



Journal of Public Interest Communications

ISSN (online): 2573-4342

Journal homepage: <http://journals.fcla.edu/jpic/>

Raining on SeaWorld's Parade: PETA's Direct Action and Public Interest Communications

Ashli Stokes

University of North Carolina at Charlotte

Article Information

Received: May 25, 2018

Accepted: November 15, 2018

Published online: April 26, 2019

Keywords

Direct action
PETA
SeaWorld
Social change

Abstract

PETA is well known for creative animal rights activism, with studies exploring how its text-based advocacy creates change regarding societal treatment of animals. What is less explored is how PETA uses on the ground direct action strategies as public interest communications (PIC). For PIC scholars, these strategies are relevant, as direct action provides communicators with experiential ways to persuade stakeholders of new perspectives to push for social change. Building on previous studies in public relations activism and PIC, this essay argues that PETA's direct-action strategies complement its text-based advocacy by shaping stakeholder perception through encounters with material realities, specifically by using embodied forms of persuasion. Answering how public interest communicators create effective persuasive messages on the ground is crucial in understanding contemporary social change.

Introduction

Prior to the 2013 Rose Bowl Parade, animal rights group People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA) asked parade directors to redesign a proposed SeaWorld float. Instead of whales frolicking in the waves, PETA suggested depicting a single orca trapped in a small fishbowl surrounded by locks and chains, complete with a banner that read "SeaWorld of Hurt, Where Happiness Tanks." The redesign was unsurprisingly declined. PETA also tried to convince the parade organizer, the Tournament of Roses, to drop the company's float with no success.

**Please send correspondences about this article to Ashli Stokes, Department of Communication Studies, University of North Carolina-Charlotte. E-mail: aqstokes@uncc.edu.*

DOI:10.32473/jpic.v3.i1.p91

Copyright 2019 Stokes. This work is published under a Creative Commons Attribution-Noncommercial 3.0 (CC BY-NC 3.0) License.

On parade day, 12-year-old Rose McCoy, along with 14 other PETA protestors, was arrested for attempting to stop the SeaWorld float from going down the route. Later in the year, Macy's received 80,000 angry emails from animal lovers before its Thanksgiving Day Parade demanding that it drop SeaWorld's float, with celebrity Alec Baldwin arguing that SeaWorld "should not be celebrated with a giant Shamu float parading down 34th street" (as cited in Li, 2013, para. 4). Finding their email campaign unsuccessful, PETA protestors and the same little girl jumped parade barricades and were dragged away by police. Coming on the heels of the July 2013 release of the CNN Films documentary *Blackfish*, which drew intense media attention for its allegations that SeaWorld treats its orcas poorly, PETA's direct-action strategies, which favor demonstrations, protests, and the like to achieve goals (Sangiovanni & Bondaroff, 2014; Lacewing, 2008), helped bring even more attention to the plight of the orcas. Fast forward to 2018, and PETA's ongoing use of these strategies to complement its more text-based advocacy pressured SeaWorld to change policies such as phasing out orca shows, ending breeding practices, and instituting improved animal welfare practices (Bomey, 2018). Over time, PETA's use of direct-action strategies helped shift public interest regarding animal welfare using animals for entertainment in ways the company could not ignore.

PETA is well known for its creative animal rights activism, with studies exploring how its text-based advocacy (turning SeaWorld into an *abusement* park, for example) has been able to help create change regarding the treatment of animals (Duhon, Ellison, & Ragas, 2016; Stokes & Atkins-Sayre, 2018). What is less explored is how PETA and others use on the ground direct action strategies as types of public interest communications (PIC). For PIC scholars, these strategies are relevant, as direct action provides communicators with experiential ways to persuade stakeholders of new perspectives to push for social change. Building on previous studies in public relations activism and PIC, this essay argues that PETA's direct-action strategies complement its text-based advocacy by shaping stakeholder perception through encounters with material realities, specifically by using embodied forms of persuasion. Although some public relations research explores the discursive (i.e., written or spoken text) construction of shared meaning, where organizations compete for the power to shape meaning through public communication (e.g., Stokes, 2013; Weaver, 2010), the role of more non-discursive (visual or physically based communication), direct action strategies in meaning creation has received little attention in public relations and PIC. Answering how public interest communicators create effective persuasive messages on the ground is crucial in understanding contemporary social change.

Although much has been written about the role of *Blackfish* in helping PETA create "a profound crisis for SeaWorld, which had built its brand on the back of killer whales" (Wallace, 2016, para. 4), the variety of ways PETA organized around the film has not been explored fully. PETA had long campaigned against SeaWorld, with its messages largely reaching committed animal welfare activists, but the film served as a "gift" for the organization, helping it reach new supporters (McEwan, 2014, para. 2). After the film's release, PETA's Twitter account set a new

record for retweets, thousands more people visited its campaign website, SeaWorldOfHurt.com, and its media outreach intensified (McEwan, 2014). In the documentary itself, footage telling the story of SeaWorld's trainer-killing orca, Tilikum, is used along with damaging testimony from former SeaWorld employees and other insider information to help indict the company. PETA used *Blackfish* to intensify its own attack on SeaWorld, with observers noting that the "*Blackfish* broadcasts on CNN injected new life into the SeaWorld campaign" (McEwan, 2014, para. 2). Although PETA is known for its mix of "strategic opportunism and digital technologies" in support of its causes, and some have assessed its use of new media in its fight for orcas (Stokes & Atkins-Sayre, 2018), the role of its direct-action strategies in helping cultivate negative public sentiment has been overlooked.

This research first sketches PETA's cause-related activism and campaign against SeaWorld, connecting its strategies to scholarship about PIC, public relations activism, and rhetorically based social movements. It then describes materialist rhetorical criticism as a method best able to capture this type of advocacy. After analyzing three uses of PETA's direct-action strategies regarding orcas since the release of *Blackfish*, implications for crafting persuasive PIC campaigns are provided as well as suggestions for moving scholarship forward.

PETA's activism, PIC, and rhetorical social change strategies

Although the animal rights movement has grown rapidly since the 1980s, with thousands of active participants and "millions of sympathizers" (Jasper & Poulsen, 1995, p. 493), PETA is recognized as the international leader, crafting public controversy since 1980 to draw attention to animal rights arguments regarding what it considers to be animal cruelty, including wearing fur, testing on animals for drug manufacture, and making animals perform for entertainment (Stokes & Atkins-Sayre, 2018). Founded in the United States, it campaigns against organizations worldwide, influencing a variety of animal rights conversations including reform in horse racing, lab animal treatment standards, and closing circuses and zoos (Atkins-Sayre, 2010). Since 1998, the organization has targeted SeaWorld, established in 1964 in San Diego, CA, by Milton Shedd and colleagues. The park has two other locations, with additional versions across the United States and around the world, all marketing animals as entertainment (Friedersdorf, 2014). Shedd, an ocean conservationist, claimed that business success depended on the ability to "exploit and stoke humans' natural interest in the ocean" (Friedersdorf, 2014, para. 28). SeaWorld reiterates that message today, arguing that its parks "inspire millions to celebrate, connect with and care for the natural world we share through the power of entertainment" (SeaWorld, "What we do," para. 1).

For PETA, SeaWorld represents the antithesis of its philosophy about animal rights and ethics. In its commitment to protecting animals, the organization accepts that it is sometimes viewed as extremist, even relishing this perception. It argues, for example, that if people are against slavery, it does not matter who is being enslaved, including animals (Cadwalladr, 2013).

PETA's goal is not to build consensus about animal rights but to provoke thought, as founder I. Newkirk explains: "People have been taught to disregard what happens to pigs or chickens, to not think about the suffering they go through. Our job is to make them think. We're not out to be popular" (as cited in Cadwalladr, 2013). The way the organization fosters thought tends to draw on shocking and emotional rhetorical, or persuasive, strategies. PETA has developed a parody of a popular Nintendo game called *Cooking Mama*, for instance, where players see a mother beheading animals for dinner (Cadwalladr, 2013). PETA also famously targets fur-wearing celebrities by throwing red paint (to symbolize blood) at them, features naked celebrities holding signs that read, "I'd rather go naked than wear fur," and holds die-ins, with protestors appearing dead, bloodied with spears in their backs, to protest bullfighting.

Although SeaWorld is *one* of its corporate targets, PETA's ongoing advocacy for animal rights makes it a public interest communicator. Indeed, because Fessmann (2017) defined PIC as developing and implementing "planned strategic communication campaigns with the main goal of achieving significant and sustained positive behavioral change on a public interest issue that transcends the particular interests of any single organization," PETA's work is a textbook example (p. 16). Its actions to support animal welfare worldwide connect it to other public interest communicators who draw on public relations techniques to help achieve social change regarding this issue (Fessmann, 2017). For PETA, animal welfare is an issue in the public interest because a central goal for its campaigns is to improve animals' lives with the help of human interference (Fessmann, 2017). Its efforts to conquer what it sees as some of the world's "demons and inequities," regarding animals provides an example of the type of PIC campaign that tries to mobilize the public in the service of policy change¹ (Christiano, 2017, p. 6). Thus, although PETA's campaigns surrounding orca treatment may help strengthen PETA's legitimacy and reputation as an organization, its activities are in the service of animals, and people's relationships to them, rather than on behalf of the organization itself. Like other public interest communicators, PETA seeks to change organizational structures by helping different voices be heard in particular communities, here, regarding the role of animals in society (Brunner, 2017; Fessman, 2017).

Within public relations scholarship that has deep connections to PIC, PETA is studied as an activist organization (Stokes & Atkins-Sayre, 2018) where activism is frequently defined as "a process by which groups of people exert pressure on organizations or other institutions to change policies, practices, or conditions that the activists find problematic" (Smith, 2005, p. 5). Briefly reviewing how activism is typically studied in public relations emphasizes the value of adding the PIC lens. Due to the continuing reliance on excellence theory and other functionalist approaches (Grunig & Grunig, 1992), some public relations scholarship still views activists as antagonistic groups corporations need to manage through public relations techniques (Benecke & Oksitycz, 2015; Smith & Ferguson, 2010; Stokes & Rubin, 2010). Traditional activism

¹ PETA achieves positive behavioral change, which Fessmann (2017) calls "the only valid measurement of the success of a public interest campaign" (pp. 21-22). Positive change can be viewed differently; but most might agree that reducing animal suffering is a good goal (Downes, 2017).

scholarship argues that opposing parties in a conflict begin by trying to find common ground; but, once one party does not reciprocate, media advocacy may begin, providing the pivot to PIC (Fessmann, 2017; Hon, 2017). As Stokes and Rubin (2010) point out, this pivot away from accommodation becomes necessary because corporations and public interest communicators often have conflicting goals, meaning that “the compromise metaphor implicit in the two-way symmetrical model is not always accurate in describing the relationships between corporations and activists” (p. 42). To better account for such intractable scenarios, sometimes activism is studied from issues management perspectives that seek to understand how organizations and activists alike nurture their positions on issues, or contested matters, through the issue-management lifecycle to a favorable outcome (Heath & Waymer, 2009; Smith & Ferguson, 2010). Depending on whether they are attempting to establish the issue and attract supporters and media coverage or push for action, parties will adopt different rhetorical strategies (Crable & Vibbert, 1985; Smith and Ferguson, 2001). Like other organizations managing issues (Crable & Vibbert, 1985; Heath & Waymer, 2009; Smith & Ferguson, 2010), PETA has to establish the legitimacy for its perspective regarding the orca issue, but also it has the PIC goals of changing the status quo and encouraging behavior change. The PIC feature of a triggering event (Fessman, 2017) is also at work in the PETA case, with the *Blackfish* release kicking off its intensified campaign. Finally, PIC campaigns face fierce opposition, and PETA's undoubtedly faces stiff challenges from SeaWorld. The value of bringing the PIC perspective into public relations activism scholarship is that it helps us better understand cases where two sides are deeply entrenched and social change hangs in the balance, while a PIC focus on PETA activism helps “train and empower a new generation of social change activists” (Fessmann, 2017, p. 27).

Indeed, analyzing how PETA tries to create social change regarding animal treatment helps scholars better appreciate the changing nature of contemporary activism. Public relations has work to do if it is to meet this challenge, especially in terms of moving away from strategy as discursively conceived to understanding the range of persuasive methods activists now employ. To date, only Henderson (2005), Ihlen (2004), and Weaver (2010, 2013) specifically explored one form of direct action, protest, as a form of public relations, examining how this strategy attracts media coverage, conveys discontent, and applies political pressure. As Ihlen (2004) argues, protests send particular messages to negotiate new meanings, with visual methods particularly important in halting the building of a power plant in Norway. Henderson (2005) and Weaver (2010; 2013), too, examined the role of protest in combating genetic engineering and industrialized food, with Weaver arguing that the celebratory carnivalesque style of protest should even comprise a particular genre of activist public relations. Finally, Boyd and VanSlette (2009)'s outlaw discourse, though not specifically protest, also begins to suggest how non-conventional, disruptive forms of public relations activism eschew making direct counterarguments to implementing the types of attention-getting appeals we see in PETA's animal rights activism to “question the methods and assumptions of the dominant system” (p. 333). Although the idea of not seeking compromise through these types of strategies is considered to be somewhat radical in traditional public relations scholarship, within rhetorical

scholars' work that connects to PIC's concern with social change, it is foundational.

In fact, in its more shocking protest measures, PETA joins other contemporary social movement organizations that rely on radical rhetorical methods to provoke thought as a persuasive strategy. PETA's efforts in combating its opponents align it with rhetorical scholars who study new social movements (NSMs), where organizations are "oriented toward changing identity, social norms, or challenging the logic governing social systems" (Foust, Pason, & Rogness, 2017, p. 3). Thus, although the need to understand how social movements create outcomes such as policy changes or legal precedents continues, scholars studying NSMs are concerned with how meaning changes over time, as in PETA's attempts to shift meaning regarding animals. Similarly, recent campaigns to legalize same-sex marriage demonstrate how "overturning bans state by state ('material' change) is woven tightly with symbolic efforts to 'normalize' marriage outside of heterosexual partnerships" (Foust, Pason, & Rogness, 2017, p. 5). PETA's efforts to change SeaWorld's policies regarding orcas is thus complemented by its longstanding work to revise perceptions about the acceptability of using animals for entertainment purposes. The work of rhetorical social change scholars is helpful in appreciating PETA's PIC strategies in this regard.

Rhetorical studies in general have made good progress in moving beyond text-based strategies to more fully considering the role of the nondiscursive in successful activist persuasion. One persuasive avenue that has been explored in detail is how bodies are a resource for argumentation and advocacy in creating social change (DeLuca, 1999b). Activists use their bodies to perform arguments, with scholars pointing out that to better "understand the dynamics of social change. . . critics must analyze bodies as a rich source of argumentative force" (p. 20). Thus, as Flood (2017) points out, for rhetoricians, the body is not just a biological form but a socially constructed entity that "has the potential to disrupt societal norms and the institutions that enforce them" (p. 109). Through this embodied rhetoric, bodies garner attention to issues as well as helping to construct an argument (Flood, 2017). Early on, Olson and Goodnight (1994) examined how anti-fur activists used their bodies to challenge social beliefs, with scholarship developing since the late 1990s to explore how bodies argue without verbal commentary (Condit, 1990).

Today many contend that the non-linguistic body does, in fact, argue. Bodies in the road blocking machinery, bodies at risk protecting trees, or SeaWorld protestors' bodies painted as orcas certainly convey meaning without words. Bodies may serve as proof for an argument, provide reasoning, or *as* an argument that helps create dialogue and change (Flood, 2017). Over time, scholarship concentrated on the body not as *part* of protestors' arguments but *as* the argument itself. DeLuca (1999a) points out that the use of the body in EarthFirst's protest image events may garner mass media attention through spectacle but serves *as* the argument for this environmental rights group. It is important to note, however, that bodily presence is not always enough to create change in the public interest because bodies must not only prompt dialogue but also continue discussion "until change and/or progress is made" (Butterworth, 2008; Flood, 2017, p. 112). PETA's combination of language and performance requires bystanders "to look,

to gaze, to read, and respond” in ways that meet this standard (Foust, Pason, & Rogness, 2017, p. 166). Indeed, by 2018, PETA's advocacy helped pressure SeaWorld to end orca breeding, stop its theatrical shows, and create educational exhibits (Bomey, 2018). Thus, like other social movement organizations, PETA may have electoral, legislative, legal, and material goals, but it uses bodies as arguments to contest social norms and suggest new ways of thinking and behaving. Specifically, PETA uses bodies to upend the perception of the “Cartesian subject apart from the natural world,” trying to get people to see nature, and animals in particular, as *like* us rather than different (DeLuca, 1999b, p. 15). Since Fenske (2016) contends that there is more to understand about how bodies argue, with body rhetoric's “corporeal and physically experiential,” qualities intersecting with words, images, and actions, attention to PETA's orca campaigns provides this opportunity (p. 99). It should be clear that attending to the role of the body, in concert with traditional text-based strategies, helps to understand how organizations act rhetorically to achieve PIC goals. One type of rhetorical criticism is particularly useful in exploring this process.

Rhetorical criticism and PETA's embodied rhetoric

To capture this movement away from focusing on text-based advocacy, this study applies materialist rhetorical criticism to analyze PETA's use of embodied rhetoric in its direct-action strategies. Rhetorical criticism analyzes written symbols in order to understand their persuasive potential, systemically looking to explain the symbolic, meaning making process. It often follows four steps: descriptive analysis, or examining texts for persuasive patterns; accounting for how texts address or respond to a particular history and context; drawing from different theoretical approaches to best illuminate a text; and, finally making an argument based on the previous steps (Campbell & Burkholder, 1997; Foss, 1996). Materialist criticism draws on the traditional rhetorical criticism process to analyze the persuasive potential of places, bodies, performance, protest, and the like, seeking to read these alternative texts to better understand meaning creation. Materialist criticism thus moves away from the symbolic, persuasive meaning of words to viewing rhetoric “as some sort of concrete ‘matter’” (Landau, 2014, p. 593), with bodies acting as a material dimension of rhetoric (Selzer & Crowley, 1999), and critics asking “not just what a text means but, more generally, what it does” (Blair, 1999, p. 23). Materialist criticism draws from a variety of theoretical influences (Karl Marx, Michel Foucault, Judith Butler, Gilles Deleuze) and texts (printed documents, historical monuments, mass mediated images, videos) to see the persuasive/rhetorical potential of physical material objects (e.g., bodies, buildings, cars, geographical space) (Landau, 2014, p. 593).² Indeed, although some PIC rhetoric is overt, with organizations making written/spoken statements and inviting others to join them, some of it is implicit, as in PETA's silent protests or costumed performances. The written

² See also Biesecker & Lucaites, 2009.

texts surrounding PETA's animal rights activism are clearly important parts of its persuasive messages, but so much of its argument is experienced by its viewers/participants, where text becomes "something living, breathing, and operating within unique spaces and received by particular audiences" (Hess, 2011). In general, then, focusing on the unruly bodies of PETA activists helps us understand the affective, emotional, biological, and psychological qualities of material rhetoric (DeLuca, 1999b, Landau, 2014, p. 603; Rice, 2008). It also appreciates how PETA relies on bodies to create arguments that are then taken up by media and used to persuade more audiences.

As a result, this longitudinal study tries to open up the definition of rhetorical texts as much as possible. Following the release of *Blackfish* until the present, I use material criticism to examine three primary examples of PETA's nondiscursive, body-centric direct-action strategies: moral shock, pranking, and rhetorical form, assessing how they try to shape knowledge and opinions and motivate action about animal rights (Stokes, 2013). I explore these strategies in examples of PETA's media-generating image events: The Rose Bowl Parade, two Macy's Thanksgiving parades, and a variety of embodied protests at or near the SeaWorld parks themselves. Similar to other materialist critics, I explore PETA's videos, images, and its mediated accounts of these events (in news releases and on its website), as well as news coverage and SeaWorld's responses to these strategies, looking to see how and whether these strategies help persuade audiences and put pressure on the corporation (Cisneros, 2008). In all, I assessed every PETA text available regarding the issue of orca treatment, resulting in approximately 50 texts, including SeaWorld's responses and related news coverage. Accounting for this kind of rhetorical experience allows for an expanded understanding of what is considered persuasive in PIC and is in keeping with its focus on understanding how to best advocate for a cause.

Analysis: Using direct action to build pressure on SeaWorld following *Blackfish*

All three strategies examined illustrate how PETA's experiential involvement of audiences helps create a connection between humans and animals while simultaneously courting media attention, complementing text-based work. PETA uses body rhetoric³ to contest SeaWorld's treatment of orcas, to encourage viewers to reconsider their views of animals, and/or take action. PETA strategically uses the body to capture attention and cultivate identification with the orcas in ways that are more dramatic, emotional, and empathetic than using text alone.

³ All of PETA's texts analyzed are available on its website, peta.org, and are included in references.

Using the body to create moral shock

If PETA seeks to shift audience perception of animal rights in order to realize the PIC goal of creating change in the public interest, drawing on the moral shock strategy, which cultivates a sense of outrage so that people become inclined to act (Jasper & Poulson, 1995), is an effective choice. Moral shocks use highly publicized events to draw people into activism “by building on their existing beliefs” (Jasper & Poulson, 1995, p. 498). Since people have become more likely to view animals as capable of having feelings and thoughts (Jasper & Poulson, 1995), with research demonstrating increasingly that animals suffer psychologically in captivity (Sample, 2008), PETA uses moral shock to interrupt societal justification of keeping animals in these conditions. Frequently moral shocks use visuals to create effective appeals that stop accepted forms of reasoning, with the imagery translating into powerful condensing symbols, as described in the following animal rights scenario:

The visual images used in animal rights recruitment have a simple but effective structure based on good versus evil. There are pictures of happy animals, sometimes in the wild and sometimes in loving homes, living fulfilled lives. Then there are the “innocent suffering” pictures. These are presented as innocent victims of an evil force. (Jasper & Poulson, 1995, pp. 498, 506)

These visually based moral shock strategies are particularly useful in serving a recruiting function by creating an opening. For example, one protest bystander explained his decision to become a part of an animal rights organization after seeing shocking images: “I had never thought about it much, but I went by a table one day and saw these terrifying pictures. I thought about that on the street, and I brought home all their literature” (as cited in Jasper & Poulson, 1995, p. 506). Thus, through their focus on visual imagery, moral shocks grab attention, create epiphanies, and trigger activism, persuading audiences to view animals, and their role in human entertainment, differently.

Following the release of *Blackfish*, PETA relied on the body to intensify the persuasive power of moral shock, deploying this strategy in two different years in the lead up to the Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade. Analysis of photos, video, and website content illustrates how this strategy relies on the materiality of the body to help cultivate new perspectives in ways that go beyond written appeals. First, in 2013, PETA staged a protest/performance outside the Macy's flagship store in New York City. There, a world-record breaking swimmer, outfitted in a sleek orca-resembling wetsuit, thrashed about in a tiny, water filled, clear tank outside the store (See Figure 1).

Figure 1. Bodily amplifying the moral shock strategy at the Macy's Thanksgiving Parade.



The swimmer closely resembles a SeaWorld orca, down to the collapsed dorsal fin associated with orcas held in captivity, his head and toes resting only approximately an inch from either end of the clear tank, his arms resting similarly close to its walls (PETA, 2013). This use of zoomorphism to enact the moral shock strategy, or the “attribution of animal traits to human beings, deities, or inanimate objects,” helps connect humans and animals, emphasizing the suffering orcas endure while helping erase the Cartesian distinction between them (American Psychological Association, 2007, p. 1011). Indeed, by embodying the orca’s existence in a similarly small enclosure at SeaWorld, the swimmer makes a clear argument about the inappropriate treatment of these whales, imploring busy passersby to imagine experiencing these conditions. Although the sign held by a PETA member standing behind the tank drives home the argument, “Take SeaWorld Orca Abuse out of Macy’s Parade,” it is the swimmer’s performance that is shocking, perhaps able to move audiences from simply reading a leaflet to imagining the plight of the orcas from a new perspective, as seen in one observer’s face (See Figure 2). Thus, in keeping with the moral shock strategy, the swimmer’s performance in the tank works to

encourage observers to question their relationships to their fellow beasts, asking if it is moral to use animals for entertainment.

Figure 2. Bodily amplifying the moral shock strategy at the Macy's Thanksgiving Parade.



Similarly, in 2014, when two naked PETA orcas, painted black and white, protested in a bathtub outside the Macy's store, passersby are again encouraged to think about the plight of the animals in new ways (PETA, 2014a). With temperatures hovering around freezing, the two women's legs almost overlap each other's in a cramped white bathtub, their identities concealed by the body paint (See Figure 3). Again, although the orcas hold a sign that reads, "Could you live in your bathtub? Boycott SeaWorld!" with two other activists behind them holding a banner that reads, "Take SeaWorld Orca Abuse out of Macy's Parade," it is the appearance of the women in the tub that helps audiences make a connection between the whales' treatment and themselves. As Atkins-Sayre (2010) wrote about PETA's general ability to induce identification, or common ground, with animals to further the group's goals, the bodily enacted moral shock

strategy helps “effectively blur the distinction between human and nonhuman animals, inviting viewers to rethink their own identities and, thus, their beliefs about animal rights” (p. 311). PETA’s embodied rhetoric promotes outrage about these practices, its clever immersive recreations of marine environments encouraging witnesses to think differently about SeaWorld.

Figure 3. Protesters enact the moral shock strategy to induce identification with the animals.



In both uses of the moral shock strategy, what is intriguing persuasively is that these instances flip PETA’s common practice of using anthropomorphism, or “the attribution of human characteristics to nonhuman entities” to create feelings of connection between humans and animals (American Psychological Association, 2007, p. 59). In PETA campaigns, animals look frightened or seek comfort from one another in the face of human experimentation or exploitation, with anthropomorphism helping “invite people—whether they currently support animal rights or not—to confront their assumptions about human and animal identities” (Atkins-Sayre, 2010, p. 318). Here, PETA uses zoomorphism, instead, to turn humans *into* animals. This strategy creates empathy by vividly seeing a human in animal like conditions, encouraging people to become involved on their behalf. By using the strategy to draw a comparison between human bodies in confined, uncomfortable spaces (the tank, the bathtub) to animal bodies in similarly problematic places (animal enclosures at the parks), the audience may be inclined to support PETA’s calls for boycotting SeaWorld or protest the float’s inclusion in the Macy’s

parades.

Embodied moral shock thus complements PETA's more text-based appeals. In news coverage about the Rose Bowl and Macy's Thanksgiving parades, PETA is quoted about the plight of the orcas' treatment: "No family event should celebrate a corporation that tears orca babies away from their loving mothers and forces them to live in chlorinated tanks that are barely big enough for them to turn around in" (as cited in Romero, 2013, para. 8). Witnessing the cramped, cold actors, however, invites a comparison in a way that is difficult to achieve through words alone. These performances are also more newsworthy than news releases in today's visually-oriented news cycles (Stokes & Atkins-Sayre, 2018). PETA couples moral shock with pranking strategies in ways that also encourage action and capture media attention.

Pranking at the parades and the parks

If PETA's embodied moral shock strategies jolt audiences into envisioning themselves as animals, the group relies on the direct-action pranking strategy in a different way, trying to point out the absurdity of SeaWorld's business model that relies on using animals for entertainment. Pranking seeks to disrupt SeaWorld's commercial cultural practices and persuasive power by deploying "rhetorical jujitsu" and "playfully and provocatively folding existing cultural forms in on themselves" rather than simply negating and opposing SeaWorld's business (Harold, 2004, p. 191). Indeed, although corporate rhetorical strategies tend to be rational, linear, and systematic to move toward the end goal of persuasion, pranking operates more like "viruses in an ecosystem," playfully using disruption to turn corporate messages against themselves (Harold, 2004, pp. 191-192). Through several uses of pranking, PETA capitalizes on this zany, atypical, playful, and hard to predict form of nondiscursive activism to boost the success of its SeaWorld of Hurt campaign.

Unlike the moral shock strategy examples, which rely on creating compassion and disgust, there is typically an element of the ridiculous in PETA's embodied pranking activities. In 2014, to protest a Christmas Celebration event at SeaWorld San Antonio, a group of PETA activists dressed up like Santas to draw a distinction between the joy of the holiday season and the conditions endured by SeaWorld's animals (PETA, 2014d). Similarly, in 2015, a robed and bearded Moses led a protest outside SeaWorld Orlando in advance of Praise Wave, a Christian Music Festival, with protestors riffing off Christian scripture to instruct parkgoers and park officials alike: "SeaWorld: Let God's Orcas Go!" PETA frequently deploys costumes as part of its activism, but in pranking, the costumes are less about moral shock's connecting human and animal as they are about making SeaWorld's practices seem absurd, or at least questionable. As Harold (2004) explains about the uses of the strategy, "Pranksters can be seen as comedians," working to "see what responses they can provoke" (p. 194). Certainly, visiting a park or seeing a news report about these antics encourages different thinking.

Thus, throughout 2016 to the present, PETA complemented its text-based advocacy and traditional protest measures with pranking to shift thinking about SeaWorld's business paradigm. In 2016, for example, prior to Halloween PETA set up an orca cemetery outside SeaWorld

Orlando, with 38 headstones marking each orca that had died at SeaWorld (See Figure 4). The headstones feature the names and ages of the orcas, drawing a connection to the human experience, but with the absurdity of having a graveyard for a marine animal helping to make the group's point in a novel way (PETA, 2016).

Figure 4. Pranking at SeaWorld Orlando



The group is pulling one over on the corporation in the traditional understanding of pranking but relies on another meaning of the word, wrinkling, folding, and reconfiguring the object of the cemetery (Harold, 2004). Thus, when the group deploys the same strategy in other locations in the United States and in the United Kingdom, each time featuring the headstones, memorial flowers, and mourners dressed in black that audiences associate with funerals, these pranks wrinkle or challenge audiences' understanding of the meaning of the parks. Through the funerals and memorials, rather than serving as a place of celebration of animals, SeaWorld becomes viewed as their killer.

By 2017, PETA again found novel ways to prank the corporation. In early May, the group hung 39 inflatable dead orcas from seven overpasses along Los Angeles highway 101 in response to a campaign targeting Los Angeles residents to protest the San Diego park. Coupled with banners reading "SeaWorld's Watch: 39 and Counting" Friday rush hour traffic could not avoid looking at the inflatables hanging from ropes at regular intervals. According to PETA,

“Hundreds of drivers honked, pumped their fists, and gave participants a thumb’s up” in support of the message, with the spectacle also inviting local television news coverage on San Diego’s CBS and Fox news stations (PETA, 2017a, para. 2). Later that year, protestors staged at exits along Los Angeles area interstate I-5 also held the inflatable dead orcas, creating a miles-long demonstration against the park’s campaign to draw in area residents. Similar to its tactic of associating a gravestone with an actual orca that died at the park, each inflatable orca carried a sign reading, “I died at SeaWorld.” Later in the year, the group continued its dramatic pranking methods, holding a die-in in front of the Los Angeles County Museum of Art where 39 painted protestors simultaneously pretended to fall dead to again signify the orcas that died at SeaWorld. Similarly, in August, dying orca painted protestors beached themselves in front of SeaWorld Aquatica in Orlando, with a sister protest in San Diego resulting in five arrests there (PETA, 2017b). During the height of tourist season, pranking allowed the activist group to steal the “limelight of the mainstream organizations or leaders they target,” interrupting the story it tells about its business and challenging its meaning (Harold, 2004, p. 198). It is important to emphasize, however, that these tactics do not just potentially influence people visiting the parks and witnessing these activities. That is, these pranks all invite media attention, ensuring that the group’s message is not limited to those with direct exposure to them. As Harold (2004) explains about the strategy in general, pranking’s “comedic posture and creation of spectacular images” helps get the group’s message “into newspapers and television broadcasts” (p. 201). Following the installation of the orca cemetery at the San Antonio SeaWorld park, for example, an article from the *Sacramento Current* provided this summary of the prank:

There's a new orca attraction at SeaWorld today: A cemetery. Animal rights group PETA placed more than twenty gravestones in front of the theme park's main entrance Tuesday afternoon, each one representing an orca that died in captivity at a SeaWorld park. (as cited in Zielinski, 2016, para. 1)

When media discuss these pranks’ symbolic meanings, they help challenge SeaWorld’s interpretation and positioning of its business. This work is supported by a third strategy.

(Rhetorically) forming new perceptions about animals

Key to understanding PETA’s embodied direct-action techniques is the notion of rhetorical form, or types of argument that encourage or discourage audience discussion, deliberation, and specific types of responses (Burke, 1931). Forms create an appetite in the mind of a participant and then subsequently satisfy that need. For example, attorneys are expected to make a case for someone’s guilt or innocence in a court case. Similarly, bodice ripper romance novels operate by promising the reader a tale of passionate romance, fulfilling expectations with exotic locales and mysterious characters. Although some rhetorical forms provide specific types of evidence or follow specific steps to fulfill audience expectations, others are more symbolic, with persuaders seeking to draw attention to “how rhetoric appears—its shape, structure, and style—rather than what is said” (Foust, Pason, & Rogness, 2017, p. 11). In this more symbolic use, for example, the refusal of

vegans to wear leather “implicates their political arguments without saying a word” (Foust et al., 2017, p. 12). As a result, repeated forms of PETA's embodied direct action (dressing as orcas, for example) are about rhetorical style, helping people think in new ways by noticing the connection between the symbolic (an activist's orca costume) and the material (the actual size of the orca tank). Each time audiences see PETA activists dressed as orcas or when they watch a PETA protest (outside a park, during a parade), they engage with qualitative progressive rhetorical form. That is, they experience a non-logical, non-linear embodied argument that helps create a mood, turns up the volume on the group's claims, and offers a specific quality (drama, parody, and the like). As Burke (1931) summarizes about successful rhetorical uses of qualitative form, “We are put into a state of mind which another state of mind can appropriately follow” (p. 125). Through PETA's costumes and performances, then, empathy and identification may be nurtured, followed by action.

Indeed, a primary way that PETA deploys the body as a type of rhetorical form is through its direct-action protest strategy. The role of protest has been examined a bit in public relations, but how the body is used as a type of rhetorical form that creates expectations among audiences needs more attention. Take, for example, the body's performance in a video provided by PETA of the 2014 Rose Bowl Parade Protest. As parade viewers take in a colorful float called Sea of Surprises, which features orcas frolicking in an open sea, 100 protestors dressed mostly in black descend upon the parade route, skirting route barricades to sit down peacefully in front of the float (PETA, 2014b). The protestors run in and sit down calmly, even though they are dragged off quickly by law enforcement, others rushing in as more are taken away. The protestors do not speak and remain calm, their grim presence standing out against the bright colors of the float and the happy atmosphere of the crowd. Since the silent protestors are dragged away by loud officers, appearing somewhat menacing in their riot helmets, this use of rhetorical form casts them as martyrs for their cause. The audience then hears a cheer go up from one side of the crowd, though it is difficult to know whether the audience is cheering for the parade, the officers, or the protestors, disrupting the message of SeaWorld's float. As Burke (1931) explains, writers use text forms to keep the reader predicting what will come next, and each time PETA deploys this rhetorical protest form, it keeps bystanders engaged and curious, wanting to see what happens. Although the protest form fulfills viewers' expectations of drama and antagonism, it is enhanced through the protestors' bodies working in tandem with the written messages they brandish. Silently holding black and white Boycott SeaWorld signs and wearing black t-shirts with white lettering, Sea World Hurts Orcas, their bodies help create cognitive dissonance about the company. This process of self-marking the body helps forge a public identity for the movement and shares its position with broader audiences, cultivating awareness that may increase membership (Goodnow, 2006; Penny, 2012).

Analysis of video from the Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade later in the year shows how the protest form continues to develop the perception that SeaWorld's handling of its orcas is problematic. There, the protestors follow the same rhetorical form, jumping over parade route barricades, brandishing the same signs, and wearing the same outfits. This time, one protestor is

able to walk along in front of the SeaWorld float for a minute or so, again calmly, silently holding the sign reading SeaWorld Hurts Orcas (PETA, 2014c). Again, between rough handling by the officers and the distinction from the happy, festive environment, the protestors use qualitative form to create expectations that a particular quality will follow each time SeaWorld tries to make claims about its business and the orcas' status within it (Campbell & Burkholder, 1997). It is important to note that the group follows a similar formula each time. Its protestors are always in black attire adorned with white anti-SeaWorld messages, using this form to make an argument about the orca issue, and the written messages contained in the form do not shift either, repeating Boycott SeaWorld and SeaWorld hurts Orcas. PETA follows the form strategy to the letter, the repeated message conflicting with SeaWorld's framing of its activities as conservation or education. PETA counters SeaWorld's positive messages by creating a grim mood, mournful tone, and empathetic quality through the protest form that circulates through media channels. For example, the *New York Times* said in its coverage, "Coming to the Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade: the float fracas" (as cited in Newman, 2013, para. 1). *National Geographic* similarly primed readers for deployment of the protest form:

In today's polarized political era, even a holiday parade meant for kids can become a heated battleground of opposing views. This week, activists from two animal-rights camps objected to Macy's upcoming Thanksgiving Day Parade in New York City. (as cited in Howard, 2013, para. 1)

What this coverage does is set up an expectation among viewers and readers that is then satisfied through viewing the protest on social media or in televised broadcasts.

Finally, the notion of *where* PETA deploys this strategy is significant in terms of rhetorical form. It matters rhetorically that PETA forwards frequently its messages in SeaWorld's *own* place(s). From a materialist perspective, place, too, is rhetorical, such that the "very place in which a protest occurs is a rhetorical performance that is part of the message of the movement" (Middleton, Senda Cook, & Endres, 2011, p. 258). That PETA holds protests at the site of the parks or during parades sends a particular rhetorical message, with place, "not just discourse *about* places," functioning rhetorically in three ways: by building on a place's pre-existing meaning (parks as containment, not conservation), by temporarily reconstructing the meaning of particular place to challenge perceptions (park funerals) and by repeating reconstructions over time (parades, protests) (Middleton, Senda Cook, & Endres, 2011, p. 259). If audiences regularly witness protestors disrupting parades or orca shows and see orcas sitting on the baggage claim areas in airports near SeaWorld parks, the meaning of the place of SeaWorld changes through these repeated forms (See Figure 5).

Figure 5. Deploying rhetorical form at the airport.



Implications and conclusion

Although its moral shock, pranking, and rhetorical form strategies are different from its text-based work, PETA's efforts help cultivate negative sentiment and put pressure on SeaWorld and associated companies, providing insight into the broader world of PIC campaigns. Generating outrage through moral shock, highlighting the ridiculous in some of SeaWorld's business practices through pranking, and deploying direct action through the body as a type of rhetorical form helped compel SeaWorld into responding to PETA in ways that are easy for the critic to discern and for future PIC practitioners to adapt. In terms of PETA's observable response to the particular examples of embodied activism discussed in this essay, for instance, SeaWorld's floats were not included in the 2015, 2016, and 2017 Macy's Thanksgiving parades and were omitted in the 2015, 2016, 2017, and 2018 Tournament of Roses parades. The impact of these strategies builds gradually. In 2013, despite initial activism from PETA, Macy's kept the SeaWorld float in, noting in a statement that it did not take part in political debate or social commentary. Later,

however, it quietly removed the float and it has not rejoined the roster. SeaWorld also responds directly to PETA's direct action, typically calling it an extremist organization and emphasizing its version of its ongoing commitment to animals, often arguing, "The real advocates for animals are the trainers, aviculturists, animal-care staff and veterinarians at SeaWorld," attempting to stand by its conservation and education positioning (PETA takes dramatic stand against SeaWorld, 2014, para. 7, 8). This defensive stance is featured in almost every example of available news coverage (e.g., Li, 2013; Romero, 2013; Wallace, 2016).

Although there is evidence of direct outcomes resulting from PETA's embodied strategies, it is more important for PIC scholars/practitioners to view them as more arrows in PETA's quiver. That is, all of PETA's direct-action strategies deployed in the wake of *Blackfish*'s release help capture audience attention and spread the anti-SeaWorld message, making it difficult for the company to use its defensive posture surrounding the orca issue successfully. As one observer put it, "Blackfish provided a huge boost" for the organization but maintained "part of the reason it had such an impact is because PETA knew how to leverage it" (McEwen, 2014, para. 15). The variety of activism PETA deployed surrounding the film, for example, saw the company experiencing a 400% spike in negative social media mentions, a 13% increase in negative commentary, and an 84% collapse in profits (Neate, 2015). By 2015, a *Consumerist* poll ranked SeaWorld as the third most-hated business in America (as cited in Geiling, 2015). By 2016, the company hired a new CEO. By the end of 2017, the company had lost another \$200 million, another CEO stepped down, and attendance continued to decline (Smith, 2018). The company also laid off 350 workers in 2017, attempting other cost cutting and revenue generating strategies, including opening an orca-free park in Abu Dhabi (Smith, 2018). In 2018, still another CEO stepped down. These indicators suggest that the public is increasingly dissatisfied with the company and the interpretation of its business, yet SeaWorld recently continued its defensive posture:

The truth is that our animals, including our orcas, live healthy and thriving lives in our care. SeaWorld is the nation's true animal welfare organization, and the real advocates for animals are our trainers, aviculturists, animal-care staff and veterinarians. We will continue to focus our energy and resources on real issues and helping animals. (PETA protest demands SeaWorld release its orcas, 2018, para. 5)

Despite Sea World's insistence that it is focusing on the real issues, PETA's efforts to rain on SeaWorld's parade can be linked to changes in the company's business model and operation, including removing orca shows and eliminating breeding practices (Smith, 2018). PETA celebrated helping close the Ringling Bros. Circus in 2017. PETA now holds 339 activist shares in SeaWorld, meaning that its ability to influence corporate behavior through its rights as a partial owner is likely. PETA may not be solely responsible for SeaWorld's woes, but it is hard to deny that its activism surrounding *Blackfish* "culminated in dramatic corporate policy change" (Chattoo, 2017, para. 13). PETA's direct action rhetorically supports and enhances its efforts to shift perceptions and corporate policies in hard to ignore experiential ways.

The ongoing attention keeping results of PETA's direct-action strategies thus suggest that

one implication this research offers is that embodied forms of public relations activism allow advocates to locate common elements of humanity to create identification with their message and the whales. Embodied forms of activism help audiences question, more viscerally, animal welfare and treatment. There may be generational, cultural, and even political divides that PETA must consider when advocating on behalf of orcas. Although baby boomers grew up watching "Flipper," millennials grew up watching "Free Willy" where an orca is released from captivity, and PETA is able to locate those elements of SeaWorld that appeal broadly to people's emotions and humanity, especially with audiences that by now are likely to have been exposed to pro-animal rights arguments. Embodied strategies specialize in creating connection, something that developing technology will only enhance. PETA's new virtual reality experience, I, Orca, for instance, which uses "wireless Google virtual reality goggles to immerse participants in a world where they can swim freely in the ocean with an orca family," finds participants swearing off SeaWorld, with some demanding a refund for prior visits (PETA, 2015, para. 1). Like other uses of embodied direct action, the ability to experience life as an orca through virtual reality goggles provides more opportunities to create identification with PETA's message than by words alone. PIC practitioners can incorporate elements of these strategies into their work to similarly bolster identification with particular issues and causes.

The second implication this paper offers is that PIC scholarship should increasingly consider the visual nature of embodied and other strategies, examining them not only for their symbolic power but also for how they complement and spread an advocacy message through new media. Accounting for visual communication is of increasing importance, because "the promotional work of organizations and activists unfolds in a social context where public expectations are high, but attention is scarce and audiences can be fickle" (Edwards, 2018, p. 107). The attention-getting, visually embodied direct-action strategies feed into this environment where "PETA identifies multiple pressure points where it can make its influence felt, then bombards its target audiences from every possible angle" (McEwen, 2014, para. 19). Direct action helps in PETA's efforts to reach "different target audiences through the media each prefers. Some people respond to video, others are energized through live protests, others read their local newspapers" (McEwen, 2014, para. 19). What PETA and others are adept at doing is using one channel to influence interest in another, which has been noted as a key hallmark of contemporary activism (Rovisco & Veneti, 2017). Embodied direct action is a crucial part of driving attention to PETA's other channels and messages. And, as Madden, Janoske, Winkler, and Harpole (2018) pointed out, social media use intersects with these other activist strategies, providing the "opportunity and support for continuing to develop and galvanize that group repeatedly over time" (p. 182). This study thus points to the need to explore the interplay between the visual nature of direct action and its online circulation. Recent scholarship explores how and why some events and images are rendered visible online and gain momentum, while others are not (Rovisco & Veneti, 2017). So, although the symbolic meaning of visually embodied direct action discussed here is important, future research should consider how it is represented and shared in new media (DeLuca, Lawson, & Sun, 2012; Milner, 2013; Rovisco & Veneti, 2017).

A third implication this study presents is that we need to draw on a variety of disciplines to better understand social change and activism within PIC to further develop this burgeoning field itself. Johnston (2017) challenges the public relations discipline to more fully engage with the public interest concept, noting that it “has failed to attract the consideration of public relations scholars in the same way it has other disciplines” (p. 5). She argues that public relations’ ongoing privileging of empiricism and positivism makes wrestling with the “more complicated, values-based nature” of the public interest a difficult, but important, challenge in helping understanding the functioning of contemporary society. Although Johnston (2017) draws on the disciplines of anthropology, law, and public policy to develop the public interest field, this essay shows how rhetorical studies offer a variety of insights into this values-based nature of social change, particularly with its focus on crucial parts of PIC campaigns: messages, audiences, and persuasion. There are at least six threads to SeaWorld’s SeaWorld of Hurt campaign, including website content, litigation, direct action, social media, shareholder activism, and media attention (McEwan, 2014). This essay has explored one of these in detail, direct action, for its ability to complement the other threads and construct a web that has ensnared SeaWorld since 2013. Explaining how PIC campaigns use these strategies in other contexts will develop our understanding of the social change process and how communicators achieve success in today’s complex advocacy landscape.

References

- American Psychiatric Association. (2000). *Diagnostic and statistical manual of mental disorders* (4th ed. text revision). Washington, DC: Author.
- American Psychological Association. (2007). *APA dictionary of psychology*. Washington, DC: Author.
- Atkins-Sayre, W. (2010). Articulating identity: People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals and the animal/human divide. *Western Journal of Communication, 74*, 309–328.
doi:10.1080/10570311003767183
- Benecke, D. R., & Oksiutycz, A. (2015). Changing conversation and dialogue through LeadSA: An example of public relations activism in South Africa. *Public Relations Review, 41*, 816–824. doi:10.1016/j.pubrev.2015.06.003
- Biesecker, B. A., & Lucaites, J. L. (Eds.). (2009). *Rhetoric, materiality, and politics*. New York, NY: Peter Lang.
- Blair, C. (1999). Contemporary U.S. memorial sites as exemplars of rhetoric’s materiality. In J. Selzer & S. Crowley (Eds.). *Rhetorical bodies* (pp. 16–57). Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press.
- Bomey, N. (2018, February 27). SeaWorld CEO suddenly out as theme park attendance wanes. *USA Today*. Retrieved from <https://www.usatoday.com/story/money/2018/02/27/seaworld-ceo-joel-manby/376136002/>

- Boyd, J. & VanSlette, S. H. (2009). Outlaw discourse as postmodern public relations. In R.L. Heath, E.L. Toth, & D. Waymer, D. (Eds.), *Rhetorical and critical approaches to public relations II* (pp. 328–342.). New York, NY: Routledge.
- Brunner, B. (2017). Community, engagement, and democracy: Re-envisioning public relations and public interest communications through civic professionalism. *Journal of Public Interest Communications, 1*(1), 45-56. doi:10.32473/jpic.v1.i1.p45
- Burke, K. (1931). *Counterstatement*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.
- Butterworth, M. L. (2008). “Katie was not only a girl, she was terrible”: Katie Hnida, body rhetoric, and football at the University of Colorado. *Communication Studies, 59*(3), 259-273. doi:10.1080/10510970802257705
- Cadwalladr, C. (2013, March 30). Peta's Ingrid Newkirk: Making the fury fly. *The Guardian*. Retrieved from <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2013/mar/31/peta-ingrid-newkirk-making-fur-fly>
- Campbell, K. K. & Burkholder, T. R. (1997). *Critiques of contemporary rhetoric*. New York, NY: Wadsworth Publishing Company.
- Chattoo, C. B. (2017). Anatomy of ‘The Blackfish Effect.’ *Huffington Post*. Retrieved from www.huffingtonpost.com/caty-borum-chattoo/anatomy-of-the-Blackfish-_b_9511932.html
- Christiano, A. (2017). Foreword: Building the field of public interest communications. *Journal of Public Interest Communications, 1*(1), 4-15. doi:10.32473/jpic.v1.i1.p4
- Cisneros, J. (2008). (Re)Making the immigrant body: Rhetoric, materiality, and social protest in 'La Gran Marcha' of March 25, 2006. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the National Communication Association, 94th Annual Convention, San Diego, CA.
- Condit, C. (1990). *Defending abortion rhetoric: Communication social change*. Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press.
- Crable, R. E. & Vibbert, S. L. (1985). Managing issues and influencing public policy. *Public Relations Review, 11*, 3–16.
- DeLuca, K. (1999a). *Image politics: The new rhetoric of environmental activism*. New York, NY: The Guilford Press.
- DeLuca, K. (1999b). Unruly arguments: The body rhetoric of EarthFirst!, Act Up, and Queer Nation. *Argumentation and Advocacy, 36*, 9-21. doi:10.1080/00028533.1999.11951634
- DeLuca, K., Lawson, S. & Sun, Y. (2012). Occupy Wall Street on the public screens of social media: Many framings of the birth of a protest movement. *Communication, Culture & Critique, 5*, 483–509. doi:10.1111/j.1753-9137.2012.01141.x
- Downes, E. (2017). “Doing Good” scholarship: Considerations for building positive social change through the emerging field of public interest communications. *Journal of Public Interest Communications, 1*(1), 31-44. doi:10.32473/jpic.v1.i1.p31
- Duhon, S., Ellison, K. & Ragas, M. (2016). A whale of a problem: A strategic communication analysis of SeaWorld Entertainment’s multi-year Blackfish crisis. *Case Studies in Strategic Communication, 5*, 3–37.

- Edwards, L. (2018). Framing, rhetoric and culture jamming in public relations. *Public Relations Inquiry*, 7(2), 107-109. doi:10.1177/2046147X18775139
- Fenske, M. (2016). Performing publics. *Review of Communication*, 16, 98-100. doi:10.1080/15358593.2016.1183908
- Fessmann, J. (2017). Conceptual foundations of public interest communications. *Journal of Public Interest Communications*, 1(1), 16-30. doi:10.32473/jpic.v1.i1.p16
- Flood, M. (2017). The Wiz Live! and body rhetoric: The complexity of increasing diversity in a whitewashed entertainment industry. *Ohio Communication Journal*, 55, 109-118.
- Foss, S. K. (1996). *Rhetorical criticism: Exploration and practice*. Prospect Heights, IL: Waveland.
- Foust, C., Pason, A., & Rogness, K. (2017). *What democracy looks like: The rhetoric of social movements and counterpublics*. Tuscaloosa, AL: University of Alabama Press.
- Friedersdorf, C. (2014, March 12). The fantastical vision for the original SeaWorld. *The Atlantic*. Retrieved from <https://www.theatlantic.com/business/archive/2014/03/the-fantastical-vision-for-the-original-seaworld/284561/>
- Geiling, N. (2015, November 9). SeaWorld San Diego ending controversial killer whale shows. *Think Progress*. Retrieved from <https://thinkprogress.org/seaworld-san-diego-ending-controversial-killer-whale-shows-c0a18bffbb2b/>
- Goodnow, P. (2006). On Black Panthers, blue ribbons, and peace signs: The function of symbols in social campaigns. *Visual Communication Quarterly*, 13(3), 166–179. doi:10.1207/s15551407vcq1303_4
- Grunig, J. E., & Grunig, L. A. (1992). *Excellence in public relations and communication management*. Hillsdale, NJ: L. Erlbaum Associates.
- Harold, C. (2004). Pranking rhetoric: “Culture jamming” as media activism. *Critical Studies in Media Communication*, 21(3), 189-211. doi:10.1080/0739318042000212693
- Heath, R. L. & Waymer, D. (2009). Rhetorical and critical approaches to public relations II. Activist public relations and the paradox of the positive: A case study of Frederick Douglass’ ‘Fourth of July Address’. In R. Heath, E. Toth & D. Waymer (Eds.), *Rhetorical and Critical Approaches to Public Relations II* (pp. 195–215). New York, NY: SAGE.
- Henderson, A. (2005). Activism in ‘paradise’: Identity management in a public relations campaign against genetic engineering. *Journal of Public Relations Research*, 17(2), 117–137. doi:10.1207/s1532754xjpr1702_4
- Hess, A. (2011). Critical-rhetorical ethnography: Rethinking the place and process of rhetoric. *Communication Studies*, 62(2), 127-152. doi:10.1080/10510974.2011.529750
- Hon, L. (2017). Editor’s essay. *Journal of Public Interest Communications*, 1(1), 1-3. doi:10.32473/jpic.v1.i1
- Howard, B. C. (2013, November 22). Animal-rights activists take air out of Macy’s Thanksgiving parade. *National Geographic*. Retrieved from <https://news.nationalgeographic.com/news/2013/11/131121-macys-thanksgiving-day-parade-protests-animal-rights-seaworld-joan-jett/>

- Ihlen, Ø. (2004). Norwegian hydroelectric power: Testing a heuristic for analyzing symbolic strategies and resources. *Public Relations Review*, 30, 217-223.
doi:10.1016/j.pubrev.2004.02.001
- Jasper, J. M. & Poulsen, J. D. (1995). Recruiting strangers and friends: Moral shocks and social networks in animal rights and anti-nuclear protests. *Social Problems*, 42, 493-512.
- Johnston, J. (2017). The public interest: A new way of thinking for public relations? *Public Relations Inquiry*, 6(1), 5-22. doi:10.1177/2046147X16644006
- Lacewing, M. (2008). *Philosophy for AS*. Abingdon, UK: Routledge.
- Landau, J. (2014). From in loco parentis to Student-Citizens: The 1964 Berkeley Protests as De tournament. *Communication Quarterly*, 62(5), 589-606.
doi:10.1080/01463373.2014.949384
- Li, L. (2013, November 20). PETA & angry Alec Baldwin go after SeaWorld's Thanksgiving day float. Retrieved from <https://observer.com/2013/11/peta-angry-alec-baldwin-go-after-seaworlds-thanksgiving-day-float/>
- Madden, S., Janoske, M., Winkler, R., and Harpole, Z. (2018). Who loves consent? Social media and the culture jamming of Victoria's Secret. *Public Relations Inquiry*, 7(2), 171-186.
doi:10.1177/2046147X18764216
- McEwan, B. (2014, June 3). PETA vs. SeaWorld: The creative tactics and tech that drive PETA's SeaWorld Campaign. *Nonprofit Quarterly*. Retrieved from <https://nonprofitquarterly.org/2014/06/03/peta-vs-seaworld-the-creative-tactics-and-tech-that-drive-peta-s-seaworld-campaign/>
- Middleton, M., Senda-Cook, S. & Endres, D. (2011). Articulating rhetorical field methods: Challenges and tensions. *Western Journal of Communication*, 75, 386-406.
doi:10.1080/10570314.2011.586969
- Milner, R. (2013). Pop polyvocality: Internet memes, public participation, and the Occupy Wall Street movement. *International Journal of Communication*, 7, 2357-2390.
- Neate, R. (2015) SeaWorld sees profits plunge 84% as customers desert controversial park. *The Guardian*. Retrieved from <http://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2015/aug/06/seaworld-profits-plunge-customers>
- Newman, A. (2013, November 18). New York Today: Parade Protests. *New York Times*. Retrieved from <https://cityroom.blogs.nytimes.com/2013/11/18/new-york-today-parade-protests/>
- Olson, K. & Goodnight, T. (1994). Entanglements of consumption, cruelty, privacy, and fashion: The social controversy over fur. *Quarterly Journal of Speech*, 80 (3), 249-276.
doi:10.1080/00335639409384072
- Penny, J. (2012). Visible identities, visual rhetoric: The self-labeled body as a popular platform for political persuasion. *International Journal of Communication*, 6, 2318-2336.
- PETA. (2013, October 30). 'Orcas' rain on SeaWorld's parade. Retrieved from <http://www.peta.org>

- PETA. (2014a, November 19). Naked 'orcas' to protest Macy's SeaWorld float. Retrieved from <https://www.peta.org>
- PETA. (2014b, January 1). *PETA protests SeaWorld float at 2014 Rose parade* [Video file]. Retrieved from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kt3u1N66VyA>
- PETA. (2014c, December 4). *SeaWorld protestors jump barricade at Macy's parade* [Video file]. Retrieved from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7ZBvkmyNNs0>
- PETA. (2014d, December 5). SeaWorld 'Christmas Celebration' to draw PETA protest. Retrieved from <https://www.peta.org>
- PETA. (2015, May 27). Go underwater with PETA's new virtual reality experience, "I, orca." Retrieved from <https://www.peta.org/blog/go-underwater-with-petas-new-virtual-reality-experience-i-orca/>
- PETA. (2016, October 26). From tanks to tombstones: PETA to set up chilling orca 'cemetery' at SeaWorld Orlando. Retrieved from <https://www.peta.org>
- PETA. (2017a, July 6). 39 'orcas' to hold 'die-in' in call to stay away from SeaWorld. PETA.org. Retrieved from <https://www.peta.org>
- PETA. (2017b, August 2). Happening now: Dying 'orcas' 'beached' at SeaWorld's Aquatica. Retrieved from <https://www.peta.org>
- PETA protest demands SeaWorld release its orcas. (2018, March 5). Retrieved from <http://www.thecwsandiego.com/story/37642949/peta-protest-demands-seaworld-release-its-orcas>
- PETA takes dramatic stand against SeaWorld's Rose Parade float, leading to 19 arrests. (2014, January 2). Retrieved from https://www.huffingtonpost.com/2014/01/02/peta-seaworld-rose-parade_n_4532159.html
- Rice, J. E. (2008). The new "new:." Making a case for critical affect studies. *Quarterly Journal of Speech*, 94, 200–212. doi:10.1080/00335630801975434
- Romero, D. (2013, December 31). Rose Parade's SeaWorld Float will be focus of PETA protest. *LA Weekly*. Retrieved from <http://www.laweekly.com/news/rose-parades-seaworld-float-will-be-focus-of-peta-protest-4255052>
- Rovisco, M. & Veneti, A. (2017). Picturing protest: visuality, visibility and the public sphere. *Visual Communication*, 16(3), 271–277. doi:10.1177/1470357217704633
- Sample, I. (2008, December 11). Stress and lack of exercise are killing elephants, zoos warned. *The Guardian*. Retrieved from <https://www.theguardian.com/science/2008/dec/12/elephants-animal-welfare>
- Sangiovanni, M. & Bondaroff, T. (2014). From advocacy to confrontation: Direct enforcement by environmental NGOs. *International Studies Quarterly*, 58(2), 348-361. doi:10.1111/isqu.12132
- SeaWorld (n.d.). What we do. Retrieved from <https://seaworldentertainment.com/en/what-we-do/welcome>
- Selzer, J., & Crowley, S. (Eds.), (1999). *Rhetorical bodies*. Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press.

- Smith, A. (2018, 27 February). SeaWorld CEO steps down as attendance slides. *CNN Money*. Retrieved from <http://money.cnn.com/2018/02/27/news/companies/seaworld-ceo-joel-manby-steps-down/index.html>
- Smith, M. F. (2005). Activism. In R.L Heath (Ed.), *The Sage handbook of public relations*. (395-407). Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE.
- Smith, M. F. & Ferguson, D. P. (2010). Activism 2.0. In R.L. Heath (Ed.), *The Sage handbook of public relations* (2nd edition). (395-407). Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE.
- Stokes, A. Q. (2013). You are what you eat: Slow Food USA's constitutive public relations. *Journal of Public Relations Research*, 25(1), 68-90. doi:10.1080/1062726X.2013.739102
- Stokes, A. Q. & Atkins-Sayre, W. (2018). PETA, rhetorical fracture, and the power of digital activism. *Public Relations Inquiry*, 7(2), 149-170. doi:10.1177/2046147X18770216
- Stokes, A. Q. & Rubin, D. (2010). Activism and the limits of symmetry: The public relations battle between Colorado GASP and Philip Morris. *Journal of Public Relations Research* 22(1), 26-48. doi:10.1080/10627260903150268
- Wallace, B. (2016, May 4). SeaWorld breached: Score one for the cetaceans. *New York Magazine*. Retrieved from <http://nymag.com/daily/intelligencer/2016/04/seaworld-tilikum-orcas.html>
- Weaver, C. K. (2010). Dressing for battle in the new global economy: Putting power, identity, and discourse into public relations theory. *Management Communication Quarterly*, 15, 279-288. doi:10.1177/0893318901152007
- Weaver, C. K. (2013). Mothers, bodies, and breasts: Organizing strategies and tactics in women's activism. In C. Daymon & Demetrious, K. (Eds.), *Gender and public relations: Critical perspectives on voice, image and identity*. London, UK: Routledge.
- Zielinski, A. (2016, October 25). New Halloween attraction at SeaWorld: An orca graveyard. *Sacramento Current*. Retrieved from <https://www.sacurrent.com/the-daily/archives/2016/10/25/new-halloween-attraction-at-seaworld-an-orca-graveyard>