

CLEAN(ING) COAL: THE ENTHYMEMATIC QUALITIES OF IMAGES, EDITING  
AND COLOR IN CLEAN COAL ADVERTISING

BY

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## ABSTRACT

*Energy advertisements in the United States have increased in both prominence and political importance in recent years. The increasing pressure of environmental concerns requires energy companies to assert green credentials in order to avoid strict regulation. In response, industry is attempting to co-opt green rhetoric by suggesting that energy production and environmental protection are not in opposition. Appeals to “clean coal” highlight such a rhetorical tactic. The attempt by the coal industry to rebrand coal as “clean” is a political tactic to downplay environmental concerns and avoid regulation or backlash. A significant feature to the “clean coal” advertising campaign is its enthymematic dimension; inviting audiences to fill in assumptions about “progress” and “environmental stewardship.” This thesis uses clean coal advertising as a case study to explore the enthymematic properties of images, particularly in editing and color. Investigating the visual rhetoric in clean coal advertising helps explore the tactics the fossil fuel industry uses to make arguments with images and contributes to rhetorical analysis of editing, images, and color.*

## CHAPTER ONE:

### Introduction

The coal industry plays an important role in the American economy and society. The United States' coal reserves, the largest in the world, are mined across the nation in twenty-five states. In 2011, U.S. coal mines produced more than one billion tons of coal, of which more than 90% was used by U.S. power plants to generate electricity. Coal is currently the most common fuel for electricity production in the United States, with over 42% of the nation's nearly four trillion kilowatt hours of annual electricity demand satisfied with energy produced from coal (EIA). However, with the threat from cheap natural gas, the declining costs of renewable energy, and most importantly, the rise of environmental activism, the coal industry has invested significant efforts in an ad campaign to portray coal as necessary and clean (Lacey; Felsing). In particular, the coal industry is struggling to work with a Democratic presidential administration and an increasingly eco-sensitive populace (Chameides). The Obama administration has proposed tighter restrictions on carbon dioxide emissions which will constrain the

construction of new coal power plants. Industry representatives have testified before Congress that the EPA New Source Performance Standards regulations are “no different than EPA saying that no new coal plants can be built for the foreseeable future” (Glaser). Public opinion has recently turned against coal power, with 53% of likely U.S. voters favoring stricter environmental regulations (Rasmussen). The political leanings of Rasmussen polling suggest that support for environmentalism and anti-coal sentiments might be even deeper than the poll indicates (Silver). In order to thrive, the coal industry is finding it necessary to inoculate itself from criticisms of environmental degradation.

Energy advertisements in the United States have increased in both prominence and political importance in recent years (Trygstad). There is a significant struggle between those looking to produce cheap, fossil fuel energy and those seeking to protect the environment. Both sides attempt to weave together scientific and visual appeals in order to make their respective case to broader publics. The coal industry is attempting to position itself as an environmentally innocuous energy source by suggesting that energy production, economic growth and environmental protection are not in opposition. The coal industry and appeals to “clean coal” highlights such a rhetorical tactic. The American Coalition for Clean Coal Electricity (ACCCE) advertisement, “Clean Coal: Now is the Time,” typifies visual appeals that attempt to reframe coal as environmentally friendly.

Much of the ACCCE’s focus has been on reframing the image of coal around “clean coal.” The industry is investing \$3.5 billion into the leading clean coal technology, carbon capture and sequestration (CCS), and touting higher efficiency standards at most of its plants (Worldwatch Institute). Most environmentalists contest the idea the coal can

ever be clean, arguing that only one CCS project has ever been completed and the research is underfunded by billions of dollars (Worldwatch Institute). However, the introduction of the term “clean” functions as an important rhetorical device. According to the Center for American Progress director of climate strategy Daniel Weiss, coal companies use the phrase “clean coal” as if it is a “magic wand” that can wave all emissions away (Worldwatch Institute). The *New York Times* has declared the existence of an escalating “word war” over the phrase “clean coal,” with “coal's boosters and its critics... vying to shape public perception about the fuel” (Mulkren). According to Kenneth Green, a resident scholar at the American Enterprise Institute, “it is a propaganda war” (Mulkren). The ability of the coal industry to “win” that war hinges on its success in controlling the perception of clean coal.

While the efficacy of clean coal is still being debated by policy-makers, environmentalists, and scientists, the coal industry is pouring significant resources into touting its success. In the run-up to the 2012 presidential election, the American Coalition for Clean Coal Electricity (ACCCE) spent over \$35 million dollars on a public relations campaign to persuade the public not to reject coal on environmental grounds (Davies). The ACCCE is the flagship lobbying group for both coal-mining companies and utilities that sell coal-based power (Chameides). According to the ACCCE website, their mission is to support policies “that will ensure affordable, reliable, domestically produced energy, while supporting the development and deployment of advanced technologies to further reduce the environmental footprint of coal-fueled electricity generation” (ACCCE, employment). The ACCCE’s advertising campaign demonstrates an effort to promote

energy independence, appealing to the public's nationalist sentiments, and to "greenwash" coal.

In April 2012, in the run-up to the 2012 presidential election, the ACCCE debuted the "Clean Coal: Now is the Time" advertisement to a national audience. The advertisement is the signature ad of the "America's Power" campaign designed by the ACCCE to support coal production and criticize EPA regulation. Chameides argues that the ACCCE launched a "blitz of ads" in the run-up to the election, "flood[ing] the airwaves with ads about the promise of clean coal, while trashing the Environmental Protection Agency." Chameides concludes, "the message was pretty clear — get Obama and those environmental-regulating crazies out of the White House."

The advertisement is a sixty-one second spot full of quick cuts and vivid footage. There are two main elements at play in the ad: the narration and the images. The narrator speaks directly to the audience, whom he labels "America." The audience is urged to focus on "reality," not "rhetoric." The narrator instructs the audience to think about the importance of affordable electricity prices, energy independence, and America's competitive edge. Coal is identified as the only viable option for attaining those goals. Urgency is emphasized: the narrator tells us "the clock is ticking" while we hear a clock tick over the sound of a crowd shouting a countdown.

The ACCCE's advertisement provides a unique insight into how the industry attempts to rebrand coal as an environmentally benign energy source. The ad's use of visual imagery attempts to marry the realities of coal production with an environmentally friendly narrative by marshaling a variety of rhetorical and visual techniques. To that end, I explore the ad in three ways. First, I argue editing plays an important role in the



construction of visual enthymeme. Through an examination of the clusters in the advertisement, I explore how a reliance on dynamic cuts as an editing strategy functions rhetorically to create a sense of urgency and deflect criticisms about the efficacy of clean coal. Second, I investigate “Clean Coal: Now is the Time” as a case study of how images function enthymematically to present coal as an environmentally acceptable energy source. Images of scientific subjects, in particular, are used to construct a technical and objective ethos that shifts the debate over clean coal from the public to the technical sphere. Finally, I uncover the role of vividness as a rhetorical device to draw the viewer’s gaze to specific messages and, more importantly, away from the production of coal itself. Drawing on color theory, I argue that in the case of clean coal advertising, vividness is used to draw attention to bright environmental landscapes and naturalize the production of coal. This reinforces the enthymematic function of the images in clean coal advertising, rendering coal environmentally innocuous.

## **Visual Rhetoric**

The study of visual rhetoric and the acceptance of images as an important source of rhetoric have been underway for decades (Barthes). These studies have looked at subjects as wide-ranging as photographs (Lucaites and Hariman; DeLuca and Demo), social movements (DeLuca), television and film (Rushing), architecture and public memorials (Blair, Jeppeson and Pucci), and advertising (Scott). That images can present an argument has already been firmly established (Birdsell and Groarke, 1996; Blair; Groarke). Exploring the ways in which these arguments are made and how effective they are is an important endeavor, as they are a powerful form of public discourse that we

have not done enough thinking about (Finnegan). Groarke argues, “visual components play a pivotal role in many attempts to prove, convince or persuade” and “public opinion is increasingly determined by visual images” (105-6). The healthy scholarly discussion on visual rhetoric allows us to establish insights unavailable with traditional discursive methods.

Images are particularly important in technical and scientific matters. Images help reduce complexity of a concept, thus making it more accessible to a wider audience. Recently, many scholars have begun to explore specific cases to identify distinct types of visual arguments and their communicative structures. Jens Kjeldsen argues for a “cognitive, contextual, and reception” oriented approach to visual argumentation while examining Scandinavian political advertising. Michelle Gibbons explores the portrayal of functional brain images in scientific journals and the popular press to explore “argument frames” as an approach to visual argument for images that shift in different contexts. Gibbons notes that the imagery of science is particularly important, as “visual knowledge of science sometimes eclipses verbal knowledge” (175). She argues the “use of scientific images in arguments is a matter of significant concern... scientific images possess substantial persuasive resources; they are a remarkably effective form of visual argument... implicated in numerous important issues concerning science and public policy” (186). Given the importance of these images, and their proliferation in contemporary policy debates, there is a pressing need to explore their nature more thoroughly.

One component of scientific images that is relatively unexplored is their relationship with enthymemes. Investigating the ways in which “Clean Coal: Now is the

Time” uses visual enthymeme uncovers how the ACCCE greenwashes the debate over clean coal. Greenwashing refers to the strategies a corporation or business uses to “wash away” a damaged reputation or tainted record on environmental issues by “posing as friends of the environment” and, in the case of coal, as employers, true American businesses, and guarantees of energy independence (Greer and Bruno, 11). The industry’s goal is to portray the environmental damage done by coal as small enough that it will be perceived as a necessary evil for the affordable and domestic energy production that coal can provide. Greenwashing is a rhetorical strategy that requires further inspection by rhetorical scholars. I argue that the selective vividness and enthymematic qualities of the images, as well as the use of dynamic editing, constitute practices that prevent a critical evaluation of clean coal. These rhetorical strategies constitute an attempt to greenwash the coal industry.

Despite the attention to visual rhetoric in recent decades, many categories of images have escaped careful analysis. Color and editing are two image concepts that rhetorical scholars have just begun to tackle (Wojcik; Orpen). Uncovering the role of these images is important to deciphering the “propaganda war” surrounding clean coal, but it is also a useful case study for understanding the rhetorical qualities of images more broadly. In addition to investigating a specific environmental and economic controversy, this thesis contributes to the work of visual rhetoric and films studies scholars by expanding the rhetorical vocabulary used to discuss the enthymematic function of images and the rhetorical dimensions of editing and color. Color serves an enthymematic function; it helps forge associations that are not discursive, but also enables connections

among various commonplaces. Attention to color and editing will enrich the critical depth of visual rhetoric studies.

Investigating the visual rhetoric in clean coal advertising both explores the tactics the fossil fuel industry uses to make arguments with images and contributes to rhetorical analysis of images. Coal is at the center of our politics and economy. Given the statements by both the *New York Times* and the American Enterprise Institute about the coal “propaganda war,” it is clear that both environmentalists and the coal industry believe that the future of energy in this country will be determined by the financial resources being pumped into advertising “rebranding” coal as clean. The central aim of this thesis is to discover ways the fossil fuel industry uses visual rhetoric to silence or blunt environmental criticisms; however, I think there are also broader benefits to this area of study. “Clean Coal: Now is the Time” is an excellent case study to explore rhetorical tactics and tropes that are commonly associated with images. This study reveals how editing functions to create argument, how images work enthymematically, and how color works to shape associations.

## CHAPTER TWO:

### Using Cluster Analysis to Unpack the Rhetoric of Editing

One of the most conspicuous elements of the ad is the editing. The ad is compromised almost entirely of quick cuts between images that appear to tell no coherent story. It contains sixty distinct shots in sixty-one seconds, or just over one second of viewing time per image, on average. The quick cuts require the audiences to defer to commonplaces because they do not have time to process. Quick cuts like these, sometimes known as dynamic cuts, “largely disregard the regular continuity of story cutting, and substitute the film's particular ability to relate together things which may have occurred far apart” (Spottiswoode 105). Context ties the shots together, even if they bear no spatial relationship. Those editing choices make up an important component of the message of the film. According to Thomas Benson, a communication scholar who has published prolifically on rhetoric and film, “It is not simply that the filmmaker has selected these images from among the many hours he [sic] recorded. The film is not simply selected, it is carefully structured within and between scenes...” (259). In order to

thoroughly explore the message of a film, therefore, it is necessary to uncover the meaning and structure of the editing.

Exploring the rhetorical structure of a film can be challenging. Films argue differently, and sometimes less obviously, than other mediums. Benson contends: “It is the great strength and the great weakness of filmic persuasion that it can create an experience, and an attitude toward that experience, but that it would be likely to diminish the felt response to the experience and the attitude if it were to provide a clearly stated, linear explanation of its point of view” (258). Most imagery in film invites the viewer to “experience a tension that can occur only when the images are apprehended but when part of the experience is kept out of conscious awareness” (258-9). This tendency of films to keep part of the message hidden complicates efforts to uncover the message. The sequencing of images may not lead to a cohesive story, which means the enthymematic relationship is what ties the images together.

Examining how multiple images work together requires parsing linkages across sequential images. Cluster analysis provides a way to do that. Cluster analysis can be used to help discover the structure and meaning of editing in film by exploring the links between and among various shots. A cluster analysis of “Clean Coal: Now is the Time” reveals the dominant editing strategies and the ways in which editing has its own expressive meaning. In this ad, the quick cuts bolster the predominant message of urgency. Through the high shot-to-second ratio the medium becomes the message as the advertisement performs the urgency advocated by its central message.

## The Rhetoric of Editing

Exploring the rhetoric of editing is a complicated enterprise. Editing is the process of arranging shots, determining their length, and combining them with a soundtrack. It is primarily a connective process, “the joining of shots to form a whole” (Orpen 1). It is rhetorical “in the sense that it is intended to be seen and to be responded to” (117).

Documentary filmmaker Frederick Wiseman describes editing as a “process of fiction-making in which bits and pieces of photographed actuality are re-assembled to see what can be found in the material” (Benson, “*Primate*” 212). Raymond Spottiswoode, a British film theoretician, notes “the editing or cutting process is peculiar to films,” and it is “in the cutting room that we can most easily get an idea of what film is really like” (90).

Through editing, sequences of shots that might be random or meaningless are given new creative life.

According to Spottiswoode: “the juxtaposition of two shots and their accompanying ideas can give rise to a third idea which has no physical embodiment” (90). The Soviet filmmakers of the 1920s considered editing to be the “creative force of film” and the “foundation of film art” (Orpen 1). Spottiswoode notes that the power of editing allows filmmakers to “create an illusion of reality” and “any interpretation of world affairs they have a mind to impose, without regard to outward actuality or inner truth” (91). The magnitude of the impact of editing on the final product makes it all the more important to expand a rhetorical analysis of editing. Yet the rhetoric of editing remains largely unexplored by scholars.

Editing can be considered connective or expressive. While editing as a connective process is well-studied in film scholarship, editing as an expressive technique is taken for

granted (Orpen 2-3). According to Valerie Orpen, a lecturer in French cinema at the University of Manchester, there is “a dearth of studies on editing” (14). The existing literature can largely be divided into three categories: film studies textbooks, editor's handbooks, and interviews with film editors (Orpen). Although there are several film studies textbooks, editing more often is merely a chapter in a more comprehensive film text. *Film Art: An Introduction*, by David Bordwell and Kristin Thompson, is an example of such a text. The seventh chapter is entirely about editing, including the various types and their alternatives. Editor handbooks, on the other hand, more carefully break down the practices of editing and the history of its development. *The Technique of Film Editing*, by Karel Reisz and Gavin Millar, is a classic example. Editor interviews present a very different take, as until recently editors stayed largely out of the limelight and did not talk about their craft (Orpen, 12). However, Orpen concludes that as far as rhetoric is concerned, “not enough attention has been paid to editing” (115). The existing texts approach editing largely from a technical perspective, ignoring its expressive qualities.

The expressive elements of editing have likely been discounted because editing is intangible. According to Orpen, “We all know that it is expressive, but it is more difficult, uncomfortable even, to explain why and how. The expressiveness of lighting, camera movements, colour, sound and so forth has been explored to a large extent. Editing is far more elusive... it is difficult to pin down, to freeze, to control” (3). Scholars seeking to study editing must first answer the question ‘does editing exist?’ Orpen writes:

This question is not as facetious as it may seem... editing exists only *in relation to*, as a *counterpart to*, the shot. In other words, it is impossible to isolate editing, to analyse cuts *per se*, that thin line, or “switching,” that demarcates on shot from



another. The upshot of this is both frustration and loss of interest: the study of editing seems elusive and not really desirable given that one must ultimately revert to the shot anyway, which leads to a sort of vicious circle. (3)

The difficulty of studying editing, however, does not mean that the study should be abandoned. Indeed, discussion of editing is “essential to a greater understanding of the ways in which films make meaning” (119). Instead, scholars should learn to approach editing more creatively.

Any study of the rhetoric of editing will appear to spend more time on the content of shots and sequences than on the cutting process itself. This should not be discouraging. It is necessary to acknowledge that editing is contextual and any analysis of editing must be so as well (118). Novel methods to explore the expressive qualities of editing should not be rejected because they appear to spend more time on the shot (4). Cluster analysis is one such tool that may be useful to examine the way editing ties the sequences of a film together. Cluster analysis asks the questions “what follows what?” and is concerned with the “examination of elements that are linked together by the communicator” (Reid 43). It explores the linkages between ideas in order to uncover their meaning. The following section will explore how cluster analysis could be used to uncover the meaning of editing in film.

### **Cluster Analysis and Film**

Cluster analysis seeks to examine the underlying framework of a text and determine what symbols are being expressed. The process of examining the “clustering of ideas” reveals the meaning or message of the rhetorical act or work (Reid 43-51). Cluster

analysis can be traced to Kenneth Burke. In *Attitudes Toward History* Burke developed a methodology for discovering what elements of symbolism might be revealed by the associative clusters of a work (194). Burke argued that by exploring “what subjects cluster about other subjects” the meaning of a text might be better revealed (232-3). Since Burke, cluster analysis theory has been significantly expanded.

Robert Ivie developed cluster analysis by exploring clusters of metaphorical concepts in the rhetoric of Cold War idealists. Ivie argues that using cluster analysis to systematically explore metaphors “exposes them to closer scrutiny and possible reconstruction... The pattern of vehicles revealed in a corpus of discourse, then, leads directly back to master metaphors” (167). Ivie’s major contribution is his documenting of an organized and methodological five-step process for identifying and analyzing key metaphors. In short, scholars must familiarize themselves with the text and context, mark the vehicles of metaphor, arrange them into subgroups with similar entailments, compile a separate file for each cluster, and analyze the cluster files one-by-one (167-8). Ivie uses a cluster analysis of the work of several Cold War idealists to expose how their metaphors are incapable of framing the Soviet Union in a way the American public was willing to engage.

Building on Burke’s and Ivie’s work, Reid explored how cluster analysis could apply to visual mediums. Reid uses cluster analysis to explore the work of Hieronymus Bosch, a fifteenth-century painter. Specifically, she looks at *The Hay-Wain*, a triptych depicting the “medieval story of the creation, the fall, and the potential redemption or destruction of humankind” (Reid 40). Reid breaks down her method for visual cluster analysis into three steps (43). The first is the selection of key terms or important elements

used in the rhetoric. Reid advises that elements should be chosen because of high frequency or intensity of use. The second step is determining what clusters around the key elements: what terms or elements are adjacent to or in close radius. Reid's final step is interpretation, exploring what messages are in each cluster. Reid argues that examining the links between the clusters can reveal the message of a text.

To analyze "Clean Coal: Now is the Time" I combine elements from both Ivie's and Reid's methodology. Reid's approach, designed for analyzing fixed images, is generally more useful than Ivie's approach to written text. Reid acknowledges that cluster analysis makes sense to reveal meaning in film (40-41); however, she notes that her specific method may apply more easily to fixed images (51-2). According to Reid:

[T]he rhetorical perspective helps open the door for more research regarding visual communication. However, further research needs to be done in order to establish more clearly the boundaries of cluster analysis and how it might relate to contemporary media such as film and video that have a fleeting rather than fixed nature. I hope this application of cluster analysis can challenge and encourage others within the field of communication to apply this method to "fleeting" communication and to explore further the issues raised. (52)

To take into account the differences between the fixed image Reid analyzes and the "fleeting" image I am examining, I will substitute Ivie's focus on conceptual vehicles for Reid's focus on proximity. Reid's concern with what elements physically cluster near each other makes sense for a fixed image like a painting, but applies less to the specific film being examined. In some cases, proximity may be a better focus for cluster analysis, even with film. Thomas Benson's "The Rhetorical Structure of Frederick Wiseman's

*High School*” draws heavily on the elements linking one shot to the next. However, this analysis makes sense because *High School* follows a narrative arc connected by continuity editing. The lack of continuity in “Clean Coal: Now is the Time” means such an analysis would be much less revealing than one focused on the conceptual vehicles throughout the ad.

### **Clusters in “Clean Coal: Now is the Time”**

Analysis of the advertisement reveals six clusters of vehicles that are consistently given attention. The first of these is the TIME cluster. The vehicles were selected both because of frequency and because they are supported by the audio components of the ad. The first vehicle is the “clock” or “timer.” Images of clocks and timers are some of the earliest and last images in the ad, almost bookending the film (they are preceded and followed only by images of cities). Alarm clocks appear in shots 2 and 54, a clock tower appears in shot 53, and various timers counting down appear in shots 3-4 and shots 48-51. These images are integrated with both narration and background sound that support the images. During the opening of the ad, we hear an audience shouting a countdown from five, while we are shown images of an alarm clock, a large screen counting down from five, and a zoomed-in shot of a timer counting down from forty seconds. Near the end of the advertisement, the phrase “the clock is ticking” is repeated, while the audience is shown seven various images of clocks and countdowns in less than five seconds. The ad both opens and closes with the narrator announcing, “The clock is ticking, America,” accompanied by the background noise of a clock ticking. The last vehicle in this cluster is a clip of the inside of a train station. The train station shot is the most complex shot in the

ad. The shot is centered on a clock; however, the shot is significantly sped up and the time scale condensed so the people moving inside the train station appear to be blurs. The only part of the image that remains static is that of a clock located at the center of the image. Clearly, time is one of the most important vehicles at work in the advertisement.



Screen captures from “Clean Coal: Now is the Time.” Top row: figures 1 (left), 2 (middle) and 3 (right). Bottom row: figures 4 (left), 5 (middle) and 6 (right).



The second cluster is INDUSTRY. These images are the most frequent in the advertisement, appearing in 22 separate shots. This includes many images of ambiguous machinery, including in shots 5 and 18. It also includes many shots, exterior and interior, of factories (shots 25, 29, 33, and 48). Many shots show specific industrial actions or items, like dump trucks (12), conveyor belts (16 and 36), welding (17), a circular saw (35), and a car being assembled (34). Several show trains or train yards, as in shot 19. Finally, many show images related to power and electricity, such as a power meter in shot 11, and power lines in shots 42, 52, and 55. These images are coupled with narration announcing the benefits of cheap, clean coal: “centuries of affordable electricity prices,” “job growth,” and the ability to “start making things again.” The image of a stock

exchange board in shot 47 ties connects the notions of electricity and economic growth supported by the previous images.

The third cluster is MODERNITY. The central vehicle in this cluster is “city.” The advertisement contains eight different images of city landscapes, dominated by skyscrapers, set at dusk or dawn to emphasize the role of electricity in powering modern society. Often, the city is being observed by one or more individuals who are awestruck by its power. Two shots show a passenger observing a city at night from inside a traveling car. The passenger has a look of wonder on her face. Another shot shows a woman observing and photographing the city at night from the top of a skyscraper. Yet another shows a bicyclist moving through a lit-up city at night. This cluster is also supported by one of the few true sequences (series of connected shots) in the advertisement. Shots 22-24 show a city lighting up at night, following by a continent lighting up, and finally a little girl in awe of a lit-up globe. The notion of “zooming out” established in shots 22 and 23 establishes the scale of modernity. The final shot in the sequence also zooms out, in a sense, to the entire Earth; however, the substitution of the real world for a globe allows the image to be juxtaposed with the image of a child, deepening the notion of “wonder” even further.

This cluster was not selected because of the diversity of vehicles supporting the idea, but because of the intensity, dominance, and placement of the central vehicle. The cityscapes are imposing, dominant images that recur consistently throughout the advertisement. Appearing in shots 1, 20-24, 30, 49, and 58-59 (of 60 shots) it is difficult to watch any ten seconds of the ad without seeing a city. Additionally, it is worth noting that aside from the closing credit to the ACCCE, the ad opens and closes with images of

city skylines. This can be seen in figures 7 and 9. These images are important because they serve to prop up the notion of modernity. According to Overmyer-Velazquez, the metropolis is the dominant traditional symbol for modernity (8). Esherick writes, “By and large, the struggle for (and between) nation and modernity has taken place in cities. In any society, the city is the locus of the modern... the ‘modern’ city was always set against the ‘backward’ countryside. If a nation was to modernize, the cities have to take the lead” (1). Thus the images of cities are used to link coal production to modernity and simultaneously caution against taking a leap “backward,” away from the city and modernity.



**Top row: figures 7 (left), 8 (middle) and 9 (right). Bottom row: figures 10 (left) and 11 (middle). Figures 7-11 are screen captures from “Clean Coal: Now is the Time.” Figure 12 (bottom right) is a generic “pipes” screensaver.**



The fourth cluster is SCIENCE. The vehicles representing time were selected for their importance to the essential claim contested by the ad, namely, that technology and science can improve coal. The first vehicle is that of the “lab.” Shot 15 shows a pristine lab space; a white, sterile environment filled with machinery and what appear to be

beakers. The image of the lab is packed with scientific meaning. According to Aden, “Laboratories are places where scientific experimentation occurs... [the] connotation of the laboratory metaphor imbues [an idea] with the qualities of science” (98-99). The laboratory metaphor suggests that those deploying it engage in a certain kind of scientific work generally agreed upon within the academic community; producing knowledge that is “certain, universal, and non-judgmental” (Condit 323). The positivist nature of the metaphor suggests that those involved can find “Truth” (Aden 99). In this way, the image of the lab acts as a metaphor for science, specifically one that searches for objective truth.

The second and third vehicles occur in shots 26 to 28. These are the “Periodic Table” and “computer modeling.” These images are significant because they are coupled with the narration that the “hundreds of billions [of dollars] invested into clean coal technology” has proven successful. The juxtaposition of the narration with these images suggests that the coal industry works through and supports complex scientific processes. The image of the Periodic Table of the Elements is coupled with ambiguous metal canisters. The complex computer models appear to be brightly colored pipes and wires. The image is nearly indistinct from the generic screensaver template “pipes.” This is demonstrated in figures 11 and 12. The images have little significance in real scientific terms; yet they clearly serve to suggest “science is being done here.” These images suggest that clean coal is scientific in terms that are uncontested precisely because they are ambiguous.

The fifth cluster is NATURE. These images were selected for their frequency, vividness, and relevance to the core controversy of the advertisement. Vivid shots of nature images are interspersed throughout the advertisement, appearing in shots 5, 12, 14,



19, 29, 39, 42, and 56. They are frequently coupled with images of industry. In shots 5 and 29 a vibrant blue sky background offsets an image of machinery. In shot 12 amber wheat fields are set beside dump trucks driving on a long road. In shot 14 piles of coal are coupled with a bright green forest and blue sky in the background. Shots 19, 39, 42, and 56 set trains and power infrastructure against bright blue bodies of water or skies. In each of these shots the nature imagery is extremely vivid. Vividness is an important component of visual rhetoric (Thatcher 24). Vividness describes explicit or detailed images that are meant to “excite the imagination” (Nisbett and Ross 45). Vivid images emphasize strong traits, like colors, to draw attention. The images in the shots described above clearly use the vivid colors of nature images to draw the eye. They also respond to the core controversy of the ad, the question of whether coal is environmentally sustainable. One of the images is coupled with the dialogue that clean coal research as resulted in “real environmental progress.” The use of images which suggest a bright and healthy environment in close proximity with sites of coal production compliment this narration.



**Screen captures from “Clean Coal: Now is the Time.” Top row: figures 13 (left), 14 (middle) and 15 (right). Bottom row: figures 16 (left), 17 (middle) and 18 (right).**



The sixth and final cluster is NATIONALISM. The central vehicle for this cluster is the “American flag.” This vehicle was chosen because of its frequency, connection with other conceptual vehicles, vividness, and relationship with the narration. Images of American flags are interspersed through the advertisement in shots 5, 12, 18, 39, and 44. In addition, in shot 37 a piece of machinery is adorned with a “Made in the USA” sticker. Like images of cities, it is difficult to watch several seconds of the ad without seeing an American flag. The flag imagery usually compliments another conceptual vehicle. In shot 5 and 18 an American flag is painted onto industrial machinery set against a bright blue sky. In shot 39 we see a speeding train with an American flag painted on its side, set against green fields, mountains, and blue sky. Finally, in shot 12 (figures 19-21), images of vibrant fields of wheat (amber fields of grain) fade into a giant image of a waving American flag, perfectly connecting the nationalism and nature clusters. The flag images, like the nature images, are some of the most vivid images, emphasizing strong color traits that draw the eye. This is true of both the flags themselves and background imagery in shots with flags. Finally, the flag imagery has a strong connection to the narration. The narrator addresses the audience as “America.” He appeals to notions of America’s “energy independence” and “protect[ing] America’s competitive edge.” The narration and images all function to construct a metaphor of patriotism and nationalism.



**Screen captures from “Clean Coal: Now is the Time.” Figures 19 (left), 20 (middle) and 21 (right).**

The cluster analysis reveals several distinct messaging strategies in the advertisement: appeal, reassure, establish trust, threaten, and establish urgency. The images of modernity and industry are appealing benefits linked to coal production. Affordable electricity, material goods, the luxuries and status of modern city life are all visually linked with coal production through the advertisement. The nature images provide reassurance that coal production and environmental sustainability are not incompatible. The overlap between the shots in the nature and industry clusters and the intermingling of natural and industrial images suggest a bright, healthy environment and a productive, coal-driven economy are not incompatible. Shot 14 of the glossy piles of coal offset by lush green forest and bright blue skies best reveals this dynamic. Next, the science images work to establish the *ethos* of the advertiser, providing a level of trust in the claims of the ad that only objective, truth-seeking science can. The concepts of nationalism in the advertisement promote coal as an American experience, but they also implicitly threaten those would reject coal with a loss of national identity. Nationalism is often used as a tool to enforce uncritical conformity (Blank 290). Finally, the concept of time interacts with all of the clusters to produce the dominant concept of urgency.

Urgency is built into nearly every sentence of the narration, which almost all begin: “It’s time to...” Urgency is even central to the title of the ad itself, “Clean Coal: Now is the Time.” The time imagery combines with the other messaging strategies to say

coal is not just important, it is important now. The benefits will happen now. The drawbacks of not using coal will happen now. Most importantly, the decision of whether to emphasize coal production must be made now.

## **Conclusion**

Many questions have troubled the study of rhetoric in film studies. How do we analyze editing? How does one uncover the invisible? What perspective should we use? These questions dog even traditional film scholars. Many scholars settle on adopting an audience perspective. Writing about the Wiseman documentary, *High School*, Benson argues:

It is important to be clear about *whose* meaning we are talking about and *what* meaning we are attributing to the film. Whose meaning? This essay is an inquiry into the states of thought and feeling an audience is invited to experience. We are not particularly interested in the psychological predispositions of the filmmaker, though the film provides considerable inferential evidence about the filmmaker's rhetorical intentions. Nor can we speak with authority about the way the behaviors of the characters in the film may reveal the psychologies of those characters. *High School* is a created reality. But for the audience of *High School* the characters may seem quite real, their behaviors quite significant. It is into this seeming reality that we are inquiring. Our perspective, then, is an audience perspective. But the evidence for the audience's responses, as well as the evidence for the filmmaker's designs, will be sought in the film itself. (235)

Orpen notes that with editing, the audience is particularly important: “In interviews with film editors, or in editing handbooks, the word ‘audience’ recurs with remarkable frequency... Every stage of film-making has to consider, sometimes even pander to, the audience. Editing, however, seems to reveal an even greater awareness of the audience, probably because making changes to the editing is the last resort...” (7). Yet, oftentimes, the best editing is invisible to the audience (Orpen 3). The editing in “Clean Coal: Now is the Time” is particularly difficult to unpack because of an almost complete lack of continuity editing; it relies almost exclusively on rapid cuts between shots that initially seem bafflingly unconnected.

The importance of editing to the meaning of film, however, necessitates that the difficulty of analysis should not deter attempts at scholarship. Given that cluster analysis is centered on uncovering what links different ideas, it can be a useful tool in uncovering editing (particularly with a film that initially appears unconnected). Reid’s cluster analysis of the *Hay-Wain* hints at its usefulness for analyzing texts that initially appear to have many disparate strands. The *Hay-Wain* baffled art critics, but Reid’s use of cluster analysis allowed her to make a coherent analysis of the triptych’s message. Cluster analysis can perform the same clearing up function in the rhetoric of editing. Cluster analysis allows the rhetorician to look at the links between shots without guessing at the intent of the editor. Uncovering the rhetoric of film may still be a risky enterprise, and the rhetoric of editing riskier still, but cluster analysis can help ground our studies in the message.

Cluster analysis cannot uncover every detail of a film’s editing, but it reveals a great deal about the way the shots are linked. The cluster analysis of “Clean Coal: Now is

the Time” links 50 of the 60 shots. It reveals some of the dominant editing strategies in the ad. The ad relies on interspersing and bookending to connect various shots. Images of time are bookended; the ad both opens and closes with them. Images of nature, patriotism and industry are interspersed throughout the ad so we are continually reminded of them. The images of modernity are also both bookended and interspersed. This demonstrates some of the expressive qualities of editing. Editing is used to emphasize the clusters in the film, using placement techniques to accentuate several images that are the most important in the message.

The expressive quality of editing, however, is best revealed by unpacking the dominant theme of the ad. The cluster analysis reveals several elements that suggest urgency: the images of time (such as countdown timers), the narration, the background sound, and the title of the ad; but these are not the only qualities that suggest urgency. Once we acknowledge that editing is expressive, it should not shock us that the editing choices, in addition to the narration and images, create a sense of urgency. Benson briefly touched on this idea in his analysis of the rhetorical structure of Wiseman’s film *Primate*. Benson notes that *Primate* is “105 minutes long and contains 569 shots, or an average of 11 seconds per shot” (207). Benson observes that that is half the average shot length of 22 seconds in Wiseman’s *High School*. He concludes, “The unusually large number of shots in *Primate* is not simply a fact, but a clue, both to the rhythm of the film and to its method of building meanings” (208). Benson argues that with the briefer shots the meaning of the film must emerge primarily from the editing because the shots would be very highly condensed.

This rings true of “Clean Coal: Now is the Time.” *Primate* featured 569 shots in 105 minutes, or 5.4 shots per minute. “Clean Coal” features 60 shots in 61 seconds, or 0.98 shots per second. That is almost 60 shots a minute, more than 11 times the shots per minute ratio of *Primate*. Given that continuity editing is the norm, jettisoning it so significantly necessarily says something. Violating the rules of continuity is in itself a form of expressivity (Orpen 3, 14). At the very least, the medium in “Clean Coal: Now is the Time” is the message. The editing establishes an energetic and urgent pace that is matched by the images, narration, sound and title. This demonstrates the usefulness of cluster analysis in unpacking the links and themes in the advertisement.

## CHAPTER THREE:

### Images of Authority

Sterile, white laboratories. Abstract computer models. The Periodic Table of the Elements. These are some of the images that flash before your eyes while watching “Clean Coal: Now is the Time.” While both the name of the advertisement and the group sponsoring the ad are oriented around presenting coal as “Clean,” only one sentence of the sixty-one second ad is devoted to environmental concerns: “It’s time we recognize that the nearly \$100 billion spent on clean coal technologies have resulted in real environmental progress.” It is common knowledge that coal is not clean: mountain-top mining, smokestacks, pollution are all environmentally destructive consequences. Few would argue that coal is clean. However, the pressure of environmentalism requires some retort. The coal industry cannot overtly tout that it is clean because the direct appeal will never work. The argument that coal is clean is not missing from the advertisement; however, that rhetorical labor is accomplished by the images in the ad.

Recent calls for public participation in technical decision-making have highlighted the complicated transmission of technical arguments from scientists to citizens in a variety of arenas (Goodwin and Honeycutt 19). Communication scholars



have evaluated this dynamic in the contexts of vaccination (Whidden), climate change (Mosley-Jensen; Paliewicz) and corn-based ethanol (Goodwin and Honeycutt). This study contributes to this scholarship by revealing the efforts by the coal industry to shift the debate over “clean coal” from the public sphere to the technical sphere and exploring the role of visual enthymemes in supporting that colonizing function.

Aristotle believed enthymeme was the “most effective among the various forms of persuasion” (Mudd 409). Bitzer defined enthymeme as an instrument of rational persuasion that succeeds because its premises are drawn from the audience, noting, “Its successful construction is accomplished through the joint efforts of speaker and audience, and this is its essential character” (Bitzer 408). Scholars of visual arguments have recently begun to explore the enthymematic qualities of images. Smith argues that the traditional notion of the enthymeme as “a syllogism with one of its parts missing” is too narrow, maintaining that Aristotle established a broader notion of the enthymeme not exclusive with studies of visual communication (114). Finnegan explores visual enthymemes as “an argument that is drawn from premises that do not need to be stated... the enthymeme leaves space for the audience to insert its own knowledge and experience” (143-144). She examines the 1936 “skull controversy” over the Dust Bowl photography of Arthur Rothstein to advance the idea of the “naturalistic enthymeme”: photographs are assumed to be “true” until there are reasons to doubt them (135). Finnegan’s exploration of the skull controversy establishes the visual enthymeme as an argumentative resource for communication scholars; however, there is much room to explore the ways in which other images implicitly communicate particular messages.

The images in “Clean Coal: Now is the Time” function enthymematically as visual validation of coal’s benign impact on the environment. The images do the rhetorical work and are productive because they can move between public and technical sphere and resonate with multiple audiences. I argue that the advertisement is a specific attempt to greenwash coal by transforming the grounding of the debate from the public to the technical sphere of argument. This is accomplished through *images of authority*, images that function enthymematically to make appeals to technical solutions and expertise. Images of lab coats, computer models, and the Periodic Table of the Elements suggest the ideas of authority and expertise. The images are deployed, not as a part of deliberative argument over the efficacy of “clean coal,” but to suggest that only the coal industry and its associates have the technical and scientific expertise to participate in the debate. These images of authority, and others like them, are used to establish a connection between the coal industry and the perceived expertise of scientists, reinforcing the idea that forming an opinion on the efficacy clean coal requires the judgment of an expert. The message, accomplished through visual argument, is that the ACCCE and the coal industry are the only actors we should trust to deliberate about energy policy.

### **The Technical Sphere and Scientific Discourses**

In his seminal essay, “The Personal, Technical, and Public Spheres of Argument,” Goodnight establishes a classification scheme for defining the realm in which arguments are being made. The public sphere concerns everyone in a community, in their capacity as citizens. In contrast, arguments made in the technical sphere require special expertise or training. To participate in a technical argument, one must have studied extensively or

be certified in the area. However, Goodnight was not primarily concerned with developing a classification system. Rather, his identification of the different spheres of argument was important to develop his argument that the argumentative practices of the technical sphere endanger public life by substituting the appearance of deliberative discourse for actual deliberation (215). According to Goodnight, “the public sphere is being steadily eroded by the elevation of the personal and technical groundings of argument” (223). The danger of the technical sphere is that it suggests specialization is necessary to make knowledgeable decisions and therefore common citizens’ participation in deliberation has no value. The result is “issues of public significance disappear into the hands of technocracy” (224-225). Goodnight’s classification system and his warning about the danger of the technical sphere encroaching on public life have had a lasting influence. The rise of the expert carries a weight that functionally silences non-scientific argument.

Decades since its publication, Goodnight's essay retains its importance to the study of deliberation. On the article’s thirty-year anniversary, *Argumentation and Advocacy* published a special issue on its influence, stating that Goodnight’s spheres theory “continues to strongly influence argumentation theorists” (Rowland 196). Writing in a similar vein, Zarefsky has urged communication scholars to take a more active role in protecting deliberative rhetoric and deliberative democracy. Zarefsky argues that the defining condition of the rhetorical situation is “the need to make collective decisions under conditions of uncertainty” which requires an invitation to deliberate (119). Zarefsky defines deliberative rhetoric as that in which it is recognized that “all discourses are partial, put forward as ways to formulate and test claims” (120). He contrasts this

with “the engineering of consent” which is manipulative rather than deliberative (123-124). According to Zarefsky, this second face of democratic rhetoric:

[R]epresents the appearance of deliberation, but not the substance--a simulacrum, in the postmodern vocabulary. Citizens are not offered arguments that they are invited to test, compare, and join, but instead are appealed to with slogans, half-truths, and condensation symbols in a bid for their unreasoned support. Rather than co-creating social reality and thereby discovering *phronesis* in the given case, they are led to acquiesce in a vision of the good that has been determined in advance. Consent is not cultivated; it is engineered. (125-126)

If the engineering of consent endangers deliberative rhetoric, then the role of communication scholars is to identify areas where public life may be in danger.

Nowhere is deliberative rhetoric more difficult to establish and protect than in the translation of scientific arguments to ordinary citizens. In debates over issues from climate change to nuclear power, reliance on complex evidence understood only by an elite cadre of scientists leads citizens to rely on heuristic clues and appeals to authority. In grasping for comprehension, the non-scientists will grasp at sense making appeals, and images and assumed experts perform that labor. In a case study of a U.S. debate over the benefits of corn-based ethanol, Goodwin and Honeycutt found that as arguments travel from the technical to the public sphere “the discourse moved from a focus on the analysis of evidence to a focus on the trustworthiness (or not) of scientists: that is, from a technical argument to an appeal to expert authority” (Goodwin and Honeycutt 22). Tracing the course and outcome of the debate, they found that the strategy of authority

controlled the argument (28). In short, the arguments themselves were indecipherable or irrelevant to non-experts; perceived credibility was everything. In “Clean Coal: Now is the Time” perceived expertise is communicated in ways that are best described as enthymematic. The images function as appeals to credibility that do the labor of helping non-scientists fill in the missing argumentative move that (coal) experts know best. The ACCCE cannot overtly claim that coal is clean; that debate is too difficult for them to win directly. However, enthymemes allow the audience to come to the desired conclusions by allowing the audience to fill in the gap of what the images mean.

### **Images of Authority**

The ACCCE advertisement, “Clean Coal: The Time is Now,” offers an excellent case study to explore the ways in which images operate as visual enthymemes. While the narrator of the ad opines, “it’s time to focus on reality, not rhetoric,” the advertisement is anything but free of rhetoric. The move to characterize rhetoric pejoratively functions to occlude the use of images to establish the unassailability of coal’s environmental credentials. The advertisement is not merely an attempt to make the argument that coal is clean, but a move to transform the grounding of the debate from the public to the technical sphere. This is accomplished through what I call *images of authority*. Images of authority function enthymematically to make appeals to technical solutions and expertise. In the context of a clean coal advertisement, images of scientists working in a laboratory suggest that forming an opinion on the efficacy clean coal requires the judgment of an expert. The more that symbols of science and expertise are present, the more powerfully the enthymeme functions. White lab coats, complex computer modeling, and the periodic

table of elements are all symbols of scientific expertise presented in this advertisement that are images of authority. The message of these images is that the coal industry has a unique and expert knowledge about the environmental impact of coal. This pushes back against the anti-coal narrative that the scientific establishment views coal as a dangerous source of climate change. The argument in the ACCCE advertisement is that decisions about energy are too complex for public deliberation and should be left to the experts who in turn are employed by the industry.

The images in the advertisement “Clean Coal: The Time is Now” present several arguments which I will examine to demonstrate how images of authority can shift deliberation into the technical sphere, or at least make the clean coal debate look exclusively like a technical matter. There are four categories of images in the advertisement: factories and machinery, scientific symbols, cities and electricity, and landscapes. The images of factories and machinery make arguments about why coal is economically and environmentally valuable. These images are juxtaposed with narration that makes a similar argument verbally as they do visually. However, the ACCCE presents a more nuanced argument through the images of scientific symbols, electrification, and landscapes. Unlike the images of factories and machinery, these images are not coupled with specific narration. These images function on their own to make arguments about the complexity of electricity production and the expertise required to engage it. In this way, they are images of authority. Rather than make an argument about the value of coal, the ACCCE attempts to shift the grounding of the debate into the technical sphere.



**Figure 1 (left) and 2 (right): Screen captures from “Clean Coal: The Time is Now”**

Factories and machinery are shown in the ad in two ways. The first, demonstrated by Figures 1 and 2, shows the factory as a place that is clean and sterile. The lab in Figure 1 is filled with light, the floors are polished and squeaky clean, and the equipment is neatly organized. There is even what appears to be a bottle of cleaning fluid tucked away on the far left side of the frame. Figure 2 shows the factory in a similar light. The factory is well lit, anything that is dangerous is carefully labeled, and anything that is not overwhelmingly white has a shiny metallic hue or is a bright, harmless color like yellow or blue. These images function as visual enthymemes; they suggest something to the viewer without providing all of the argument directly (Smith; Finnegan). The audience is inundated with the idea that the coal factory is white, sterile and clean; therefore, the image suggests, “isn’t coal also clean?” We typically think of coal as dirty, but associating coal with the bright colors and sterile environments shown in the images above dissociates it from its dirty past. Birdsell and Groarke note that images have “significant rhetorical advantages” in their “capacity to naturalize” which allows images to make arguments that verbal claims cannot (2007, 108-109). The images of the sterile lab and the ordered factory suggest to the audience and naturalize the idea that coal can be and indeed, is, clean.



**Figure 3 (left), 4 (middle) and 5 (right): Screen captures from “Clean Coal: The Time is Now”**

The second set of images of the factory is related to the material goods the ACCCE suggests we could not have without cheap and abundant coal. These factories, the images imply, are what provides the goods we desire and the jobs we need to afford them. The images in Figures 3 through 5 serve as what Birdsell and Groarke label “visual flags” (2007, 104). A visual flag is used to attract attention to a message conveyed to the audience. The advertisement is attempting to flag the goods and jobs that the ACCCE suggests would not exist without unrestrained access to abundant coal. The images prompt the idea that the welder in image 3 and machinist in Figure 5 would not have jobs without coal. Figure 4 insinuates that without the cheap electricity generated by coal the audience would not have access to the affordable, mass-produced cars shown being assembled. Images of the assembly line are sequenced before and after the spark-laden images of welding and machine tools to make the electricity-production connection clear to the audience. These images work in conjunction with the narration, which notes, “American’s unsurpassed coal reserves can deliver centuries of affordable electricity... [and] real environmental progress” and are necessary to “maintain job growth and America’s competitive edge” (ACCCE).





**Figure 6 (left) and 7 (right): Screen captures from “Clean Coal: The Time is Now”**

In the rest of the images, there is something different happening. Neither Figures 6 nor 7 directly relates to the voice-over narration. The images make arguments independently, only connected to the narration by the context it establishes (Birdsell and Groarke, 1996, 5-7). These images are what Birdsell and Groarke term “visual symbols:” images with strong associations that allow them to stand for something that they represent (2007, 105). Both the image of computer modeling in Figure 6 and the image of the periodic table of the elements in Figure 7 are symbols of science. By showing images of scientists, the ACCCE suggests that the coal industry is thoughtful and scientific, and is employing rigorous standards for responsible energy production. However, these images do more than just argue that the coal industry is scientific and responsible; they are arguments for grounding the energy debate as a technical, not public, matter.

This is demonstrated in the images shown in Figures 6 and 7. The appropriation of scientific symbols functions to establish the members of the coal industry as experts possessing a complex knowledge of the science of energy production. Like the image of the sterile lab, there is also a visual enthymeme present. The visual symbol creates a message that the producers of coal are scientists, privy to a complex knowledge of how coal, chemicals, and machinery interact with the environment. The images of computer modeling shown are complex and likely meaningless to those without technical expertise.

The periodic table suggests knowledge of chemistry that it is likely only an expert in the area would be able to utilize contextually. Thus the advertisement, through visual argument, insinuates that the public lacks the knowledge to participate in deliberations over how we should approach the subject of coal and should therefore defer to – and trust – the experts.



**Figure 8 (left), 9 (middle) and 10 (right): Screen captures from “Clean Coal: The Time is Now”**

The images of cities and skylines that fill the advertisement also work to ground the debate in the technical sphere. Figures 8, 9 and 10 are just a few examples of the many shots of lit up cities in the ad. These images appeal to *pathos*, encouraging the audience to feel small and humbled by the process of electricity generation. Through the images, the ACCCE argues that energy production is an enormous task conducted on the scale of cities, not individuals. The characters in Figures 9 and 10 offer a model for how the audience should react to the idea of electricity by juxtaposing individuals with the city-wide scale of electricity production. The message is that viewers should be in awe of the spectacle that electricity production (and therefore coal) provides. Like the woman taking in the city lights from the backseat of car in Figure 10, the audience should be a passive observer of the product of electricity generation, not a participant in the process.



**Figures 11 (left), 12 (middle) and 13 (right): Screen captures from “Clean Coal: The Time is Now”**

Jhally writes that images of technology in corporate advertising are part of a deliberate strategy to create a distracting fantasy. The “technology fix,” according to Jhally, is a “deep-rooted way of approaching (and obscuring) social problems” (227). Jhally contends that technological images function on an almost religious or magical plane; through the images the advertiser attempts to “bewitch” the viewer and promises the creation of a supernatural world (217-218). The sequence of shots shown in Figures 11 and 12 offers a vivid demonstration of this point. A shot span over several seconds shows a city lighting up, followed by a continent lighting up, and finally a young girl, amazed by a lit-up globe. The ad invites the viewer to be like the young girl, in awe of the promises and power offered by electricity. These images of technology encourage the viewer to be passive, establishing a supernatural connection, whereby “technology deprives us of a control which we are given back in the surrogate form of spells and promises” (Williamson, 142).

The ad suggests something larger than the individual is at play, something that cannot be controlled but that benefits individuals immensely. These images do not invite the viewer into a conversation about electricity production; they induce the viewer to idolize it, reinforcing another mode of authority. Jhally warns that this rhetorical strategy

threatens to “divert attention away from the political consequences of economic structures” and subvert a “democratic discussion about the proper uses of social resources” (226-228). The message of this sequence is that we are the small child with the globe, in awe of the gift we have received, but unable, and not supposed to be able, to participate in the discussion of how we received it or what it cost.



**Figures 14 (left) and 15 (right): Screen captures from “Clean Coal: The Time is Now”**

Certain types of images advance this effect even more powerfully. The last set of images depicts technology set against landscapes of nature. Visuals that juxtapose images of technology or modernity against nature, in particular, tend to diminish the viewer’s perceived self-agency. The image of a technological construct dominating nature, whether in function or scale, symbolizes “the command over the landscape obtainable through” the modern technological product (Marchand, 264). These images convey “impressions of the product as dominant or transcendent, if not awesome” (267). The product becomes an idol, a necessity, beyond the control or understanding of the consumer of the image. These images are designed to overwhelm and “stun the spectator into a passive, confused stupor” (267). Figures 8 and 9 embody this effect. The massive train yard in Figure 8 dominating the landscape symbolizes technology’s powerful hold over nature. The large transportation infrastructure dominating the harbor in Figure 9 shows the Earth bending to the will of technological constructs. These images make the

viewer feel small and impotent so they believe they have nothing to add to the conversation.

## **Conclusion**

These effects all build cumulatively to ground the debate over clean coal in the technical sphere. The images of the lab, the scientist, complex computer modeling, the scale of city-wide electricity generation and nature dominated by industrial energy infrastructure all reinforce the notion of authority and expertise. The ad uses images of authoritative/expert features to marshal scientific credibility. The way those images work is enthymematic. The images appeal to the common idea that experts know what they are doing. These images of authority are used to establish a connection between the coal industry and the perceived expertise of scientists. Technology is glorified in a way that facilitates its passive idolization instead of inviting the audience into a discussion. These are not merely arguments about why coal has value, but arguments for establishing the expertise of industry and moving the debate into the technical sphere. The message, accomplished through visual argument, is that the ACCCE and the coal industry are the only actors we should trust to deliberations about energy policy.

If the ACCCE successfully shifts the terrain of the clean coal debate to the technical sphere, then the “war of words” will have been won by the coal industry regardless of the efficacy of clean coal. From a broader perspective, this paper advances knowledge of visual argument. The study of visual enthymeme is still in its infancy, and the rhetorical “toolbox” of enthymematic images is still relatively empty. Clean coal advertising reveals a specific visual enthymeme: the image of authority. Given the

importance of scientific images, and the threat to public deliberation from the expansion of the technical sphere, future rhetorical scholarship should explore how images of authority function in other scientific contexts.

## CHAPTER FOUR:

### Color, Vividness, and Terministic Screens

The importance of color in “Clean Coal: Now is the Time” is evident from the first few frames. The ad confronts the viewer with bright blue skies, emerald green forests and vibrant waving flags. This chapter explores how color and the properties of color function rhetorically within the ad to direct attention to the successful co-existence of industry and the environment. For those that can see the full range of the visible spectrum, color shapes and defines everything seen. Attention to color can enrich rhetorical theory by broadening the scope of what is understood as visual rhetoric. For an ad touting clean coal, there is a stunning lack of coal represented. This is because images of coal are juxtaposed with vivid images. The editing, through quick cuts, helps create a diversion allowing the coal to be trumped by associations with “nature” images. This chapter explores how vivid colors in particular are used to divert attention from coal and coal production and onto the themes and messages the ACCCE is attempting to promote. Vivid, bright colors invoke naturalist and environmental concepts lending credence to appeals about coal’s “cleanliness.” I argue that vividness functions enthymematically to

direct attention toward positive messages, such as environmentalism, energy independence, science and patriotism, while directing attention away from the pallid subject material: the debate over whether coal can actually be clean. I draw on color theory to show how cultural understandings of color, like the association of blue and green with environmentalism, are enthymemes implanted into the message of “Clean Coal: Now is the Time.”

### **The Rhetorical Force of Color**

Imagine a large button that if pressed will activate a doomsday device, launching a torrent of nuclear missiles across the globe. Picture it in your head. What color is the button? Chances are the button in your imagination is red. In Western cultures, red is often correlated with danger or warning. Red fire engines are equipped to deal with raging infernos. The phrase “red alert” is synonymous with extreme risk. Until recently, the United States Department of Homeland Security used a color code to signal the likelihood of a major terrorist attack, with red representing the most severe danger (Schwartz). Red stop signs caution you against advancing haphazardly into traffic. Oftentimes, the color red accomplishes its message without the need for language. Its message can be inferred from an audience clued into the cultural understanding of color.

Color theory has much to add to the field of visual rhetoric. According to Michael Wojcik, “[D]espite contemporary interest in visual rhetoric, little has been written about color as a rhetorical device or vehicle. Color theories come from many other disciplines, but rarely do they address the use of color for persuasion, except in some limited senses: appealing colors for branding purposes, for example, or the use of bright colors to attract



attention”(1). A few critics have explored the rhetoric of color. Wojcik (2008) assembled a bibliography of works relevant to a rhetoric of color from other schools of thought. Scholars have explored the rhetoric of color in art (Lichtenstein 1993), rhetorical pathos (Richards and David 2005), and children’s literature (Wolfe 2008). While I will primarily look at the role of vivid and brilliant colors, Wolfe focuses on the function of the dark and drab palate deployed early in *The Lorax*, by Theodor Geisel, more popularly known as Dr. Seuss. He argues that color in *The Lorax* functions as “an ideological tool conveying the moral statement of ecological destruction” by constructing the image of “industrial wasteland” through a “cool color scheme made up of grays and browns” (15-16). This chapter draws on color theory from other disciplines to explore the rhetoric of color in “Clean Coal: Now is the Time.”

The importance of color to meaning has been predominately examined from scientific and marketing perspectives. Many empirical studies examine how color choices impact consumer habits and preferences. For example, researchers have found that the color of a pill can affect how likely it is to achieve its goal. A study published in the *British Medical Journal* found that that color red was associated with a stimulant effect, while blue was associated with a tranquillizing effect (de Craen 1624). Moreover, the color of the pill actually affected its effectiveness as well (1625). We have been trained to believe that blue is associated with sleep, so blue makes us sleep. There is a reason the packaging of sleeping pills nearly uniformly sticks to a blue hue. In fact, most marketing research is done internally by companies testing how to sell their products. This data is considered proprietary and is not released to the public at large (Zikmund 33-34). Given

the importance of this “packaging” and its widespread effects, it makes sense to look at the rhetorical force of color.

Colors do not always mean the same thing. In the examples discussed here, red is shown to be associated with danger or warning. However, as the imagery of hearts and Valentine’s Day makes clear, the color red is also associated with the diametrically opposite emotion of love or passion. Therefore, while a universal theory of the rhetoric of color is unlikely, if not impossible, it is possible to construct a contingent theory of the rhetoric of color. Context, such as imagery and narration, is necessary to decode the rhetorical force of color. Previous non-rhetorical studies of color can be useful to this endeavor. As Wojcik argues, “The scientific and mathematical theories of color need to be well-understood and situated appropriately before being incorporated into a rhetorical theory” (2). A mathematical theory of color; however, is insufficient to understand what color is accomplishing. The “very slipperiness and uncertainty of color grants a certain latitude” that is ripe for exploration by rhetorical critics (Wojcik 2). The rhetoric of color should be contingent and draw upon both specific context and scientific studies of color where appropriate. Although I draw on several studies of color and meaning, the primary aspect of color theory I explore is vividness.

### **The Vividness Factor**

The generally accepted definition of vividness comes from Nisbett and Ross (1980). They explain information may be described as vivid when it is “likely to attract and hold our attention and to excite imagination to the extent that it is (a) emotionally interesting, (b) concrete and imagery-provoking, and (c) proximate in a sensory, temporal,

or spatial way” (45). They also note that more information usually means more vivid information (53). For example, a travel brochure describes Puerto Rico as having:

A majestic rain forest. Three magical bioluminescent bays. An amazing ancient underground cave system... When the sun goes down, the Island sizzles with clubs, casinos, lounges and libations. Set in a centuries-old capital city that’s a designated World Heritage site, a visit to our picturesque cobblestoned streets is an unforgettable experience. (Meet Puerto Rico)

Compare this with a more pallid description: Puerto Rico has a rain forest, three bays, and underground caves, as well as clubs, casinos, lounges. The vividness persuades readers to more fully imagine themselves in Puerto Rico, enjoying what it has to offer.

Vividness is usually but not exclusively discussed as a function of text. Thatcher (2009) updated Nisbett and Ross’s definition to apply to visual texts, using it directly with animation and filmic images (5). Exploring Nisbett and Ross’s understanding of vividness as meant to “excite the imagination” Thatcher describes vividness:

The same process happens with visual vividness but without the verbal description; the image producer can persuade the viewer more directly with the image’s explicit emotional appeal, since verbally vivid text includes the additional step of translation from verbal to imagining the visual. Visually vivid texts allow the viewer to skip past imaginative visualization with the direct presentation of an actual image. Visually vivid texts include images and illustrations that use bold colors and themes,

often meant to get attention or distract the viewer from competing images.  
(Thatcher 6)

Like color theory, vividness research is “primarily grounded in empirical measurement” and advertising studies. However, Thatcher draws on that work to demonstrate that vividness can be used as a “foundation for rhetorical analysis” (24). Exploring empirical research on vividness is a necessary prerequisite for understanding how it could be a foundation for a rhetorical analysis of color in clean coal advertising.

Nisbett and Ross (1980) argue, “Vivid information is more likely to be stored and remembered than pallid information” (45). They give the example of the literary text, *The Jungle*, by Upton Sinclair, arguing that although there were “more authoritative, better reasoned, and more factual writings” on the subject, Sinclair’s work had a more powerful impact on society because of its vivid language (44). However, the vividness debate has evolved significantly. Taylor and Thompson (1982) identify new studies that question the link between vividness and information retention. Collins, Taylor, Wood and Thompson (1988) further argue that vivid information was less memorable. Frey and Eagly (1993) argued that vividness actually undermines the persuasiveness of messages. Frey and Eagly found that vivid language was associated with a reduction in counterarguing, but that vivid elements in the message “function as effective distractors from the message’s essential line of argumentation” (40). An explanation for these incompatible studies was found by Pham, Meyvis and Zhou (2001). They found that information that is vivid but not salient distracts from information that is pallid but salient (250). This actually supports Nisbett and Ross’s original thesis, which concludes that when presented at the same time as vivid information, pallid information is much more likely to be ignored (62).

Entering these empirical studies into rhetorical conversations identifies a path for scholars to navigate the concept of vividness. Vividness deflects, as opposed to simply reflects, ideas. This is a concept central to Burke's notion of the terministic screen.

Coined by Burke, a terministic screen is a descriptor of language that directs "attention into some channels rather than others" (45). Burke uses the example of one object photographed several times with different color filters. The object is always the same, but the filter, or screen, used to photograph it makes the object take on many different appearances depending on what filter is used (45). The different filters can alter both the appearance of the object and its meaning. Terministic screens can deflect or divert attention from one particular aspect of a concept and onto another. According to Burke, "In brief, much that we take as observations about 'reality' may be but the spinning out of possibilities implicit in our particular choice of terms" (46). The empirical understanding of vividness allows us to see how it functions rhetorically as a terministic screen. Much like a camera filter, a vivid part of a text draws attention away from the pallid section. Vividness works as a screen to focus our attention only on those parts of a text meant to "excite the imagination."

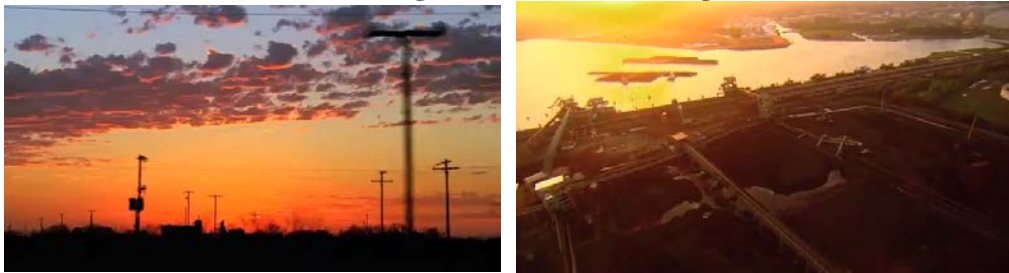
### **Vividness as a Terministic Screen in "Clean Coal: Now is the Time"**

"Clean Coal: Now is the Time" deploys vividness in two ways: vivid imagery juxtaposed with pallid imagery, and vivid imagery coupled with other vivid imagery. Many of the images in "Clean Coal: Now is the Time" are constituted largely by clear, blue skies. The images in Figures 1 through 5 show how the sky is depicted. Sometimes the sky is a single solid azure blue. Sometimes it is punctuated by a few puffy white clouds. In many of the images a brilliant sun, lens flare, or highly saturated image of a

sunset is present. All of these images have one principal unifying feature: the imagery of the sky defines and offsets a larger picture that includes an element of coal production or consumption.



**Top: Figure 1 (left), 2 (middle) and 3 (right)**  
**Screen captures from “Clean Coal: The Time is Now”**  
**Bottom: Figure 4 (left) and 5 (right)**



Drawing on previous research on vividness helps understand what this placement says about the message. The nexus question in the clean coal debate is ‘can coal be clean’; however, it is not a question that is addressed, let alone answered by the narration of “Clean Coal: Now is the Time.” Instead, the narration focuses on the benefits of coal consumption: energy independence, employment, and economic growth. To use the terms of Pham, Meyvis and Zhou, these are the salient factors of the ad. In the screenshots shown in Figures 1-5 they are represented by machinery used to produce energy from coal, the power lines that transmit that energy, and the cityscape that runs on that energy. Yet in each of these shots, the imagery relevant to the narration is naturalized by the environmental imagery of the sky or sun. The constructions of humankind are displayed as synchronous with nature, or if anything, subservient to it: the images of the sky, sun, and water are always at the top of the frame. Figure 1 demonstrates this most aptly.

Machinery takes up the borders of the image, but has so little screen room it is difficult to tell exactly what we are seeing, and this disorientation makes the natural imagery most recognizable. The cable lines and yellow machinery suggest a work zone. Surrounding images make it clear we are looking at a factory; however, in this shot the imagery to the clear, azure sky dominates. The blue sky literally pushes the salient images to the edge of the screen.

Figure 2 has two main elements: power transmission lines and the sky. The sky is less azure in this image; it has taken on a saturated cyan hue (Gurney 92). Barry explains the idea of color saturation in her book, *Visual Intelligence*: “Human adults with normal color vision can generally discriminate between 120 to 150 color differences across the visible spectrum. When saturation and brilliance are included, the number jumps into the millions” (128). This may amplify the distracting/re-directing function of vividness. In her work on “cartoon-washing” in advertising, Thatcher argues “saturated color is used to effectively greenwash” (3). The saturation of natural tones and images metes out unnatural coloration; flooding of brilliant blues draws the eye away from the mundane greys of the power lines. Figure 3 is similar to Figure 1. An azure sky takes up much of the image. The image of the factory is much clearer than before and takes up more of the screen, but the brilliance of the sun and its lens flare blots out any details of the factory, drawing the eye to it and the clear sky. Figures 4 and 5 demonstrate the extreme end of saturation. The brilliance of the sunset darkens the power lines in Figure 4 and the cityscape in Figure 5. The beauty of the “color soup” of hues in the sunset directs the attention to the environmental imagery of the sky and to the water (Wolfe 16). That these

shots are spaced apart from each other functions as a form of repetition or reminder, drilling the message home.

In all of these images, vividness works as a terministic screen directing attention away from the argument being advanced by the narration. The empirical research on vividness informs us that vividness on non-salient imagery collapses retention of salient information. However, understanding vividness as a terministic screen helps in turn to understand the function of “Clean Coal: Now is the Time”: the message established by the narration (energy independence, growth) is not as important as the message performed by the imagery (environment). The imagery draws attention to the vivid, pro-environmental imagery, distracting from the salient, narrated message. Empirical research suggests retention for the salient message will suffer; however, that does not undermine the persuasive appeal of the ad. The salient message, or what is being narrated, is not the controversial claim. The terministic screen of vividness allows the environmental imagery to address the real nexus question of the clean coal debate as a “hidden persuader” (Packard). The juxtaposition of the apparatus of coal production and consumption next to the vibrant, well-functioning ecological images simply asserts that the two are compatible.



**Figure 6 (left) and 7 (right). Screen captures from “Clean Coal: The Time is Now.”**



Not all the images fit so neatly within the scheme of vivid imagery combined with pallid imagery, however. Figures 6 and 7 show two screenshots from the ad that combine one vivid image with another vivid image. Figure 6 is composed of four predominant colors, the yellow that makes up the majority of the train, and the blue, lavender and green that compose the landscape. Like in the previous shots, there image of technology is juxtaposed with the image of the environment. Once again, there is an azure blue sky, now coupled with a fade into a vegetable green landscape. However, a second vivid image has been introduced. The train represents the consumption and/or production of power. It is an image of technology, and (American) progress. The train is surging forward. Color theory supports this: A UC Berkeley study found people associate vivid yellows with fast-paced action (University of California – Berkeley). That supports the narration and message of the ad: now is the time for clean coal, coal helps society keep moving at its current pace, and there is not time to consider alternatives.

The vivid, waving flag is a consistent image in “Clean Coal: Now is the Time.” Figure 7 shows it most clearly coupled with the now-standard azure blue sky; however, it can also be seen on the train in Figure 6 and the platform in Figure 1. The omnipresence of the flag encourages the idea that Americanness and coal are one and the same. This positions anyone who fails to support coal as anti-American or unpatriotic. Zarefsky explains that this is the substitution of a valence issues for a position issue: “a valence issue is one on which everyone supports the same value, and advocates try to identify their proposal with that value” (128). Rather than arguing that coal is the best source of energy, or clean, “Clean Coal: Now is the Time” positions coal as American. If an advocate concentrates on branding their proposal as patriotic, then anyone who disagrees

with their proposal must not be a patriot. The danger is that this “eliminates the possibility of agreeing about goals while disagreeing about means” (Zarefsky 129). Little time is spent arguing about what the best means is for achieving those goals, rather, the goals are made clear and the audience is left to enthymematically deduce the arguments for why coal must be the best. The quick cuts between shots create associations that overwhelm any incongruities.

The vivid colors of the flag play an important role in propping up these notions of patriotism. Exploring vivid portrayals of the nuclear family in advertising, Thatcher writes that vividness “encourages personal and emotional identification with the advertisement’s symbolic Americanness while simultaneously distracting viewers away from questions about the more troubling consequences”(2). According to Thatcher, vividness is used to enhance the emotions that come with the attempt to define “who we are” and “who we want to be” (8). Vividness amplifies the emotional appeal of the waving flag. It becomes impossible to question the Red, White and Blue.



**Figure 8 (left), 9 (middle) and 10 (right). Screen captures from “Clean Coal: The Time is Now.”**

The final vivid images I examine are images of coal. Figures 8 through 10 show all of the images of coal in the ad “Clean Coal: Now is the Time.” These images are striking in two ways. First, they represent approximately three seconds of total screen time, or less than five percent of the ad, a shockingly small amount of screen time for an ad that purports to be about coal. Second, they are striking in their vibrancy. Whether it is

the sleek glossiness of coal in Figure 10, the organized mass of coal in Figure 9, or the viridian green forest in Figure 8, the images of coal are all vivid. However, understanding the role of color in the presentation of coal requires an exploration of the meanings associated with the color black.

Color theory has a lot to say about how the color black has evolved in meaning over time. Originally conceived as representing evil and sin, the meaning associated with black has been in flux through the ages. Fulford explains:

While black has been the colour of danger for most of human history, it acquired positive symbolism in ancient Egypt when it indicated fertility, a reference to the black silt deposited by the Nile. In primitive Christianity, black represented hell and the Devil -- but also monastic virtue. In the Middle Ages, the Black Knight showed up in heraldic literature. Disguised by a black helmet and anonymously black clothing and shield, he usually turned out to be a significant character (Tristan, Lancelot, Gawain) of good intentions, with a reason for hiding his identity. That tradition lasted some six centuries, right up to the publication of Sir Walter Scott's *Ivanhoe* in 1819, a bestselling chivalry tale in which the mysterious Black Knight turns out to be no less than King Richard the Lionhearted, preparing to recover the crown of England that is rightfully his.

These more positive associations with black are also true today. The definitive scholarly work on blackness as a color is Pastoureau's *Black: The History of a Color*. Pastoureau agrees that black has represented a range of values; however he argues that in modern times, "The [negative] symbolism of black has faded everywhere. Even death and

mourning are less and less often associated with this color” (194). Instead, in many contexts black is sleek, expensive, and seductive. Pastoureau locates part of this shift in filmography. Since shooting a black-and-white film today is more expensive than shooting in color, it is done less often and therefore is more defining and valuable (184). This is also true in the worlds of industrial and fashion design. Whereas in the early centuries black was “the dirty, miserable black of the large, industrial cities” today it is a symbol of luxury, “simultaneously a sober and refined black, an elegant and functional black, a joyous, luminous black” (184-9). This represents dangerous terrain for a coal advertisement that seeks to avoid the ‘industrial’ black association.

Color and the juxtaposition of color play an important role allowing advertisers to present coal as associated with modernity instead of an industrial past (Pastoureau 189).

Pastoureau explains why color, especially black, can never be viewed in isolation:

A color never occurs alone; it only takes on meaning, only fully functions from the social, artistic, and symbolic perspectives, insofar as it is associated with or opposed to one or many other colors. By the same token, it is impossible to consider a color in isolation. To speak of black, as you will read in the pages that follow, is also—necessarily—to speak of white, red, brown, purple, and even of blue. (2)

In “Clean Coal: Now is the Time” black must be viewed primarily with green and blue, the colors most representative of environmentalism. Coal is shown with images of green forests in Figure 8 and a blue lake in Figure 9. The sequences before and after coal is shown are also heavy with environmental imagery and colors. Finally, the coal itself, as shown in Figure 10, has a sleek and glossy texture. This, along with the juxtaposition of

cooler blue and greens, helps define the value associated with coal as the “modern black” as opposed to the “industrial black.”

## **Conclusion**

The most prevalent theme in all of these images is how color, and vividness of color in particular, works as a terministic screen to divert attention away from coal and the debate over whether it can actually be clean. This is accomplished partly through the “attention grabbing effects of intensified chroma or color saturation” but also through the enthymematic qualities of color (Thatcher, 9). The association of blue and green with a vibrant environment, yellow with efficiency, and black with modernity are cultural realities that are left for the audience to infer based on context.

This is an enthymematic process. Environmentalism itself is never discussed, but the viewer of the ad fills in the blanks of the clear blue skies and vibrant forests. The argument could be advanced that this is a process of affect, not enthymeme; however, blue, yellow and black carry no intrinsic values that impact upon a person. Their associations are learned, and therefore must be inferred. As Pastoureau points out, the message one takes away from a color is dependent on its context, both the colors around it and the broader image context.

Color and vividness are deployed by the ACCCE to both have its cake and eat it too. On the one hand, juxtaposition of coal and industrial images with blue skies and green forests helps link together associations of coal as natural and earthy. On the other, sleek, organized pictures of coal, while still shown below or subservient to environmental images, capture the modernity of the color black, and not its dirty industrial past. This is

reinforced by the images of technology and cities interspersed throughout the ad. Additionally, associations with the red, white and blue of the flag help position environmentalist arguments as distinctly un-American. These maneuvers reveal how distraction and deflection are key elements to the pitch.

## CHAPTER FIVE:

### Conclusion

As the public's demand for greener energy solutions pits the energy industries like coal against government regulators, the importance of understanding what is happening in energy advertising is paramount. "Clean Coal: Now is the Time" was the flagship ad of a campaign launched to influence the 2008 presidential election (Lacey). Exploring the ways in which the coal industry seeks to inoculate itself from environmental critiques in "Clean Coal: Now is the Time" helps to understand the ways in which energy advertisements attempt to greenwash their product and environmental message. Quick cuts, images of authority, the juxtaposition of vivid environmental imagery with pallid industrial imagery are all tactics of visual rhetoric that greenwash clean coal and undermine deliberative dialogue.

Putting a spotlight on places where scientific arguments are being appropriated to leverage a public argument is important. In "Clean Coal: Now is the Time" the ethos of scientific expertism is suggested by the images of the advertisement. The quick cuts function to distract from a deliberative debate over the nexus question, "can coal be clean," and leave viewers only thinking of the scientific images. Thirty years ago

Goodnight argued that the practices “which replace deliberative rhetoric by substituting alternative modes of invention and restricting subject matter need to be uncovered and critiqued” (227). That remains true today. If the balance between deliberative rhetoric and manipulative rhetoric is tipped toward the engineering of consent, then communication scholars can play an important role in restoring that balance (Zarefsky 115-116).

Zarefsky identifies three problematic moves that “decrease scrutiny, hurt deliberation, and allow consent to be more easily engineered” (131). “Clean Coal: Now is the Time” triggers all three of these red flags. The first red flag is *argument by definition*. Zarefsky argues that it is problematic when a loaded definition is applied to a controversial topic as if there were no controversy: “Rather than being presented and defended, the incipient argument is simply stipulated” (129). “Clean Coal” is an obvious offender; the label asserts that coal is clean without explaining how that is true.

The second warning sign is the *substitution of valance issues for position issues*. Patriotism is a prime example. If advocates concentrate on branding their proposal as patriotic, then anyone who disagrees with their proposal must not be a patriot. The danger is that this “eliminates the possibility of agreeing about goals while disagreeing about means” (129). “Clean Coal: Now is the Time” clearly utilizes the substitution of valance issues a number of times. Patriotism is appealed to by multiple images of American flags: waving translucent in the foreground of a field of wheat, plastered on the side of a factory, speeding across the screen painted onto the side of a locomotive. Energy independence, the revitalization of American manufacturing, and the ideal of economic growth itself are all valance issues established by the images and narration of the advertisement. Little time is spent arguing about what the best means is for achieving those goals, rather, the



goals are made clear and the audience is left to enthymematically supply the arguments for why coal must be the best.

The third red flag is the *proclamation of crisis*. When matters are in crisis mode, there is no time to deliberate (130). In “Clean Coal: Now is the Time,” the ACCCE could not have been clearer about promoting a mentality of urgency. The narrator tells us “the clock is ticking” while we literally hear a clock tick against a crowd shouting a countdown. The pace of images itself cultivates a mentality of crisis or urgency. The audience is shown a flurry of sixty distinct images in the sixty-one second ad spot. Zarefsky warns that these tactics make it easy for the engineering of consent to “[trump] the encouragement of deliberative rhetoric,” rhetoric becomes “less a means of ascertaining practical wisdom than a *techne* to serve a cause chosen in advance” (131). The quick cuts serve to distract from a deliberative message and reinforce the images of authority. The appeal to authority is neither to a neutral authority nor for disinterested motives. The ACCCE asks its audience to refer to its experts, its science, its authority, and ultimately to sanction its profit. The appeal to expertise should be lauded when it is an appeal to a nonbiased, wide-ranging body of experts. It should be viewed with caution when it is an appeal to a specific, profit-motivated group.

When deliberation is the focus of dialogue, arguments can be weighed and evaluated by any party. However, “Clean Coal: Now is the Time” works to keep its arguments rooted in the technical sphere, where the public is not invited to deliberate on them. Rehg explores how and why arguments “travel” between spheres: “if an argument is a good one and addresses a matter of general concern—e.g., a good scientific argument about the natural world—then it would seem to merit acceptance beyond its point of

origin: it ought to travel, one might say. Conversely, bad arguments ought not to travel” (40). Goodwin and Honeycutt expand on the importance of the idea of “travelling” in the context of scientific arguments, arguing:

[A] good scientific argument should not only travel to relevantly related fields (as for example, from physics to chemistry), but also from technical to appropriate policy contexts. The fact that lay decision-makers, with interests and expertise vastly different from that of scientists, can nevertheless understand, assess, and accept a technical argument demonstrate that arguments cogency (what Rehg calls its "public merits"), and thus tends to legitimate both the scientific knowledge and decisions the argument supports. (20-21)

The ability of arguments to travel is not a perfect indicator of deliberative or correct argumentation. As Rehg argues, “socially durable racist arguments show the mere fact that an argument travels and is accepted widely across space and time does not mean the argument is a good one” (39-40). Not all good arguments travel and not all bad arguments stand still. Yet, the sole or primary reliance on appeal to authority should make one wonder why no substantive arguments are being made. The reliance on appeal to authority demonstrates a reluctance to travel. In “Clean Coal: Now is the Time” the ACCCE spends little time attempting to make arguments about why coal is eco-friendly. Instead, it shows pictures of scientists and “science” and expects the audience to connect the dots.

When an appeal to authority seems to engineer consent rather than invite deliberation, it is the job of communication scholars to analyze how that transformation

and deflection is being accomplished. In this advertisement, images of scientific subjects are used to construct a technical and objective ethos, a visual and enthymematic appeal to authority. These images of authority interrupt a critical evaluation of the efficacy of “clean coal.” A variety of tropes such as the technology fix are used to magnify the enthymeme and diminish the viewer’s perceived self-agency. The editing uses quick cuts to flood the zone and ensure that the images of authority dominate the message. The juxtaposition of vivid blue skies and green forests with the more pallid image of the factory draws attention to the theme of environmentalism, which, in combination with the quick cuts, overwhelms viewers’ ability to assess the nexus question of “is coal clean.” These tactics are all used to greenwash the idea of “clean coal.” The enthymematic qualities of images, the rhetoric of color, and the rhetoric of editing are all areas where more attention could be paid. Rhetorical critics should continue to explore new subgenres of visual rhetoric to uncover these tactics and others like them. The importance of this paper is that it uncovers how these elements work together.

## APPENDIX: SEQUENCES IN “CLEAN COAL: NOW IS THE TIME”

1. Aerial shot pans across a city/skyline at dusk.
2. Alarm clock.
3. Countdown timer.
4. Different countdown timer.
5. Machinery with American flag, blue sky background.
6. The Capitol Building, seen from within a moving car.
7. Black-and-white close-up of a man’s face.
8. Black-and-white close-up of a woman’s face.
9. Shaky pan of Occupy protestors.
10. News article on high electricity prices.
11. Power meter.
12. Dump trucks driving on a long road, vibrant wheat fields on either side; fades into a waving American flag.
13. Outstretched arm.
14. Traveling shot of piles of coal, bright green forest and blue sky in the background.
15. Lab space.
16. Conveyor belt.
17. Welding.
18. Traveling shot of machinery, American flag.
19. Traveling shot of train yard, set against a bright blue body of water and greenery.
20. Car passenger observing a city at night.
21. Close-up of car passenger observing a city at night.
22. City lighting up at night.
23. Continent lighting up at night.
24. Little girl with a lit-up globe.
25. Factory.
26. Periodic table of the elements.
27. Two people observing computer modeling.
28. Two people observing computer modeling, more modeling in background.
29. Factory, set against bright sun and sky imagery.
30. Person holding a phone set against city at dusk.
31. Inside of a subway/train station.
32. Man on a step-ladder, writing on a board.
33. Black-and-white factory and worker footage.
34. Car being assembled.
35. Circular saw.
36. Conveyor belt.
37. Made in the USA sticker.

38. Factory doors opening.
39. Train with American flag painted on, set against green field, mountains, and blue sky.
40. Computer parts.
41. Extension cord being plugged in.
42. Power lines set against bright blue sky.
43. Shot of a man's waist and arm, holding a glossy piece of coal.
44. Traveling shot of a building, American flag painted on the side.
45. Inside of a train station, movement sped up.
46. Woman holding a little girl.
47. Stock exchange board.
48. Countdown timer.
49. Traveling shot of a city.
50. Countdown timer.
51. Different countdown timer.
52. Power lines set against sunset.
53. Clock tower.
54. Girl holding an alarm clock.
55. Power lines set against sunset and sky.
56. Infrastructure set against body of water and sun.
57. Bicyclist in city at night.
58. City at dawn or dusk.
59. City skyline at night and Statue of Liberty.
60. Extension cord plugged into a piece of coal set against the ad's name: "CLEAN COAL. NOW IS THE TIME."

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## CURRICULUM VITAE

### **Matthew S. Struth**

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#### **Contact Information:**

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#### **Education**

- M.A. Wake Forest University, Winston-Salem, NC \*May 2014  
Communication, Emphasis in Rhetorical Studies  
Thesis Advisor: Ron Von Burg, Ph.D.
- B.A. University of Mary Washington, Fredericksburg, VA 2009  
Major in History

#### **Teaching Experience**

- Wake Forest University, Winston-Salem, NC, Fall 2013  
Teaching Assistant, Department of Communication  
Historical and Cultural Rhetorical Criticism, Ron Von Burg, Ph.D.
- Wake Forest University, Winston-Salem, NC, Spring 2012  
Teaching Assistant, Department of Communication  
Argumentation and Advocacy, Len Neighbors, M.A.
- Georgetown Debate Seminar, Georgetown, DC, Summer 2013  
Instructor  
*Co-taught a group of 20 high school students, working individually and in groups on speaking, debate and research skills.  
Gave lectures to large groups on policy debate theory and practice, as well as topic-specific knowledge.*
- Spartan Debate Institute, East Lansing, MI, Summer 2013  
Instructor  
*Co-taught a group of 20 high school students, working individually and in groups on speaking, debate and research skills.  
Gave lectures to large groups on policy debate theory and practice, as well as topic-specific knowledge.*
- Liberty Debate Institute, Lynchburg, VA, Summer 2010-2012  
Instructor  
*Taught a group of 15 high school students, working individually and in groups on speaking, debate and research skills.  
Gave lectures to large groups on policy debate theory and practice, as well as topic-specific knowledge.*

Capitol Debate Institute, Lynchburg, VA,  
Instructor

Summer 2012

*Co-taught a group of 30 high school students, working individually and in groups on speaking, debate and research skills.*  
*Gave lectures to large groups on policy debate theory and practice, as well as topic-specific knowledge.*

Wyoming Forensics Institute, Laramie, WY,  
Instructor

Summer 2011

*Co-taught a group of 20 high school students, working individually and in groups on speaking, debate and research skills.*  
*Gave lectures to large groups on policy debate theory and practice, as well as topic-specific knowledge.*

### **Conference Presentations**

Struth, M.S. "Declaring war on immigration: Reading the congressional immigration debate through the metonymy of surge," Abstract to be presented at the 2013 Rhetoric Society of America Conference.

Struth, M.S. "Cleaning coal: The enthymematic function of images of authority in clean coal advertising," Paper to be presented at the 2013 Rhetoric Society of America Conference.

Struth, M.S. "The influence of dynamic cutting on argument: How clean coal advertising floods the zone," Paper presented at the 2013 National Communication Conference.

### **Employment Experience**

Graduate Assistant Debate Coach, Wake Forest University, 2012-Present

*Responsible for developing and refining arguments with undergraduate students, including judging practice debates and speeches and providing feedback to improve students' debate skills*

*Conduct intensive research and generate strategies*

*Travel to 8-10 college tournaments per year*

*Assist in the administration of the high school and college debate tournaments hosted by Wake Forest University*

Assistant Debate Coach, New Trier High School

2012-Present

*Responsible for working with high school students on public speaking and research skills as well as providing feedback to improve student's debate skills.*  
*Travel to 5-7 high school debate tournaments a year*

Assistant Debate Coach, Liberty University,

2009-2012

*Responsible for developing and refining arguments with undergraduate students, including judging practice debates and speeches and providing feedback to improve students' debate skills*

*Conduct intensive research and generate strategies*

*Travel to 8-10 college tournaments per year*

*Assist in the administration of the high school and college debate tournaments hosted by Liberty University*

*Worked closely with novice and beginner debaters to teach them the fundamentals skills of public and policy debate*