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Rivers, Nathaniel A.; Derksen, Maarten

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Ecologies of Deception in Psychology and Rhetoric

Nathaniel A. Rivers & Maarten Derksen

This article explores deception through the lenses of rhetorical theory and experimental social psychology, thus performing an important interdisciplinary gesture. It argues that deception is emergent in experimental conditions as it likewise is in rhetorical encounters. In so doing, it builds toward an understanding of human agency outside the bounds of the subject/object split. Examining work on rhetorical ecologies and ambience on the one hand, and experimental social psychology on the other, the article argues that deception is not something that one person does to another, but rather is an emergent phenomenon within moments of encounter, whether they be rhetorical interactions or psychological experiments.

Keywords: Agency; Deception; Ecology; Kairos; Ambience; Psychology; Rachel Dolezal

A common sense understanding of deception breaks the world into those with agency and those without it. To deceive others is to manipulate them, to lead them astray without their knowledge or consent. Liars turn the other into a passive object, an instrument of their design, keeping all the agency for themselves. But deception is not merely a form of manipulation, it is also a requirement for it. To successfully manipulate others, they must be deceived into thinking they are in control. Manipulation needs to be hidden to be effective.

Of course, this telling is deceptively simple. We use it to prime readers, making them perhaps all too willing to accept our coming complication of deception and agency. We believe this telling is not so much incorrect (deceptive manipulation really happens) as it is limited. In this article, then, we deploy themes from recent rhetorical theory to critique this view of deception and agency. The standard telling of deception (definitions of which range from lying, false promises, or otherwise masking intent) is predicated upon an assumption about human agency that was perhaps formulated

Nathaniel A. Rivers is Associate Professor in the Department of English at Saint Louis University. Maarten Derksen is Assistant Professor of Theory & History of Psychology at the University of Groningen. The authors would like to thank Thomas Rickert, Casey Boyle, Barbara Biesecker, Hillary Palmer, and two anonymous reviewers for their feedback on the manuscript as it developed. Correspondence to: Nathaniel A. Rivers, Department of English at Saint Louis University, 3800 Lindell Blvd., Saint Louis, MO 63108, USA. Email: nrivers1@slu.edu

most succinctly by Mark Wildermuth, working with Thomas Hobbes, who argued that “all things” are “classified either as Agents ‘which hath the power to move’ or Patients ‘which hath power to be moved.’”¹ Building on the work of Jennifer Edbauer Rice and Thomas Rickert, we propose instead to see deception, manipulation, and the division between agents and patients as properties that emerge within rhetorical interaction, which in turn is part of an ambience of practices and settings that leak into it and supply the materials to construct a rhetorical effect. We then illustrate this alternative conception of deception and manipulation through a reading of the so-called priming effect in experimental social psychology in which priming plays two roles: as a case study for the ecological, ambient model we employ, but also as an intensification of these models in attending to the complexity that emerges from the tight controls of psychological experiments. We show how priming, which at first blush appears to be straightforward manipulation-through-deception in the traditional sense, can be seen in an ecological and ambient perspective. We then zoom in on a recent controversy in priming research to indicate how such a perspective might be employed in analyzing public rhetoric in a variety of contexts. Through this reading of priming and the place of deception therein, we hope to engage deception “without the agent as the decisive horizon for rhetorical agency,”² folding deception back upon a general understanding of agency that we, with Rickert, will describe as participatory. Just as subjects participate in priming experiments—and thus emerge ambiently as agents—so too do we, outside the bounds of the experiment, continually exert ambient agency through our participation in rhetorical ecologies. We conclude by thinking through the implications of this position for vital, rhetorical work of deliberation by briefly examining the case of Rachel Dolezal, who has been accused of falsely representing herself as African American.

A complication of agency is nothing new under the sun. Gorgias, in the *Encomium of Helen*, distributes agency across the gods, fate, force, love, and speech.³ Rhetorical theory has long toyed with agency and experimental psychology has long examined it. What we think is new is the joint venture itself. Working through rhetoric and psychology side-by-side, we attempt to both add to the ongoing study of agency and to perform an interdisciplinary understanding of something central to the human experience. As psychologist Brent Dean Robbins argues, “post-Cartesian criticisms of modern psychology [which takes human individuals as discrete or autonomous] [...] are likely to discover the possibility of a historical retrieval of a *human* science psychology as the partial re-emergence of the lost [at least to some psychologists, that is] rhetorical tradition.”⁴

Likewise, within rhetoric there has been a turn to psychology and other sciences. In their exploration of material rhetorics, Debra Hawhee and Cory Holding argue that psychology and chemistry are “relevant disciplinary approaches” that have much to say about the work of rhetoric. Indeed, while they see their work as related to areas like the rhetoric of science, they write, “we also mean to replace the ‘of’ in rhetoric of science with a bi-directional ‘and.’”⁵ And so we have here not the rhetoric of psychology or the psychology of rhetoric, but rhetoric *and* psychology. While we certainly attend to how psychological research is communicated, it is the articulation of this

“and” that the present article focuses on most. This interdisciplinary *and* allows disciplines to move through and intensify one other.

Deception and Agency

The link and tension between deception and agency is a venerable theme in the history of rhetoric, recurring time and again in handbooks. The same, we argue, can be said of experimental social psychology, where deception is seen and enacted as a means to an end: to produce discernible and measurable data about human behavior. In the case of both rhetoric and social psychology, artifice is best hidden because otherwise it will be resisted. Persuasion works best if people are not aware of the means of persuasion, or, better yet, of the fact that they are being persuaded. To move people, let them think they move themselves; the most effective persuaders are hidden persuaders. The history of rhetoric offers many examples of such maxims. Aristotle advised the orator to give his language “a ‘foreign air’”—“for men admire what is remote”⁶—but he added that “those who practise this artifice must conceal it [. . .] for that which is natural persuades, but the artificial does not. For men become suspicious of one whom they think to be laying a trap for them, as they are of mixed wines.”⁷ Likewise, Lysias was admired for the way he hid the rhetorical techniques he employed in the speeches he wrote,⁸ and Quintilian saw the “highest expression” of the orator’s art in “the concealment of its existence.”⁹ Other famous expressions of this principle of covert artifice include Cicero’s “diligens negligentia” of the ideal orator,¹⁰ which in turn inspired Castiglione’s “sprezzatura,”¹¹ the apparently effortless grace of the ideal courtier.

It is important to note that such advice does not represent the only kind of rhetoric these authors proposed.¹² Cicero did not recommend the “plain style” for all occasions. Often it was better, even expected, to put one’s artifice in full view. Advice for concealment sometimes came with the further recommendation that the concealment itself be visible. Sprezzatura was all the more impressive when it was obvious.¹³ Covert persuasion is only one form of rhetoric, but an influential one. “Most rhetoricians from Aristotle on [. . .] urge that art must be concealed by nature.”¹⁴ Carolyn Miller, in her discussion of the disciplinary implications and history of both concealing and revealing the art of rhetoric, writes, “Rhetoric, it seems, must deny itself to succeed.”¹⁵

Concealed rhetoric is effective because deception allows discourse to become technology—that at least is the idea. Unhindered by the victim’s consciousness and reason, well-crafted discourse can influence the mind mechanically. Deception allows rhetoric to become what its opponents denounce it as being: manipulation. Rhetoric, here, is “an insidious art that knows how, in matters of moment, to move men like machines.”¹⁶ Brian Vickers mocks Immanuel Kant for conceding “total effectiveness” to the orator, and creating “an unbelievable picture of man as an automaton driven by the orator.”¹⁷ But the fear Kant manifests still lingers. Eugene Garver, in a 1994 special issue of *Rhetoric Society Quarterly* on deception, illustrates the challenges of discussing deception: “Whenever I give a talk about [Aristotle’s] Rhetoric, audiences ask about

rhetorical deception and fraud, about the morality of rhetoric, and about how to tell a good rhetorician from a sophist.”¹⁸ What audiences seem to want, Garver argues, is for rhetoric to serve “as an equivalent to defensive driving” that will help to make them more “conscious of hidden persuasion.”¹⁹ For many, then, deception is first and foremost problematic because it violates or negates the autonomy of the agent. That is, the deceiver not only deceives but also takes possession of the audience’s agency, rendering them victims of his or her discourse. How can we discover and defend against malicious intent? How can we drive to avoid being driven?

One common element across these responses to both rhetoric and deception, which have been linked since at least Plato, is the assemblage of agency and deception. This assemblage primes both the popular imagination and the study of rhetoric—both rhetoricians and the lay public have held this technological ideal of “persuasive communication,” or fear that one day it might become reality. Deception is linked with agency inasmuch as our field’s understanding of it is often anchored in intent and autonomy. When it comes to “assessing lies and deception in communication,”²⁰ then, George E. Yoos writes (in the same *RSQ* special issue), “what is important is the ill will in the intent to obfuscate the intent of the communication to certain audiences. It is the ill will in the hypocrisy of masking with pious intent a real intent to have someone infer from what is said something misleading or false.”²¹ Deception is only discernible so long as intent is discernible. Miller, in her treatment of concealment in rhetoric, argues that the “principle of rhetorical concealment” is a “dissimulation of intentions” as well as “the conviction that the means by which intentions are concealed must also remain undetectable.”²² Rhetorical concealment thus involves a double dissimulation: of artifice and intention. Any theory of concealment or deception flows logically from assumptions about agency.

Indeed, much the same can be said of deception’s supposed opposite: sincerity. As Robert Terrill writes, “Sincerity might inform and characterize a heartfelt effort at persuasion, as when the intended effect of discourse is fully aligned with the authentic commitments of the speaker.”²³ Terrill proceeds to problematize sincerity in much the same way we wish to complicate deception. A common sense notion of sincerity “is recognized as the style of speech most closely associated with authenticity because it presents the self as whole or undivided.”²⁴ Michael Leff also sees this flat notion of sincerity at work in critiques of Cicero, whose oratory, according to Mary Rosner, was frequently “called inconsistent and insincere and manipulative.”²⁵ Anticipating our own ambient reading of deception as well as its implications for the rhetorical work of deliberation, Leff argues instead for an enlarged perspective that enables a critic to “respond not just to the technical artistry in the text but also to the ethical and political concerns that animate it.”²⁶ These treatments of sincerity in both Terrill and Leff resonate with our approach to deception in terms of ambience to which we now turn.

Ambient Ecologies

In addition to being grounded in intent, the connection between deception and agency as it is commonly conceived frequently hinges on a conception of agency as the

possession of individuals. In deception, one individual takes away agency from another, but only by concealing her own. Several rhetorical scholars have recently critiqued this idea of agency, and we build on their proposals in developing an ecological and ambient model of deception and agency.

Agency is, in large part, the center of the debate between Dilip Goankar, Michael Leff, and others. A major component of Goankar's critique, which generally concerns the universalizing of rhetoric as hermeneutic, centers on agency, which Goankar sees as treated as too static and strategic. In the "humanist paradigm" Goankar writes, "The agency of rhetoric is always reducible to the conscious and strategic thinking of the rhetor."²⁷ This "agent-centered model of intentional persuasion,"²⁸ which Goankar argues is "still dominant but under trial,"²⁹ sees rhetoric as the strategic means by which rhetors are enabled "to act upon an audience," instilling attitudes and inciting action.³⁰ Goankar argues that this model "marginalizes structures that govern human agency: language, the unconscious, and capital."³¹ Leff, as we note above, defends the humanist paradigm, arguing that this tradition does in fact acknowledge such structures.

More recently, Carolyn Miller has used the thought experiment of a system for the automated assessment of writing and speaking assignments to discuss rhetorical agency. Poststructuralist and posthumanist theories have "dispersed" agency, she notes, and since "traditional rhetoric requires the possibility for influence that agency entails," rhetoric is in crisis.³² She proposes "that we think of agency as the *kinetic energy* of rhetorical performance."³³ It is "a property of the rhetorical event or performance itself. Agency thus could not exist prior to or as a result of the evanescent act."³⁴ Similarly, Carl Herndl and Adela Licona argue that the humanist legacy makes two mistakes: "Agency is tied to the concrete individual" and "agency is theorized as a thing, something agents *have*, *possess*, or *gain*."³⁵ Christian Lundberg and Joshua Gunn likewise want to sever the apparently seamless linkage between agency and agents. The "understanding of agency as a possession," they argue, "is central to reproducing the humanist model of the intentional agent who owns the capacity to make agential choices."³⁶ Instead, they propose the Ouija board as a model for thinking about rhetorical agency, because it fosters "an uncertain posture towards the flows of agency and agents implied by an open disposition toward the *séance*."³⁷

It is important to note, however, that breaking the connection between agency and the actor has unsettling consequences for related concepts such as deception. Marilyn Cooper, reacting to Miller's kinetic energy metaphor, points out that it casts doubt on attributions of responsibility. She agrees that rhetorical persuasion is the work of both speakers and listeners, but insists "deeds are always done by someone, and replacing the doer of the action, the agent, with an amorphous force like kinetic energy [as in Miller] leaves us with no basis for assigning responsibility for actions."³⁸ Lundberg and Gunn also acknowledge that their rejection of "the equivocation of agent and agency" necessitates a new look at responsibility, including the issue of deception:³⁹ "if we are unable to determine the seat of agency, then are we robbed of our ability to locate lying and to censure deception?"⁴⁰

Jennifer Edbauer and Thomas Rickert offer unique yet complementary ways of pursuing the move away from the possession metaphor of agency that are particularly well suited to both rhetoric and social psychology. In thinking about rhetoric and experimental social psychology with respect to agency and deception, we have found it helpful to draw a parallel between the experimental condition and the rhetorical situation. We do this because they have been seen in similar ways: as discrete contexts comprised of distinct elements. This view, which still has some purchase in rhetorical theory, imagines the rhetorical situation to be comprised of a speaker, an audience, a text, and a context. "Situation" is a key term in rhetoric (i.e., the rhetorical situation) that attempts to define the contours of any particular rhetorical act (e.g., a speech, an act of legislation, or a scientific treatise). In brief, both the etymology and methodology surrounding "situation" suggest a discrete container for rhetorical action. That is, any rhetorical act takes place as a series of discrete elements in a fixed site with well-defined borders (sounding here very much like a laboratory experiment). "Situation," however, has recently been rethought by a number of rhetorical theorists, and what has emerged is a more ecological model.⁴¹

We follow Edbauer's critique of "situation," for which she presents "ecology" as an alternative. Edbauer takes issue with "situation" by first tracing its etymology, "which resonate[s] with our definitions for location, site, and place."⁴² She then focuses on the root word *situs* because it implies "a bordered, fixed space-location."⁴³ "Situation" thus treats space as a static container for rhetorical action. An ecological model, on the other hand, presents the elements of any rhetorical situation as necessarily bleeding out into a wider flux of social and material relations. It likewise sees any rhetorical act as necessarily contaminated by other elements of this flux. Ecology allows for the treatment of rhetorical action as constituted by a range of discursive and nondiscursive forces and to see ecologies as themselves rhetorically constituted. As we will show, a similar shift from situation to ecology is taking place in social psychology, even though it is not always recognized as such.

Whereas Edbauer articulates ecology in terms of rhetorical analysis and public distribution, Thomas Rickert marks the ambient in terms of agency. Ambience—that which surrounds, encompasses, encircles, or environs⁴⁴—has been the subject of research in robotics, music, and, now, rhetorical theory. Rickert's discussion of ambience speaks directly to the question of agency that concerns us here. His project can be understood as a refiguring of rhetoric beyond the subject/object split, in which he sees the rhetorical tradition deeply rooted. He writes, "the characteristics of intelligence and control that we tend to assign to a creator-subject are better considered as ambient."⁴⁵ That is, "the writer is not merely *in* a situation [. . .]. From the ambient perspective, the writer is written by the environment."⁴⁶ Importantly, Rickert argues that the environment is not simply an external element added to a subject: "ambience is inseparable from the person in the environment that gives rise to ambience. There is no person who can then be tacked onto the environment."⁴⁷ Indeed, Rickert goes so far as to argue that "an ambient rhetoric integrates the world itself as a necessary part of rhetorical work, making rhetorical theory as

much about the world around us as it is about human being.”⁴⁸ The quality of this integration, its nature, is that to which *ambience* attends.

Rickert’s reworking of Mark C. Taylor’s complexity theory from a metaphor of networks to one of *ambience* highlights the distinctiveness of the concept of *ambience* and works to complicate human agency and subjectivity in helpful ways. Rickert prefers *ambience* to *network* because the metaphor of the network keeps in place, with the idea of nodes that exist prior to the connection, what Taylor himself describes as “nodular subjectivity.”⁴⁹ “Like the metaphor of the network, *ambience* connotes distribution, coadaptation, and emergence, but it adds an emphasis to the constitutive role of the overall, blended environment that the network does not.”⁵⁰ *Ambience*, for Rickert, is more physical and immersive, and rather than seeing language and environment as linked (in a network), Rickert sees them as enmeshed and, thus, as “mutually entangled and constitutive.”⁵¹ This enmeshed, blended relationship would include humans as well, in what Rickert, borrowing from Taylor, calls an “incarnational logic.”⁵² Rickert provides a uniquely rhetorical way of encountering questions of deception, manipulation, control, and, thus, agency. Rickert is interested in a position other than the middle between the poles of using and being used, controlling and being controlled, and the implicit understanding of agency and subjectivity built into the notion of the middle.

To further distinguish *ambience*, Rickert employs the notion of *kairos*. *Kairos* can be contrasted with *chronos*. Whereas *chronos* is a quantitative understanding of time—how much or how long—*kairos* is a qualitative understanding of time—is this moment opportune? Rickert is quick to point out that in addition to its temporal aspects, *kairos* can also be understood spatially: “the earliest uses of the word *kairos* were grounded in a sense of place, particularly the body and more particularly a special or critical place.”⁵³ Akin to *ambience*, *kairos* suggests that action emerges from within opportune environments in addition to moments in time. Herndl and Licona also suggest that agency works in terms of *kairos*, which “implies the moment in time when speaking and acting is opportune.”⁵⁴ Furthermore, and in line with Rickert, they argue, “Agency cannot be *seized*.”⁵⁵ While often understood in terms of *carpe diem* (seize the day), *kairos* can just as easily be seen as seizing us, willing us to act and calling us to speak, and thus as constitutive of the conditions for human agency and action. “*Kairos*,” Rickert nevertheless argues, “is not an objective force overcoming disempowered, passive subjects.”⁵⁶ “[*K*]airos wills us and *logos* [language] speaks us, but only insofar as we are also taking part in them.”⁵⁷ Troubling the subject/object split and the poles of using and being used, Rickert provides us with a way of seeing Hobbes’s moving and being moved as two sides of the same coin, and, thus, sets the stage and the moment to reimagine deception—as a synecdoche for agency—as emergent. But as we see and will see again, not only emergent. Rickert writes of his own creative process, “All these things combine in ways difficult to process or analyze, yet there they are, the conditions of possibility giving rise to these worlds appearing now, words, of course, I never exactly ‘planned.’”⁵⁸ *Kairos* both attends to emergence and reminds us that emergence is beyond the strict control of any willing subject.

This emergent complexity, then, helps us to articulate what we mean by an ambient ecology. This phrase should evoke a tension, as *ecology* and *ambience* are not synonymous but complementary. An ecology is a cut made in the name of inquiry. Cuts can be made at any level—a city, a classroom, a kitchen, the human digestive tract. These cuts, to borrow from Karen Barad describing experiments in physics, enact “a *local* resolution *within* the phenomenon of the inherent ontological indeterminacy.”⁵⁹ Ambience, then, marks the irreducible and indeterminate whole from and in which such cuts are made. As Rickert writes in his formulation of an ambient understanding of context, which likewise draws from Barad’s work, “context is transsubjective in how it exceeds and contours the assemblages within which it emerges.”⁶⁰ Rickert borrows an example from Barad that here works both to mark precisely the important difference between ecology and ambience and to frame our discussion of priming in the following section. Barad describes an experiment conducted by Otto Stern and Walther Gerlach in 1922 designed to “provide support for quantum theory against classical physics.”⁶¹ The experiment fails but thereafter was fine-tuned. Rickert writes:

the fine-tuning was itself only made possible by the fact that one of the experimenters, Stern, a male assistant professor with a low salary, smoked cheap cigars. The cheap cigar produced sulfurous smoke, which proved crucial in generating the experiment’s results. However, following the cigar’s affects led to further the further realization that the experiment did not, in fact, prove the reality of space quantization but rather electron spin.⁶²

Rickert (and Barad) use the smoke to argue both that “the construction of an experiment explicitly and implicitly draws boundaries” and that “these boundaries are inseparable from an awareness of context, since context contours how the various elements show up for us.”⁶³ Understanding the cigar smoke as part of the experiment, as part of this particular ecology, begs the question: “At what point does it become understood as integral to the experiment, even if it was an aleatory element uncontrolled for in the original conception? What allows for the emergence of that judgment?”⁶⁴ According to Rickert, judgment is ambient, emerging between and among actors. The cuts we make in defining an ecology are not made by disconnected, autonomous agents. As Barad puts it, “‘Humans’ do not simply assemble different apparatuses for satisfying particular knowledge projects but are themselves specific local parts of the world’s ongoing configuration.”⁶⁵ When we write of ambient ecologies, then, we mean not to collapse them, but to use them in concert to intensify the complex entanglement we wish to make of deception.

Social psychology’s experimental as well as disciplinary confrontations with deception reinforce the complexity of deception. But more than merely reinforcing it, the following case study on priming specifically gestures toward what a disciplinary-wide reassessment of deception looks like and suggests how those invested in ecological and ambient rhetoric might move forward. Indeed, the ways in which experimental social psychologists have attempted to operationalize deception in experimental conditions (within, for instance, studies of priming) throws into sharp relief the complexities pointed to by scholars such as Edbauer and Rickert, whose own case studies are

necessarily fuzzy. That is to say, the rigor of an experiment designed explicitly to control complexity magnifies the complexity that persistently tends to elude our grasp.

Priming

Deception is a much-studied subject in experimental social psychology. Much of this research focuses on lie detection because of its obvious applicability and popular appeal.⁶⁶ As in rhetorical theory, “deception” has proven hard for experimental social psychologists to define, but the intention behind the lie is considered essential. Liars intentionally manipulate their verbal and nonverbal behavior in order to manipulate their victims. Manipulation through deception is also a basic method of experimental social psychology: experimental control requires misleading the “subject.” Participants in experiments are rarely fully informed of the true nature of the study. Subjects who know what the experiment is about may try to act differently than expected, or, equally unwanted, try to be a “good subject” and do what they think the experimenter wants. Therefore, the experimenter presents the subject with a cover story or the experiment’s hypothesis is left vague. Subsequently, false feedback or other forms of deception may be part of the experimental “manipulation”—the latter a technical term. Experimental control is the goal in much social psychology, and deception an important tool. With attention side-tracked by the cover story and other ruses, the lawfulness of human nature can show itself. This experimental paradigm is often supported by a dualist view of human nature that distinguishes between powerful, automatic, unconscious processes and relatively weak, rational, conscious processes that attempt to control them.⁶⁷ A recent example is so-called behavioral priming and automaticity research, noteworthy for the fact that it accords almost no agency to conscious processes. Interestingly, it also provides the means to complicate the connected concepts of deception and agency.

Imagine the following scenario: You are a New York University undergraduate and you have volunteered for a psychological experiment. You have been welcomed by the experimenter, who sat you down at a desk and explained that you are to complete a test that is part of a language proficiency experiment. Each test item consists of five words, and you are asked to construct a grammatically correct four-word sentence out of them as quickly as possible. After completing the test, you are debriefed: the experimenter tells you about the research that you have participated in and thanks you for your cooperation. You leave the room and walk to the elevator. Along the way, you pass a student who is sitting in a chair by another office, apparently waiting for an appointment. While you wait for the elevator, the experimenter catches up with you. S/he asks you whether you had noticed that many words in the test you just took were related to “the elderly stereotype,” and you answer that you had not. The experimenter goes on to explain that the experiment was not in fact about language proficiency but about unconscious, situational influences on behavior. The student you passed in the hall measured how long it took you to walk the 9.75 meters from the office door to that broad strip of silver carpet tape over there, and the hypothesis of the experiment is that subjects primed with words like

“Florida,” “forgetful” and “bitter” would, on average, walk slower than others. The experimenter hands you a written version of this explanation and thanks you again.

In the article in which they describe this experiment, Bargh, Chen, and Burrows tie it to “a fundamental existential question”: “The extent to which one’s own thought and behavior are or are not under one’s own intentional control.”⁶⁸ Priming and automaticity research pictures a world of Agents and Patients, people in control and people under control. Attention is focused firmly on the latter, on the fact that behavior is often, mostly, or almost entirely (the modifier varies) triggered automatically, and how this can be demonstrated. Priming researchers take the figure of the automaton very seriously. The effects they demonstrate in the laboratory are taken to be representative of the “automaticity of everyday life.”⁶⁹ Priming is ubiquitous.

The effects of priming manipulations are surprising, even spectacular. People whose “elderly stereotype” had been primed, walked the 9.75 m about a second slower than others on average; priming with a briefcase makes people more competitive than priming them with a backpack;⁷⁰ priming the professor stereotype boosts performance at Trivial Pursuit.⁷¹ Ignoring for the moment the discussion among social psychologists about the reality of priming effects (more about this below), we focus our critical gaze at the circumstances of their production and at the way they are typically interpreted in terms of deception, manipulation, and control. We start our inspection by shifting attention from the people supposedly under control to those ostensibly in control.

Although control appears to reside with the experimenter in this and many other setups in experimental social psychology, the experimenter is forced into this position by the possibility of resistance from the subject.⁷² The elaborate architecture of the experiment is a measure of the control that the subject might otherwise exercise. Because the subject will likely resist manipulation if s/he realizes what is going on, the experimenter is required to introduce deception into the experiment. In this way, priming experiments are no different from the majority of social psychological experiments, albeit the emphasis on deception and manipulation more pronounced. Fake debriefings and elaborate arrangements such as the student in the hall are reminiscent of a bygone era in social psychology. The kind of extensive debriefing to check whether or not the subject had realized what the experiment was about is also less common in other fields.

Thus, although the point of automaticity research is that behavior is automatic, it takes a good deal of effort on the part of the experimenter to produce such “mindless” behavior.⁷³ Exactly how much effort is required is itself an object of study: the Trivial Pursuit experiment, for example, distinguished itself because the subjects were fully conscious of the prime—they were asked to think of professors (or secretaries in one of the control conditions), and write down a list of their distinctive characteristics. Subjects did not grasp the relation between this part of the experiment and the quiz they took later on (this, again, was carefully checked in the debriefing), but the priming stimulus itself was conscious. Total automaticity is the goal of this field of research, but it has so far not been achieved.

A priming experiment is thus not an interaction between a controlling, autonomous experimenter and a passive, controlled automaton. It is the experimental environment—the muddle of the meeting of two people in a specific ecology—that produces relative autonomy and automaticity. The experiment achieves a particular, momentary distribution of agency, rather than being the product of Hobbesian Agents and Patients. Experimenters, of course, set up the conditions of the experiment: they have control over the laboratory. In the lab, they exert a considerable amount of agency at the start (although, as our argument suggests, this agency emerges ambiently across the lab and its surrounding environs). Participants subject themselves to this regime the moment they sign the informed consent form. They await instructions and, within the boundaries of research ethics, agree to carry them out, actively surrendering control. If they are a freshman in a psychology class (as is typically the case in psychological research), they will likely have at least an inkling that deception may be part of the proceedings. The experiment then transforms the agencies of experimenters and subjects into the priming effect with its particular distribution of autonomy and automaticity. It is, to use Andrew Pickering's term, a mangle consisting of people (experimenter, accomplices, subject) and material (a room, a desk, a computer, an elevator) from which emerges a particular constellation of agencies.⁷⁴ The experimental effect is the result of a “dialectic of resistance and accommodation”⁷⁵ between subjects and experimenters, rather than being the product of the experimenter's total control.⁷⁶

Secondly, the experimental effect and its distribution of agency are “temporally emergent”⁷⁷—they are kairotic. A priming experiment is the provisional endpoint of a history of assemblages, each a way of producing relative autonomy and automaticity. At the forefront of research, the control of the experimenter and the automaticity of the participants are yet to be established—one does not know whether a new experiment will work. If it does, the field (rather than the individual researcher) has produced a new way of distributing agency and achieving priming. Science is a social undertaking, not the work of individuals, despite how pervasive the *topos* of the solitary genius has been in Western culture.⁷⁸ This is particularly true of the field of priming and automaticity research, which has all the markings of a scientific “bandwagon” sweeping through social psychology,⁷⁹ and thus is the ambience from which experimenter agency, in part, emerges. It offers Ph.D. students and their supervisors a “standardized package”⁸⁰ of theory and experimental technique that has a record of reliably producing interesting results, thus offering some insurance against the inherent uncertainty of scientific research. The agency that researchers exert, their power in the lab, is contingent upon their accepting this package. When critics bemoan the “automaticity juggernaut,” they criticize the implied passivity of both subjects and experimenters.⁸¹ Again, as with *kairos* and *logos*, researchers are not mastered by this package but instead exert agency by participating in it. Priming research is itself enacted in and through a disciplinary ambience.

Turning from the history of priming to its environment, we want to propose an ambient reading of priming. A priming experiment is not a closed rhetorical situation, but is inevitably contaminated and productively seeded by elements of its

environment. An obvious element in the ecology of priming is the stereotypes that get primed. When psychologists succeed in raising participants' creativity level by priming them with the Apple logo, for example, they put to use a stereotype that was meticulously crafted by the marketing division of Apple.⁸² The participants in the experiments conducted by Fitzsimons *et al.* carry this "brand personality based on the ideas of nonconformity, innovation, and creativity" with them into the lab.⁸³ The same goes for the behavior that results from the priming: participants bring the association between stereotype and behavior to the experiment; the psychologist does not create it. The experiment can only "activate" what is in the "behavioral repertoire" of the participants, and is associated with the stereotype.⁸⁴

But the ambience of priming may also be a contaminating factor. Bargh and Chartrand advise planning the experimental procedures carefully so as to avoid a task that becomes an unwanted source of priming effects.⁸⁵ For example, if participants are required to first fill in a questionnaire to determine their personality or their attitude towards a particular topic, the questionnaire may itself become a prime. Bargh and Chartrand do not mention the possibility of contamination from outside the experiment, but that risk is inherent in the paradigm. A recent theoretical model proposes that "(a)utomatic actions result from the integration of all the currently active representations, including the primed concept, knowledge about the self and the target person of the action, and other aspects of the situation."⁸⁶ In other words, the subject's behavior is the result of the interplay of a multitude of psychological forces ("active representations"), and the experimental prime is only one—the others originate outside the lab. These others may be the result of priming since priming does not operate only in the laboratory. Such extraneous primes (pre-priming the subject, so to speak) may overwhelm the effect of the experimental prime or even may confound the experiment if they become associated for whatever reason with one experimental condition rather than another. Care must therefore be taken to shield the experimental situation such that external factors do not become *de facto* experimental conditions. The presence of contamination or pre-priming suggests to us that an experimental condition is but a part of a wider ambience in which people find themselves, and that their agency and behavior emerges as a result of their participation in it.⁸⁷ The ecology of any particular experiment emerges from out of ambience.

Situationism and the Muddle

Priming is relevant to our effort to complicate agency and deception because it itself is an ambient phenomenon. All experiments are ecologies cut from an ambient whole, but what makes priming special is that in these particular instances the experiment is *about* how behavior occurs in an ambience of subtle influences. Psychologists, however, conceptualize priming effects not in terms of ambience and emergence but instead in terms of situation and variables—controllable, measurable, and discreet. On the one hand, then, priming researchers are committed to a straightforward methodology of experimental control, supplemented by deception. By carefully designing the setting, the stimulus, the props, and the information delivered, the experimenter

affects the subject's behavior. On the other hand, the theory of priming and automaticity points in the opposite direction. With its emphasis on the power of the situation and its skepticism towards the Cartesian conscious, thinking, and willing subject, automaticity research appears to undermine its own claims to be in control of the experimental situation and the subject. Psychologists resolve the paradox by partitioning agency, attributing control to themselves and priming to their subjects.

A recent controversy about Bargh *et al.*'s classic experiment, however, makes visible the emergent nature of the distribution of agency in priming experiments, pointing the way toward possible applications of a rhetorical-psychological understanding of agency and deception as ambient and ecological. When a team of researchers led by Stéphane Doyen tried to replicate the original study, they found they could not reproduce the claimed effect: despite following Bargh *et al.*'s procedure as closely as possible, their subjects did not walk slower after having their elderly stereotype activated.⁸⁸ Searching for an explanation, they decided to test the hypothesis that Bargh *et al.*'s result had been an effect of the experimenters' expectations.⁸⁹ And indeed, when Doyen *et al.* manipulated the expectations of half their experimenters with a "one hour briefing and persuasion session"⁹⁰ and made them aware of which experimental condition (prime or no prime) the subjects were in, those subjects did walk slower when primed. Since walking speed was measured using infrared cameras, the outcome was due not to measuring errors by the experimenters. Doyen *et al.* concluded that the experimenters' expectations were crucial to creating "a favorable context to the behavioral expression of the prime."⁹¹ Apparently, the experiments' subtle nonverbal cues combined with the stimulus words had been enough to produce the behavioral effect. Not surprisingly, Bargh has disputed this conclusion, accusing Doyen *et al.* of incompetence and insisting that his own experimenters could not have been aware of which condition their subjects were in.⁹² In the ensuing debate, however, most social psychologists have reserved judgment until further replication studies can be performed.⁹³

In our view, this twist in priming research confirms the need to dissolve the dichotomy of agency and passivity. Our long-standing interest in parsing the complex ecological mixture of control and passivity leaves unexamined the larger, ambient whole from which rhetorical effects emerge. The key, as we argue above, lies in reconsidering the notion of the "situation." Priming and automaticity theory is an instance of psychological "situationism," the position that consciousness and behavior are determined by the "power and subtlety of situational influences"⁹⁴ rather than by personality or rational thought. Reflecting on Doyen *et al.*'s replication study, Klein *et al.* emphasize not only that the situation is paramount in everyday social behavior, but that the psychological experiment itself is a social situation, of which the experimenter is an integral part.⁹⁵ Understanding what happens in the experiment requires we broaden the view to include the laboratory (and everything and everyone in it). Experimental situations are shot through with confounding variables. Indeed, despite the fact that 'the experiment' has long been about securing boundaries and controlling the variables to be measured, an experiment is not simply a container that shapes the contained. The experiment itself is an emergent phenomenon constituted by the

movements and actions of its participants. Thus, answers to the key questions of automaticity theory—concerning human motivation and agency—are necessarily more complicated than either automation or autonomy. The very conditions and results of experiments suggest that humans—both participants and experimenters alike—are neither pure automatons nor completely autonomous.

The experiment is not a continuum with “control,” “deception,” and “autonomy” at one end and “reception,” “manipulation,” and “automaton” at the other. It is, rather, a muddle from which emerge the very conditions of deception and reception, of control and manipulation, of autonomy and automation. As Edbauer argues, “The exigence [or cause for action] is not properly located in any element of the model. Instead, what we dub *exigence* is more like a shorthand way of describing a series of events.”⁹⁶ The “control” of the experimenter, the “passivity” of the subject, and the manipulation and deception by the former of the latter are properties and effects generated by the ambience of the laboratory—a complex of materialities, techniques, knowledges, instruments, convictions and expectations.

As the controversy over behavioral priming continues to unfold, additional failed attempts at replication are pushing the field to specify the “precise contexts and conditions required to produce thoughts and behaviors from unconscious priming cues.”⁹⁷ So far, however, these efforts have only underscored the difficulty of controlling priming. Several new theories spell out these contexts and conditions, but one commentator has already expressed fears that “a full theory of behavioral priming [may] have to include thousands of moderators.”⁹⁸ Barry Schwartz has taken the final step, arguing that priming processes are so sensitive to “context” (what we prefer to term ambience) that in priming “anything might matter.”⁹⁹ If that is so, experimental control is always already inadequate to its aim.

In the trials and tribulations of experimental social psychology resides an important lesson for rhetorical criticism. Firstly, the question of who primes who or who deceives who must be answered ecologically—a context in which priming, deception and agency ambiently emerge. Even more, any determination of what takes place in a priming process will always remain contested. Priming emerges in a muddle that may never be cleared up absolutely. Any lingering hope that social psychology could bring clarity to the ecological and ambient nature of persuasion is vain, and this has implications for inquiry into and deliberation about deception, to which we now (re)turn.

Implications: *What Else?*

We are not interested in a version of deception that gives back agency to the audience or, for that matter, to participants in psychological experiments. Such a version maintains agency as a possession. We are instead interested in an ambient agency widely distributed in ecological flux. The deceptive act and the deceptive agent are constituted within the rhetorical moment (and the experimental condition). Because deception is a result rather than a starting point, we endorse an understanding of agency as ecological and ambient.

In turning to the implications of such an endorsement, we return to Leff's desire for the critic to "respond not just to the technical artistry in the text but also the ethical and political concerns that animate it."¹⁰⁰ This animating ambience is where we would like to expend our critical energies with respect to agency in both rhetoric and experimental social psychology. We hope this interdisciplinary effort makes possible another way to critically approach instances of deception in the public sphere. As Leff and the other scholars note, our tendency has been to examine deception as the (strategic) act rather than an emergent effect within rhetorical interaction. "We need to view the persuasion process," Leff argues, "both as an instrument of influence and as a generative form that reflects and shapes the character of those of who use it."¹⁰¹ Analysis and critique ought, therefore, to begin with an exploration of that ambience as "generative." The work of critique ought not be the re-simulation of intentions (to recall Carolyn Miller's treatment of concealment) but, to borrow from Edbauer, a testimony to the "affective channels of rhetorical communication and operation."¹⁰² The critic traces the process of persuasion and the emergence of agency, deception, and manipulation. And as we have pointed out in regard to the priming discussion, the critic can only do so from within this process. There is no privileged position for a critic to occupy.

What then of deliberation in an ambient ecology? How can we decide and adjudicate in the muddle? As political scientist Jane Bennett argues, "In a world where agency is distributed, a hesitant attitude toward assigning blame becomes a virtue."¹⁰³ With her, then, we are not suggesting that rhetoricians and psychologists alike simply accept deception, but, rather, that we move with care, patience, and caution, since the rush to judgment—like the drive to divvy up Agents and Patients—leaves unaccounted for the complex of agents that collectively produce effects. The *kind* of inquiry we recommend is one that is hospitable to rather than defensive against the plurality of actors and factors involved in the generation of effects. Inquiry as a form of *copia*, we might say: the generation of possibilities.¹⁰⁴ Importantly, this kind of generative inquiry also comports with an ethic of deliberation: the gathering of a robust assembly for the purpose of judgment.

A recent and potentially consequential example of deception that calls for copious inquiry and patient deliberation is the case of Rachel Dolezal, an academic and activist who, until recently, served as president of the Spokane, Washington chapter of the NAACP. Many have argued that Ms. Dolezal deceptively represented herself as African American, and much ink has been spent in dissecting and debunking this case, the details of which continue to emerge. Now how might rhetorical critics best approach this case? First and foremost, we would attend to the participatory agency at work across the deception. Instead of, for instance, measuring words against intent (or reality) or simply compiling the ways Dolezal explicitly constructed her deception, we would identify and track elements of the larger ecology out of which such a deception emerged as well as the ambient dimensions that bleed in and out of it. And we would begin not by placing ourselves at a distance from the scene but, instead, by implicating ourselves in it: to fold, as the word suggests, ourselves into the deception. However, such folding in would not be under the auspices of agents and patients, since, as noted above, such a binary will not hold. We agree with Jenny Rice that inquiry is most productively

understood as “an endless survey of these networks within which a crisis is embedded.”¹⁰⁵ Inquiry, that is, takes place from within and never from without; it, too, is ecological and ambient. Furthermore, and complicating both the rhetorical critic’s desire for clarity and the experimenter’s desire for conclusions, Rice writes, “Instead of seeking resolution, the inquiring subject seeks to uncover the composition of a given scene (What are the relations that give it shape and form?).”¹⁰⁶

So, what were/are the relations that gave/give the case of Rachel Dolezal its form? In an *LA Times* Op-Ed, Fredrik deBoer argues, “Rachel Dolezal was inevitable. We made her.”¹⁰⁷ While perhaps too strongly worded (admittedly, it is an Op-Ed), this claim rings true from within the participatory, emergent model of agency and deception we are advocating. Acknowledging that “in material terms, the condition of the average black American has actually gotten worse in the last 35 years, post-racial rhetoric to the contrary,” deBoer asks, why “would someone try to occupy that position of oppression?”¹⁰⁸ His answer attends to the ecology in which Dolezal moved: “political activism and academia.”¹⁰⁹ deBoer points to two social norms that he sees as having “created direct incentives for Dolezal’s behavior.”¹¹⁰ First, a “dubious and problematic” “notion of black people generally and black women specifically as inherently more authentic, more wise, or more connected to nature,” notions deBoer argues are “alive and well in many academic and activist contexts” and may have drawn Dolezal in.¹¹¹ Second, “she might not have attempted such a deception,” deBoer argues, “if not for another aspect of academic and activist culture: the notion that race does not equate to skin color, complexion or other physiological markers.”¹¹² Outside the conventions of an Op-Ed, such claims would of course be elaborated. What is of interest to us is the critical posture of attending to the ecology of the deception in terms of larger, ambient dynamics such as social norms. Moving beyond “the agent as the decisive horizon for rhetorical agency,”¹¹³ a more complex picture emerges.

Beyond this horizon, several news pieces put Dolezal’s deception in an ambient context by seeing it in the tradition of “passing.” In an interview in *The Atlantic*, Baz Dreisinger, author of *Near Black: White-to-Black Passing in American Culture*, says “There has always been within White America a kind of fetishizing of blackness, and of things associated with black culture, with music, and so on.”¹¹⁴ Echoing deBoer’s argument, Dreisinger further remarks, “Anytime you’re talking about the cultural domain, it certainly can be advantageous to pass as black.”¹¹⁵ Again, there is a larger history to which Dolezal is heir.¹¹⁶ Intensely connected to the history of passing is Dolezal’s particular performance of “blackness,” which has also been remarked upon in popular media. In a playful but equally insightful piece titled “Rachel Dolezal Definitely Nailed the Hair, I’ll Give Her That,” Kara Brown writes, “Black people come in all shades, but clearly Rachel knew: Those spray tans would not be enough. The hair—she had to nail the hair—and boy did she. This is not to say that all black people have the exact same hair texture. However, it would be a lie to say that hair texture doesn’t play a role in determining a person’s background.”¹¹⁷ What follows is an annotated photo essay of the various hairstyles Dolezal donned as she represented herself as African American. For instance, Brown writes, riffing on the logic of passing, “That’s how you know she was in this

for real. This woman went out and got arguably the blackest hairstyle possible and then multiplied it by five.”¹¹⁸ Particularly compelling for our purposes, Brown concludes, “Look, I can be mad at Rachel Dolezal about a lot of things, but I can’t be mad about her hair game. Rachel, girl, YOU DID THAT.”¹¹⁹ Here we recall Bennett’s caution against devoting ourselves “too exclusively to moral condemnation.”¹²⁰ Although there *is* much to be angry about in the Dolezal case, we would be remiss to allow that to blind us to what also may be learned from it. The cuts she made in representing herself as African American emerged ambiently and cannot be reduced to her isolated agency.

This reading of Dolezal’s deception is admittedly tentative and thin, and admittedly much more work needs to be done. What draws us to this “case” are the critical insight or caution we can glean from the popular sources we cite: that something more than a singular, deceptive agent is at work. To read Rachel Dolezal as a master rhetor deploying deception in a way that allowed her to achieve her goals is to miss the complex ecology that gave rise to an initially successful but ultimately discovered deception. Refusing resolution or closure, however, does not render such inquiry apolitical (or arhetorical). Rice argues, “The political potential of network inquiry lies in its ability to imagine new relations, thus creating a new network of meanings.”¹²¹ The resolution of deception by either exposing its agents or controlling its effects ought not be the sole focus of either rhetorical critics or experimental social psychologists. Tracing the folds of Dolezal’s deception and subsequent reactions does not avoid judgement: it supplements or displaces simple moral outrage with an ecology in which such deceptions might not emerge. Confirming Rachel Dolezal as an Agent and the rest as Patients does very little to prime us, as it were, for complex crises to come. If deception, like agency itself, is an emergent effect of complex relations, then the goal of criticism or inquiry should be the generation of new relationships that cultivate different effects and different agencies. This ambient inquiry leads not simply to deliberation about who did what and why (which is more forensic than deliberative, Aristotle might gently remind us). Inquiry that aims for *copia* rather than control points us toward a fulsome deliberation wherein the complexity of relations lead inexorably to the *what else*.

This *what else* moves across rhetoric, deception, and priming as we have here positioned them. The presence of deception coincides with a feeling of *what else* is going on here. Priming research is itself a quest for the *what else* that shapes human action. And, finally, rhetoric, in particular the deliberative variety, always attends to the *what else* we might do. Controlling for the *what else*, however tempting, ultimately circumscribes the inventive force of rhetorical action. While the anxiety over deception is often warranted, deception remains but the exhaust of an ambient rhetoricity that we fully participate in but never fully determine.

ORCID

Nathaniel A. Rivers <http://orcid.org/0000-0001-5193-7475>

Notes

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- [74] We would here acknowledge indebtedness to areas outside of rhetorical and psychology. In addition to Andrew Pickering's treatment of the mangle of scientific agency, Bruno Latour's actor-network-theory has been an excellent conceptual starting point. For an introduction to actor-network-theory see Bruno Latour, *Reassembling the Social: An Introduction to Actor-Network-Theory* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005). Latour moves through this article like a silent hand across the Ouija board. Andrew Pickering, "The Mangle Of Practice: Agency and Emergence in the Sociology of Science," *American Journal of Sociology* 99, no. 3 (1993): 559–89.
- [75] Pickering, "The Mangle Of Practice," 567.
- [76] Part of the production of this particular distribution of agency is that stubborn subjects are removed: "[I]f a participant evidences any genuine awareness of a relation between the prime and experimental task, his or her data should not be included in the analyses." Bargh and Chartrand, "The Mind In the Middle," 259.
- [77] Pickering, "The Mangle Of Practice," 561.
- [78] Steven Shapin, "'The Mind Is Its Own Place': Science and Solitude In Seventeenth-Century England," *Science In Context* 4, no. 1 (1991): 191–218.
- [79] Joan H. Fujimura, "The Molecular Biological Bandwagon In Cancer Research: Where Social Worlds Meet," *Social Problems* 35, no. 3 (1988): 261–83.
- [80] Fujimura, "The Molecular Biological Bandwagon," 261–83.
- [81] John F. Kihlstrom, "An Unwarrantable Impertinence," *Behavioral and Brain Sciences* 27, no. 5 (2004): 666–67; John F. Kihlstrom, "The Automaticity Juggernaut—Or, Are We Automatons After All?" in *Are We Free? Psychology and Free Will*, ed. John Baer, James C. Kaufman and Roy F. Baumeister (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008): 155–80.
- [82] The computer company, not the record label. The effect is relative to a control group that was primed with the IBM logo. As our application of Rickert suggests, we would also caution against giving sole credit for the effectiveness of this stereotype to the marketers at Apple. Gráinne M. Fitzsimons, Tanya L. Chartrand, and Gavan J. Fitzsimons, "Automatic Effects of Brand Exposure On Motivated Behavior: How Apple Makes You 'Think Different,'" *Journal of Consumer Research* 35, no. 1 (2008): 21–35.
- [83] Fitzsimons, Chartrand, and Fitzsimons, "Automatic Effects of Brand Exposure," 24.
- [84] Bargh, Chen, and Burrows, "Automaticity of Social Behavior," 240.
- [85] Bargh and Chartrand "The Mind In the Middle," 267.
- [86] Tobias Schröder and Paul Thagard, "The Affective Meanings of Automatic Social Behaviors: Three Mechanisms That Explain Priming," *Psychological Review* 120, no. 1 (2013): 256.
- [87] Schröder and Thagard as well as Loersch and Payne note the proximity of J. J. Gibson's ecological psychology to their theory of the mechanism of priming effects. See Chris Loersch and B. Keith Payne, "The Situated Inference Model: An Integrative Account of the Effects of Primes on Perception, Behavior, and Motivation," *Perspectives on Psychological Science* 6, no. 3 (2011): 234–52.

- [88] Stéphane Doyen, Olivier Klein, Cora-Lise Pichon, and Axel Cleeremans, "Behavioral Priming: It's All in the Mind, but Whose Mind?" *PLoS ONE* 7, no. 1 (2012): 1–7.
- [89] Both Bargh's team and that of Doyen did not conduct the experiments themselves, but had them done by students, as is common in social psychology.
- [90] Doyen *et al.*, "Behavioral Priming," 3.
- [91] Doyen *et al.*, "Behavioral Priming," 6.
- [92] See John A. Bargh, "The Natural Unconscious: Automaticity in Cognition, Motivation, and Emotion," *Psychology Today*, accessed March 12, 2012, <http://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/the-natural-unconscious/201203/nothing-in-their-heads>
- [93] See Tom Bartlett, "The Power of Suggestion," *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, January 30, 2013, <http://chronicle.com/article/Power-of-Suggestion/136907>. See also the comments under the following blog post: Ed Yong, "A Failed Replication Draws a Scathing Personal Attack From a Psychology Professor," *Discover Magazine Online*, March 10, 2012, <http://blogs.discovermagazine.com/notrocketscience/2012/03/10/failed-replication-bargh-psychology-study-doyen>.
- [94] Lee Ross and Richard E. Nisbett, *The Person and the Situation: Perspectives of Social Psychology* (Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press, 1991): 8.
- [95] Olivier Klein, Stéphane Doyen, Christophe Leys, Pedro A. Magalhães de Saldanha da Gama, Sarah Miller, Laurence Questienne, and Axel Cleeremans, "Low Hopes, High Expectations: Expectancy Effects and the Replicability of Behavioral Experiments," *Perspectives on Psychological Science* 7, no. 6 (2012): 572–84.
- [96] Edbauer, "Unframing Models of Public Distribution," 8, emphasis in original.
- [97] John A. Bargh, "Our Unconscious Mind," *Scientific American* 310, no. 1 (2014): 34.
- [98] Edwin A. Locke, "Theory Building, Replication, and Behavioral Priming: Where Do We Need to Go From Here?" *Perspectives on Psychological Science* 10, no.3 (2015): 412.
- [99] Barry Schwartz, "On Klatzky and Creswell (2014): Saving Social Priming Effects But Losing Science as We Know It?" *Perspectives on Psychological Science* 10, no. 3 (2015): 406.
- [100] Michael Leff, "The Idea of Rhetoric as Interpretive Practice: A Humanist's Response to Goankar," in *Rhetorical Hermeneutics: Invention and Interpretation in the Age of Science*, ed. Alan G. Gross and William M. Keith (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1997): 83.
- [101] Leff, "The Idea of Rhetoric as Interpretive Practice," 69.
- [102] Edbauer, "Unframing Models of Public Distribution," 21.
- [103] Jane Bennett, "The Agency of Assemblages and the North American Blackout," *Public Culture* 17, no. 3 (2005): 464.
- [104] This kind of inquiry calls to mind Bruno Latour's formulation of actor-network-theory, where the goal is not to limit the number of actors but to follow many actors as they form associations. "For scientific, political, and even moral reasons," Latour admonishes, "it is crucial that enquirers do not in advance, and *in place* of the actors, define what sorts of building blocks the social world is made of." Latour, *Reassembling the Social*, 41, emphasis in original.
- [105] Jenny Rice, *Distant Publics: Development Rhetoric and the Subject of Crisis* (Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2012): 168.
- [106] Rice, *Distant Publics*, 169.
- [107] Fredrik deBoer, "Why Rachel Dolezal Would Want to Pass as a Black Woman," *Los Angeles Times*, June 13, 2015, <http://www.latimes.com/opinion/op-ed/la-oe-0614-deboer-rachel-dolezal-20150614-story.html>.
- [108] deBoer, para. 5–6.
- [109] deBoer, para. 6.
- [110] deBoer, para. 7.
- [111] deBoer, para. 8.
- [112] deBoer, para. 10.
- [113] Lundberg and Gunn, "'Ouija Board, Are There Any Communications?'" 98.
- [114] Yoni Appelbaum, "Rachel Dolezal and the History of Passing for Black," *The Atlantic*, June 15, 2015, <http://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2015/06/rachel-dolezal-and-the-history-of-passing-for-black/395882/>
- [115] Appelbaum, para. 12.

- [116] See also Daniel J. Sharfstein, "Rachel Dolezal's 'Passing' Isn't So Unusual," *New York Times Magazine*, June 15, 2015, http://www.nytimes.com/2015/06/25/magazine/rachel-dolezals-passing-isnt-so-unusual.html?_r=0; Jamelle Bouie, "Is Rachel Dolezal Black Just Because She Says She Is?" *Slate*, June 12, 2015, http://www.slate.com/articles/news_and_politics/politics/2015/06/rachel_dolezal_claims_to_be_black_the_naacp_official_was_part_of_the_african.html.
- [117] Kara Brown, "Rachel Dolezal Definitely Nailed the Hair, I'll Give Her That," *Jezebel*, June 12, 2015, <http://jezebel.com/rachel-dolezal-definitely-nailed-the-hair-ill-give-her-1710899988>.
- [118] Brown, emphasis in original.
- [119] Brown, emphasis in original.
- [120] Bennett, "The Agency of Assemblages," 464.
- [121] Rice, *Distant Publics*, 172.