THE COMMODIFICATION OF EXIGENCY:

RHETORICAL EXIGENCY AS VALUE IN LATE CAPITALIST SOCIETY

by

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(Under the Direction of Michelle Ballif)

ABSTRACT

This thesis aims to explore the commodification of exigency in consideration of the late capitalist, neoliberal era. In asserting a shift to the rhetorical circulation, I propose wedding Foucauldian and Marxist views in light of biopolitical production in order to position rhetoric as labor in the conception of circulation and value, and explain how rhetorical acts become commodifiable in a neoliberal era. The case study of the Green New Deal and its response provide an example of how such interplay works within the rhetoric surrounding the resolution. I argue that such politicizing of these urgencies turn them into commodified goods exchanged for their value. Exigency thus becomes a commodity which we use to raise our value in the labor of communication. Such an investigation highlights the prominent shift of exigency in rhetorical communication, as well as addressing the need for new ways of thinking about rhetoric in our current society.

INDEX WORDS: Exigency, Commodification, Rhetorical Circulation, Neoliberalism, Biopolitics, Late Capitalism, Affective Ecologies, Affect Labor, Green New Deal

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INTRODUCING THE GREEN NEW DEAL

"It is our great collective misfortune that the scientific community made its decisive diagnosis of the climate threat at the precise moment when an elite minority was enjoying more unfettered political, cultural, and intellectual power than at any point since the 1920s."

-Naomi Klein

On February 7, 2019, the House of Representatives issued a resolution titled "Recognizing the duty of the Federal Government to create a Green New Deal." A few pages into a rather short document, fourteen pages total, Senator Ed Markey and Representative Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez present several solutions in addressing climate change, while potentially boosting the economy and living conditions of "frontline and vulnerable communities" (U.S. Congress 4). The resolution begins by stating scientific reports on global warming, listing severe consequences for the planet if we continue emitting greenhouse gases at the current rate. Segueing into the responsibility of the United States, as both a world leader and the nation responsible for releasing a disproportionate amount of the emissions, the resolution begins to mirror Franklin D. Roosevelt's New Deal from the 1930s.

At the end of the preamble, the resolution states, "Whereas the House of Representatives recognizes that a new national, social, industrial, and economic mobilization on a scale not seen since World War II and the New Deal era is a historic

opportunity," followed by similar proposals from the New Deal such as job creation and social security (5). As the New Deal responded to the Great Depression, the *Green* New Deal responds to current economic disparity and the depression-like consequences from inaction on climate change. Almost every single motion concerning greener initiatives is followed by economic advantages, whether addressing economic disparity, minority land rights, pro-union labor rights, new jobs, and the like. Indeed, climate change reform is so intertwined with economic reform, the main topic on greener initiatives could be easily relegated to the background, as merely an added bonus.

Efforts to impose greener initiatives find their American roots in the Green Party, specifically in 2006 with the Green New Deal Task Force. Yet, while Green Party candidates such as Jill Stein received their fifteen seconds of fame as a third-party candidate during presidential campaigning, the ideas surrounding the Green New Deal would remain in the background for quite some time. The phrase, Green New Deal, began finding mainstream popularity thanks in part to journalist Thomas L. Friedman's opinion articles in *The New York Times* and *New York Time Magazine* in 2007, wherein he rallies for rethinking the term "green" and its necessity in economic policy change. Another decade would follow of calling for greener initiatives in various op-ed pieces and few scientific reports before becoming a contentious Thanksgiving dinner topic. Since the Green New Deal entered U.S. politics again in 2019 with the House of Representatives' resolution, the rhetoric surrounding the link between economic policy and climate change intensified, for better or worse. Though the Senate voted down the resolution in March of 2019, echoes of a Green New Deal are still heard in the climate change debates surrounding the upcoming 2020 presidential election.

Regardless of whether the deal may find success in America's future, the Green New Deal resolution and its reception highlights an integral shift in rhetorical communication in regards to such exigencies, or urgent needs, as climate change. For many modern exigencies, the problems and solutions often seem paradoxical. Studies show climate change is profoundly caused by capitalism, yet solutions to climate change are stalled by capitalism, because many of those solutions would in fact impede capitalistic ventures, such as oil extraction and manufacturing. The same impediments apply to nearly all of our prominent exigencies today. Calls for healthcare reform are continuously thwarted by insurance companies, demands for immigration policies are bolstered by alleged threats to the job market, and the decimation of small business is heralded by monopolistic corporations backed by government subsidies. Thus, how do we define the discourse surrounding such situations, wherein multiple enacting agencies impede persuasion to act?

Traditional rhetorical teaching would call for identifying the speaker, text and audience of such exigential speeches as climate change resolutions. We would point to a problem, such as the rise in sea levels due to ice shelves melting, considering this as cause for utterance. We may then analyze the audience's reception, concluding to the efficacy of the speech in regard to (in)action on such an exigency. Yet, one look at the cacophony surrounding climate change and things get very complicated. In a society dominated by the capitalist economic model, invisible markets seem to dominate. It is therefore much too simple to consider one enacting agent, let alone single causes urging action. In a time where mass media infiltrates the household, information spreads in a variety of ways. Instead of a speaker, we have a multitude of voices, instead of a

message, we are inundated with differing accounts, and our exigencies are now disregarded urgencies or tokenized economic demands. Thus, how do we define political exigencies and their elements when the traditional rhetorical modes no longer apply? Such a shift asks us to rethink the traditional modes of the rhetorical situation, of agency, and of affect.

As many rhetoric scholars have been combing through the multi-faceted debates over our global climate crisis, one thing becomes clear, this is indeed an "exigency in dispute" (Banning). As scientific research into the causes and effects of climate change are booming, many scholars have been analyzing such research and climate activism to understand why such information has little to no impact on policy change. As Ambuj Sagar and Milind Kandliker state in their analysis of the Conference of Parties in the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change in Kyoto, "the real battles over climate change are being fought over issues of trade and national competitiveness in the context of greenhouse policies" (Kandliker 3139). Just as with the Green New Deal, the climate crisis shifts to the background of economic incentive.

Alarming scientific studies also seem unable to translate the crisis to the public, causing many rhetoricians to plead for incorporating the art of rhetoric in scientific debate, as Leah Ceccarelli does in *The Conversation*. As such studies into the rhetoric of climate activism are beginning to emerge, such as Peter Bsumek, et. al.'s analysis of activist Bill McKibben's "strategic gestures to identify and theorize social movement interventions that have significant symbolic and material consequences" (Bsumek), and the handful of front facing books, such as Naomi Klein's last few publications, primary focus tends to either urge improved rhetorical communication between scientists and the

public, or explain policy inaction by the government through economic means. Consequently, it becomes necessary to not only improve rhetorical communication, but also reframe it to fit into the economic motives that strangle modern exigencies.

While several scholars, such as Catherine Chaput and Ronald Walter Greene, as well as others mentioned in this essay, challenge the older models of agency and the rhetorical situation itself, I propose a closer analysis on the rhetorical element of exigency in modern communication. We must address the dominance of capitalism that bleeds into our everyday utterances, specifically in regard to demands for the greater good. The Green New Deal resolution and society's response exemplifies how we may manipulate such an exigency in economic terms, creating a mode of exchange between rhetorical communication and economic or political benefit for those involved.

Climate change itself has become such a bipartisan issue, that this particular exigency is now addressed *only* in terms of voter support or economic value, much like other urgencies in our time, such as abortion, immigration, and so on. It is quite common to hear about last minute flip votes that disregard constituents' opinions, wherein a politician may campaign on a platform for certain social issues, just to eventually pass or block opposing legislation for monetary kickbacks or support for future campaigns. Lobbying also promotes such directed interest, often regardless of majority voter opinion. Yet, an exigency such as climate change extends far beyond the politicians and their cohorts, begging the question as to why resolutions such as the Green New Deal and its public reception are still shrouded in economic language.

While the story of the unjust government and the greedy politician is by no means new, such exigencies like climate change, wherein everyone will be affected and a

plethora of scientific study predicts such disastrous outcomes, urge us to redefine the way rhetorical communication works in this era. As mentioned previously, older sender-receiver models of the rhetorical situation, as well as the rhetor, or agent, being moved by the urgency to perform an exigential speech do not quite fit the current times. Coupled with rapidly advancing technology and mass mediated communication, the old rhetorical triangle morphs into an incomprehensible web. Further, the prominent exigencies of our time are no longer successful calls to action for the greater good, rather the urgencies are merely treated as exchangeable goods.

A further cause for this complex rhetorical structure surrounding exigencies is the current political era in which we reside. If we are to consider our late capitalist society from a neoliberalist lens, nothing seemingly escapes the reach of government. While the definitions surrounding the term neoliberalism are complex, for the purposes of this paper, I refer to neoliberalism as an economic paradigm characterized by free market trade, deregulation, privatization and individualization, a paradigm which Neil Brenner et. al. describe as "an extension of market-based competition and commodification processes into previously insulated realms of political-economic life" (Brenner 329). I argue that such politicising of these urgencies turn them into commodified goods exchanged for their value, a side effect of our neoliberal, late capitalist era, wherein economic gain supersedes any action.

This paper aims to explore the commodification of exigency in consideration of the neoliberal era. By setting a foundation composed of Catherine Chaput's theories on the rhetorical circulation and exigency's role within such a circulation, I set forth a way to discuss how rhetoric works in our late capitalist, neoliberal society. I briefly analyze

Karl Marx's seminal theories to construct the economic language of circulation, exchange, and commodification needed to clarify how such processes work. I next analyze Michel Foucault's theories on biopolitics and their relationship with neoliberalism, to further construct the current environment for which rhetorical acts of labor are entangled within the biopolitical processes of our neoliberal era. Because of the contention between Marxist and Foucauldian views, I address the gaps in Marxist theory as identified by Foucault, which opens a route for which we can use Marxist terminology when addressing both Foucault's neoliberal and biopolitical theories. By turning to Ronald Walter Greene's approach to rhetorical agency as communicative labor and Michael Hardt's concept of affective labor, we may position rhetoric as labor in the Marxist conception of circulation and value, and how rhetorical acts become commodifiable in a neoliberal era.

Once the stage is set, we can further explore how the act of commodification works within the circulation. I then address how aspects of the rhetorical circulation become commodifiable if we are to consider Jenny Rice's notion of affective ecologies found within the rhetorical circulation, wherein the elements of rhetoric heavily influence one another. Chaput's theories on market affect work within said ecologies to further understand neoliberalism's strong hold on rhetorical communication. The case study of the Green New Deal and its response provide us with a real-life example of how such interplay works within the rhetoric surrounding the resolution.

To complete the exchange of exigency, we must address those inside and outside of the exchange. I propose rethinking the notion of audience as a collective unit, and instead signal to Biesecker and Chaput's notion of fluctuating identities. I look to both

sides of the exchange of exigency, to see how we may manipulate rhetorical concepts and misconstrue our sense of need. I then turn to those left out of the exchange, the docile bodies or passive citizens. Finally, I consider Chaput's notion of market affect, and how we might engender an active challenge to the commodification of exigency. Such an investigation highlights the prominent shift of exigency in rhetorical communication, as well as addressing the need for new ways of thinking about rhetoric in our current society.

RETHINKING EXIGENCY AND THE RHETORICAL SITUATION

In order to understand how the commodification of exigency works in the rhetorical circulation, we must first track the evolution of these rhetorical aspects. Lloyd Bitzer's preeminent theory of the rhetorical situation established the framework for which rhetoric would span out across decades and gave rise to analyzing the rhetorical mode of exigency. Bitzer formulated a situation wherein he posits an objective rhetorical situation that dominates the rhetorical act. He provides a formal definition of the rhetorical situation as "a complex of persons, events, objects, and relations presenting an actual or potential exigence which can be completely or partially removed if discourse, introduced into the situation, can so constrain human decision or action as to bring about the significant modification of the exigence" (Bitzer 6). He calls for a pre-existing exigence, one that Richard E. Vatz would famously counter, that is modifiable through the persuasive discourse of rhetoric, emphasizing that it is "the situation which calls the discourse into existence" (2). He claims that exigence is predetermined, "an imperfection marked by urgency" wherein it "functions as the organizing principle" of the situation (6-7), which calls for a fitting response from the rhetor. A response that should be gleaned from the objective facts of history.

Vatz's response to Bitzer's rhetorical situation model emphasizes the role of the rhetor, countering Bitzer's notion that the situation is determined by an objective source outside of the rhetor. Instead, Vatz argues that "no situation can have a nature

independent of the perception of its interpreter or independent of the rhetoric with which he chooses to characterize it" (Vatz 154). By shifting from the objective to the subjective, Vatz posits that "meaning is not discovered in situations, but *created* by rhetors" (157). Such a shift highlights the ongoing question about agency in the rhetorical situation. Does the rhetor respond to exigency or create an exigency through response? Barbara Biesecker would challenge this even further.

Biesecker's influential take on the rhetorical situation spearheaded the breakdown of the traditional model theorized by Lloyd Bitzer. Juxtaposing Bitzer's model with Richard E. Vatz's counter model, Biesecker envisions a deconstructionist re-examination "of symbolic action (the text) and the subject (audience) that proceeds from within Jacques Derrida's thematic of *différance* [that] enables us to rethink the rhetorical situation as articulation" (Biesecker 111). Viewing the rhetorical situation as an ongoing formation of identities, she foregrounds the audience as integral in shaping the situation. This again complicates the role of agency, as not only are the rhetor and exigency considered possible agents, but the audience too must be considered.

From the early days of Vatz's counter argument to Bitzer appealing for the rhetor's agency, to Biesecker's Derridean deconstruction resulting in identity formation, rhetoric witnessed the formative triad create a foundation from which later critics would incessantly revise. Smaller, though crucial, interventions from the likes of Scott Consigny's mediation between Bitzer and Vatz, claiming "rhetoric as art," (176) and Bradford Vivian's further exploration of commonplace topoi suggest new ways of thinking about rhetorical acts. Such a foundation helps lay groundwork for revising the rhetorical situation to address a more fitting, fluid response to our current neoliberalist

era. Indeed, most aspects of the rhetorical situation have now been altered to fit into our postmodern notions of transsituational and transhistorical approaches to rhetorical communication.

Such revisions have garnered a new shift from the rhetorical situation itself to a rhetorical *circulation*, wherein, as Chaput states in her essay, "Rhetorical Circulation in Late Capitalism: Neoliberalism and the Overdetermination of Affective Energy," this "ontological shift takes us from the rhetorical situation as a temporally and spatially fixed site of exigency, constraints, and discourse to rhetorical circulation as a fluidity of everyday practices, affects, and uncertainties" (6). Using Foucault's biopolitics as a foundation, Chaput calls for rhetoric's abandonment of situated moments, instead embracing the fluctuating identities found within neoliberalism. She argues for "structural reorganization… a new understanding of rhetoric as continuously moving through and connecting different instantiations within this complex structure" (6). This fluidity is essential in understanding how all aspects of rhetorical acts are related, and acknowledges the paradoxical nature of certain political exigencies.

Chaput makes a strong case for the necessity to rethink how rhetoric currently works, by incorporating Louis Althusser's overdetermination, wherein "meaning is constructed circuitously and acquires its value from a connective energy"(11), and grounding these energies in Jenny Edbauer Rice's affective ecologies, a living environment "flowing, circulating and exchanging connections" (12). The message of the older rhetorical situation model no longer takes a single direct path, instead circulating throughout its environment, acting on and by several agencies. To simplify a bit, the childhood game of telephone comes to mind. The "situation" of the game is for one

person to whisper a message into another's ear, which is passed down a line to an end receiver. Yet, the joy found in the game is when the end message becomes terribly distorted from the original. The circulation of the message alters based on each receiver, how one speaks, how one interprets, possibly even distractions from others in the room. On a grander scale, rhetorical communication is never just a simply directed message, one must account for the environment, the speakers, the interpreters, everything at once, in an ongoing circulation.

As for exigency's role in the circulation, Chaput argues that exigency "shifts from urgent problems to everyday life activities" in a neoliberalist, late capitalist era, since the rhetorical circulation "is always passing through, but it is never located" (20). Such a shift highlights how the static triangulation of sender, receiver, and message has transformed into a circulation, positing agency as cause *and* effect, with no temporal or spatial grounding. While Chaput ends her discussion of exigency here, I propose carrying it further. Instead of relegating exigency to just another flowing, morphing aspect of the rhetorical circulation, I believe exigency has become a commodity, wherein one may raise or lower their value in communication. While exigency's role must be somewhat modified in order to work within the rhetorical circulation, we may still consider its original status as an urgent need or demand. An urgency that becomes commodified in the public sphere.

The term commodification also necessitates an exploration into how Marxism plays a role in the rhetorical circulation. Chaput briefly touches on the parallels between Marxism and the debates among the rhetorical situation, stating "the remarkable resonance between this exigence-rhetoric debate and the Marxist notion of an economic

base and its cultural superstructure has virtually been ignored" (9). For early rhetoricians such as Bitzer, exigency influences the rhetor's response, just as superstructure influences society to act accordingly. Yet, as modern scholars like Chaput argue, these relationships are not merely static one-way connections. She acknowledges the faults in such binary ways of thinking from both groups, "rhetoric/culture or situation/economy" (9), and their failure to comprehend the all-inclusiveness of neoliberalism.

Yet, Chaput and other contemporary scholars do not tread further into how exigency's role in the neoliberal circulation often parallels exchange and circulation through the lens of Marxist commodification. I argue that within this rhetorical circulation, we can envision the role of exigency as another fluid, everyday practice, one that becomes vulnerable to commodification. The rhetorical circulation and exigency's place within the circulation are necessary in setting a framework to argue that we may envision exigency as a commodity, which we use to raise our value in the labor of communication. Though, we must first explore the Marxist terminology of the terms commodification, circulation, and labor in their original intentions. We may then use such terminology in their current affiliations to identify how they work within a neoliberal society.

REVIVING MARXIST TERMINOLOGY

Before we can begin to break down the nuances of Marxist commodification, circulation, and labor and their often contentiously interpreted roles in neoliberalism, I would like to briefly put forth the original explanations of such terms. In the first German edition of *Capital*, Marx first identifies the concept of a commodity, followed by their values in use and exchange. He states, "A commodity is, in the first place, an object outside us, a thing that by its properties satisfies human wants of some sort or another" (27). Though there is a difference between a basic object as use and how it transcends into a commodity. He states, "A thing can be useful, and the product of human labour, without being a commodity. Whoever directly satisfies his wants with the produce of his own labour, creates, indeed, use-values, but not commodities. In order to produce the latter, he must not only produce use values, but use values for others, social use values" (30). To transcend the notion of commodification from an object exchanged to a rhetorical act, such as exigency, we may theorize the social use of such an act. Two key factors of Marx's commodification highlight how we may do so: value and social circulation, both underscored by labor.

In a manuscript that would later become a contribution to the *Critique of Political Economy* (1859) and *Capital* (published 1867), Marx introduces different concepts of value. He states, "Commodities as objects of use or goods are corporeally different things. Their reality as *values* forms, on the other hand, their *unity*. This unity does not

arise out of nature but out of society. The common social substance which merely manifests itself differently in different use-values, is – *labour*" ("The Commodity"). With labor as the "substance of value," Marx differentiates between two types of value: "use-value" and "exchange value," the usefulness of the object to us, and the value in exchanging the object respectively ("The Commodity"). While labor is the quintessential yardstick for which to measure value, in order to produce a *commodity*, the laborer must "produce not merely use-value, *but use-value for others – social use-value*" ("The Commodity"). Therefore, we must be able to exchange these objects with those who have use for them, which heeds a circulation of said objects.

Marx theorizes on circulation, stating, "what is essential is that exchange appears as a process" wherein commodities are "produced as *exchange values*, not as *immediate use values*, but as mediated through exchange value" for circulation (*Grundrisse*). This is important to note in regard to commodifying something like exigency. The use-value of exchanging exigency is not produced for immediate use, but rather for its exchange value. Simplified, exigency's value is an exchange value, one for future economic or financial gain, rather than an immediate use value, as in acting for the greater good.

According to Marx, because this implies that the production of these objects for circulation generates appropriation and alienation, then circulation appears as a "social process" wherein "the social relation appears as something independent of the individuals, but not only as, say, in a coin or in exchange value, but extending to the whole of the social movement itself" (*Grundrisse*). While Marx would attack alienation from a political standpoint in later manifestos, for our purposes, we may think of alienation in terms of abstraction of our labor from the value of a product, once it

circulates. Because of this abstraction, even though we consciously are involved in circulation, it appears to become an objective social power. This bears resemblance to the popular, though often misleading, phrase, "everything is a commodity" in our capitalist era. As if all objects, and by extension institutions and ideologies, fall under the threat of commodification in the overarching free markets. As I have noted the importance of commodification and circulation, I will return back to labor's importance in the commodification of exigency momentarily.

While this brief detour into the Marxist lexicon barely scratches the surface of Marx's economic theories on commodification and labor, it not only provides us with useful terminology, but points to gaps within this economic theory for which Foucault and others would later explore. Before I proceed into Foucauldian biopolitics and the evolution of neoliberalism in the United States, I would like to acknowledge that many critics are divided on the similarities and differences between Marxist and Foucauldian views on labor in light of neoliberalism. For the purposes of this paper, I focus on positing the notion of Marx's commodification, outlined in his original rough drafts and introductory essays to *Capital*, and the ability for such commodification within the far-reaching biopolitical sphere outlined by Foucault, as a framework for how commodification of rhetorical communication is made possible in the rhetorical circulation of our neoliberal era. In order to proceed with any sort of reconciliation of Marx and Foucault, we must first outline Foucault's originary theories on biopolitics and neoliberalism in order to understand their differing views on labor. Following, I will show how other theorists have wedded Marxist and Foucauldian views, including rhetorical scholarship's attempt to identify a new labor, one that just might redeem the

abstract nature of Marxist labor in which Foucault, among others, takes issue.

REVISITING FOUCAULT: BIOPOLITICS AND THE EVOLUTION OF NEOLIBERALISM

If we are to consider our current epoch as dominated by a Foucauldian biopower, we open the door to allowing the markets to assume control. According to Foucault, the governing powers dictate every aspect of society, in accordance with what is best for the economy. Foucault's theory of biopower, introduced in "Right of Death and Power over Life," wherein "numerous and diverse techniques for achieving the subjugation of bodies and the control of populations" (140) is, according to Foucault, "without question an indispensable element in the development of capitalism; the latter would not have been possible without the controlled insertion of bodies into the machinery of production and the adjustment of the phenomena of population to economic processes" (140-41). The parasitic nature of biopower works as a bedrock from which we can understand the invasiveness of capitalism into our socio-political realm of communication.

In his lectures at the College de France, Foucault not only furthers his exploration of biopolitics, but also traces the history of neoliberalism from its European to American machinations. He considers the rise of neoliberal ideology in America as based on an opposition to three primary contextual elements: "Keynesian policy, social pacts of war, and the growth of the federal administration through economic and social programs" (*The Birth of Biopolitics* 217). Liberalism in government, through the lens of biopolitical theory and neoliberalism, has shifted from individual freedom to an intrinsic

governmentality that dictates according to the markets, while assuming the guise of such individual freedom.

According to Foucault, individuals are seen as "active economic subject[s]" making "income of a capital" so that "the worker himself appears as a sort of enterprise for himself," which ultimately leads to an "economy made up of enterprise-units," which links them to "liberalism and its programming for the rationalization of a society and an economy" (223-225). The American Dream is just that: the self-made entrepreneur enjoying the freedoms and unfettered wealth available thanks to the American government. Yet, for Foucault and others, these freedoms are merely facades. What is best for the markets, for the economy, ultimately overrides any individual security.

It is essential to note that the vast expansion of neoliberalism in our current society, coupled with its use of governmentality through biopolitics, provides an opening to consider the far reaching hand of the markets and their relationship with economic and global crises. Further, if the cost analysis of an exigency isn't valuable to the markets, it would also explain the inaction of the government, and at times, the public. As Chaput notes, "[t]he neoliberal landscape consists of blurred boundaries that fold into one another: information flows almost instantaneously, commodities and people transgress national boundaries, time accelerates, space collapses, and distinctions between such classic demarcations as agent and subject or politics and economics erode" ("Rhetorical Circulation" 2). Such an obscure networking of agency and affect in the current era necessitates rethinking traditional modes of rhetorical communication.

As the term neoliberalism has gained popularity in current conversations, many point to the cause of its reemergence in academic literature because of Foucault, not to

mention left leaning academics' use of the term to decry the shift in government's post WWII Keyenesian welfare economics to the Reagan administration's extension of free market capitalism. Coming a long way from Milton Friedman's 1951 economic essay, "Neoliberalism and Its Prospects," others such as Neil Brenner's "After Neoliberalization" and Susan Watkin's editorial, "Shifting Sands" have further extended the conversation about American neoliberalism in the current era. Many of these articles have similar themes within this essay, an exploration of the "extension of competition and commodification processes into previously insulated realms of political-economic life" (Brenner et. al. 329). Similar explorations may yield just how exigency is affected by such an intrusion. Yet before addressing the role of commodification in the biopolitical sphere, I next propose a reconciliation of Marx and Foucault so that we may wed the theories of labor and their role in neoliberalism.

RECONCILING MARX AND FOUCAULT

While this exploration of commodification in the neoliberal era in no way intends to solve the issues between Marxist and Foucauldian theories, we must find common ground in order to argue for such terminology and theories to fit in the same place. Moreover, such a reconciliation further illuminates gaps in Marxist theory that may be rectified, not nullified, through Foucault, as Bradley Macdonald argues, and later theorists such as Antonio Negri and Michael Hardt, who reprise a Marxist and Foucauldian meshing through their concept of "biopolitical production". Finally, such a reconciliation allows us to take the theory of rhetoric as affect labor, from Ronald Greene's rhetoric as labor and Hardt's notion of affective labor, and apply it to the rhetorical circulation, which I will do so momentarily.

In *The Birth of Biopolitics* lectures, when leading up to his theory on human capital, Foucault states that neoliberalists claim classical economics tends to forget about labor, nor subject it to an economic analysis. While most would quickly bring Marx into conversation here, Foucault challenges Marx's views on labor as "abstract ... a labor that has been cut off from its human reality" (221). As neoliberals would ask who is responsible for such abstraction, Marx would argue that "capitalism itself is responsible" (221). Here, we see the argument circle back. For, Foucault claims, the neoliberals would then counter that such abstraction is not actually capitalism, but "the economic theory that has been constructed of capitalist production" (221). Foucault summarizes this point

aptly, noting that because classical economics was unable to properly analyze real labor, that glaring gap has been unsuccessfully filled with Marxist theory.

This theorization only further bolsters the neoliberalist view that because "classical economists only ever envisaged the object of economics as processes of capital," when instead the focus should be on analyzing how "individuals allocate these scarce means to alternative ends" (222). Such an analysis eschews processes like capital, production, and the like, with which labor is involved. From here, Foucault lays out the theory of human capital and its association with the biopolitical. Importantly, though, we should take note of how Marxist theory seemingly doesn't hold much ground in the Foucauldian view of neoliberal ideology.

Further, both camps tend to criticize the subject's role in power dynamics. As Johanna Oksala explains, "The Foucauldian critique against traditional forms of Marxist theory targeted the latter's inability to account for the different ways in which subjects are constituted in the diffuse and intersecting networks of power" (Oksala). We see resemblance in Foucault's critique from his lecture, about the alienation of labor. For Marxists, Oksala continues, "While effectively exposing forms of exploitation and alienation, Marxist theory tended to theorize subjects and the power relations between them in terms of relatively static class antagonism between capital and the proletariat" (Oksala). Such critiques tend to relegate the theorists to opposing ends.

Bradley Macdonald further explores the contentions found within Foucault's readings of Marx, but argues that much of the opposition between Marx and Foucault has been promulgated by other scholars, not necessarily from Foucault himself. Macdonald proposes a genealogical approach to understanding the theorists, and how often their

theories find similar grounding. As we can see from Foucault's understanding of abstract labor, often Marx is charged with "[n]othing but interpretation" (Macdonald 270). Even in Foucault's essay "Nietzsche, Freud, Marx," one of the few written accounts directly referring to Marx, Foucault states, "The concept of platitude in Marx is very important, at the beginning of *Capital*, he explains how, unlike Perseus, he must plunge into the fog to show that, in fact, there are no monsters or profound enigmas, because everything profound in the conception that the bourgeoisie has of money, capital, value, and so on, is in reality nothing but platitude" (273). Yet, after analyzing a multitude of Foucault's transcribed lectures, Macdonald argues that Foucault had more issues with the ideology of Marxism, that those rallying in the name of communism were stuck in using dogmatic slogans of revolution, actually impeding any real change.

Macdonald states Foucault's issue was that the Marxists of his time "assumed the a priori importance of transformations within the economic structure, a reliance that ignored the multiple contingencies and practices that constitute historical events" (273). Macdonald argues that after reading Marx through a Foucauldian lens, and vice versa, it is possible to see a reconciliation, most obviously in his biopolitical theories. Macdonald writes, "Foucault found a Marx who did not just see power as personified in the state but who was attentive to seeing power as a variable, multiform technology that infiltrated differing institutions, and which, importantly, lays hold of the body" (278). Macdonald concludes by arguing for the possibility of "Foucault's Marx," one found in the likes of modern scholars such as Antonio Negri and Michael Hardt, who I will return to in my discussion on affect labor.

Macdonald is neither the first nor last to begin the process of finding compromise between the two theorists. Negri reads *Grundrisse* against *Capital*, arguing that Marx "disowns the objectivist portrayal of capitalist processes so often attributed to him… renders capitalism's character as fundamentally unsettled and antagonistic"... "the motor force of capitalist history is the embodiment of living labor in the working class, a force-field of potentiality whose struggles have forced reactive regimes by capital…" (Macdonald 283). Negri has also worked with Michael Hardt, blending Marxist and Foucauldian views in their trilogies, with the concept of "biopolitical production" which designates "the whole of the ontological process in which social reality is materially produced" (Oksala). Oksala also takes up the task of reconciliation, arguing that "Rather than swear allegiances and defend camps, we should try to critically analyze the decisive philosophical issues underlying the opposition between Marxist and Foucauldian responses to the rise of neoliberalism" (Oksala).

The importance of wedding Marxist and Foucauldian views for the purposes of this paper allows for an understanding of how power dynamics play an active role in the neoliberal era. Marx's commodification in a neoliberal circulation, wherein governmentality allows for new forms of biopolitical processes, further extends the possibilities of commodification beyond material objects. A filtration of power also invites us to consider a rhetorical circulation, wherein everything becomes an entangled web of affect. I next want to expand on the concept of labor, rethinking it in rhetorical terms, and how it plays into the possibilities of commodifying rhetorical acts.

RHETORICAL ACTS AS AFFECTIVE LABOR

Not only may we surmise a sort of reconciliation with Marx and Foucault through the likes of Macdonald, but a few other contemporary scholars may also help us redefine this idea of abstract labor, interpreting the conversation of labor and commodification in rhetorical terms. Reframing our thinking of exigency in the rhetorical circulation, I bring in contemporary neoliberal, late capitalist critics, such as Ronald Walter Greene and Michael Hardt to explain the atmosphere necessary to consider exigency as a commodity. As any amateur economist could tell you, in order for any exchange of goods to work, there must be supply and demand within the markets. It is interesting to note the definition of exigency outside of its role in rhetoric. According to the *Oxford English Dictionary*, exigency is defined as, "What is needed or required; a thing wanted or demanded; a requirement, a necessity" and "a state of urgent need" ("exigency", n.1,2). If exigency, by its root definition, fulfills the demand, how might we supply goods for exchange? To translate this in rhetorical terms, we must first envision rhetorical acts as labor, which in return, will allow for rethinking exigency as a commodity used to raise and lower such value.

I first turn to Ronald Walter Greene's approach to rhetorical agency as communicative labor. In his essay, "Rhetoric and Capitalism: Rhetorical Agency as Communicative Labor," Greene explores the root cause of anxiety over rhetorical agency in the (post)modern capitalist era. By navigating through James Aune's hermeneutic

approach to rhetorical agency and Dana Cloud's class-based social movement approach, Greene proposes moving away from rhetorical agency as a model of political communication in favor of "a different materialist ontology, one that imagines rhetorical agency as a form of living labor" (Greene 189). According to Greene, prior rhetorical endeavors to distinctly fashion agency as a political model either privileges "national economic interests over an investigation into the international division of labor" (192), like Aune's approach, or isolates class and other identifications of difference, such as gender and sexuality, per Cloud's approach. Greene urges rhetorical scholarship to abandon "communication as a political model for imagining rhetorical agency" and instead affirm the value of labor within communication itself (198).

Working off Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri's approach to the value of labor in biopolitical production, Greene argues for a "material ontology of rhetorical agency" wherein the "characteristics of communication… reside in the matrix of bio-political production," which would remodel rhetorical agency as communicative labor (201). In doing so, Greene dismisses the necessity to quantify or qualify agency and its success or failure in rhetorical persuasion. The question of agency should not be who holds the rhetorical power for change, but how rhetoric itself creates value. As "action generates the value of living labor" (Greene 203), I propose using the theory of rhetoric's labor in my explanation for the ability to commodify exigency. If we consider rhetoric itself as a labor, we may envision an exchange of rhetorical acts to raise or lower our value. Further, as with Greene's approach, we see agency diffused throughout the circulation, allowing for those within the exchange to act upon exigency through economic or political means.

Moving from Greene's notion of rhetorical acts of labor, I next want to propose a way of considering labor as affective, which I will return to in the following sections. Michael Hardt's concept of affective labor, entailing "human contact and interaction" (Hardt 95) is considered an "*immaterial labor*… that produces an immaterial good, such as a service, knowledge, or communication" (94). In his essay, "Affective Labor," Hardt argues that we have reached an age of economic postmodernization, wherein affective labor— labor that is intended to produce or modify emotions in others— has fallen into "a role that is not only directly productive of capital but at the very pinnacle of the hierarchy of laboring forms" (90). This immaterial labor, one that produces an immaterial good, such as service or knowledge, produces "social networks, forms of community, biopower" (96).

Resisting Foucault's definition of biopower, one Michael Hardt deems as from above, with a more inclusive definition, wherein biopower is also seen from below, Hardt argues that this "affective immaterial labor is now directly productive of capital" (97). Hardt views affective labor as a crucial aspect of economic postmodernization, wherein both material and immaterial forms of labor produce a value. If we are to combine Greene's approach to rhetorical communication as labor with Hardt's concept of affective labor, we create a semblance of Marx's use-value and exchange-value, wherein the object becomes a rhetorical act, and its value arises in its utility to instill or modify emotion, or action, in rhetoric's persuasive sense. Because, as Hardt and others argue, this labor is circulating in a neoliberal biopower, we may see an increase in value through its circulation, precisely through the rhetorical circulation.

Chaput's analogy of biological systems concisely explains these similar claims between rhetoric and capitalism, stating "the economic and rhetorical circulatory processes work in tandem to sustain the vitality of late capitalism in much the same way that the muscular and skeletal systems work together to animate human motion" ("Rhetorical Circulation" 14). If biopower forces our capitalist government to create, manage, and control populations, affective labor is of extreme value. Thus, if we posit rhetorical communication as an affective labor, we can theorize a value in rhetorical acts. And just how may we raise or lower that value? By utilizing exigencies as commodities for exchange. I next look at how such a circulation works in what Jenny Rice Edbauer deems "affective ecologies," where both the biopolitical is made apparent, and the power of affect assists in raising or lowering the value of rhetorical communication.

AFFECTIVE ECOLOGIES WITHIN A BIOPOLITICAL SPHERE

Chaput notes that for Foucault, an "organic coherency" comes in the form of neoliberalism's governing through biopolitics, "through an embodied habituation— a way of thinking and acting that stems from discrete but interconnected technologies all bound up within the same asymmetrical power dynamics of economic competition" (4). We may apply these dynamics to the rhetorical circulation, wherein this "embodied habituation" affects rhetorical communication. Returning to this essay's primary inquiry, I next explore just how exigency works within this "embodied habituation," how it evolves into a commodity based on its value, which becomes threateningly imperative if urgencies are only taken up according to said value.

So, how do we move from rhetorical acts as valued labor to commodification of such acts? We must first reconsider rhetorical acts as standalone components, and rather consider them as flexible, overlapping elements that comprise a circulating and fluid environment. I return to Jenny Edbauer Rice's notion of "*affective ecologies*," outlined in her essay, "Unframing Models of Public Distribution," wherein she states these ecologies "recontextualizes rhetorics in their temporal, historical, and lived fluxes" (Rice 168). Rice's rhetorical ecologies considers the plurality of exigencies and their interaction with the audience and rhetor, which complicates the older sender-receiver models of rhetorical discourse, as well as the outdated modes of the rhetorical situation. While some may consider Chaput's rhetorical circulation and Rice's affective ecologies as exchangeable

terms identifying more or less the same concept, I believe considering the affective ecology as a framework in which rhetorical circulation operates helps to visualize how such circulation of utterances works.

For Rice, "the concept of 'rhetorical situation' is appropriately named insofar as the models of the rhetorical situation describes the scene of rhetorical action as 'located' around the exigence that generates a response" (169), yet because our sense of public is more of a network than a fixed location, we must rethink such a static description for any elements of rhetoric. Rice's notion of *affective ecologies* is an ingenious way of rethinking how history and place (place as fluxating) effect exigency, in order that we may achieve a more cumulative way of seeing exigency rather than just as a necessary moment. This also encapsulates the transsituational moments integral to Chaput's concept of exigencies as everyday activities in the rhetorical circulation. Activist/author Naomi Klein's quote about the timing of climate crisis during unprecedented capitalist growth that presides over this paper (and underscores my entire argument) demonstrates exactly how certain exigencies become so immersed in the stronghold of history and place, that all elements become fluid parts of an affective ecology. Since exigency is not isolated, it is neither protected from the biopolitical or neoliberal influence. Thus, exigency becomes vulnerable to commodification.

Returning to our rhetorical circulation, as Rice states, "[t]he *elements of rhetorical situation simply bleed*" (168). Situating Rice's affective ecologies within the Foucaudian biopolitical sphere, we can extrapolate how rhetorical acts and biopolitics easily become entangled. If, according to biopolitical theory and its machinations in the neoliberal era, our very existence is dictated by governmentality, then according to Rice's ecologies,

economically motivated decisions act as a kind of "*shared contagion*," or "viral economy," wherein "intensity, force, and circulatory range of a rhetoric are always expanding through the mutations and new exposures attached to the given rhetoric"(173). As Rice traces the circulation of the "Make Austin Weird" slogan and its manipulated permutations (once a slogan for small business appropriated by commercial interests), we can see similar viral circulations of climate change rhetoric as it spreads through political platforms in the wake of a contentious presidential election.

Concepts such as Chaput's rhetorical circulation and Rice's rhetorical ecologies allow us to revise rhetorical communication to match the neoliberal, late capitalist era within which we reside. Further, such a fluid, ongoing relationship between rhetorical elements are not only impacted by socio-historical contexts but also influence the contexts themselves. The biopolitical is influence writ large. Therefore, in our market dominated society, with consideration of rhetorical communication as labor, we can conceive of the possibilities for commodifying exigency, to give value to an urgency that stays within the parameters of market control.

In her book, *Market Affect and the Rhetoric of Political Economic Debates*, Chaput reprises Foucault's notion of biopolitical power, to argue that "the biopolitics of neoliberalism function as a governing rationality to constitute individuals as spontaneous subjects of capitalist nature, dissolving their rationality into their instinctual desires" (139). For Chaput, this explains not only how what she deems the market affect ultimately complicates political economic debates, but also why audience perception of the commodification of exigency is seemingly rather passive. She argues that the invisible market alienates "human agents from their social and individual choices" while

working as “an affective force that influences rhetorical action by linking bodily receptivities to economic persuasion” (1-2). By analyzing the genealogy of affective traditions, including Hardt’s affective labor as mentioned above, she argues that “affect moves like an energy between two bodies—one affecting and the other being affective,” (3) which in turn makes economic decisions made by the public quite predictable.

Further, she argues that “Market theory’s superior affective sensibility of various unconscious modes of communication immunizes it against criticism at the same time that it prevents substantive change: alternative practices go against a human nature that, although it evolves, cannot be other than it is” (138). Echoes of Foucault’s theories on biopower help strengthen this claim, as the human becomes subject to the government, even under the guise of individual freedom. We must rethink how the modes of rhetorical communication work in order to consider the power affect holds, both in affective ecologies, and throughout the circulation of affect, wherein it gains value, a value commodifiable through its exchange.

I next analyze the multiple agencies that are active and inactive in the exchange of exigency. First, I want to propose a reconsideration of the audience as a collective retainer, and rather envision the term as multiple, fluctuating identities. After such a revision, I will then explore how those involved in the exchange use rhetoric’s artistic qualities towards manipulation, and how those left out of the exchange are still affected.

RETHINKING AUDIENCE

According to Marx, a commodity gains value when it is exchanged. Thus, in order to consider exigency truly commodifiable in the rhetorical circulation, we must explore the relationship with the public, composed of the voting constituents and monetary investors. Yet, the traditional role of the audience in the rhetorical situation, those who receive the intended message, must be re-contextualized to fit the shift to circulation. When assuming communication works within a rhetorical circulation, we decenter the traditional roles of speaker, text, and audience. While we disperse agency throughout the network, we must still acknowledge those actively participating in exchange, both the person with power to act or dismiss climate change policy and those who support them through votes or financial support. Further, we must consider those left out of the exchange altogether.

First, I propose revisioning audience from the previous fixed container to the fluid individual. We begin to see this audience shift in Beisecker's Derridean approach to the rhetorical situation, calling for a "logic of articulation" wherein "the subject is shifting and unstable (constituted in and by the play of différance)," and the rhetorical act may be rearticulated as "an incident that produces and reproduces the identities of subjects and constructs and reconstructs linkages between them" (126). This shift from early notions of fixed rhetorical modes thus became "event[s] that makes possible the production of identities and social relations" (126). While Beisecker brings the audience to the

forefront, there is still an assumption in rhetorical scholarship that this audience is somehow a collective container for which the rhetor adapts and the message is received.

Following Beisecker's important intrusion into the individual identities making up the collective, Chaput later considers the shift of audience from the situation as "fixed identity-being" to the circulation as "fluid identity-becoming" (20). We can no longer surmise a collective audience, for which we adapt. Instead, we must consider the important factors that shape response, including the rhetorical act itself. There are several interdisciplinary approaches to such an endeavor, perhaps forever and always an ongoing and unsolvable inquiry to why humans act accordingly. For the purposes of this paper, I would like to briefly touch on a few theories of "audience," to highlight how shifting away from such a collective branding to a more individual approach is integral in consideration of the rhetorical circulation. Such a move also parallels the historical move from classical republicanism's collective good to liberalism's individualism, an approach often transmogrified by neoliberalism's capitalist ventures.

If we were to consider a political campaign with a platform on addressing climate change, we may track how a politician's marketing to the public would address climate action. However, as Chaput notes, these types of campaigns "work from the assumption that appropriate rhetorical choices will ignite political agency within audiences, who will then act accordingly" (20). Although climate change has been projected as a common concern for a decade, little to no overhaul in local or national politics has taken place. Chaput states,

> This system rests on a liberal philosophy that accepts causality and that appeals to the idea of materially or ideologically fixed positions. While the rhetorical

> situation does admit an uncertain future and does position rhetoric as an art, it works through a fairly rigid grid of determinacy embedded within bounded sites of exchange that cannot account for the beliefs people hold through sensed experiences that do not necessary align with clear surface logics—beliefs that are affective habituations rather than ideological errors. (20)

These constantly in flux identities that shape the audience hinder a common collective approach. Yet, as stated previously, we must ask who exactly participates in commodification of a rhetorical act. I resist the notion that those individuals who accept the idea of exchanging exigency are just inherently hoping to watch the world burn while they bask in their riches. We may only assume the incentives for a certain politician's motives underlying a climate change platform, whether they are looking to gain or simply playing by the rules of the given system, yet it is intriguing to note how one may be able to successfully persuade against scientific fact, such as global warming. Now let us analyze those involved in the commodification.

EXCHANGING EXIGENCIES: ACTIVE MEMBERS IN THE EXCHANGE

Looking at both sides of the exchange, I first want to explore how one may use the artistic nature of rhetoric to persuade those into the exchange. As Scott Consigny and others have claimed, rhetoric is an art. Rhetoric is fundamentally about persuasion, thus considering commonplace topoi and its ability for manipulation, as I will outline below, we may see how an urgency such as climate change is skewed. Such misconceptions may lead to a conflict of needs, an important concept in rhetoric heralded by James Kastely and potentially linked to Foucault. Following this section, I want to consider those left out of the exchange. From a Foucauldian approach, neoliberal's primary goal seems to seek those "docile bodies," controlled through governmentality in the biopolitical. Wendy Brown furthers this assumption that we become passive citizens. While neither approach to such passivity encompasses the audience as a container, it does shed light on potential reasons for lack of individual action, those caught up in the circulation and affected by the rhetoric surrounding the exigency of climate change.

I want to begin with the consideration of rhetoric as an art. In such terms, we may dust off the Aristotelian language of *topoi*, strategies of invention, and see how manipulation of it may open the doors for exchanging exigency as a commodity. While all commodification isn't necessarily negative, in considering the idea of commodifying an urgency of the public good, I believe we must consider how such commodification has a manipulative and appropriative nature. For any manipulation or appropriation of a

rhetorical concept, whether it be positive or negative, there must be possibilities for manipulation in aspects of the rhetorical circulation.

I refer to Bradford Vivian's work on the manipulation of commonplace topoi in witnessing, to argue that such manipulation is applicable to acts of exigency. Vivian's book, *Commonplace Witnessing*, explores the modern and late modern shift of witnessing in public culture. Deeming recurring topoi and themes throughout the acts of bearing witness as "commonplace," Vivian establishes a mode of rhetorical invention that "entails a call to dramatically expand and diversify our normative assumptions about the particular types of historical subjects who bear witness" (Vivian 6). Vivian states that the "[c]onstant cycles of historical mediation or remediation, in which the authentic relation between self and history resembles a plastic commodity, deeply informs the contemporary politics of private and public identities" (52). This malleability between subjectivity and history, which opens the doors for appropriation, is made possible by the very rhetorical modes that it produces. I propose to connect this manipulation of witnessing, which Vivian illuminates through commonplace rhetorical inventions, with the commodification of exigency by similar commonplace topoi.

In witnessing, Vivian argues that "pronounced liberal-democratic inflections of late modern public culture form the most salient common places, so to speak, in which forms of witnessing acquire especial social, political and moral value or utility" (6). By connecting Greene's notion of communicative labor with the value gained in witnessing through use of such commonplace topoi, we may theorize that the exigency itself that one bears witness to may also be used in exchange for value. Because these commonplace topoi result from witnessing as a form of rhetorical communication, many speakers are

easily able to adopt the stories of others' plights to pursue their own personal interests. The same may be argued for manipulating exigencies.

Foucault's biopolitics also enters the arena of witnessing, as Vivian considers bearing witness in the public sphere as "contemporary practices of governmentality" (155). Vivian theorizes that "[P]opular memorials to historic tragedies constitute an emergent locus of governmentality" (156), which relate to Foucault's claims that citizens are "involved in their own biopolitical management" (155). Such memorials often remind the nation's citizens of historical tragedies while valorizing patriotism, yet are simultaneously commodified by a government that may or may not have been implicit in the event itself. Vivian's exploration of the 9/11 memorial exemplifies how such memorials work.

To return to my primary example, the Green New Deal, we see commonplace topoi of public discourse in our current political affairs that often manipulate the exigency of climate change and thwart bills, such as the Green New Deal, in favor of raising the value of particular parties. For the conservative parties, promoting free-market and neoliberalist agendas promote false promises of the markets solving problems. Allowing industries such as oil to dominate these markets, greener initiatives that would inhibit the economic wealth of the oil industries are often buried under bureaucracy in favor of capitalist agendas. In response, economic initiatives such as the Green New Deal seem to be the only way to infiltrate into the biopolitical networks to push forward the exigency of climate change.

We must be careful here not to relegate all of the agency to a rhetor's manipulation. In her article, "René Girard and the Rhetoric of Consumption," Kathleen

Vandenberg illustrates René Girard's notion that mass media has cultivated an environment wherein we perform rhetorical acts upon one another, often swaying opinion to consumption based ideology. This allows for a complex inter-agency, that Vandenberg states, "is both dynamic and de-centered" (270). Moving away from singular agency, Chaput too considers the multiple actor network theory, wherein no fixed agency applies to any part of the rhetorical situation ("Rhetorical Circulation"). This would allow for consideration of more than just the speaker in the possibility of manipulating or commodifying exigency, which fits into fluctuating models of the rhetorical circulation.

As Chaput states, "While liberal epistemologies search for the true match between rhetoric and audience, neoliberal epistemologies seek knowledge by following rhetoric as it energizes different audiences throughout diverse situations—a move that adjusts our focus from agentive power to value production" ("Rhetorical Circulation" 6). Acknowledging the potential for manipulation and appropriation in the rhetorical circulation contends with the value production altogether, not just the rhetor using commonplace topoi to their advantage. I next analyze other elements in the rhetorical circulation that assist in explaining further why perspectives on urgencies such as climate change are so conflicted.

CONFLICTING PERSPECTIVES

In this mass-mediated consumption culture, responses to such exigencies as climate change are strengthened by the conflicting perspectives of what the individual considers necessary to prioritize: economic or climate crises. I next bring in James L. Kastely's research on the rhetoricity of need as a way to further consider just why perception of climate change is so indecisive. In his article, "The Rhetoricity of Need," Kastely uses psychoanalysts Emmanuel Ghent and Adam Phillips' studies on need, claiming that "the language of need functions as a way to establish and argue for priorities" (423). Kastely explores the audience's logic of need that he states, "might explain why resistance to persuasion is a major obstacle for many rhetorical acts, for it would see resistance as a structural feature of persuasion" (425). Applying this concept of problematic resistance to persuasion, in my exploration of manipulation of exigential matters, we may see resistance as yet another commonplace topoi to appropriate.

According to Kastely, if we don't open up dialogue to what we need versus what we are *told* that we need, we risk manipulation of the audience. With the onslaught of social media algorithms perpetuating informational bubbles today, it feels overwhelmingly risky that we justify our needs based on the information given to us, often isolating us from the needs of others. Such isolation seems paradoxical, as well, since the more transparent the algorithms become, e.g. Facebook hawking ads based on your last Google search, the more we find ourselves resisting such intrusion.

When it comes to climate change, perception of the exigency is often skewed by isolated informational enclaves. Paradoxical at best, resistance to information such as global warming data may be manipulated in favor of political advantage. If a news site claims to "uncover the real truth" and go against the mainstream grain, those attuned to that particular news source may resist any scientific data that contradicts their beliefs. While such a trajectory calls for its own investigations, it is worth noting that the problematics of need may be found within the rhetoric of climate change from a multitude of angles, which further underscores the importance of considering the fluctuating elements of the rhetorical circulation.

In considering the logic of need as a trope, Kastely signals the paradoxical nature of need and neediness, a paradox that justifies rhetoric. Echoing Scott Consigny's claim of "rhetoric as art," Kastely argues that if we confront the unknowability of our needs, needs that are in constant flux with our community, we may open up discourse to addressing actual needs versus assumed needs. Viewing need as "an art of rhetoric… serves the ongoing human project of discovering possibilities and of adjusting our understandings of ourselves and our worlds so that we can thrive in situations in which change is a defining feature of our lives" (434). Such a view encapsulates the very notions of rhetorical circulation.

Such a problematics of need also relates back to Foucauldian biopolitics. When discussing the classical conception of *homo oeconomicus*, first introduced by John Stuart Mill as the rational economic human who pursues wealth for their own self-interest, Foucault describes the characteristic feature as "the partner of exchange and the theory of utility based on a problematic of needs" (225). This problematic of needs may be

considered an analysis of needs in the process of exchange. Yet, Foucault argues, this definition of *homo oeconomicus* as a partner of exchange changes under neoliberalism to "an entrepreneur of himself… being for himself his own capital, being for himself his own producer, being for himself the source of [his] earnings" (226). Foucault's lecture moves on to human capital, but I believe the question remains as to what happens to the problematics of need when viewing economic humans as self-enterprises rather than partners in exchange. While Kastely's intrusions into the rhetoricity of need do not address such a link to *homo oeconomicus,* there are parallels between economic decision making based on needs. As human capital, which links to the biopolitical, follows Foucault's discussion on *homo oeconomicus,* it is possible to infer that a shift in the self-entrepreneur's needs leads to governmentality's needs, as mentioned earlier when discussing the biopolitical reach of neoliberalism.

The problematics of need found in Kastely's research relate back to the problems discussed in Marlia E. Banning's exploration of the climate change dispute. From an interdisciplinary approach, Banning responds primarily to Jodie Nicotra and Judith Totman Parrish's article, "Rushing the Cure: Temporal Rhetorics in Global Warming Discourse," and their exploration of the latest report (the AR 4) from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, to shed light on the complications of conflicting scholarly approaches communicating with public discourse. Banning concentrates on how "time is deployed in the shaping of public arguments about global warming" (639), fleshing out how *deep* time impacts public (in)action of expediency.

While Nicotra and Totman call for consideration of *deep time*, a planetary sense of time rather than human based, to solve such conflict, Banning urges rhetorical

scholarship to push further, asking how "exigency considered from the perspectives of *human time* and the *precautionary principle* can inform the field of action on global warming in ways that may escape a deep time perspective" (Banning 641). Often, Banning argues, the scientific communities and the publics lack the proper rhetorical discourse concerning published data on global warming and the hindrances of media sensationalism. Here we can see how such an exigency may be manipulated into a commodity.

Further adding to the issues of inaction, the article also explores the economic impacts that lend to the exigency, from the potential devastation of lower income communities to the political battles stalling policies "because climate policy strikes at the core of a high stakes, global carbon-based economy" (654). This underscores my primary example of commodified exigency, that of the Green New Deal, and how the complications of enacting exigency may be an appropriable commonplace topoi. The above mentioned approaches to rhetorical circulation may also explain why the public allows for the politicization of such an exigency as climate change.

These intrusions into "audience" perception, intrusions that are fluid and ever-evolving in our affective ecologies, are key to successful circulation of exigency as a commodity. This is essential in considering how the public responds to such exigencies as climate change. By using manipulatable commonplace topoi coupled with the power of market affect, a virus of willful subordination to inaction on exigency spreads through the affective ecology, by way of the rhetorical circulation. If greener initiatives that lead to a healthier and safer environment are detrimental to the economic markets in the short term, then political rhetoric is able to successfully commodify exigencies such as climate

change, exchanging (in)action for political or monetary gain. Next, let us look at those who are not directly involved in the commodification.

EXCHANGING EXIGENCIES: THOSE LEFT OUT OF THE EXCHANGE

So what happens to those left outside of the exchange? While we consider our society a democratic one, it would be naive to consider everyone actively participating in all governmental endeavors. Yet, with an exigency such as climate change, inaction will have detrimental results for those also not involved in the exchanging of exigency. If we are assuming affect circulates through a biopolitical network, then even those indirectly involved are affected. First we must consider the bodies outlined in Foucault's biopolitical theories, which leads to a current interpretation by scholar Wendy Brown, that of the passive citizen.

In *Discipline and Punish,* Foucault introduces his theory of docile bodies. Working from the classical conception of the body as "object and target of power," Foucault states that the eighteenth century notions of the body incorporated "docility, which joins the analyzable body to the manipulable body" (180). Important to the notion of rethinking audience from a static collective unit to dynamic individuals, Foucault states that the "scale of control" moved from "treating the body *en masse*, 'wholesale,' as if it were an indissociable unity, but of working it 'retail,' individually; of exercising upon it a subtle coercion, of obtaining holds upon it at the level of the mechanism itself… an infinitesimal power over the active body" (181). He then summarizes the constraints that create subjugation of these bodies as "disciplines," which could be applied to most institutions under neoliberalism. Connecting this thread of docile bodies that Foucault

wrote about in 1975, to his concept of biopower (1976) to the connection of neoliberalism and the biopolitical in his lectures from 1978-79, we can place this notion of the docile body as existing in the biopolitical sphere of neoliberalism. Thus, even those bodies who are not actively participating in the exchange find themselves tethered to the biopolitical's governmentality.

Working with Foucault's theories of biopolitics and neoliberalism as her foundation, Wendy Brown propels them into current politics. Countering Marxism's prediction that capitalism will ultimately destroy individual worth and freedom, Brown states that "Neoliberalism is not an inevitable historical development of capital and instrumental rationality… but represents instead a new and contingent organization and operation of both" (Brown 45). Following the Bush administration, Brown claims we've arrived in a new era, where market control is no longer masked behind governmentality, but rather heralded proudly as what makes a successful member of society. In order to be accepted, you must find success within the economy. She argues that since "neoliberalism equates moral responsibility with rational action," it "reduces political citizenship to an unprecedented degree of passivity and political complacency" (42-3). Such passive citizenship may shed light on why those who still opt-in to the current American neoliberal society are less likely to challenge the commodification of exigency. Let us return once more to the Green New Deal to see how these concepts apply.

EXEMPLIFYING THE COMMODIFICATION OF EXIGENCY: THE GREEN NEW DEAL RESOLUTION

As I propose to connect the rhetorical circulation with neoliberalism in the biopolitical sphere, I return to the Green New Deal resolution, and how such commodification of the exigency of climate change occurs. In our current socio-political climate, one can easily ascertain a persuasive political speech as commodified, as often political pundits decry terrorism for financial war gains. Indeed, most modern, public addresses tend to be commercialized in one way or another. Yet, I would like to go one step further, applying commodification to exigency itself, wherein exigency becomes a commodity which we use to raise our value in the affective labor of communication. While most critics have focused their energies on revising the rhetorical circulation, transcending the situation to circulation in order to argue for a postmodern, capitalist take on rhetoric, little focus is left to exigency, specifically in the ways that exigency may play into commodity exchange. The urgency of climate change, and resolutions such as the Green New Deal, exemplifies just how immersed, and complicated, exigencies are in the biopolitical sphere.

In their article, "Climate Change and the Global Financial Crisis: A Case of Double Exposure", Robin M. Leichenko, Karen L. O'Brien, and William D. Solecki take up the call to consider a double exposure framework, where climate change and the global financial crisis are so intricately bound, they may be approached simultaneously

with one solution. As Leichenko et al. argue, “the two interacting processes spread risk and vulnerability over both space and time” (Leichenko et. al., 964), therefore a double framework approach is necessary to attend to both crises. Listing examples of environmental damage linked to financial collapse, such as the housing market bubble developing energy-intensive developments, the authors argue that such efforts as the Green New Deal are critical. They suggest that “the idea of simultaneously addressing both the financial crisis and climate crisis through a combination of government regulation and free-market incentives represents an innovative and transformative strategy” (965). As Leichenko, O’Brien, and Solecki argue, the climate change exigency is primarily related to global capitalism, wherein the two cannot stand alone to amount to any effective change. This relationship between the exigency of climate change and our economy moves us from strictly scientific conjecture to economic motives, whether positive or negative, depositing exigency into an economic circulation.

As I mention earlier, the Green New Deal is shrouded in economic incentive, often foregrounding economic gain over actual environmental impetus. The public response to the resolution further exemplifies how this exigency becomes manipulated into a commodity. Republican Senator John Barrasso has spoken publicly about the detrimental costs to the American taxpayer such a resolution would yield, as well as considering it a ploy by Democrats to increase government control (Barrasso). Despite the derisive rhetoric surrounding the Republican response to the resolution, it becomes clear that the conversation is never about the urgency of climate change, but rather how it would impact American capitalism, i.e. the markets. Prior to the vote, Senator Mitch McConnell blatantly asked the Senate, “Do [the Democrats] really want to completely

upend Americans' lives to enact some grand socialist vision?" (Davenport and Stolberg). If it were simply an opposition to the Green New Deal's economic proposals, the public would see an increase in other climate change proposals, yet the actual scientific threat of global warming is always relegated to the background.

On the opposing political spectrum, the Democrats are already rallying to revise the Green New Deal for political gain in the 2020 election. Senator Chuck Schumer considers "casting it as a way to mobilize millennial voters, a key part of the Democratic constituency that the party will need to turn out to win in swing states" (Davenport and Stolberg). Here it becomes clear that even the party in favor of the resolution are still primarily concerned with the exigency in terms of political gain. Barring scientific and environmental outlets, the public sphere has shifted its concern from the urgency itself, to what it means for an upcoming, decisive presidential election.

Just as Rice discusses in her work about affective ecologies, we see how response to the resolution, moving away from climate activism to political and/or economic gain, breeds a virus like network, wherein the primary rhetorical circulation involving such an exigency manipulates any action on climate change into a commodity. By promoting buzzwords such as socialism and taxes alongside carbon emissions and deforestation, we see both sides of the climate change debate use commonplace arguments to further raise or lower their value in the rhetorical exchange.

CONCLUSION: RECOGNIZING EXIGENCY AND RETHINKING THE APOCALYPSE

I propose that in our current socio-political climate, one deemed postmodern, late capitalist, neoliberalist, and the like, that exigency can become a commodity which we use to raise our value in the labor of communication. In considering rhetorical communication as affective labor, one can posit the notion of commodifying this labor in our current bio-political situation. Exigency becomes manipulable due to its commonplace topoi, a manipulation that works to commodify its urgency. While such an analysis may engender a rather pessimistic outlook on the current state of our socioeconomic affairs, we may also consider more productive possibilities through rhetorical communication itself. If we are to embrace the rhetorical circulation, taking into account the transsituational and transhistorical effects on communication, the opportunities to create new ways of thinking and addressing exigencies such as climate change arise. I return once more to Catherine Chaput's consideration of our neoliberal era, and just how we might be able to change course by rethinking rhetorical communication.

In consideration of market affect's power on societal decision making, Chaput concludes her argument with a call to "anticapitalist thinking" through various modes, such as movement politics (such as the Me Too and Black Lives Matter movements) and oppositional subjectivity. Chaput argues that "[a]ctive participation in disruptive

moments produce different bodies, different subjectivities, and different affective terrains. Such movement politics cultivate the possibility for an entirely different biopolitical governance, one that is neither innate nor simply a response to neoliberalism" (*Market Affect* 160). If capitalist thinking gains its affective power through rhetorical circulation, why not anticapitalist thinking? Simply put, we spend so much of our energies making sense of socio-economic decisions through our understanding of the markets and capitalism, why shouldn't we consider what these decisions look like in a new form, one that prioritizes a collective outside of the biopolitical reach?

This type of rethinking also relates back to Kastely's optimistic hope for consideration of the rhetoricity of need. Kastely warns of rhetorical manipulation, recalling Thrasymacus's dismissal of the audience in Plato's *Republic*. Kastely states, "The narrative of the *Republic* demonstrates that a rhetoric seeking to discover needs must be committed to advancing the responsiveness of the audience by creating a discourse that invites the raising of questions" (437). If we continue to dictate our rhetorical utterances by neoliberal standards, we fail to ask the questions that arise with anti-capitalist thinking. Kastely concludes that "[t]o understand the rhetoricity of need is to appreciate the ongoing acts of self-invention that constitute the human and that attach people to the world in ways that make them, in their responsiveness, subjects capable of an appreciation of the world as a place receptive to the evolution of human purpose" (439). Reevaluating our needs in an ever-changing environment allows us to adapt to our fluid affective ecology, to fully engage with the rhetorical circulation and revise the affective energies that gain prevalence in modern discourse.

We can see how an exigency such as climate change is seemingly inextricably linked with our economy, as the climate crisis is an effect of the global financial crises and our neoliberal market practices, while also the cause for greener initiatives and bipartisan platforms. The elements of this particular exigency bleed over into our capitalist society, just as the elements of the rhetorical circulation bleed unto themselves. Looking to the Green New Deal, the exigency of climate change addresses economic concerns, similar to the Double Exposure network, addressing the audience to climate crisis through economic gain, a persuasive rhetorical circulation that entangles exigency with the ever-invasive capitalist structures upon which our current society is built. Yet, if we begin focusing on shifting the rhetorical modes of communication surrounding such exigencies, we can begin creating new conversations. Such conversations that involve anticapitalist thinking allow us to critique the commodification of our exigencies, potentially putting an end to its exchange for political and/or economic gain rather than acting on the collective good.

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