Participatory Critical Rhetoric

Theoretical and Methodological Foundations for Studying Rhetoric In Situ

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Introduction

On April 14, 2007, thousands of climate change activists decided to "step it up" by engaging in a national day of climate change that included both traditional and nontraditional protest events organized in over 1,400 places around the USA.[1] From 2008 until the present, homeless citizens and their allies have lobbied their local community leaders in Sacramento both in meetings at City Hall and through collective actions taken in the streets to create new solutions to an old, but increasingly dire, set of political and economic conditions faced by Sacramento's homeless citizens.[2] Daily in national parks, wilderness enthusiasts, tourists, and passers-by navigate—and sometimes resist—efforts by park officials to normalize the ways of interacting with and, as a consequence, coming to know the environments they encounter.[3] And, health advocacy groups attend raves aiming to find new spaces and tactics to effectively shape perspectives on recreational drug (ab)use and of the War on Drugs.[4] These and countless other fields where communities form, engage in collective action, and disperse are brimming with the insights to be gained from examining everyday localized rhetorical practices.

Viewed individually, these vastly different fields of rhetorical action seemingly share little in common. Yet, they provide examples of the forms of rhetorical invention that increasingly capture the attention of rhetorical theorists and critics.[5] They point toward the significant rhetorical exigencies that rhetors tackle in the spaces of everyday life, they highlight the important challenges with which communities struggle, and they demand that scholars rethink what can be learned from the everyday rhetorical practices that are often dismissed as too mundane to warrant critical attention. Engaging with these *in situ* fields of rhetorical invention highlights the significance of the embodied, emplaced, material, visual, affective, processual, and vernacular dimensions of rhetorical practice that intersect in these places inhabited by

activists, speakers, audiences, and observers to shape shared understandings of significant phenomena.[6] Accessing, documenting, enacting, and analyzing these extratextual forms of *in situ* rhetoric calls for new ways of doing rhetorical scholarship that involve the critic's presence in the moment of rhetorical invention and draw from the tools of fieldwork and qualitative inquiry to participate with and interpret these embodied and emplaced performances of rhetoric. Encounters with these rhetorical fields goad rhetorical scholars to recognize the significance of shifting and nontraditional notions of texts, rhetor, audience, critic, and context.[7]

In this book, we develop a set of theoretical and methodological perspectives that we collectively refer to as participatory critical rhetoric. In doing so, we embark on a programmatic effort to theorize *in situ* critical rhetorical scholarship as a trend with important consequences for the discipline. A deliberate and extended effort to tease out the challenges and opportunities presented by this approach helps clarify its focus and strengthen the foundation on which future participatory critical rhetoric research is conducted.

Participatory critical rhetoric describes a set of research practices that bring qualitative methods of data collection such as participant observation, interviewing, and oral history into the process of doing rhetorical criticism. Grounded in the intellectual tradition of critical rhetoric, participatory critical rhetoric affords critics the opportunity to stand with, for, and among the people whose rhetoric we study.[8] As a participatory research praxis, participatory critical rhetoric reconsiders the relationship between critic, rhetor, text/context, and audience by placing the critic in direct contact with audiences and rhetors, inviting new perspectives on these complex rhetorical processes. It provides a means to account for the rhetoric of the everyday, to locate rhetoric in relationship to broader cultural discourses, and to open space for critics to analyze, participate with, and contribute to an emancipatory form of critique. By naming and theorizing participatory critical rhetoric, we also hope to contribute to a programmatic and sustained study of the potential offered by this critical approach. To that end, we highlight how participatory critical rhetoric draws on and expands the theoretical and critical exploration of scholars who are already pursuing efforts to better understand vernacular, everyday, and live(d) rhetorics through field-based approaches to rhetorical inquiry.[9] Further, through our own experiences with fieldwork, we attend to how we have struggled to determine the impact of the forms of rhetorical action encountered in the field. Throughout the book, we provide, by way of vignettes and references to extant rhetorical scholarship, examples of practical efforts to engage with these problematics of participatory rhetorical fieldwork.

We use this introduction to develop our definition of participatory critical rhetoric by synthesizing previous *in situ* rhetorical research and theory, and

to examine each of the key terms: rhetoric, critical, and participatory. We also offer a brief glimpse into our own experiences with using the approach. Finally, we sketch the key questions that guide subsequent chapters and that illuminate critical considerations that are activated in unique ways when one undertakes *in situ* rhetorical research.

TOWARD A PARTICIPATORY CRITICAL RHETORIC

The argument throughout this book is that field-based approaches to rhetorical criticism raise generative questions and provoke new discussions that are at the core of theorizing rhetorical practice. Put simply, participatory critical rhetoric theorizes field-based rhetoric. In practice, it signals that a rhetorical critic engages in fieldwork as a part of the critical process, where the critic enters a naturalistic field in which rhetoric occurs in order to observe, participate with, document, and analyze that rhetoric in its embodied and emplaced instantiation. Participatory critical rhetoric furthers efforts to theorize these practices on the part of critical rhetoricians and rhetorical critics.[10] While we recount the development of field-based approaches to rhetorical criticism in chapter 1, here we focus on describing the participatory critical rhetoric approach as a critical framework that rhetoricians can use to investigate live(d), locally-situated rhetoric in its immediate manifestation. This approach emerged from a synthesis and enhancement of our previous work on the topic, including "critical-rhetorical ethnography" and "rhetorical field methods."[11] On the one hand, participatory critical rhetoric draws on Aaron Hess's efforts to theorize critical-rhetorical ethnography, which combines critical rhetoric, ethnography, and the classical rhetorical concepts of invention, *kairos*, and *phronesis*. He contends that a need exists in rhetorical criticism for a method that would allow scholars to "advocate alongside vernacular organizations, arguing for their causes."[12] Foregrounding advocacy and activism, critical-rhetorical ethnography privileges access to locally-situated, vernacular rhetorics and seeks to partner with rhetors rather than merely study them. On the other hand, participatory critical rhetoric also draws from Michael Middleton, Samantha Senda-Cook, and Danielle Endres's theorization of rhetorical field methods. They argue that rhetorical field methods provide a means to identify emancipatory potential in the communities that rhetoricians study and a way to better understand live(d) rhetoric. They contend that, "Rhetorical field methods offer a productive articulation of the careful textual analyses characteristic of CR [critical rhetoric] with the provocative insights uncovered by *in situ* research common in ethnography and performance studies."[13] Synthesizing and expanding on these two efforts to theorize *in situ* rhetorical study provides a means by which to develop the theoretical groundings that can

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guide the proliferation of field-based studies being undertaken by rhetorical scholars.

Both approaches seek to understand everyday rhetoric as well as extraordinary rhetoric as it happens in its naturalistic field, and both present the voices of marginalized communities by attending to vernacular discourses. Participant observation that produces fieldnotes, interviews (ranging from informal conversations to collected oral histories), and other techniques that result in recordings and transcripts allow rhetoricians to access (otherwise) undocumented, embodied, emplaced, material, and ephemeral rhetorical practices. Moreover, both critical-rhetorical ethnography and rhetorical field methods aim to create durable artifacts that provide insights into the lived experiences of the communities they study and, as a consequence, expand the archive of rhetorical activity in ways that add to conventional "after-the-fact" forms of textual criticism familiar to the discipline.[14] Yet, they also illuminate elements of rhetoric that are difficult to ascertain from a textual (particularly already documented texts) purview, including insights into the judgments that underpin the production and reception of rhetoric within a community and the variety of rhetorical forms (affective, sensorial, emplaced, embodied) that can be difficult to capture with textualization.

Participatory critical rhetoric is an umbrella term to describe a range of research practices in which rhetoricians engage—depending on the type of projects they conduct and the kinds of questions they pursue—in extended forms of interaction, participation, and observation with the rhetorical communities they study. Participatory critical rhetoric, however, does not simply take up the mantle of ethnography or claim to offer the same sorts of evidence and analysis. For example, whereas ethnographers tend to be in the field for extended periods of time to gain insight into cultural practices, rhetoricians could be in the field for only a few hours during a political rally or public performance to understand the rhetorical culture of the event. Moreover, while ethnography may seek a holistic picture of culture, participatory critical rhetoric is mainly interested in how symbols are deployed to construct, maintain, and challenge cultures, identities, movements, and place/space.[15] Participatory critical rhetoric maintains a focus on rhetorical interaction by inquiring into community advocacy, symbolic contestation, deliberative practices, and other elements of rhetorical culture.

The kinds of artifacts privileged by and the questions asked by rhetoricians influence how the boundaries (temporal, spatial, etc.) of participatory critical rhetoric are negotiated. Some participatory rhetoricians enter the field with the aim of gathering texts (e.g., speech transcripts or photographs) that lend themselves to approaches more aligned with conventional textual criticism; others enter the field with a focus on embodied, emplaced, and material artifacts and experiences that require different critical approaches (e.g., taking

fieldnotes, attending to extratextual dimensions of corporeality); and still other participatory rhetorical critics seek to put both types of artifacts into conversation with one another. Likewise, how rhetoricians imagine the role of the critic has consequences for the analytical approach. Participatory critical rhetoricians must choose the degree to which they privilege the perspectives of the participants in their research vis-a-vis the critic's expertise, deciding whether to maintain control of the interpretive process or share it with participants. In other words, within the common set of practices named by participatory critical rhetoric, a spectrum of approaches can emerge based on the length of time in the field, ways of negotiating textualization and its implications, analysis processes, perspectives on the role of the critic, types of advocacy enacted, levels of organizational membership, and involvement with participants that each participatory rhetorical critic adopts. And, to the extent that each of these elements is emphasized in a particular project, participatory critical rhetoric presents a number of vexing considerations to be interrogated by its practitioners, each of which is taken up over the course of this book. However, there are some baseline critical commitments that are evoked by each of the key terms that name this approach.

Rhetoric

As we suggest above, participatory critical rhetoric, despite its intellectual debt to qualitative communication scholarship, ethnographic practice, and performance studies, maintains a *rhetorical focus.* For us, this means it is concerned with how symbolic practices articulate disparate identities, ideas, values, beliefs, images, meanings, bodies, and communities with some effect on immanent (and future) symbolic practice within, at minimum, the communities where those practices emerge. That is to say, participatory critical rhetoric casts its net broadly when it comes to the question of what constitutes rhetoric or rhetorical practice. We draw from Carole Blair, Greg Dickinson, and Brian Ott's definition of rhetoric as: "discourses, events, objects and practices [whose] character [is] meaningful, legible, partisan, and consequential."[16] When entering the field, the critic is faced with the messy multimodality of rhetoric. Intersectionality, therefore, becomes an important move toward explaining how multiple forms of rhetoric engage in intertextual relationships in the field. In this respect, Darrel Enck-Wanzer's theorization of intersectional rhetoric provides a useful grounding for how participatory critical rhetoric conceptualizes its rhetorical focus. It endeavors to understand how different forms of rhetoric—words, images, bodies—work together without privileging one over another.[17] Participatory critical rhetoric promotes consideration of "the confluence of forms in a radically fragmented vernacular rhetoric."[18] This confluence is important to field-based rhetorical

practices where a variety of (rhetorical) forces are colliding with one another at once to create an embodied and emplaced rhetorical encounter. For instance, in addition to verbal texts, images, and bodies, place and space are also crucial rhetorical forms at play in many *in situ* rhetorical performances. So, while participatory critical rhetoric draws on the efforts of Enck-Wanzer and others to theorize the viability of an intersectional rhetorical approach, it aims to further develop these insights from their focus on already documented texts to explore their promise for *in situ* rhetoric.[19]

Critical

Participatory critical rhetoric is closely aligned with a *telos* of *critical praxis* that informs its approach to rhetorical scholarship. By critical praxis we mean a practice in which critics not only analyze rhetoric, but also seek to intervene in structures of power and engage with communities by doing rhetoric. On the one hand, this critical commitment aligns with the already developed commitments of critical rhetoricians who aim to expose how power is sustained through the mystifying force of discourse. Accordingly, participatory critical rhetoric shares the recognition that power is contingent, that it is made material through discursive practice, and that it is communicated by both presence and absence of rhetorical action by both privileged and subordinated rhetorical communities. Like other practitioners of critical rhetoric, it recognizes that new forms of freedom are as likely to mask the discursive operations of power as effectively (if not more so) than the forms of domination which they intend to upend. On the other hand, participatory critical rhetoric endeavors to emphasize the role of the critic as an activist both in their scholarly efforts and in their embodied engagements with the rhetorical communities they examine. It aims to trouble the way in which much critical rhetoric scholarship is focused on efforts to shape future political actions distanced from immediate political struggles in which the critic and the communities they research are located. Specifically, participatory critical rhetoric recognizes that critics who participate with communities in the field cannot restrict their political efforts to objective commentary alone, but rather that claims are made on critics to take immanent political action, which we outline in further detail in chapter 2. And, whether critics desire it or not, those claims will be answered as much by the lack of action or silence of critics in the moment of those encounters as by any other action they choose to take. In this regard, participatory critical rhetoric aligns with the "commitment to a telos," for which Kent Ono and John Sloop argue.[20] However, we contend that the moment when action must be taken and the political horizon that informs that action is not defined by when pen is put to paper. Rather, it is defined by what the embodied, emplaced critic chooses to do (or not do) when claims

are made on the critic's body by the communities that have shared their fears, their trust, their insights, and (sometimes) their resources with the critic.

Participatory

Most essentially, participatory critical rhetoric demands the *participation* of the critic with the rhetorical fields and practices that inform their research and critical praxis. For this, there is no substitute. Intimate engagement with the rhetorical communities that inform one's scholarly efforts through fieldwork is the link to both the critical praxis to which participatory critical rhetoric commits itself, as well as the intersectional rhetorical interactions and practices that it seeks to privilege as an object of analysis. As we suggest throughout the following chapters, participation can take many forms and mean many things, but it evokes a few minimal criteria to fulfill our conceptualization of participatory. At minimum, it requires that the critic be present as the rhetorical practices under examination unfold. In other words, participatory critical rhetoric eschews the notion that the critic can or should occupy a third position outside of rhetor or audience. It, instead, insists that to begin to capture insight into the embodied, emplaced experience of live(d) rhetoric, the critic must make efforts to erode the critical distance that places rhetoricians above or outside the rhetorics they examine. In its most thorough enactment, participatory critical rhetoric invites critics to experiment with the creation of rhetoric alongside the rhetorical community they examine, to become a full participant and intimately know the challenges, successes, failures, and metrics for measuring effects in the rhetorical dynamics of that community. In between these two roles, participatory critical rhetoric invites and values a range of other forms of participation, each of which recognizes that to gain intimate insights into the rhetorical processes that shape any rhetorical community, the boundaries that found traditional rhetorical criticism (i.e., the critic as separate from the rhetorical practice) must be made porous. Such a critical move affords the critic insight into what are otherwise often fleeting, ephemeral moments of rhetorical creativity.

It is this synthesis of rhetoric, critical praxis, and participation that defines participatory critical rhetoric, laying bare some of the underlying assumptions of this approach that we discuss further in chapter 1. Our emphasis on critical praxis in particular situates participatory critical rhetoric within a particular subset of rhetorical theory and criticism. While it is possible to undertake forms of rhetorical ethnography, rhetorical fieldwork, or participatory rhetoric that are not informed by critical rhetoric, the approach we put forth in this book narrows the scope with our commitment to a critical praxis. Nonetheless, we believe the issues we raise in subsequent chapters are of importance to all practitioners of field-based rhetorical criticism, whether one addresses

those issues with a critical rhetoric lens or not. Further, as we argue, these issues are also of importance to larger conversations in the field of rhetorical theory and criticism.

PARTICIPATORY CRITICAL RHETORIC IN PRACTICE

As we outlined thus far, participatory critical rhetoric encompasses differing degrees of participation and a variety of tools but is always accented with a critical rhetorical sensibility. To illustrate the scope of possibility within the approach, over the course of this book, we often refer to our own work. Between the four of us, we have engaged in a number of projects that fall under the umbrella of participatory critical rhetoric. Each of these projects informs our current and collective thinking about the theoretical nature and methodological scope of the approach. Throughout the chapters, we offer our own tales from the field in the form of personal vignettes, which provide moments of insight from conducting this work including unexpected outcomes, striking interactions with participants, and the lessons learned from placing our bodies in the field. Taken together, the scope of our research has been quite broad and has included a variety of methodological choices. We hope that the inclusion of vignettes shows that participatory critical rhetoricians take up a number of tools to explore fundamental questions of rhetoric.

For example, Michael's efforts with the framework of participatory critical rhetoric have been focused on the social movement practices of homeless communities. During his graduate study and presently, Michael has spent several months conducting periodic research embedded with activists forming the homeless advocacy group, SafeGround Sacramento. His research included participant observation, interviewing, and the collection of vernacular texts produced by the activists with whom he worked. This research informs his current publication efforts while he is laying the groundwork for a related study of the criminalization of homelessness and responses to that criminalization via research in alternative "homeless courts."[21]

Aaron has also conducted a number of projects that have included a range of methods including participant observation, interviews, focus groups, and documentary filmmaking. While his work at the intersection of rhetoric and qualitative methods began with his undergraduate honor's thesis using observational methods at a Promise Keepers rally, his long-term ethnographic engagement with a health advocacy group called DanceSafe was the foundation of his dissertation work on critical-rhetorical ethnography. Working with Art Herbig, he has also been involved with two documentary projects, one in Washington, DC covering Jon Stewart and Stephen Colbert's "Rally to

Restore Sanity and/or Fear" and another in Lower Manhattan during the tenth anniversary of 9/11. In Phoenix, he has worked with a local birthing center to explore health advocacy and the politics of natural birth through interviews and focus groups.[22]

Danielle's interest in field-based rhetorical approaches began in graduate school where she was trained in both ethnography of communication and rhetorical theory/criticism. Although her dissertation analyzed a set of already documented texts related to nuclear waste siting decisions, that work was informed by fieldwork conducted with Native American and environmental activists opposed to the Yucca Mountain nuclear waste site. Over the years she has continued to build relationships, spend time in the field as a participant observer, and create an oral history archive on a variety of topics related to the Atomic West to inform her work on conceptions of place/space in the American West, nuclear colonialism, and environmental justice. Danielle also coheaded with Tarla Rai Peterson and Leah Sprain a team of scholars across the USA who studied the rhetorical tactics of the 2007 Step It Up climate change rallies using both participant observation and rhetorical methods, and shared their findings with key members of the Step It Up organization (now 350.org). Currently, Danielle and Peterson are leading a collaborative project that is examining the expert-to-expert internal rhetoric of low-carbon energy technology scientists and engineers, using multisited participant observation and interviewing at nuclear science, wind energy science, and carbon sequestration science conferences. This project has moved Danielle from the world of activists to the world of scientists and engineers (not necessarily mutually exclusive worlds), which has prompted thinking about doing critical work with a community that is not always aligned with her politics.[23]

Samantha wove participant observation and interviewing into her rhetorical research about outdoor recreation at Zion National Park. During this project, she spent a month camping and hiking through Zion, documenting and analyzing the different forms of material rhetoric present in this national park. As a graduate student, she collected oral histories for Danielle's nuclear colonialism research. She has also attended, as a researcher, a few one-day events such as Step It Up, PARK(ing) Day, and Elevate. As part of a research team, she attended two Step It Up rallies in Salt Lake City, gathering data that provided evidence of the rhetoric that places themselves perform. For a project about spatial argument, she participated in a PARK(ing) Day event in Omaha. This fieldwork informed the analysis but did not become part of the published essay. Again, in Omaha, she attended Elevate, which was an event aimed to challenge dominant food practices by making connections between food and transportation. Finally, focusing on urban environments, she has been using participant observation and interviewing to engage in a long-term study of constructions of place/space in neighborhoods in Omaha.[24]

Taken together, our experiences in the field may seem disparate; however, upon closer inspection, they reveal a fundamental focus on participating in intersectional rhetorical processes as they happen in the field. Across our works, we have maintained a critical focus on the dissemination, circulation, and contestation of meanings inherent to each respective rhetorical community. Whether nuclear science, drug culture, outdoor recreation, or homelessness, we examine the nature of symbolic identities and meanings forged and challenged in urban streets, national parks, desert raves, scientific meetings, and official memorials. These sites of invention and the people found therein inform our theories of rhetoric. We use them to illustrate the potential of participatory critical rhetoric in articulating new insights into the processes and products of rhetoric. We also hope that our collective experience indicates that participatory critical rhetoric is not a set of predetermined tools to be taken up, or a prescriptive, formulaic method. Rather, participatory critical rhetoric engenders a commitment to flexibility in participating with the immanent politics of emplaced and intersectional rhetorics, as comprehended through the critical embodiment of being present in the sites of invention and affected by the perspectives offered by those who participate in the production of rhetorical discourse.

ORGANIZATION OF THE BOOK

In the chapters that follow, we expand on the foundations and key assumptions of participatory critical rhetoric and develop some of its potential implications for rhetorical theorists and communication scholars working in ethnography and performance studies. In particular, we develop four interrelated *topoi* that open conversations about the theoretical and methodological implications of participatory critical rhetoric: immanent politics, critical embodiment, emplaced fields of rhetoric, and gaining perspectives from participants. Chapter 1 begins by tracing the theoretical foundations of participatory critical rhetoric. Specifically, we situate participatory critic rhetoric in the critical tradition of rhetorical theory, discussing how critical rhetoric itself demands a reexamination of texts, rhetors, critics, and audiences. In doing so, we argue that critical rhetoric provides the grounds for embodying participatory approaches to rhetorical criticism. This chapter also provides key assumptions of participatory critical rhetoric, expanding the definition we offer in this introduction. We contend that (1) texts are always embedded within social practices, performances, and contexts; (2) participation itself functions epistemologically to advance theory and criticism; and (3) when conceiving of rhetoric as embodied and emplaced, rhetoric itself

is revealed as intersectional and multidimensional. We close this chapter by articulating some of the implications of apprehending rhetoric via participatory experience.

In chapter 2, we argue that participatory critical rhetoric provides the opportunity to position the critical rhetorician as an activist-scholar. In order to theorize this role for the critic, we focus on three dimensions of critical rhetoric that we believe are supplemented by participatory critical rhetoric: its focus on text or textual fragments, its deferral of politics by seeking to offer counsel relevant to future rhetorical engagements, and its risk of fostering political paralysis by privileging constant criticism over immanent engagement. We introduce the concept of immanent politics as a way to challenge the critic to engage directly with the rhetorical field that hosts their research, consider the importance of minor, often non-textual (or textualizable) rhetorical practices, and imagine how the critic might adopt the role of activist-scholar. We conclude by considering how these shifts enable critics to focus on and participate in productive criticism, utilizing their insights to sharpen the political edge of critical rhetoric.

In chapter 3, we theorize critics as embodied, contending that although critics embody their roles in conventional rhetorical criticism, physical presence at the site of rhetorical invention heightens the significance of critics' bodies in participatory critical rhetoric, which calls for increased reflexivity. We begin by arguing that although rhetorical critics increasingly attend to the body as a rhetorical entity itself, they rarely consider the body *in situ*, focusing instead on representations of bodies of rhetors or on how rhetors deploy the bodies of others. We enhance these perspectives by calling attention to the critical embodiment of the critic. As such, we suggest three ways of conceiving of critics' bodies: as critical, affective, and risky. By critical, we mean that critics' bodies function as research instruments, collecting multisensory information. We also advance theories of affective rhetoric, discussing how critics' bodies participate in a field of affect at once experiencing and contributing to it. Lastly, we explain that critics' bodies can raise suspicion, incur damage, or change unfolding rhetorical situations for the better and the worse. Throughout, we emphasize that reflexivity ought to become a routine practice not only among scholars using participatory critical rhetoric but also in rhetorical criticism more broadly.

In chapter 4, we argue that the field is not simply a different context for rhetoric. Rather, the field is a participant in rhetorical invention that takes on a range of meanings from a place of research to context to community of meaning to a rhetorical actor. In order to theorize the way the field participates in rhetorical invention in participatory critical rhetoric, we advance the argument that rhetoric is an emplaced phenomenon, meaning

that rhetoric is always an embodied experience in relation to place and space. Participatory critical rhetoricians who enter the field are in a unique position to access and document emplaced rhetoric. We examine how four intersecting vectors of the field—place of research, context, community of meaning, and rhetorical actor—not only allow the participatory critical rhetorician to better understand emplaced rhetoric, but also how engaging with, attuning to, and evaluating emplaced rhetoric in the field enhances a critic's understanding of the complex and intersectional material experience of rhetoric.

In chapter 5, we turn our attention to the role of participants in field-based rhetorical research. By engaging those present in the rhetorical field, we encourage critics to take up a multiperspectival form of judgment. This judgment is attained through the consideration and elevation of the voices of participants. Participants in participatory critical rhetoric can range from audience members to rhetors, depending on the nature of the particular project. Engaging with participants means inquiring into the immediate moment of speaking as judgments on rhetorical invention and reception are shared between speaker and audience. We offer three conceptualizations of participants—as inventors and auditors of discourse, as rhetorical bodies, and as dialogic interlocutors—each of which provides complementary understandings of how participants can be understood within participatory critical rhetoric research and how they assist in forming multiperspectival judgment. Finally, we discuss the ethics of participant interaction and how it challenges and decenters the traditional role of the critic.

In the conclusion, we synthesize our discussion in each of these chapters and consider some of the implications of this approach for rhetorical study. We also use the conclusion to address practical and logistical aspects of doing participatory critical rhetoric. Although this book is not meant to be an instructional "how to" method book, we recognize the importance of sharing our insights into the actual practice of this approach. Finally, we identify some of the challenges that we continue to struggle with as we theorize our engagement with the field.

Ultimately, we hope that this book serves as both a resource and catalyst for continued engagement with fieldwork by rhetorical theorists and critics. Climate change and homelessness activism, performances of material rhetoric in national parks, health advocacy in drug communities, and the many other fields of everyday and extraordinary, embodied and emplaced rhetorical practice can offer valuable insights into the inner-workings of rhetorical communities. Participatory critical rhetoric offers an approach and set of interrelated tools and practices for tapping into these insights that have the potential to enhance the field's understanding of rhetoric's fundamental role in the lives of communities, large and small, that we inhabit.

NOTES

1. Danielle Endres, Leah M. Sprain, and Tarla Rai Peterson, eds., *Social Movement to Address Climate Change: Local Steps for Global Action* (Amherst, NY: Cambria Press, 2009).

2. Michael K. Middleton, "'SafeGround Sacramento' and Rhetorics of Substantive Citizenship," *Western Journal of Communication* 78 (2014): 1–15, doi:10.1080/10570314.2013.835064; Michael K. Middleton, "Housing, Not Handcuffs: Homeless Misrecognition and 'SafeGround Sacramento's' Homeless Activism," *Communication, Culture & Critique* (2014): 320–37, doi: 10.1111/cccr.12055.

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10. While we craft this approach with a foundation in critical rhetoric, we believe field-based approaches could prove useful for all rhetorical critics. That said, we also believe that theorizing outside of this critical rhetorical foundation is beyond the scope of this book.

11. Middleton et al., "Articulating Rhetorical Field Methods"; Hess, "Critical-Rhetorical Ethnography."

12. Hess, "Critical-Rhetorical Ethnography," 128.

13. Middleton et al., "Articulating Rhetorical Field Methods," 388.

14. Hess, "Critical-Rhetorical Ethnography," 128.

15. As we discuss in chapter 4, we use place/space to refer to the mutually constitutive relationship between semi-bounded places and more generalized spatial practices.

16. Carole Blair, Greg Dickenson, and Brian L. Ott, "Introduction: Rhetoric/Memory/Place," in *Places of Public Memory: The Rhetoric of Museums and Memorials,* eds. Greg Dickenson, Carole Blair, and Brian L. Ott (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2010): 2.

17. Darrel Enck-Wanzer, "Trashing the System: Social Movement, Intersectional Rhetoric, and Collective Agency in the Young Lords Organization's Garbage Offensive," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 92 (2006): 174–201, doi: 10.1080/00335630600816920.

18. Ibid, 180.

19. Elinor Light, "The (Em)Placed Vernacular: Rhetorics of Control and Transgression in the American City," (PhD diss., University of Utah, 2015).

20. Kent A. Ono and John M. Sloop, "Commitment to a *Telos*: A Sustained Critical Rhetoric," *Communication Monographs* 59 (1992): 48, doi:10.1080/03637759209376248.

21. Middleton, "'SafeGround Sacramento'"; Middleton, "Housing, Not Handcuffs."

22. Daniel C. Brouwer and Aaron Hess, "Making Sense of 'God Hates Fags' and 'Thank God for 9/11': A Thematic Analysis of Milbloggers' Responses to Reverend Fred Phelps and the Westboro Baptist Church," *Western Journal of Communication* 71 (2007): 69–90, doi:10.1080/10570310701215388; Art Herbig and Aaron Hess, "Convergent Critical Rhetoric at the 'Rally to Restore Sanity': Exploring the Intersection of Rhetoric, Ethnography, and Documentary Production," *Communication Studies 63* (2012), 269–89, doi:10.1080/10510974.2012.674617; Hess, "Critical-Rhetorical Ethnography"; Aaron Hess and Art Herbig, "Recalling the Ghosts of 9/11: Convergent Memorializing at the Opening of the National 9/11 Memorial," *International Journal of Communication* 7 (2013): 2207–30.

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24. Endres and Senda-Cook, "Location Matters"; Endres et al., "Step What Up?"; Danielle Endres, Samantha Senda-Cook, and Brian Cozen, "Not Just a Place to Park Your Car: Park(ing) as Spatial Argument," *Argumentation and Advocacy* 50 (2014): 121–140; Samantha Senda-Cook, "Rugged Practices: Embodying Authenticity in Outdoor Recreation," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 98 (2012): 129–52, doi: 10.1080/00335630.2012.663500; Samantha Senda-Cook, "Materializing Tensions: How Maps and Trails Mediate Nature," *Environmental Communication: A Journal of Nature and Culture* 7 (2013): 355–71, doi:10.1080/17524032.2013.792854; Samantha Senda-Cook and Danielle Endres, "A Place of One's Own," in *Environmental Rhetoric and Ecologies of Place*, ed. Peter Goggin (London: Routledge, 2013), 143–54; Samantha Senda-Cook, Michael Middleton, and Danielle Endres, "Interrogating the 'Field' of Rhetorical Field Methods," for *Connecting Textual Criticism and Field Work*, National Communication Association Conference, Washington, DC November 2013; Samantha Senda-Cook, Michael Middleton, and Danielle Endres, "Rhetorical Cartographies: (Re)Mapping Urban Spaces," Conference on Communication and the Environment, Boulder, CO, June 2015.