even more of a deviation.

As these three examples illustrate, while possessing a Nature as Resource attitudinal orientation, Pruitt's regulatory discourse does not primarily appeal to ethos as Herndl and Brown's model dictates. Rather, Pruitt's discourse predominantly relies upon pathos. As the findings of my first case study showed, this divergence suggests that there is more nuance in discourse than Herndl and Brown's model makes allowances for. This nuance continues within the findings of my third case study as well.

Case Study 3

Re-Imagined Environmental Rhetoric Model

In Chapter 4, the findings of my case study of OERB's Petro Pete and his accompanying depiction in books illustrated that the environmental discourse of OERB could be identified to be an actor within the non-renewable energy industry public. OERB's discourse revealed a position near the already-existing Nature as Resource attitudinal orientation and my proposed Nature as Creation attitudinal orientation, while being more distanced from the already-existing Nature as Object and Nature as Spirit attitudinal orientations. Figure 5.3 illustrates the inclusion of this new attitudinal orientation, the positioning of OERB's discourse, and a new entity (education). The new entity, education, is located in a centralized location due to its proximity to all attitudinal orientations.
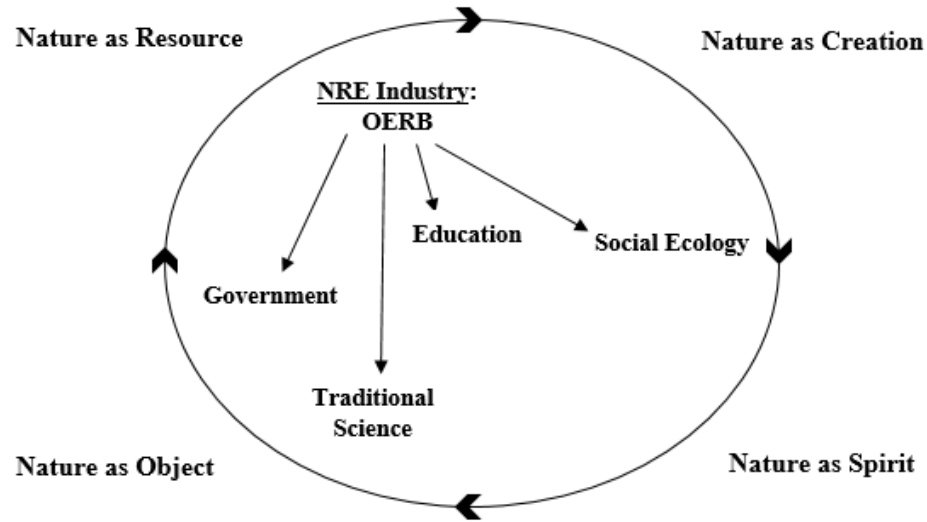
Figure 5.3 My Re-Imagining of K and P's Model for OERB in My Third Case Study

In Killingsworth and Palmer's model, rhetorical appeals are only directed toward government and agriculture. But, the findings of my case study show that OERB directed rhetorical appeals toward education, social ecology, traditional science, and government.

In Chapter 4, the findings of my case study of OREEP's Ree Newable illustrated that the environmental discourse of OREEP identified with the counterpublic of environmental organizations. As I described in the above section, OREEP's discourse revealed an attitudinal orientation near the already-existing Nature as Resource, Nature as Object, and Nature as Spirit attitudinal orientations. Figure 5.4 shows the inclusion of the new attitudinal orientation (Nature as Creation), entities (environmental organization and education), and the positioning of OREEP's discourse.
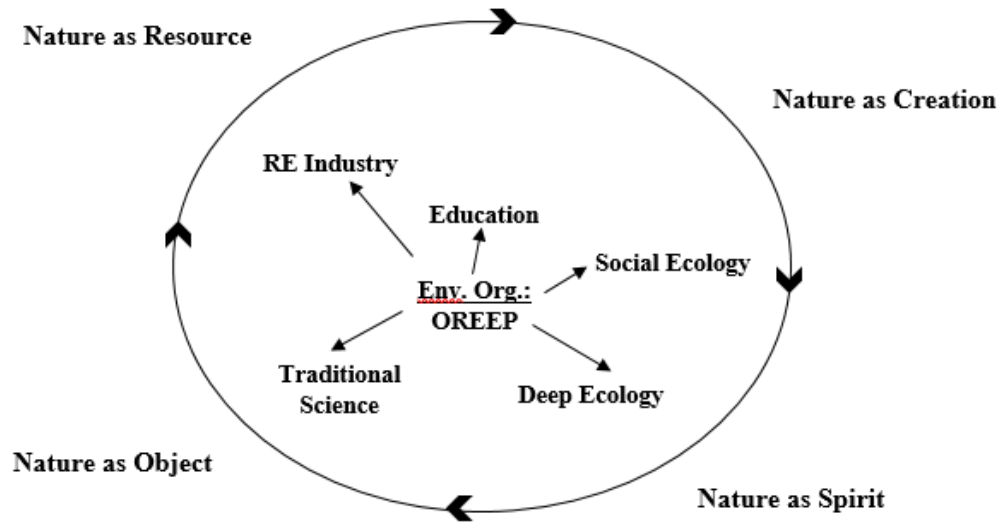
Figure 5.4 My Re-Imagining of K and P's Model for OREEP in My Third Case Study

In Killingsworth and Palmer's model, there is no 'environmental organization' entity anywhere. They describe the environmentalist alliance as being a combination of deep ecology, science, and government (15). This notion of environmentalism does still exist in the more mainstream environmental organizations like the Sierra Club, but as the findings in this case study show, rhetorical appeals are directed from OREEP toward the renewable energy industry, education, social ecology, deep ecology, and traditional science.

Rationale for this Re-Imagined Model: Critique of Existing Models

Based on Killingsworth and Palmer's configuration, OERB's environmental discourse as embodied in Petro Pete is hegemonic, since it is an organization strictly funded by royalties from the non-renewable energy industry. With his oil field worker hardhat with an OERB label, goggles, overalls, gloves, work boots, and bulging biceps, Petro Pete is quite literally the embodiment of the non-renewable energy industry. As I elucidated in Chapter 4, Petro Pete embodies a discourse that portrays Nature as Resource through a reading of him as a white, working-class male within the non-renewable energy industry in Oklahoma.

In embodying a discourse that portrays Nature as Resource, Petro Pete should only rhetorically appeal to those in the government and agriculture based on Killingsworth and Palmer's configuration. But, Petro Pete appeals to more entities than just them. How? I argue that Petro Pete also embodies a Nature as Creation attitudinal orientation, one that is not included on Killingsworth and Palmer's configuration. If Petro Pete is read as white, working-class male with the non-renewable energy industry in Oklahoma, then he can also be read through the rest of the cultural script of whiteness that is normed in Oklahoma. This script involves assumptions about beliefs and values, particularly those connected to a specific fundamentalist version of the Christian faith that invokes dominion by a benevolent authority.

Because Petro Pete embodies a discourse that portrays Nature as Resource and Nature as Creation, it is difficult to discuss him in connection with Herndl and Brown's model at all. No one primary rhetorical appeal could be identified. By depicting Petro Pete as a white, working-class male from the non-renewable energy industry, OERB simultaneously uses ethos to develop their credibility and pathos to remind readers of the benevolence of the industry.

Based on Killingsworth and Palmer's configuration, OREEP's environmental discourse as embodied in Ree Newable is not immediately hegemonic, since it is an organization funded by environmental organizations/nonprofits and the renewable energy industry. Environmental organizations reside on the bottom portion of the configuration around the social ecology perspective, while the renewable energy industry simultaneously resides on the top portion of the configuration in terms of its classification as an industry and the bottom portion of the configuration in terms of its supposed commitment to sustainability. As described by Killingsworth and Palmer (1994), social ecology is driven by "a deep-felt commitment to human culture and sustainable technology."

Therefore, Ree Newable embodies a discourse that portrays Nature as both Resource and Spirit, which according to the configuration, appeals to individuals in agriculture, industry, government, and science. (And, because of the variation in attitudinal orientations and rhetorical

appeals, it is also difficult to talk about Ree Newable in connection with Herndl and Brown's model.) But, can she actually appeal to individuals within all those areas? Does inclusivity work as a rhetorical strategy? I argue that it does not within Ree Newable. Although she was intended to be read as a strong indigenous female who is involved with sustainable technology who deviates from the fundamentalist beliefs and values, she was white-washed.

A Re-Imagined Environmental Rhetoric Model to be Altered

As shown in the above sections, the situatedness of each case study requires its own re-imagining of Killingsworth and Palmer's configuration of perspectives. Would it be possible to create a model that would include all attitudinal orientations (the already existing Nature as Object, Nature as Resource, and Nature as Spirit, in addition to my proposed Nature as Creation), all entities (the already existing traditional science, government, business/industry, agriculture, social ecology, deep ecology, and holistic ecology, in addition to my proposed education and environmental organization entities), and the directionality of all rhetorical appeals for all my case studies? Sure. But, here is what it would look like with my existing re-imagined model. As seen in Figure 5.5 below, I used different types of arrows in order to represent the different case studies.
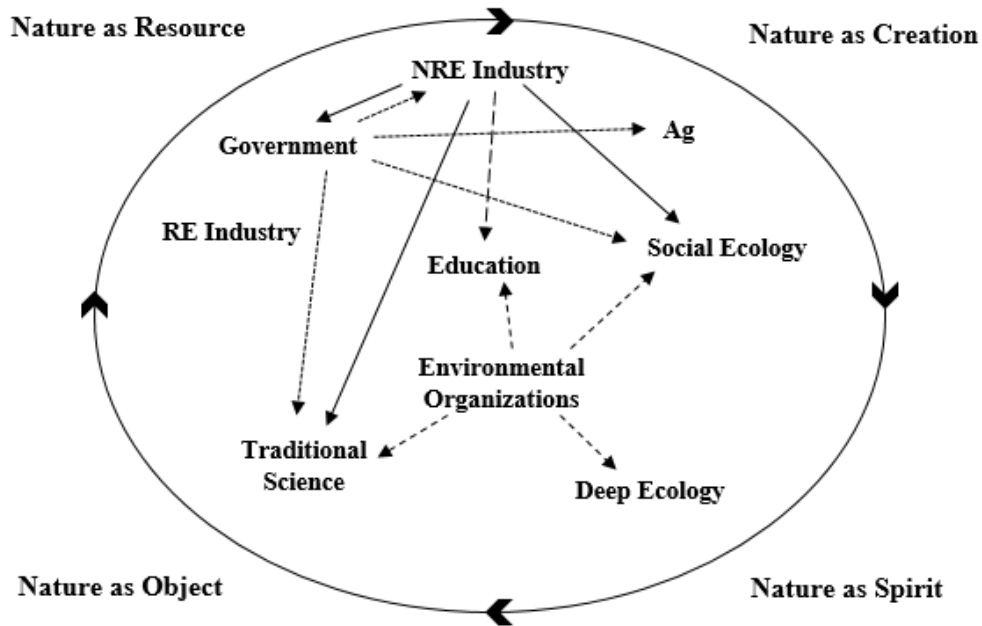
Figure 5.5 My Re-Imagined Environmental Rhetoric Model for Oklahoma

While more all-encompassing, this model is messy design-wise; therefore, it would be more

difficult to explain, even within academia. That is why in the above sections I presented a

different adaptation of my model for each case study. The situatedness of each case study requires

it. The complexity involved in describing environmental discourse need not require a complex

model. Rather, I argue that complexity in describing environmental discourse should be made

more simple through an adaptable model.

　　　If designed to be adaptable, models enable people to more easily understand. The

adaptable model shown in Figure 5.6 helps people visualize environmental discourse, organize

their thoughts about it, and see the relationships between attitudinal orientations and entities. (I

acknowledge though that in some contexts not using a model at all might be what is needed.)

Therefore, I would encourage rhetoricians and rhetors to adapt my re-imagined model seen in

Figure 5.6 as is needed for your particular context. Or, re-imagine it completely, because

certainly, this model possesses both possibilities in limitations in providing a means to talk about

environmental discourse.

Nature as Resource

Industry

Government   Agriculture

Nature as Object   Traditional   Education   Nature as Creation
Science   Social Ecology

Environmental
Organizations
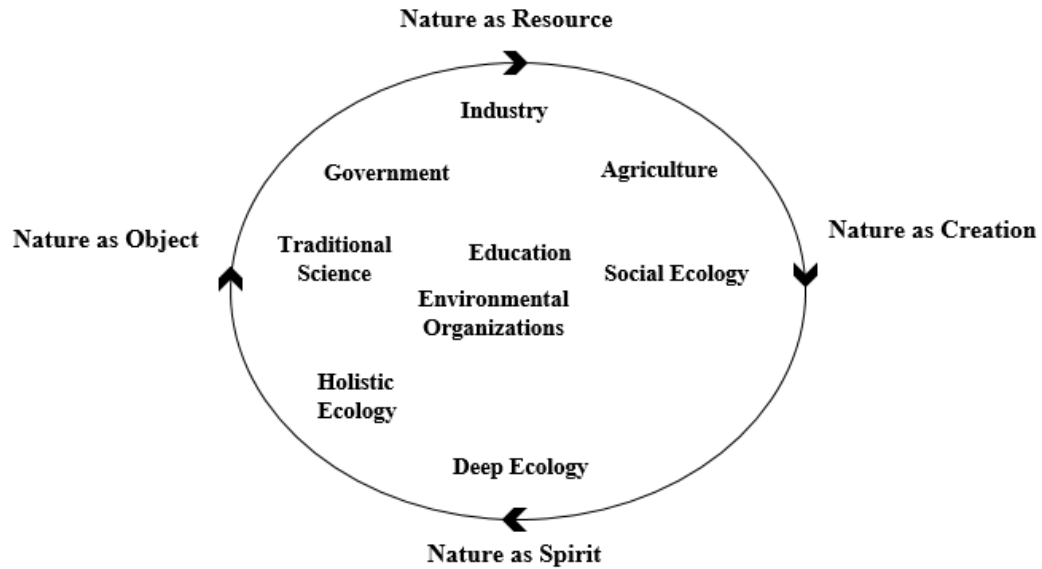
Holistic
Ecology

Deep Ecology

Nature as Spirit

Figure 5.6 My Re-Imagined Environmental Rhetoric Model

So, what are some of the major possibilities and limitations of my model?

1. I would speculate that the attitudinal orientation of Nature as Creation is not solely one that appears within the environmental discourse of actors within Oklahoma. It would probably appear with the environmental discourse of actors in states where the same or similar fundamentalist Christian beliefs and values are held. But, I would also not limit the attitudinal orientations of environmental discourse within our contexts to just the four I include.

2. I would assume that other entities would need to be added or subtracted to this model if I conducted additional case studies in Oklahoma or elsewhere. For example, in the future, I hope to conduct case studies connected to the environmental discourse of particular Christian denominations that officially do and do not hold the fundamentalist beliefs and values about dominion in connection with environmental stewardship. Within those case studies, adding religious institutions would be necessary.

3. I elected to not include the directionality of rhetorical appeals through the use of arrows, because once again, the situatedness of a particular context would dictate those appeals

146

which are constantly shifting. I would simply direct rhetoricians and rhetors to include the arrows in order to illustrate how rhetorical appeals are being made.

4. While the non-renewable energy industry is clearly hegemonic as a public here in Oklahoma now based on my three case studies, its position will shift due to the impending depletion of fossil fuels in the next few decades. I assuming that renewable energy industry will take their place. The likelihood of this shift is why I included the revolving arrows. But also, I included the revolving arrows, because it is possible attitudinal orientations will change or disappear.

My Journey Continues

Bare branches of post oaks and black oaks sway in front of me. As I stare out the window of my study, it occurs to me that every word of this dissertation has been typed here—inside an 8'x10' space with my laptop propped up on a meal tray that rests on a twin bed pushed against the wall. A limited space. I stand as I write, rocking back and forth, shifting my weight from left to right and back again. Sometimes, the windows have been open. But most of the time, they have remained closed. Researching, thinking, and writing are hard for me to do, but especially if I can feel the outside pushing its way into me.

I recognize that this space is similar to what I have wanted my dissertation to be and do— simply a glimpse into the environmental discourse of Oklahoma that might provide others insight into how discourse molds us just as we mold it. I acknowledge that someone else from another space might have a different window that holds a different view. And, I also acknowledge that someday I might see other views from this same window. But for now, this project illustrates what I have researched and discovered about environmental discourse in Oklahoma.

The religiosity I was often surrounded with in the first twenty years of my life might have resulted in my possessing the fundamentalist Nature of Creation attitudinal orientation described

147

in this Conclusion, but the next seventeen years of life have shifted the way that I understand and interact with Nature. As this dissertation illustrates, I am actively looking for ways to more deeply understand and hopefully alter the environmental discourse here in Oklahoma.

REFERENCES

Anderson, Meg. "CHARTS: Here's What Donald Trump Has Said on the Issues." National

    Public Radio. November 16, 2017. https://www.npr.org/2016/11/17/501582824/charts

    heres-what-donald-trump-has-said-on-the-issues

Ballotpedia. "Presidential Election in Oklahoma, 2016."

    https://ballotpedia.org/Presidential_election_in_Oklahoma,_2016

---. "Presidential Election in Oklahoma, 2020."

    https://ballotpedia.org/Presidential_election_in_Oklahoma,_2020

Barthes, Roland. *Image-Music-Text.* New York, Hill and Wang, 1977.

Berger, John. *Ways of Seeing.* New York, Penguin, 1977.

Blatt, David. "Increased Gross Production Taxes are Fueling State's Revenue Boom." *Oklahoma*

    Policy Institute.

    https://okpolicy.org/increased-gross-production-taxes-are-fueling-states-revenue-boom/

    5 January 2021.

Bratta, Phil and Malea Powell. "Introduction: Entering the Cultural Rhetorics Conversations."

    Enculturation: A Journal of Rhetoric, Writing, and Culture, April 2016.

    http://enculturation.net/entering-the-cultural-rhetorics-conversations

Brunner, Daniel, et al. *Introducing Evangelical Ecotheology: Foundations in Scripture, Theology,*

    History, and Praxis. Grand Rapids, Michigan, Baker Academic, 2014.

Burke, Kenneth. *A Rhetoric of Motives.* University of California Press, 1969.

Capek, Stella. "Surface Motives." *Symbolic Interaction*, vol. 29, no. 2, 2006, pp. 157-181.

Carbon Disclosure Project. https://www.cdp.net/en

Caragee, Kevin and Wim Roefs. "The Neglect of Power in Recent Framing Research." *Journal of Communication*, vol. 52, no.2, 2004, pp. 214-233.

Carney, Dana, Amy Cuddy, and Andy Yap. "Power Posing: Brief Nonverbal Displays Affect Neuroendocrine Levels and Risk Tolerance." *Psychological Science*, vol. 21, no. 10, January 2010, pp. 1363–1368.

Charmaz, Kathy. *Constructing Grounded Theory*. 2nd ed., Sage, 2014.

Cloud, Dana. *Reality Bites: Rhetoric and the Circulation of Truth Claims in U.S. Political Culture.* The Ohio State University Press, 2018.

Coal Age. "Harvey Mine: The Road to Today." Accessed on 17 November 2020. https://www.coalage.com/features/harvey-mine-the-road-to-today/

Cobos Casie et al. "Interfacing Cultural Rhetorics: A History and a Call." *Rhetoric Review*, vol. 37, no. 2, 2018, pp. 139-154.

Cook, John, et al. "Consensus on Consensus: A Synthesis of Consensus Estimates on Human -Caused Global Warming." *Environmental Research Letter*, vol. 11, no. 4, April 2016. DOI:10.1088/1748-9326/11/4/048002

Coppola, Nancy. "Rhetorical Analysis of Stakeholders in Environmental Communication: A Model." *Technical Communication Quarterly*, vol. 6, no. 1, 1997, pp. 9-24.

Corbett, Julia and Jessica Durfee. "Testing Public Uncertainty of Science." *Science Communication*, vol. 26, no. 2, 2004, pp. 129-151. DOI:10.1088/1748-9326/11/4/048002

Crowley, Sharon. *Toward a Civil Discourse: Rhetoric and Fundamentalism.* Pittsburgh,

    University of Pittsburgh, 2006.

Cushman, Ellen. "The Public Intellectual, Service Learning, and Activist Research." *College*

    English, vol. 61, no. 3, 1999, pp. 328-336.

Davenport, Coral and Eric Lipton. "The Pruitt Emails: E.P.A. Chief was Arm in Arm with

    Industry." *New York Times.* 22 February 2017.

    https://www.nytimes.com/2017/02/22/us/politics/scott-pruitt-environmental-protection-

    agency.html

Dayton, David. "Evaluating Environmental Impact Statements as Communicative Action."

    Journal of Business and Technical Communication, vol. 16, no. 4, 2002, 355-405.

Dennis, Brady and Steven Mufson. "Thousands of Emails Detail EPA Head's Close Ties to

    Fossil Fuel Industry." *Washington Post.* February 22, 2017.

    https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/energy-environment/wp/2017/02/22/oklahoma-

    attorney-generals-office-releases-7500-pages-of-emails-between-scott-pruitt-and-fossil-

    fuel-industry/

DeCerteau, Michel. *The Practice of Everyday Life.* University of California Press, 2011.

DeLuca, Kevin. *Image Politics: The New Rhetoric of Environmental Activism.* New York, The

    Guilford Press, 1999.

Devon Energy. "Make a Difference." Interest Owners tab. Accessed March 12, 2021.

    https://www.devonenergy.com/interest-owners

Dobrin, Sidney and Sean Morey, eds. *Ecosee: Image, Rhetoric, Nature.* New York, SUNY Press,

    2009.

Dochuk, Darren. *Anointed with Oil.* New York, Basic Books, 2019.

Entman, Robert. "Framing: Toward Clarification of a Fractured Paradigm," *Journal of Communication*, vol. 43, no. 4, 1993, pp. 51-58.

Environment and Climate Change Canada. "Acts and Regulations." November 19, 2020. https://www.canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change/corporate/transparency/acts-regulations.html

Environmental Protection Agency. "Enforcement: Clean Air Act (CAA) and Federal Facilities." https://www.epa.gov/enforcement/clean-air-act-caa-and-federal-facilities

---. "What Climate Change Means for Oklahoma." August 2016. https://19january2017snapshot.epa.gov/sites/production/files/2016-09/documents/climate-change-ok.pdf

Ferns, George. "7 Myths Big Oil is Using to Convince People It Can Solve Climate Change." *Newsweek.* February 23, 2018. https://www.newsweek.com/seven-myths-big-oil-using-convince-people-it-can-solve-climate-change-817570

Franks, Kenny. *The Oklahoma Petroleum Industry.* Norman, OK, the University of Oklahoma Press, 1980.

---. "Petroleum Industry." *Oklahoma Historical Society.* https://www.okhistory.org/publications/enc/entry.php?entryname=PETROLEUM%20INDUSTRY#:~:text=Oil%20ushered%20Oklahoma%20into%20the,%2C%20Louisiana%2C%20and%20New%20Mexico.

Gaby, Keith. "Scott Pruitt's Web of Fundraising and Lawsuits." EDF Action: Advocacy Partner
of the Environmental Defense Fund. https://www.edfaction.org/scott-pruitts-web-
fundraising-and-lawsuits

Gregory, Robert. *Oil in Oklahoma.* Muskogee, OK, Leak Industries, Inc., 1976.

Habermas, Jurgen. *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a
Category of Bourgeois Society.* Cambridge, MA, The MIT Press, 1989.

Hagen, Rebecca, and Kim Golombisky. *White Space is not Your Enemy.* 3rd ed. Boca Raton, FL,
CRC Press, 2017.

Hauser, Gerard. *Vernacular Voices: The Rhetoric of Publics and Public Spheres.* Columbia, SC,
University of South Carolina Press, 1999.

Hayhoe, Katherine. "The Most Important Thing You Can Do About Climate Change: Talk About
It." TED Talk. November 2018.
https://www.ted.com/talks/katharine_hayhoe_the_most_important_thing_you_can_do_to
fight_climate_change_talk_about_it?language=en

Hum, Sue. "'Between the Eyes': The Racialized Gaze as Design." *College English*, vol. 77, no.
3, 2015, pp. 191-215.

Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change. "Summary for Policy Makers: 2019 Update."
Accessed on 3 September 2020. https://www.ipcc.ch/report/sr15/summary-for-
policymakers/

Jaworska, Sylvia. "Change But No Climate Change in Corporate Social Responsibility
Reporting in the Oil Industry." *International Journal of Business Communication*, vol.
55, no. 2, 2018, pp. 194-219.

Kennedy, Tammie, et al. *Rhetorics of Whiteness: Postracial Hauntings in Popular Culture, Social Media, and Education.* Carbondale, Southern Illinois Press, 2016.

Killman, Curtis. "Pruitt Lawsuits, Other Actions Taken Against EPA." *Tulsa World.* December 8, 2016. https://tulsaworld.com/news/local/crime-and-courts/pruitt-lawsuits-other-actions-taken-against-epa/article_c2b975d2-0df0-5e6c-aa8b-ce6d1758ea9e.html

Kirsch, Gena. "From Introspection to Action: Connecting Spirituality and Civic Engagement." *College Composition and Communication*, vol. 60, no. 4, 2009, pp.

Kress, Gunther and Theo van Leeuwen. *Reading Images: The Grammar of Visual Design.* New York, Routledge, 2005.

Kuo, Gioietta. "When Fossil Fuels Run Out, What Then?" Millennium Alliance for Humanity and the Biosphere. May 2019. https://mahb.stanford.edu/library-item/fossil-fuels-run/

Lakoff, George. *Don't Think of an Elephant: Know Your Values and Frame the Debate.* Chelsea Green Publishing, Vermont, 2004.

Lipton, Eric. "Energy Firms in Secretive Alliance with Attorneys General." December 6, 2014. https://www.nytimes.com/2014/12/07/us/politics/energy-firms-in-secretive-alliance-with-attorneys-general.html

Liu, Jingfang and Phaedra Pezzullo. *Green Communication and China: On Crisis, Care, and Global Futures.* Michigan State University Press, 2020.

Mailloux, Steven. *Disciplinary Identities: Rhetorical Paths of English, Speech, and Composition.* New York: Modern Language Association of America, 2006.

Mason, Marianne and Robert Mason. "Communicating a Green Corporate Perspective:

    Ideological Persuasion in the Corporate Environmental Report." *Journal of Business*

    and Technical Communication, vol. 26, no. 4, 2012, pp. 479-506.

McCloud, Scott. *Understanding Images: The Invisible Art.* New York: Harper Collins, 1993.

McFague, Sallie. *A New Climate for Theology: God, the World, and Global Warming.*

    Minneapolis, Fortress Press, 2008.

---. *Blessed are the Consumers: Climate Change and the Practice of Restraint.* Minneapolis,

    Fortress Press, 2013.

---. *Super, Natural Christians: How we should love nature.* Minneapolis, Fortress Press, 1997.

---. *The Body of God: An Ecological Theology.* Minneapolis, Fortress Press, 1993.

Medina-Lopez, Kelly. "Rasquache Rhetorics: A Cultural Rhetorics Sensibility." *Constellations.*

    May 2018. Accessed on 26 August 2020. http://constell8cr.com/issue-1/rasquache-

    rhetorics-a-cultural-rhetorics-sensibility/

Mirzoeff, Nicholas. *How to See the World: An Introduction to Images, from Self-Portraits to*

    Selfies, Maps to Movies, and More. New York, Basic Books, 2016.

Mohai, Paul, et al. "Environmental Justice." *Annual Review of Environment and Resources*, vol.

    24, 2009, pp. 405-430.

National Center for Education Statistics. "Revenues and Expenditures for Public Elementary and

    Secondary Education: FY 18." https://nces.ed.gov/pubs2020/2020306.pdf

Ogden, CK and IA Richards. *The Meaning of Meaning: A Study of Influence of Language Upon*

    Thought and the of the Science of Symbolism. New York: Harcourt, 1923.

Oklahoma Energy Resources Board. "About." Accessed on 19 May 2020.

>   https://www.oerb.com/about

---. Bio: David Ferris. Accessed on 13 March 2021. https://oerb.com/bios/david-ferris/

---. 2019 Annual Report. Accessed on 20 May 2020.

>   https://www.oerb.com/uploads/oerb-annualreport-final.pdf

Oklahoma Historical Society. "Nellie Johnstone Number One." By Linda D Wilson. Accessed on

>   1 June 2020. https://www.okhistory.org/publications/enc/entry.php?entry=NE003

Oklahoma Renewable Energy Education Program. Accessed on 19 May 2020.

>   https://www.oreep.org/about-vision

Oklahoma Senate Session Summaries. "2003 – First Session of the 49th Legislature."

>   https://oksenate.gov/sites/default/files/2019-12/2003_legislative_summary.pdf

---. "2005 – First Session of the 50th Legislature." https://oksenate.gov/sites/default/files/2019-
>   12/2005_legislative_summary.pdf

Oklahoma Tax Commission. "Chapter 45: Gross Production." Accessed on 1 June 2020.

>   https://www.ok.gov/tax/documents/Chapter%2045%20Gross%20Production.pdf

Palmer, Jennifer. "Digging Deeper into Public School Enrollment." *Oklahoma Watch*. Accessed

>   on 19 May 2020. https://oklahomawatch.org/2019/12/22/trends-in-oklahoma-public-
>   school-enrollment/

Patterson, Robert and Ronald Lee. "The Environmental Rhetoric of 'Balance': A Case Study of

>   Regulatory Discourse and the Colonization of the Public." *Technical Communication

>   Quarterly*, vol. 6, no. 1, 1997, pp. 25-40.

Pellow, David. *Resisting Global Toxics: Transnational Movements for Environmental Justice.* Cambridge, The MIT Press, 2007.

Petition for Review of Methane Rule. United States Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit. August 2, 2016. http://ago.wv.gov/publicresources/epa/Documents/16-1264%2 0date%20stamped%20Petition%20for%20Review%20Methane%20Rule%20(M013207 5xCECC6).pdf. Accessed September 2020.

Pew Research Center. "Religious Landscape Study: Adults in Oklahoma." Accessed on 12 October 2020. https://www.pewforum.org/religious-landscape-study/state/oklahoma/

Pezzullo, Phaedra. *Toxic Tourism: Rhetorics of Pollution, Travel, and Environmental Justice.* Tuscaloosa, University of Alabama Press, 2007.

Powell, Malea, et al. "Our Story Begins Here: Constellating Cultural Rhetorics Practices." *Enculturation: A Journal of Rhetoric, Writing and Culture,* vol. 18, 2014. http://enculturation.net/our-story-begins-here

Pruitt, Scott and Luther Strange. "The Climate-Change Gang." National Review. Accessed on 9 October 2020. https://www.nationalreview.com/2016/05/climate-change-attorneys general/

Rademaekers, Justin and Richard Johnson-Sheehan. "Framing and Re-framing in Environmental Science: Explaining Climate Change to the Public. *Journal of Technical Writing and Communication,* vol. 44, no. 1, pp. 3-21.

Rivers, Nathaniel. "Deep Ambivalence and Wild Objects: Toward a Strange Environmental Rhetoric." *Rhetoric Society Quarterly,* vol. 45, no. 5, pp. 420-440.

Ross, Derek. "Dam Visuals: The Changing Visual Argument for the Glen Canyon Dam." *Journal of Technical Writing and Communication*, vol. 38, no. 1, 2008, 75-94.

---. "Common Topics and Commonplaces of Environmental Rhetoric." *Written Communication*,

vol. 30, no. 1, 2013, pp. 91-131.

---. *Topic-Driven Environmental Rhetoric*. New York: Routledge, 2017.

Ross, Donald. "Environmental Impact Communication: Cape Wind EIS, 2001-2015." *Journal of Technical Writing and Communication*, vol. 48, no. 2, 2018, pp. 222-249.

Rude, Carolyn. "Environmental Policy Making and the Report Genre." *Technical Communication Quarterly*, vol. 6, no. 1, 1997, 77-90.

Rule of Law Defense Fund. "About." https://rldf.org/about/

Schmitt, Casey. "Scapegoat Ecology: Blame, Exoneration, and an Emergent Genre in Environmentalist Discourse." *Environmental Communication,* vol. 13, no. 2, July 2018, pp. 152-164.

Serafini, Frank. "Reading Multimodal Texts: Perceptual, Structural, and Ideological Perspectives." *Children's Literature in Education*, vol. 41, April 2010, pp. 85-104.

Southern Baptist Convention. "Resolution: On Global Warming (June 1, 2007)." Accessed on 11 November 2020. https://www.sbc.net/resource-library/resolutions/on-global-warming/

Stanley, Jason. *How Propaganda Works.* Princeton University Press, 2015.

The Bible. New Revised Standard Version, HarperCollins, 1989.

The BIPOC Project: A Black, Indigenous, People of Color Movement. https://www.thebipocproject.org/

Tabar, Emily. "Heated Arguments at Protest Over Durant Confederate Statue." July 1, 2020. https://www.kxii.com/2020/07/01/heated-arguments-at-protest-over-durant-confederate-statue/

Trump Twitter Archive. "Global Warming Collection." Accessed on 9 October 2020. http://www.trumptwitterarchive.com/archive/global%20warming/ftff

U.S. Census Bureau. "Quick Facts: Oklahoma Population Estimates." Accessed on 1 June 2020. https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/OK/RHI125218

---. "Pennsylvania." Accessed on 17 November 2020.

U.S. Energy Information Administration. "Oklahoma: State Profile and Energy Estimates."

    Accessed on 1 June 2020. https://www.eia.gov/state/analysis.php?sid=OK

---. "U.S. Crude Oil and Natural Gas Proved Reserves, Year-end 2019." Accessed on 1 June

    2020. https://www.eia.gov/naturalgas/crudeoilreserves/

United States Environmental Protection Agency. "What Climate Change Means for Oklahoma."

    Accessed on 20 August 2020.

    https://19january2017snapshot.epa.gov/sites/production/files/2016-

    09/documents/climate-change-ok.pdf

Van Dijck, Jose. *The Culture of Connectivity: A Critical History of Social Media.* London,

    Oxford University Press, 2013.

Volcovici, Valerie. "Trump Administration Tells EPA to Cut Climate Change Page from

    Website: Sources." Accessed on 9 October 2020. https://www.reuters.com/article/us-usa-

    trump-epa-climatechange/trump-administration-tells-epa-to-cut-climate-page-from-

    website-sources-idUSKBN15906G

Ware, Lawrence. "Why I'm Leaving the Southern Baptist Convention." *New York Times*, July

    17, 2017. https://www.nytimes.com/2017/07/17/opinion/why-im-leaving-the-southern-

    baptist-convention.html

Warner, Michael. *Publics and Counterpublics.* New York, Zone Books, 2005.

Warnick, Barbara and David S. Heineman. *Rhetoric Online: The Politics of New Media.* 2nd ed,

    New York, Peter Lang Publishing, 2012.

White, Lynn. "The Historical Roots of Our Ecological Crisis." *Science*, vol. 155, no. 3767, 1967,

    pp. 1203-1207.

Willerton, Russell. "Visual Metonymy and Synecdoche: Rhetoric for Stage-Setting Images."

    Journal of Technical Writing and Communication, vol. 35, no. 1, 2005, pp. 3-31.

Wysocki, Anne. "Introduction: Into Between--On Composition in Mediation." *composing*

    (media) = composing (embodiment), edited by Kristin Arola and Anne Wysocki

    Boulder: University Press of Colorado, 2012.

Yale Program on Climate Change Communication. "Yale Climate Opinion Map: Oklahoma

    2019." Accessed on 26 August 2020.

    https://climatecommunication.yale.edu/visualizations-data/ycom-us/

VITA

Christina Joy Graves Lane

Candidate for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Dissertation: ENVIRONMENTAL DISCOURSE IN OKLAHOMA:
EXAMINING RHETORICAL STRATEGIES IN THREE CASE STUDIES

Major Field: English

Biographical:

Education:

Completed the requirements for the Doctor of Philosophy in English at Oklahoma State University, Stillwater, Oklahoma in May, 2021.

Completed the requirements for the Master of Education in TESL/Bilingual Education at the University of Central Oklahoma, Edmond, Oklahoma in 2010.

Completed the requirements for the Bachelor of Arts in Religious Education at Oklahoma City University, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma in 2007.

Experience:

Graduate Assistant FYC Director, OSU, Stillwater, OK, 2018-2020

Instructor, OSU, 2016-2020

Writing Center Tutor/Community Engagement Facilitator, OSU, 2015-2017

English/History Teacher, Central Texas Christian School, Temple, TX, 2013-2015

Language Arts Teacher and RTI Facilitator, Travis Science Academy, Temple, TX 2012-2013

ELL Coordinator for Oklahoma City Public Schools at Northwest Classen High School, OK, 2010-2011

English/ESL/Humanities Teacher, Northwest Classen High School, 2008-2010

EFL Teacher, Baptist Student Center, Bangkok, Thailand, 2007-2008

Professional Memberships:

National Council of Teachers of English, Coalition for Community Writing