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THE MEGAPHONE OF THE SOUL: RESISTANCE OF FRAUDULENT
TECHNOLOGICAL IDOLIZATION
BY RECOGNIZING THE POWER OF HUMAN CHOICE IN MEDIA ECOLOGY

A Dissertation

Submitted to the McAnulty College and Graduate School of Liberal Arts

Duquesne University

In partial fulfillment of the requirements for
the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

By

Richard L. Talbert

May 2016

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Richard L. Talbert

2016

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TECHNOLOGICAL IDOLIZATION
BY RECOGNIZING THE POWER OF HUMAN CHOICE IN MEDIA ECOLOGY

By

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ABSTRACT

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By

Richard L. Talbert

May 2016

Dissertation supervised by Janie Harden Fritz, PhD

Humans naturally communicate, but choose to use tools. They use them to make sense of things, even to their own detriment and the detriment of others. These tools often receive the attention, instead of the human interaction. Aristotle's notion of humans as social animals has been carried into media ecology scholarship by Arendt, Burke, Ellul, Mumford, Postman, and Ricoeur. Social media scholarship has often focused on the tool and how it affects humanity. However, a phenomenological approach is necessary, as humans communicate with or without these tools. This approach will follow multiple steps. The first is through an understanding of the historical lens of civic discourse from antiquity to contemporary society. The second step is to examine why Aristotle's concept of *ethos* still matters in social media. The third step warns how social media could be shaped into a "knack" environment and lead to a synthetic *ethos*. The fourth step analyzes how interpersonal communication interacts with social media, as well as

how a noble friendship can be established in social media. The fifth step exposes how humanity is unfortunately using technology to revise modernism in a postmodern age. The sixth step details how humans can reconcile social media-in-itself with social media-for-itself. This multi-step approach seeks to understand how social media fit in humanity, and also how humans fit in social media. These steps puts a focus on humans having choice and free will, and thus, responsibility. The approach in this document is more concerned with understanding the medium and then understanding how choice affects human action and direction.

DEDICATION

To Marcy, for her courageous support over the last twenty years of this journey
And to Shannon and Ronan, for listening to the academic babbling of your father

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My imaginative and inspirational students

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Preface

"For those of us who have thrown off the myth of the machine, the next move is ours, for the gates of the technocratic prison will open automatically, despite their rusty ancient hinges, as soon as we choose to walk out." ~ Louis Mumford, 1970

Aristotle's notion that humans are social animals is easily seen through an analysis of the history of communication technology usage. Standage (2013) has detailed this sociality over the past 2000 years to show how social animals have been using mediated communication in social ways, which forms the concept of social media. It is odd that it took two millennia to coin the contemporary term, but this is the foundation of the definition of social media moving forward through this work. Arendt (1998, p. 35) noted that human society is a "hybrid realm where private interests assume public significance." We find this realm in contemporary communication tools. Mumford (1952, p. 35) noted that "(m)an was perhaps an image maker and a language maker, a dreamer and an artist, even before he was a toolmaker. At all events, through most of history, it was the symbol, not the tool, that pointed to his superior function." Postman (1976, pp. 8-9) continued by saying:

Communication is a situation in which people participate, rather like the way a plant participates in what we call its growth. A plant does not exactly grow because it *does* something. Growth is a consequence of complex transactions among the plant, the soil, the air, the sun, and water. All in the proper proportions, at the proper time, according to

the proper rules. (...) And if there is no semantic environment, there is nothing much we can do about communicating. If communication is to happen, we require not merely messages, but an ordered situation in which messages can assume meaning.”

Humans are social because the human brain is predisposed toward social communicative action (p. 8-14). Social media is popular because humans are always seeking ways to “scratch a prehistoric itch” (p. 8) to be social. It is plausible that language was developed for social needs, rather than for survival needs (p. 14), as seen in animals. Therein lies the distinction, notably stated by Burke (1966, p. 3): “Man is the symbol-using animal.” He further stated that reality is nothing but a “clutter of symbols,” but these are shaped into “symbol systems” to construct knowledge of the past and present (p. 5). Mumford (1952, p. 18) continued by noting that “(t)he greatest of man’s symbolic functions is of course speech.”

Rather than rediscover the work that Standage and others have done, perhaps a better pathway into the scholarship of social media would be through a phenomenological approach in order to discover why humans use these symbol systems the way that they do. Arendt (1998, pp. 198-199) noted the importance of this approach, and the argument can easily be applied to the study of contemporary communication tools, such as social media:

The *polis*, properly speaking, is not the city-state in its physical location; it is the organization of the people as it arises out of acting and speaking together, and its true space lies between people living together for this purpose, no matter where they happen to be. ‘Wherever you go, you will be a *polis*’: these famous words became not merely the watchword of Greek colonialization, they expressed the conviction that action and speech create a space between the participants which can find its proper location almost any time and anywhere. It is the space of appearance in the widest sense of the word,

namely, the space where I appear to others as others appear to me, where men exist not merely like other living or inanimate things but make their appearance explicitly.

This phenomenological approach will follow multiple steps. The first is through an understanding of the historical lens of civic discourse from antiquity to contemporary society. This is significant because to understand humans; one must look at how humans interacted with each other. It is also insightful to review the communication tools that they used over this historical span.

The second step is to examine why Aristotle's concept of *ethos* still matters in social media. This step is vital because foundational concepts from 2300 years ago still play a role in communicative practices today, as they should. An analysis of *phronesis*, *arête*, and *eunoia* show that the ethical communicator is still needed.

The third step warns how social media could be shaped into a “knack” environment and lead to a synthetic *ethos*. Social media gives everyone a voice. But can that voice be manipulated in such a way that *ethos* is fraudulent, and audiences are deceived? What would this synthetic *ethos* look like? How would it be stopped? Would Plato call social media a “knack” environment, cast to the sophists of our time? These questions are worth confronting if a civil society is to endure.

The fourth step analyzes how interpersonal tensions arise in social media. As citizens engage each other in the virtual *polis*, what are the remains of face-to-face communication? There are certainly tensions, as people bring face-to-face rules into the online world and as people bring online rules into the face-to-face world. Prominent voices, such as Arendt (1998) and Turkle (2011), respectively, offer warnings about the consequences of these actions. It also

reveals how a noble friendship can be established in social media. Aristotle provided ample guidance in *Nicomachean Ethics* about the nature of friendships and how they are created and strengthened. There are ways to recognize friendship types and how to move toward nobility on social media platforms.

The fifth step exposes how humanity is using technology to revise modernism in a postmodern age. There are valid critiques of technology and how it affects humanity. The works of Mumford, Burke, Ellul, and Postman are reviewed, so that there can be a solid understanding of the consequences when humans turn their lives over to the machines that they created.

The sixth step details how humans can reconcile social media-in-itself with social media-for-itself. This analysis into the phenomenology of human history is based on Ricoeur's framing of progress, ambiguity, and hope. His premise was that tools exist as stratified objects without meaning, yet the drama unfolds as humans pick up the tool and add value to it by putting it to use. This humanization of the tool can be applied to social media to help humans understand its placement in history.

This multi-step approach seeks to understand how social media fit in humanity, and also how humans fit in social media. While this certainly has the feel of Postman's "everyone uses or is used by computers" (1992, p. 108) statement, but it is not necessarily such an infiltration. Nor is it a matter of Heidegger's "essence" (1977, p. 3) or even his "Enframing" (p. 24). It is also not a matter of Ellul's condemnation of the "technical world" that creates control of humans with "malice aforethought" (1964, p. 405). These approaches give incredible strength and power to inanimate objects while defrauding humans of choice and free will, and thus, responsibility. The approach in this document is more concerned with understanding the medium and then

understanding how choice affects human action and direction. Mumford (1966, p. 309) noted that “our age has not yet overcome the peculiar utilitarian bias that regards technical invention as primary and aesthetic expression as secondary or superfluous.” After all, why does one have to survive communication technologies? Why does one have to presume that they are ingrained into one’s very being? A more fitting, and perhaps more concerning, the approach would be that one has to survive the inquiry into who and what humans are. It appears to be easier to study things and assign credit and blame to them, for those things have no voice and cannot respond. It is thus far more challenging to assign credit and blame to human action. This approach to studying human experience concerning communication technology just might be considered an adjusted framing of logocentric epistemology and ontology. It is a Ricoeurian, post-structural framing that recognizes that people approach an item, whether text, image, or symbol, and add meaning. The human mind, as well as human action, adds or subtracts value. Communication technology is text. It is image. It is symbol. And as Ricoeur noted that the “text is mute” (1976, p. 75), then contemporary communication technologies must also be held as mute. It is also Mumfordian in nature, as it is hopeful that humans choose the wonder of artistic nature over the shallowness of impersonal technic (1952, p. 155-162).

However, communication technology is often construed as a constructed idol to mask inward reflection and thought about human action and thought. It is a scapegoat. Postman (1976, p. 187) noted that “in every situation...someone (or some group) has a decisive power of definition. In fact, to have power means to be able to define and make it stick.” Perhaps it is clever and catchy to say something such as, “the medium is the message” to frame the approach to media ecology. The approach posed here is perhaps as clever and catchy, but it is challenging to face, though, because something uncomfortable becomes clear: Communication technology is

a megaphone of the soul. It is not the technology that is either good or bad. It merely amplifies and projects the intentions of the sender. The good and the bad of the human communicator is found in the message, not the medium. A positive message does not make the technology good. Likewise, the poor actions of humans cannot be cast upon an inanimate object to escape guilt. There is not a banality of communication technology, but rather one of human communication. This is centered on choice and responsibility, not the technology. This is framed well by Burke (1966, p. 11):

Action involves *character*, which involves *choice*—and the *form* of choice attains its perfection in the distinction between Yes and No (shall and shall-not, will and will-not). Though the concept of sheer *motion* is non-ethical, *action* implies the ethical, the human personality.

Burke continued that humans are separated from their natural condition by instruments of their own making (pp. 13-14). Humans are, first and foremost, symbol-using animals, which defines the priority of being natural, whereas submitting humans to being tool-using animals first would put the unnatural action as the primary being of man. Language is a symbolic action that can be used as a tool; thus, symbols are natural and came first (pp. 14-15). Burke clarified his statement of man in this way (p. 16):

Man is
the symbol-using (symbol-making, symbol-misusing) animal
inventor of the negative (or moralized by the negative)
separated from his natural condition by instruments of his own making
goaded by the spirit of hierarchy (or moved by the sense of order)
and rotten with perfection

Thus, the thesis remains: humans naturally communicate, but choose to use tools. They use them to make sense of things, even to their own detriment and the detriment of others.

Chapter One

Civic Discourse from Antiquity to Contemporary Society

Human communication has been channeled through mediated communication for centuries. Mumford (1952) noted the importance of this movement to mediated tools. “Early man had created vast and wonderful symbolic structures in language at a time when a handful of tools sufficed to meet his needs in hunting and agriculture” (p. 40). While speech mattered, the character creation of text allowed the populace to follow action at an adjusted time and accelerated scope. The early *Acta Diurna* of the Roman Senate allowed communication with the literate masses and provided a vehicle through which discourse could flourish. The public sphere, where discourse typically flourished in Antiquity, moved to mediated communication forms. These forms have evolved over time, taking the shape of newspapers, books, radio, television, and Internet software. These tools enable citizens to stay connected to the polis, to stay informed, and to hold accountable those in power. The focus of this section, however, is not merely on the tools, but on tracing civility and discourse from Antiquity to contemporary society, and why civil discourse is important in everyday life. Postman (1976, pp. 97-98) noted why civility matters in the *polis* and how humans can act in a civil manner:

One of the main purposes of many of our semantic environments, for example is to help us maintain a minimum level of civility in conducting our affairs. Civility requires not that we deny our feelings, only that we keep them to ourselves when they are not relevant to the situation at hand.

Arendt (1998, p. 178) continued this thought of humans moving into the *polis* and how discourse

serves as a complement to civility when approaching the other:

“Action and speech are so closely related because the primordial and specifically human act must at the same time contain the answer to the question asked of every newcomer: ‘Who are you?’ This disclosure of who somebody is, is implicit in both his words and deeds; yet obviously the affinity between speech and revelation is much closer than that between action and revelation....”

Ong (1971, p. vii) noted that Cicero’s command was that an “orator needed to know everything that could be known.” This statement, according to Ong, showed that rhetoric in Antiquity was critical for learning and intelligence, and served as the heart of a liberal arts education. Ong further traced the origin of oral and written rhetorical history, noting that while script began around 3500 BC, composition was still rooted in the oral tradition (pp. 2-3). The ancient Greeks focused heavily on the skill of oral performance, and the preliterate culture kept scholarship from being properly codified (pp. 3-4). Aristotle placed rhetoric as the counterpart of dialectic (Rhetoric, 1354a) and defined it as “discovering in the particular case what are the available means of persuasion” (1355b). Ong (p. 4) noted three parts of discourse, but when discussing logic, he called it an uneasy bedfellow of rhetoric, but aligning it more closely with dialectic. These three elements move people to knowledge, action, and decision making. Arendt (1998, p. 26) noted, however, that in the Greek *polis*, action and speech were separated. Ong (pp. 11-12) further stated that “(r)hetoric clearly occupies an intermediary stage between the unconscious and the conscious,” which places the art “within one’s soul, mind, heart, feelings.” When coupled with Aristotle’s declaration that humans are political animals, it becomes clear that rhetoric is tied with education, which becomes the driving force for the person to be tied to

the polis. Postman (1976, p. 26) continued this thought by noting "...what *you* want must be expressed through what the situation demands. This is what is meant by social order, without which communication is quite impossible." The *polis* is quite important, and it relies on humans and communication.

The shift from oral discourse to mediated communication-framed discourse happened in Roman Antiquity, as the *Acta Diurna* became a method for the Senate to proclaim its "actions of the day" to the populace. This shift showed the ability for a new medium to essentially speak on behalf of the sender. It also moved communication to an asynchronous state, where messages could be delivered at a later time or recorded for posterity. It also enabled the abandonment of memory as a valued aspect for maintaining history, myth, and story, a dilemma long foretold by Plato (Phaedrus, 275a-b):

If men learn this, it will implant forgetfulness in their souls; they will cease to exercise memory because they rely on that which is written, calling things to remembrance no longer from within themselves, but by means of external marks. What you have discovered is a recipe not for memory, but for reminder. And it is no true wisdom that you offer your disciples, but only its semblance, for by telling them of many things without teaching them you will make them seem to know much, while for the most part they know nothing, and as men filled, not with wisdom, but with the conceit of wisdom, they will be a burden to their fellows.

What Plato has discussed and predicted is not simply a dire warning, but a declaration of the importance of choice when approaching mediated communication. Citizens have a choice whether or not to be engaged in the polis, and what form of communication they wish to use when conversing with others.

Mumford (1952, p. 43) noted that mankind loves uniformity, repetition, and order. Humans have always seen this in nature and have sought to emulate it. The methods of communicating with others are no different, as structures guide the communicative efforts. The ability to enter the polis is not merely determined by the mode of communication, but also by the framework that surrounded the citizenry, such as educational systems or the rules crafted by those in authority. One's discursive power was limited by one's knowledge and standing in Greek courts; however, in Roman courts, the ruling authorities varied the size and scope of the polis—if it was even allowed. Arendt (1998, p. 23) noted that “the Latin usage of the word *societas* also originally had a clear, though limited, political meaning; it indicated an alliance between people for a specific purpose.” Roman rhetoric and liberal arts were balanced well during much of Cicero's time (Jurdjevig, 1999, para 20), and Cicero was able to successfully buttress “the authority of the Roman state with the power of rhetoric” (para 17), but as the Roman era continued, there was a move away from republican ideals of civic discourse and political cooperation. The leaders became more and more compelled to lead with absolute power. Bruni noted, “Before the day of the Caesars, character was the route to honor, and positions such as consul, dictator, or other high public offices were open to men of magnanimous spirit, strength of character, and energy” (Jurdjevig, 1999, para 22). Throughout the entirety of the reign of the Caesars, there was collapse of Latin language, fine arts, eloquence, scholarship, and liberty, resulting in the brilliant minds of the region disappearing from the public sphere (para 26).

Rhetorical discourse was relegated to an academic affair in the early Communal Era, approximately in the latter part of the 14th century throughout the 15th century. The philosophical component of civic participation that began in this time period was civic

humanism. Civic humanism was based on the grounds that not only is it important to stay civic-minded, but that the only way that one could do so effectively is by a solid liberal arts education. Basic democratic society was reborn and transferred from Antiquity to the Communal Era (para 3). Oral discourse remained the primary means of sharing and gaining knowledge. Although not notably practiced, the core beliefs of civic humanist philosophy remained intact over the centuries since the Roman era. The argument and debate over what constituted republican ideals created different interpretations by individuals have created pseudo-humanist systems. The communal era brought about competition between two rival republican ideologies, as noted by Jurdjevig:

Republicanism of the communal era, the first and elder of the ideologies, was rooted in the guilds, favoring wide participation in government councils and defining political representation as a function of class and corporate identity. The younger ideology – oligarchic republicanism of the post-Ciampi era (1378) – undermined the legitimacy of communal corporate politics. As an elitist philosophy, it favored the politics of consensus and favored the participation of only a select few wealthy old families in the government. (para 5)

These beliefs were notably challenged in the late 14th century as the “tyrannical Milanese Visconti” forced the Florentines “into a process of rigorous self-analysis that affirmed the values for which they were fighting: freedom of speech, free access to political office, equality of all citizens before the law, and self-government – in short, the fundamentals of modern democracy” (para 3). As people debated and fought for liberty, they began to experience the conflict of the extent of their freedoms. Arendt (1998, p. 197) noted the value of the *polis*. In the ideal state, the *polis* was supposed to multiply...the chances for everybody to distinguish himself, to show in

deed and word who he was in his unique distinctness.”

This conflict was most notably evident in Italian politics Italy during this era. One such instance of conflict was during the leadership of Scipio Mainenti of Ferrara, who fought to preserve the Roman state and political freedom, not necessarily as a means to protect liberty itself, but to create a system where liberal studies would thrive (para 28). He rejected the desires of the Senate to return to imperialism through their efforts to bestow upon Scipio “the offices of Dictator and Consul in perpetuity” (para 27). Scipio clearly favored a republican government and the importance of civic service and education in the liberal arts.

The rise of the Medici family in Florence during the same period also showed the conflict of leadership styles and the usefulness of republican and civic humanist ideologies. Prior to the Medici family, Florence was governed by an oligarchy of ruling families that kept each other’s power in check (para 37). Ultimately, the Medici family ascended to power and ruled the Florentines. The Medici family was not immediately known for granting extraordinary liberties or fostering great civic discourse. That changed with the rise of Cosimo de Medici: “Florence under Cosimo commanded a leading position in the revival of antiquity and liberal studies” (para 45). His guidance, love of education, and of course, wealth helped created the first public library in the history of Europe (para 46). Jurjevich noted:

Civic humanists did not fuse certain ideas from classical antiquity with republicanism deliberately to assist Cosimo de' Medici in his bid for power; nor was Cosimo's association with those ideas a premeditated and calculated political gesture. Civic humanism was not the pivotal and causal force in Cosimo's political ascent. Civic humanism did, however, help to create and express new foci for the city's political culture in the Quattrocento. A central strain of ideas within this ideology could be used to

provide an intellectual justification for Cosimo's political preeminence. Humanistic exaltation of the scholar-statesman and humanistic interpretations of wealth, history, and ideal government buttressed and extended the political implications of Cosimo's reputation for prudence, wisdom, generosity, and learning. (para 53)

Basically, Cosimo recognized that a free society would create an atmosphere where education could easily be pursued and that the more educated a citizen, the greater chance for his or her advancement in life. This advancement would logically bring wealth, which could be used to further education among the populace. Jurdjevic also noted:

Civic humanists fused traditional Florentine republicanism with principles and values they felt reflected the culture of classical antiquity, in particular the Ciceronian exaltation of civic life. In addition to the *vita activa politica*, the ideology of civic humanism included the exaltation of the scholar-statesman and novel interpretations of wealth, history, and ideal government, all of which complemented Cosimo de' Medici's distinguished role in Florentine society and politics. (para 14)

Another great problem was illiteracy, and it was the creation of Gutenberg's press that created an influx of printed material that gave citizens the ability to become more educated, particularly in the matters of the state (Boran, 2006). There was a need to split the art and technic of writing in order to form common typography so that mass printing could occur, giving greater access to text and increasing literacy and education (Mumford, 1952, pp. 68-70). This was a profound shift in the civilization of mankind. Mumford (p. 65) further noted that printing "is second only to the clock in its critical effect upon our civilization." The influence of the Gutenberg press coincided with the rise of Cosmo de Medici in Italy, whose reign was marked by a "revival of antiquity and liberal studies" (Jurdjevic, 1999, para 45) and the creation of the first public library

in Europe (para 46). The concept was that the more educated the citizen, the greater chance for advancement in life. Brucker (1999, para 11) noted the collegiate and corporate quality of the political system, where “decisions were made and policies formulated by citizens chosen to represent the whole community.”

Mediated communication tools were advanced through the Enlightenment, Industrial, and Technological Revolution eras. Colonialists used books, magazines, leaflets, broadsides, and newspapers to espouse their views to an increasingly literate public. Yet the need for civil discourse continued. Katz (2006, p. 265) reflected upon the work of Tarde, who noted that “if people did not talk, it would be futile to publish newspapers.” This forerunner to Lazarsfeld’s two-step flow of communication showed that discourse indeed moves through media and opinion leaders to the citizenry. Early colonial writings showed a desire to express opinions and thoughts, even ones that were contrary to those of King George of England. This civic dialogue brought about the King’s recourse, seen in a series of methods designed to bring colonial authors into compliance, such as the Stamp Act and the libel trial of publisher John Zenger (Boran, 2006). Anti-crown works, such as Paine’s *Common Sense*, flourished. They were created and disseminated among the reading public prior to the American Revolution. Tarde’s work frames this civic action: “society is made up of individuals, and that the social psychology of their interaction brings about social structures and change (Katz, 2006, p. 264). This mediated discourse continued after America’s independence, as well. This was aided by compulsory education and technologization that happened in the 19th century (Boran, 2006). The increase in literacy and efficiency of printing created an environment where citizens could know more of the civic sphere. The process of creating public opinion begins with a citizen interacting and conversing with a medium, then it is refined by fellowship in the public sphere (Katz, 2006, p.

267). The final aspect was the infrastructural ability to move printed goods, and thus information, around the country and globe in a much faster and sizable manner.

Communication tools had a further reach than before, and this only expanded through the early 1900s with the advent of radio and television. However, traditional mediated communication tools do not lead to changes; human communication does (Van Den Ban, 1970, p. 199). To understand human communication, a framing of the benefits of interpersonal, face-to-face interaction is needed. The benefits show that this interaction is:

(1) more casual and therefore less inclined to attract only persons already sympathetic to the view expressed, (2) it is more flexible in countering resistance, (3) it provides immediate personal rewards for compliance, and punishment for non-compliance, being itself capable for expressing social pleasure and displeasure, and (4) the receiver can ask questions to the sender in order to decrease his uncertainty on the effects of the new behavior. (p. 199)

Yang and Stone (2003, pp. 57-58) noted that discourse with others is what drives civic awareness and action. As the realm of media increases to include more consumers of information and thus more discourse, “the interpersonal discussion of public issues is more healthy politically than is the now-rejected image of powerful agencies of mediated communication directing their influence toward an atomistic electorate” (Carter and Clarke, 1962). While their study is decades old, it reveals a great point: information is a catalyst for discussion, and discussion is a catalyst for education and change.

This places the weight of dialogue and civic duty on the shoulders of people, not mediated communication tools. The tools have been the variable throughout human history. There has always been interpersonal communication, but there have only recently been mediated

communication tools. In the scope of human existence, electronic communication tools are still in their infancy, despite the seemingly omnipresence of the Digital Age. Standage (2013) showed this movement through mediated communication history, detailing how civic action and social dialogue have been successfully mediated for 2000 years. He framed it this way to show how there has always been social media, but his work also shows the history of civic-minded media.

Finally, there is also an emerging frontier of the virtual polis, in which people can interact without the boundary of distance or, in some instances, anonymity. This is the concept of McLuhan's global village. Early American colonists were able to produce their own leaflets, thanks to more affordable and compact printing technology. The rise of electronic mass communication, and the associated costs to participate, changed the ownership and framework of media outlets. The digital frontier allows anyone with access to have an equal voice. One once needed to be literate to participate; now one merely needs to be technologically literate, which means understanding the scope of the virtual *polis* and how users are often known. Postman (1976, p. 136) noted how "(i)n some 'primitive' cultures one's 'real name' is kept secret, because it is believed that knowing a person's name carries with it the power to control him. In 'civilized' cultures, we know better, but not much." This loss of anonymity, whether by nature of communication tools or by choice of disclosure is affecting the virtual *polis*.

The realm of contemporary social media is a seemingly vast and powerful. In today's "electronic water cooler" atmosphere, this becomes more noticeable than Carter and Clarke would have imagined. One thing that is understandable, though – social media users have become today's opinion leaders. As media outlets shrink the number of reporters, and as greater access to global media is realized through the Internet, the difference is the citizen journalist who

is able to see something and report on it far before the traditional media. The more news that is available, the less it is filtered through a specific ideology. The more that report, the greater the viewpoints represented. Hill noted that “[t]he best way to avoid impending political slavery is to enhance civic competence and awareness” (1999, para 17).

While there is not a traditional face-to-face component of social media, the discourse can happen as quickly as a person can type and submit the data. It is indeed more casual than the rigidity of traditional mediated communication, and it provides a great outlet for those with similar or opposing views to consume, ignore, or discuss issues. Some systems even have rating tools, which provide a feedback system to the person who left a response. This influx of information and the growing number of citizens that consume it are only good for society and the civic life. The great amount of information (and information gatherers) creates a situation where leaders are much more likely to be caught when corrupting the system. As Machiavelli noted, corruption affects not only individual citizens, but entire groups creating “an apathetic and dissolute citizenry” (Hill, 1999, para 5). These civic citizens that watch the actions of the leaders are not simple people in front of computers. The country has seen social media tools “represent the divergent voices of millions” (Perlmutter and Schoen, 2007).

Civic humanists place a great value on the virtue and vigilance of the citizen. It is believed that “[a]n apprehension of benevolent and candid leadership on the part of citizens would come from tighter surveillance of institutional and parliamentary activity” (Hill, 1999, para 16). Citizens need to be watchdogs if they are to expect wise and considerate leadership. The modern tools of mediated communication allow citizens to easily become watchdogs and notify other citizens. Mediated communication tools are certainly helpful in aiding the civic-minded humanist to stay informed and actually be involved in creating and maintaining a

republic. For better or for worse, as Postman (1976, p. 115) noted, "...there is no such thing as a 'private' self. Even the selves that take form only when no one else is around presuppose the existence of a social content (or semantic environment)." This active civic life is reflective of the efforts framed in the communal era, as noted by Brucker: "The distinctive features of those republican regimes were a high degree of cooperation and collaboration among their members, an atmosphere of mutual trust essential for their survival and the achievement of common goals, and an egalitarian ethos based upon horizontal social bonds" (1999, para 1).

Eventually, others will analyze the political and communicative ideals of the early 21st century and determine how the citizens interacted with each other and with its leaders. What defines media, mediated communication, and civic humanism is perhaps best described by Hartelius of how people can, in fact, relate to each other in this world of virtual civics. "Virtual communities, Jones (1997) claims, are the functions of a virtual settlement. By studying the artifacts of a virtual settlement – its postings, structure and content – scholars gain an understanding of the nature of the virtual community the way an archeologist gains an understanding of a particular village by studying its cultural artifacts" (2005, p. 72). People interact, discuss topics, get to know each other, and as a result, an experience is generated. It is clear that there has been a shift in civic engagement and the consumption of mediated communication.

Mumford (1952) noted this shift and how it corresponds to the art and technic of human communication. He noted (p. 25):

There are, as I see it, three stages in the development of art, [...] I should call them first, the self-enclosed or infantile stage, the stage of self-identification; second, the social or adolescent stage, when exhibitionism passes into communication, with an effort not

merely to attract attention but to create something worthy of approval; and finally, a personal or mature stage, when art, transcending the immediate needs of the person or community, becomes capable of begetting fresh forms of life: when the work of art becomes itself an independent force, directly energizing and renewing those who come into contact with it, even though they may be separated by time and space from the original culture, now vanished, or the original person, now dead.

These stages help show the shift in communication, especially as “art” is sometimes as hollow as pictures of meals or the creation of memes; but there is also a real delivery of quality art to the populace, much like the printing press allowing more people to have access to books. Electronic communication forms allow those without ability to see works of art in person to enjoy their richness.

That is not to say that there are not threats to discourse. Postman (1976, pp. 250-251) noted the importance of placing...

...a high value on social order and its four pillars—empathy, tradition, responsibility, and civility. I realize that these words are extremely abstract and therefore not easy to define. I am using them here to suggest the socially conservative idea that there is something worth preserving in most semantic environments. What I have been calling ‘semantic environments’ are, after all, situations shaped by long human experience, and their purposes and language are on no account to be taken lightly or to be revised precipitately. Those who are quickest to call for a reordering of some social system, including its language, are usually those who are most insensible to how much they, themselves, depend on conventional rules and roles.

The closing warning that Postman makes has always been relevant, as voices that call for the

proper framing of language arise in society. Arendt (1998, pp. 176-177) noted how humans are inserted into the world by word and deed, and the action sets things in motion. Mumford (1966, p. 309) also noted that there is a prevailing thought to frame humans “as *Homo faber*, the tool maker, rather than *Homo sapiens*, the mind maker.” Yet, neither tools nor language nor education are enough to place the human spirit in history. Human excellence is found in humans engaging with each other in the public realm (Arendt, 1998, p. 49). Mumford (1966, p. 306) noted this need for interaction, as well, by stating

...if technical proficiency were alone sufficient to identify potential intelligence, man would for long have rated as a hopeless duffer alongside many other species. The consequences of this perception should be plain, namely, that there was nothing uniquely human in early technology until it was modified by linguistic symbols and aesthetic designs. At that point, the human mind, not just the hand, made a profound difference.

Human communication in the *polis* requires dialogic civility. Humans have discovered how to move forward by using symbols in such a way so that the foundation of a semantic environment could be created. They have determined their purpose for talk. They have created rules of discourse and styles of talk. But ultimately, they have discovered each other (Postman, 1976, p. 9).

Chapter Two

Aristotle's Concept of *Ethos* Still Matters in the Era of Social Media

Communication technologies have been in use for thousands of years. Interpersonal speech has been augmented by written forms, audiological forms, visual forms, and computer-mediated forms. One aspect of human communication that has seemingly withstood the test of time is Aristotle's concept of *ethos*. This concept is generated by the rhetor and is comprised of three components: practical wisdom (*phronesis*), virtue (*arête*), and goodwill (*eunoia*). A communicator needs to display all three to be considered ethical. There is certainly a provocation that exists in questioning the need for *ethos* in a Digital Age. Modernity turns against tradition in order to highlight whatever progression may occur. So, is the use of the newest mediated communication tools subject to 2300-year-old concepts? Or has writing been fundamentally changed by the newest technologies? Should communicators still strive to be ethical? These questions do provoke, as media ecologists have duly noted human interaction through these media. Arendt (1998, p. 27) noted that Aristotle's best definition of man is through *nous*, the capacity of contemplation. Man is the contemplative animal, which is above speech, logic, and social gathering.

Mediated communication is still susceptible to misuse, as is rhetoric. When one is grounded in goodness, is skilled in communicating, and can use technologies in an appropriate manner, then a true rhetoric can be used and public discourse in a civil society can be advanced. Aristotle's ethical standards still hold true today.

Aristotle (1984, p. 24) defined rhetoric as:

...the faculty of observing in any given case the available means of persuasion. This is not a function of any other art. Every other art can instruct or persuade about its own particular subject-matter. [...] But rhetoric we look upon as the power of observing the means of persuasion on almost any subject presented to us; and that is why we say that, in its technical character, it is not concerned with any special or definite class of subjects.

Aristotle plainly puts rhetoric in the realm of knowledge and moral purpose, unlike the sophist who is guided by moral purpose or the dialectician who is guided by knowledge (p. 24). Herrick (1992, p. 143) defined rhetoric as "...the means of discovering facts, truths, evidence, and maxims relevant to the resolution of controversial issues, and forging these into persuasive arguments adapted to an audience." Herrick's definition of rhetoric does not claim to dictate how messages are sent or how an audience is formed. It is instead focused on the nature of rhetoric's active nature between senders and receivers. There is an inherent action in rhetoric seen here. The senders and receivers each have a part in this activity, as there needs to be an understanding of the subject matter and validity of the argument so a sound judgment can be reached (Grimaldi, 1980, p. 37). Grimaldi also grounded rhetoric through basic building blocks of the art: speaker, audience, subject matter, and source material (1972, p. 136). Herrick (1992, p. 144) established a virtue ethic by pointing out three inherently good aspects of rhetoric: discovery of relevant truths, moving ideas before publics, and testing propositions through debate. Arendt (1998, p. 176) also noted:

Through [speech and action], men distinguish themselves instead of being merely distinct; they are the modes in which human beings appear to each other, not indeed as physical objects, but *qua* men. This appearance, as distinguished from mere bodily existence, rests on initiative, but it is an initiative from which no human being can refrain

and still be human. This is true of no other activity in the *vita activa*.”

Word and deed play an important part in foundational rhetoric. The building blocks described above establishes how to move forward to create dialogue.

None of these foundational aspects note how messages are sent or how audiences are formed. They do not note that the audience even has to be immediately present. In fairness, contemporary mediated communication technologies had not been fully realized at the time of their writings. However, the written word was certainly in full use, as were some electronic forms, such as radio, television, and email. These forms certainly had to been in the minds of 20th-century scholars. What does seem to matter most in these definitions is that rhetoric must discover persuasive facts about almost any subject (Aristotle, 1984, pp. 23-24). The onus is placed upon the speaker and the receiver to move through the material and make a sound judgment for the sake of rhetoric. The quality of the speaker does have a certain power, as a skilled speaker has the ability and knowledge to deliver the subject matter in such a way that the audience is moved. The art of persuasion possesses an external quality for the receiver, but the state of persuasion becomes internalized within the receiver, affecting his or her decision about the topic (Allard-Nelson, 2001, p. 247). Perhaps Wallace was the most insightful when he noted the action of rhetoric is the product and response within a rhetorical context that...

...reflects the speaker’s major adaptation to his audience; it guides his creative activity as each unit of meaning, each concept and utterance, grows and develops in terms of what is said, has been said, and is to be said until, at the conclusion of his creative endeavor, the speech stands as a meaningful whole to which the audience responds. (1970, pp. 95-96)

In the Digital Era, this “major adaptation” to the audience is certainly active. This back-and-forth action of understanding, which has taken place over centuries of rhetorical practice, has

created basic rules and conventions that Wallace noted man is to recognize and respect. This practice dates back to Aristotle, who opened *Rhetoric* by stating that rhetoric is for morally appropriate ends (Clayton, 2004, p. 2).

The burden of successful, ethical rhetoric belongs to the speaker. This was noted by Aristotle (1984, p. 22), Garver (1985, p. 56), Beason (1991, p. 342), Fortenbaugh (1992, p. 226), Herrick (1992, p. 146), and Arnett (2001, p. 328). These scholars also note the moral aspect of rhetoric, which also belongs to the speaker. It is also frequently noted that rhetoric is a skill to be learned; unfortunately, it also has the capacity to be abused, which garners great distrust of rhetoric. Aristotle noted in *Rhetoric* 1355a21–24 that rhetoric is useful, as what is true and just are superior to their opposites—and if judgment is not issued accordingly, the fault and blame belong to the speaker. Garver noted that there is a suspicion of rhetoric because, although it is a skill that can be used for good or bad purposes, the rhetor is the driving force behind the abuse. And this suspicion is borne out in modern analysis of linguistic turns that do not match the views of the analyst. Abused persuasion is often brushed off as “mere rhetoric.” However, Herrick noted that ethical rhetoric will be a catalyst and enabler of moral differences as people seek to discover understanding. Postman (1976, p. 237) noted this turn and placed it on the shoulders of the participants:

“The fundamental strategy of meta-semantics is to put ourselves, psychologically, outside the context of any semantic environment so that we may see it in its entirety, or at least from multiple perspectives. From this position—or variety of positions—it is possible to assess the meaning and quality of talk in relation to the totality of the environment in which it occurs, and with a relatively high degree of detachment. We become less interested in *participating* in semantic environments, more interested in *observing* them.”

Mumford (1966, pp. 300-309) continued this thought, noting that "...man is pre-eminently a mind-using, self-mastering animal; and the primary locus of all his activities is his own organism. Until he had made something of himself, he could make little of the world around him." The speaker is clearly required to be grounded before moving forward to the audience. Postman (1976, p. 115) also noted "...there is a self which seems to supervise our other selves. It is the quiet voice which tells us which self to call upon, and whether or not the right selection has been made. If we cannot get along without the idea of a True Self, then I nominate the supervisor-self for the post. It is the self to which we attach the name *our judgment* or *reason*."

While Plato noted that virtue is the only good that cannot be negatively used, there is a continued suspicion of rhetoric because it is more than a skill, but not as perfectly redeeming as virtue (Garver, 1985, p. 56). Perhaps this is why Aristotle framed his three building blocks of *ethos*. The concepts of practical wisdom, virtue, and goodwill form the structure of the speaker's *ethos*, which is made known through the speech and how the speaker conducts him/herself (McAdon, 2004, p. 317). These parts, along with *logos* and *pathos*, are used by a communicator to guide an audience to an actionable end (Grimaldi, 1972, p. 136). All three proofs are discussed heavily by Aristotle in *Rhetoric*, notably in 1355b38-9 and 1356a1-4. The importance of *ethos* is clear, but it is not a solidified state, as credibility would be. Each communicator generates *ethos* with each delivery. An ethical framework is beneficial to the effort, as unethical behavior is damaging (Beason, 1991, p. 342) and that the audience is open to persuasion when they sense goodness and goodwill in the speaker (Fortenbaugh, 1992, p. 226).

Fortenbaugh noted that "(w)e need to keep in mind that Aristotle's idea of persuasion through character is largely traditional. He is working with everyday notions of wisdom and virtue. He is not concerned with the unity of the virtues nor with the idea of a single virtuous

disposition that applies to all men at all times” (1992, p. 220). Rhetoric is meant for everyday occurrences between common people who use everyday notions of wisdom and virtue, dealing with subject matter that is based on probability instead of the absolute (Cherry, 1998, p. 2). The speaker builds character through each speech—it is not attached to him/her at all times, for eternity. It can be built during a speech and it can be ruined during a speech. The “rules” of rhetoric dictate that a speaker eschews deception because unethical behavior is so damaging (Beason, 1991, p. 342) and that an audience’s belief of a rhetor that displays ethical behavior is reasonable (Fortenbaugh, 1992, p. 226). Aristotle noted that people are open to persuasion when they sense goodness and goodwill of a speaker (Fortenbaugh, 1992, p. 216). This firmly places, as Aristotle noted, rhetoric as the counterpart of dialectic.

Yet, it is simply not enough to agree, for Grimaldi correctly noted that rhetoric prepares one for judgment as well as action (Grimaldi, 1972, p. 27). Persuasion is laudable, but it is incomplete without action (Allard-Nelson, 2001, p. 247). Postman (1976, p. 235) noted that “a principle of human communication... is the idea that whatever you think is going on in any situation depends on how you ‘frame’ or ‘label’ the event, that is, where you stand in relation to it.” After all, why persuade an audience if at the end of the day, there is no change in the process or movement of the subject matter? Rhetors are called to bring about action if they want to have good and complete rhetoric. And this action must be ethical (Wallace, 1970, p. 73). It is vital to be ethical, displaying wisdom, goodwill, and virtue, even when this action takes audiences down a path that may not appear to be. One must be willing to be truthful so the audience may make an intelligent decision, as long as the speaker acts ethically and does not mislead the judgment of the audience (Fortenbaugh, 1992, p. 320). Herrick noted “standards of excellence for rhetoric” that make it clear why there is a goodness to rhetoric when the speaker behaves ethically: these

are “any standards that assisted in the discovery of appropriate facts and truths, enhanced human capacity to defend and test those facts and truths, extended respect for people as givers and hearers of reasons, encouraged the creation and preservation of contests for free exchange of arguments, and elevated human capacities to give and hear reasons” (Herrick, 1992, p. 146). It would appear that Herrick is correct in his summation; it is unclear how many actually behave in such a manner during communicative dealings. One can only hope that actions and desires to teach rhetorical action and habits will properly form that person into an ethical speaker (Halloran, 1982, p. 61).

Grimaldi (1980, p. 41) noted that the subject material and manner of presentation should be “carefully and intelligently selected” before presented to an audience. This leads to a thoughtful discussion and actionable decisions. While an audience must have the capacity to be moved and acted upon (Allard-Nelson, 2001, p. 248), it is the duty of the communicator to know the audience and properly frame the text. Aristotle charged the speaker with the duty to put the audience into the correct frame of mind to foster judgment (1984, p. 90). Persuasion through character was important to Aristotle, for he knew that a respected and trusted speaker would be believed by an audience (Fortenbaugh, 1992, p. 209). The audience is likely to trust a speaker if he/she appears to be like the members of the audience, sharing the same values and goals (Beason, 1991, p. 331). Speakers who mislead or conceal intentions are not acting ethically. Those who have to be “taught” how to act virtuously behave in a shameful way, as they are concealing that they lack any natural ability (Garver, 1985, p. 54). Those who use fear or demagoguery also damage character, for they seek to “lessen the voices of the Other” (Arnett, 2001, p. 328) by their speech acts. Arendt (1998, p. 181) noted the need to understand the importance of recognizing ethics:

The moment we want to say *who* somebody is, our very vocabulary leads us astray into saying *what* he is; we get entangled in a description of qualities he necessarily shares with others like him' we begin to describe a type or a 'character' in the old meaning of the word, with the result that his specific uniqueness escapes us.

This shows the importance of ethos in the discussion and understanding ideas. It is also where one can see the need for Aristotle's "real world" approach. When one dissolves the need for ethical behavior—the wisdom, the virtue, the goodwill—and replaces it with abstract theory or basal behavior, there is an abuse of rhetoric. Kuypers noted the following:

A conception of prudence necessitates that we respect qualities that the academy and critical theorists usually eschew: virtue, morality, and the "right" or "good action. Prudence is not concerned with bodies of knowledge, nor is it contained in bodies of propositions; instead it is concerned with action. It can be said to be a product of experience and the possession of reason. It is concerned with consequences, uncertain judgments, and ethical considerations. Prudence may be contrasted with *sophia* in that it operates in the realm of moral and political action, whereas *sophia* represents wisdom generated in the speculative sciences and philosophy. (1996, p. 456)

Aristotle is right about the usefulness of rhetoric because truth and justice are superior to their opposites. If a speaker misleads an audience to make bad judgments through the use of untruths and injustice, then there is a violation of rhetoric's rules. The ethical nature has been cast aside to create something selfish and twisted. Grimaldi (1980, p. 27) noted the importance of using language in an ethical manner to defend rhetoric and guide the audience to the realities of truth and justice. A rhetor moves through multiple steps in his/her effort to produce ethical rhetoric, according to Wallace (1970, p. 94). The rhetor must decide whether or not to speak. Then

he/she justifies and identifies the circumstances and decides if explanation is warranted. He/she then determines if he/she is technically equipped to act. Finally, the audience is given responsibility, because the last action falls upon them to accept or reject the message. These steps enable an ethical rhetor to carry on with his/her actions and not violate the principles of ethical rhetoric. Aristotle (1984, p. 91) also recognized that a speaker is most persuasive with ethos is rationally produced during the communicative act. It is clear that persuasion can take place with a strong argument or the stirring of the emotions (Allard-Nelson, 2001, pp. 250-251), but it is necessary to focus on the importance of ethos and how the proof—with its three parts—are worthy of discussion and analysis in a technological age.

Halloran calls ethos “argument from authority” (1982, p. 60). This basically states that if a person is good and wise, then he/she is thus believable. He readily admits that this is a simplistic view, but it is quite thorough in its brevity. Aristotle noted the same premise in *Rhetoric* 1356a8-13, that a speaker is most persuasive when ethos is rationally produced by the argument (1984, p. 91). Put in practical terms, if one encounters a well-designed and built building, then it is likely that the viewer will believe the builder is excellent at his/her craft. However, if one encounters an excellent builder, then the viewer has no reason to believe that the builder is capable of duplicating the task by creating more excellent buildings (Allard-Nelson, 2001, p. 246).

The effort is obtaining this authority. One can follow basic principles of effective communication and carefully select a topic, analyze an audience, thoughtfully craft a message, and deliver it skillfully. Aristotle places the task at a more rudimentary level in *Rhetoric* 1378a. One needs to have wisdom, virtue, and goodwill toward the audience (1984, p. 91). Grimaldi noted that virtue is “revealed by the acts of the person” (1980, p. 201), and Allard-Nelson holds

that virtue “does not occur automatically” and is the choice of the rhetor (2001, p. 255). Aristotle (NE 1145a) claims that wisdom and virtue are inseparable (1998, p. 158). Kuypers noted that wisdom examines “who we are and who we are becoming” (1996, pp. 457-458). London views Aristotle’s concept of virtue is so that knowledge will “inform praxis” (London, 2001, p. 553). Ethical rhetors produce excellent actions by “repeatedly performing excellent actions” (Allard-Nelson, 2001, p. 252). Beason calls a rhetor’s ethical potential for success the “inclination to succeed” (1991, p. 338). Finally, Fortenbaugh stated that “a speaker of good character is more apt to have an attentive audience than one who lacks good character” (1992, p. 228).

The ethical speaker is clearly one with a strong grounding in wisdom, virtue, and goodwill. That speaker will craft a message from this grounding, and it will reveal itself to the audience throughout the delivery. The understanding of ethos directs the speaker in crafting the message so that it will persuade the audience from that ethical grounding, showing the character that he/she wants to reveal (Halloran, 1982, p. 60). The ethical communicator seeks to persuade through reason, and not diminish the judgment of the audience through emotional appeals (Fortenbaugh, 1992, p. 228). Clayton (2004, p. 2) correctly observes that “(a)nyone who uses Aristotelian rhetoric, it would seem, is to use it only in the right way and for the right reasons: to defend the true and the just and to make sure they prevail over falsehood and injustice. He must avoid deception and manipulation regardless of their effectiveness.” Transformation, establishment, and maintenance of society are only fully realized through the wisdom of the ethical rhetor (Kuypers, 1996, p. 456). Aristotle noted in *Nicomachean Ethics* (1144a) that man’s work is only realized through wisdom and virtue, as virtue tells us where to go and wisdom correctly gets us there (1998, p. 158). Arnett (2001, p. 331) concluded that “(t)he goal

of phronesis is to do what is appropriate in a given historical moment that is also sensitive to the narrative background of particular patterns and the historical situation.”

The rhetor develops both the choice and the object of the choice (Allard-Nelson, 2001, p. 257). It is also clear that unethical rhetors show a lack of wisdom, virtue, and goodwill (Aristotle, 1984, p. 91). Humans have the capacity, regardless of upbringing or education, to make choices that are both good and bad. Humans have the capacity to make choices that seem good at the time, only to falter under the weight of reality. This is a limitation made by humans, a limitation of wisdom. The question with which humans are left is whether or not they are aware that they do not know what they do not know. Grimaldi (1980, p. 229) noted that a “thoughtless, foolish man would be the opposite of the man possessing practical wisdom” and that Aristotle calls this self-deception—as opposed to ignorance—for humans are responsible for learning and knowledge. Humans must be aware of what they know and what they don’t know. Otherwise, as Aristotle noted, humans act in self-deception and endanger the audience. One must act with wisdom, virtue, and goodwill. One must understand self-knowledge and then, as Cherry (1998, p. 2) noted, represent oneself “in the speech as knowledgeable, intelligent, competent, and concerned for the welfare of the audience.”

There is then a move from the basis of goodness to the realm of effectiveness. There is a use of goodwill to ensure the audience that they are viewed as friends, and words are offered as would be offered to friends (Fortenbaugh, 1992, p. 220). One should strive to make “moral convictions as effective as possible” (Garver, 1985, p. 59). As Garver continues, “(v)irtue consists not only in loving and honoring the good, embracing the right values, but in doing something about it.” This is valuable information, as the importance of action has been discussed. What good is love? What good is moral conviction if one does not seek action from

those who will listen? To move into effectiveness, there must be persuasion toward action.

Halloran recalls Aristotle's notion of actions in *Nicomachean Ethics* by stating,

For the things which we have to learn before we can do them we learn by doing: men become builders by building houses, and harpists by playing the harp. Similarly, we become just by the practice of just actions, self-controlled by exercising self-control, and courageous by performing acts of courage. (1982, pp. 60-61)

This notion holds that virtue may be something that humans have naturally, but must be exercised to become useful. Grimaldi (1980, p. 158) also noted as much by calling the habit of virtue "established" and the disposition toward virtue "incomplete." Cherry (1998, p. 2) stated that Aristotle argued that we are neither virtuous nor morally depraved at birth, but we must act and create a habit of virtue. Humans are, as Aristotle noted in *Nicomachean Ethics* 1113a, responsible for the exercise of virtue, because humans are also, then, responsible for vice (1998, p. 59).

Humans must exercise the complete proof of ethos in order to be effective. Humans must exercise the "habit" of virtue, humans must show wisdom by understanding knowledge, and humans must offer goodwill to the audience. Humans must show respect for people, believing they have the capacity to give and hear reason (Herrick, 1992, p. 145). Humans must use the ability to develop ethos in order to craft a message that only fosters an ethical judgment in the audience. Humans must build up "a store of ethos" to make choices acceptable to the audience (Carlson, 1994, p. 2).

This discussion of ethics is incomplete without moving it into discourse. Grimaldi (1972, p. 136) called this an "integrated act in which person speaks to person for this is both the beginning and the end of the whole operation." Reynolds (1993, p. 327) noted the "social

context surrounding the solitary rhetor” and that ethos is a social act that is “a product of a community’s character.” In other words, one cannot simply look at ethos as a simple being under a basic microscope. There are multiple aspects of ethos—and one cannot disclude the audience and its interaction. Reynolds wisely ties in the aspect of habit that was discussed previously: “Character is formed by habit, not engendered by nature, and those habits come from the community or culture. One identifies an individual's character, then, by looking to the community. An individual's ethos cannot be determined outside of the space in which it was created or without a sense of the cultural context” (Reynolds, 1993, p. 329).

One has to view public discourse, as what Mailloux (1989, p. 147) describes, as “a complex rhetorical struggle of everyone with everyone, a conversation traversed by uneven power relations, a rhetorical conflict implicated in social formations of race, class, gender, age, and nation.” Sometimes speakers face a small audience and have limited focus as a result. Other times, the audience is much grander in scale, and has an incredible scope, which stretches the ability to effectively share a message. But that is the rhetorical calling, to bridge the gap, regardless how massive. Every situation is different, and every rhetor must evaluate the terrain and create what works for the given occasion (Makay & Brown, 1972, p. 4). And every occasion is different, as each rhetor and each audience has a different perspective (Cherwitz & Hikins, 1986, p. 106). Finally, speakers have to also be cognizant of the historical moment so that the dialogue is “invitational, embedded, and temporal” (Arnett, 2001, p. 323).

To move forward with effective, ethical, discourse one must understand the Other. This is not an easy task, for one must first attempt to understand the society. This is a key component to understand the moral character of the Other (Whittenberger-Keith, 1992, p. 34). One can use this understanding to craft messages so that there is a greater dialogic experience, which only

adds to knowledge. This verbal interaction, according to Brent (1992, p. 120),

...can help us understand how we build ourselves and our understanding of the world. If we can understand this, perhaps we can also understand how to sort through the seemingly infinite variety of jostling opinions that clamor for our assent and to identify in a principled way the ones that are worthy of having influence on our belief systems—to control, that is, in a nonarbitrary way, the formation of our beliefs.

Only by being aware of the audience, the society, and the historical ground are rhetors able to affect change, or potentially more importantly, to be personally changed (Cherwitz & Hikins, 1986, p. 120). In the grand scheme of Aristotle's rhetoric, public discourse is important because, as Brent (1992, p. 70) argued, "worldviews are not isolated heaps of knowledge, but rather complex, integrated systems of logical, emotional, and ethical beliefs."

Interaction with others occurs on different scales, but one thing remains: learning is viewed as a natural condition, as Aristotle did in *Rhetoric* 1371a30-1371b10 (1984, p. 71), and knowledge is actively sought. Sometimes this is work, while other times it is leisure (Holba, 2007), but it is a choice to seek knowledge. This quest is often social, where interaction with others allows the development of knowledge (Brent, 1992, p. 64). There is interaction with others and their counsel is sought. Knowledge is developed and this knowledge is turned into action. Knowledge is transformed into action through reaching decisions and executing plans (Kuypers, 1996, p. 458). Information from the past is taken and transformed in such a way that the audience will best be able to receive and make judgments on that information (Brent, 1992, p. 118). Language and speech styles are shifted to best deliver the message to the audience at the time (1991, p. 332). Beason (1991, p. 341) asked if this is ethical, changing persona to one that the audience views in a favorable way, in effect manufacturing an ethos to fit the occasion.

Garver (2004, p. 378) also noticed the problem, as “(o)ne can be eloquent and virtuous and still be unjust through increasing inequality and reducing the full citizenship of others.” These objections are worthy because, as mentioned before, rhetoric can be abused by the unjust and immoral. It is up to the ethical rhetor to be aware of the audience and craft a message that brings about a true and just judgment from that audience. The rhetor cannot be persuasive, and the audience cannot be persuaded if the rhetor does not know the audience and address it accordingly (Clayton, 2004, p. 1).

Aristotle (1984, pp. 124-125) noted the importance of matching the speech to the audience and that people look favorably upon a speech that is adapted to and reflective of their character. This connection creates an *ethos*-laden bond between the speaker and audience (Dunbar, Ramirez, Jr., & Burgoon, 2003, pp. 24-25). This is an interpersonal connection that allows a greater transference of wisdom, virtue, and goodwill (Makay & Brown, 1972, pp. 77-78). This interpersonal connection happens regardless of medium or audience size. When any audience gathers to discuss issues and form judgments, this is the heart of rhetoric. And these audiences are only likely to gather when there is a connection, likely through something that they hold as important (Grimaldi, 1980, p. 85). This ethical interplay is a concept of public virtue. This is different for different people, as some base their concept of virtue on traditional values, while others are concerned with public persona, and some are focused on managing public virtues to obtain persuasion (Whittenberger-Keith, 1992, pp. 34-37). Clayton (2004, p. 3) believed that Aristotle viewed an education of ethics and politics was an education in virtue, as it led students to knowledge and training to act in a virtuous manner. The sharing of this education with others is ethical, so it is also virtuous.

It is in the public domain where we find the ability to encourage Aristotle’s promotion of

virtuous knowledge. Arnett (2001, p. 321) pointed out Arendt's concept of "common space" where people gather for discourse and disagreement. This common space is a place where ethical rhetors and audiences are expected to thrive and move through issues. While there may or may not be resolution, the optimal situation is one in which rhetoric flourishes. Grimaldi (1972, p. 52) noted that participants must be "disposed toward listening" for rhetoric to exist. This is the heart of Aristotle's good man, which Fortenbaugh (1992, p. 222) noted is both single and perfect, a "combination of moral virtue and practical wisdom." He contrasts this from the good citizen, who is primarily concerned with goodness within the structure of that society. Aristotle was correct in his assertions. The good man seeks to do what is ethical, regardless of the surrounding structure. He will act out his rhetorical habits and draw in others to do the same, creating a common space of rich and vibrant discourse. The public domain is thus "more hospitable" and a "worthy pursuit" (Arnett, 2001, p. 329). Without the common space, ideas stagnate and tyranny becomes possible (Herrick, 1992, p. 134).

Cherwitz and Hikins (1986, p. 108) grounded rhetoric within the perspective of an individual rhetor, making their perspectives "embraceable by others." This has some merit, but in a common space, it can be seen as problematic because of the discursive aspect of the ethical public. There is not an individual meaning, but multiple meanings, as each rhetor is both the speaker and audience at the same time (Makay & Brown, 1972, p. 124). Herrick (1992) views this duality as a benefit, as discourse brings about disagreements, ideas, and refinement of positions—all members of the discourse have an enhanced moral character (p. 134). Grimaldi (1980, p. 60) called rhetoric the "vehicle for all discourse." This is a great metaphor, as vehicles are used in the public sphere to take people of similar or dissimilar backgrounds and persuasions to a singular location. Granted, sometimes people want to be let out early, but the destination is

usually the same—and in this exercise, that destination is knowledge and understanding.

Rhetoric is not just limited to the spoken word—it is indeed within the realm of the written word. It is also fully within the realm of the mediated world. Grimaldi (1972, p. 18) noted that “(r)hetoric functions as a method of communication, spoken or written, between people as they seek to determine truth or fallacy in real situations.” Bitzer (1963, p. xiv) echoed Campbell’s definition of rhetoric as “a general art of discourse; it comprehends tragedy as well as private conversation, poetry as well as oratory, the purest expository writing as well as the most sublime oral presentation.” So, although these definitions were laid out for criticism decades ago, why would they not also work in the world of mediated communication, in the world of technological communication? While language is a key component for developing ethos (Grimaldi, 1972, p. 50), there is also the appearance and manner of delivery. These items may not be readily available for direct observation, but can be inferred by the work itself (Smith, 2007, p. 120). Mumford (1952, p. 68) noted that:

...there is no form of art [than writing] that tells one so much, at every stroke, about the individuality of the writer, about his tone and his temper and his general habits of life. So truly is handwriting a key to the human personality than when one wants to refer to the highest type of individuation in art, we refer to the artist’s signature.

The written word clearly has weight, not merely in what it can deliver in terms of content, but also the meaning within it that situates it with the writer.

Building ethos, as has been mentioned previously, is done through the communicative act. This act can create a credible image of the rhetor, or it could create a less-than-flattering image of the rhetor. Effective writing is critical to create a credible image (Beason, 1991, p. 328). If writing, whether on paper or with communication technologies, is flawed or poorly

executed, one cannot expect to attract, much less retain an audience that would hold the rhetor in a favorable light. Good writing must be a good act (Garver, 1985, p. 56). And this good writing can appear in many different media. It is unfortunate that the study of technological communication is an immature field—technological communication is itself immature. Rhetorical study of the field must move beyond the temptation to follow Plato’s assault on sophistic rhetoric, calling it a “knack” instead of an “art” (Brent, 1992, p. 103). There is indeed real knowledge to impart, regardless of whether or not one falls into the trappings of assaulting the medium.

Writing is a valuable skill, so the medium should not be the basis for formulating opinion on communicative discourse through technology. Throughout history, we have seen examples of when writing is preferable to speaking. Bitzer (1963, p. 338) cited Campbell’s notion of how readers have the command of time to read at whatever pace necessary, including rereading and stepping away from the text to think. These luxuries are not afforded to the audience of a speaker. The inclusion of technological communication furthers these benefits as storage and recollection of text has been made considerably easier. There is also much greater access to text in both realms of time and space. Material from the past and from around the globe is quickly within reach of a potentially immense audience. This scope of audience can make message formation more complicated, as readers view the text in different ways, with different levels of importance and meaning. Although the author isn’t present, he/she can still give an impression of character, as Brent (1992, pp. 66-67) detailed:

(L)et us first ask whether the difference between listening and reading is really as significant to the operation of ethos as the question implies. The main difference between the reader and the hearer from this perspective is the absence of delivery as a

factor in persuasion. This might be a problem if ethos were conceived simply as the way a rhetor presents herself through facial expression, tone of voice, and such. However, ethos in the Aristotelian sense is not primarily an aspect of delivery. Rather, it is an aspect of invention. As one of the three *pisteis* , it refers to the impression the rhetor gives of herself through her choice of words and arguments, based on her solid knowledge of the virtues, the emotions, and the facts of human character. The audience of the Aristotelian orator, therefore must construct the rhetor's character from the clues provided by the discourse in very much the same way that a reader must, for the audience of a speech has no more direct access to the interior of the person who stands before them than does the reader.

This scholarship further enhances what was said earlier concerning the importance of effective writing and the power of the communicative act to generate ethos. It is then evident that in order to “construct the rhetor's character” one must look at every clue available, which includes basic foundational practices of proper grammar and spelling, as well as the weighty aspects of argumentation style, major points of development, and worldview of the rhetor (Beason, 1991, p. 327). Critics and audience-rhetors must also train themselves to look past the persona, a “mask” that a writer intentionally wears (Cherry, 1998, p. 5) to shape opinion of him/her. One must look for the good, moral character—shown through wisdom, virtue, and goodwill—to discover the ethical writer and assign due credibility (p. 7). Only then can one work through a discursive event to come to understanding and knowledge. There must be a willing approach to cooperate in the rhetorical situation (Makay & Brown, 1972, p. 67). Grimaldi (1980, p. 32) understood rhetoric as “not persuasion in itself, but the ability to perceive in any given subject, problem, or situation those elements which are suasive and which make decision possible and reasonable.”

True rhetoric simply creates a situation where the audience member can come to an understanding on his/her own terms.

It is necessary to analyze the text that has been written, so one is able to determine if it fits within a true rhetoric. It is understood that the audience is always changing and that the framework within the text is a reflection of the historical moment. Mailloux (1989, p. 17) correctly noted that any rhetorical analysis should describe this moment so that one is able to fully understand the “topics, arguments, tropes, ideologies, and so forth which determine how texts are established as meaningful through rhetorical exchanges” (p. 15). The analysis of the historical moment and the transition into text is not a task to be taken lightly (Brent, 1992, pp. 104-105), as one seeks ways to engage the audience both now and for the time that follows. One must find a way to call a person to action, and help the audience understand the groundwork of that call, regardless of when they read the text.

The rhetor is best able to craft such a message by use of evidence, as well as strong arguments to support such evidence. Evidence and argument are powerful in their persuasion, leading readers to a belief of what is laid bare before them (Carlson, 1994, p. 2). Beason (1991, p. 337) noted that an audience is quite likely to support a rhetor and his/her message if he/she demonstrates a knowledge and understanding of the material. Grimaldi (1980, p. 212) noted that the man of virtue is able to derive a “deliberate moral choice” and action through the proper use of rhetoric. It has been discussed—and studied for generations—that perceived expertise lends itself to a higher credibility for the rhetor, with leads to a greater likelihood of persuasion (Myers & Goldberg, 1970, pp. 178-179). If one strives to be an ethical rhetor, then he/she must seek to know, to understand, and to become an expert. Evidence is first judged so that there can be a determination of its usefulness to the audience so they, too may judge the argument. Speakers

take mountains of evidence and reduce it to a molehill, as reproducing all of the evidence would be overwhelming for the audience (Carlson, 1994, p. 2). That evidence is still available to the audience, either through the reproduction by the rhetor, or in the era of technological communication, by further research by the audience. While the entire mountain of evidence would be impossible to reproduce for the audience, it is still available for analysis, discussion, and understanding. To this point, Postman (1976, p. 202) noted that “(m)ost people are perfectly willing to accept the contrary opinions of others, and many an intelligent discussion will end on a note of civil disagreement. Civility begins to depart, however, when opinions come disguised as facts.”

One then wonders if ethos truly can be simulated. If a speaker is able to enter into discourse with a public that has the potential to be fully informed, can a rhetor simply appear as knowledgeable when he/she is not? Reynolds (1993, p. 328) noted that the negotiation between the rhetor and public is a social construction and production that is held to account by the community, thus disrupting any effort to manipulate ethos. The audience may rely on rhetors to be ethical, but ultimately rhetors must remain ethical because the community dictates such behavior. The enhanced ability through technological communication to determine a fraudulent attempt at garnering ethos only further solidifies the ethical grounding of the rhetor. Granted, the audience may rely on the honor of the rhetor in specialized situations (Cherwitz & Hikins, 1986, p. 3), but the community still has the ability to investigate. Those who choose not to investigate are at the mercy of the rhetor and the responsible members of the community who seek to keep the rhetor ethical. Carlson (1994, p. 2) correctly stated how this analysis is beneficial:

(I)t forces us as critics to become sensitized to our rhetorical choices. If evidence is evaluated on the basis of how it is defended, then the very nature of the required defense

can force us to think hard about what we consider valid evidence. This kind of thinking is vital if we are to create new ways to investigate and evaluate the plethora of diverse communication modes that exist in our modern society.

Note that Carlson made this observation in 1994, at the beginning of the explosion of the technological communication era. These words are much more relevant today. The rhetor crafts an argument and sends it out for consumption. This moves rapidly and globally to an audience, as Brent (1992, p. 13) noted, “may consist of hundreds or even millions of individual entities, some not yet born.” This is a remarkable statement, as the concept of “text” is moving from a physical book to a virtual one. And while people across the world may have access to a physical text, the speed and dissemination of the virtual text is staggering. There has been an entry into a new historical moment, where those involved in the communicative act are now forced to juggle the argument, amount of evidence, communicative framework, and historical fit (Arnett, 2001, p. 323). But, to note the solution, Mumford (1952, p. 7) stated that the human spirit can revolt against these technological changes. The autonomy of the human spirit is spontaneous, religious, and has inexhaustible creativity.

Carlson (1994, p. 3) calls for a reevaluation of evidence and argument, as audience and critics have “new modes of evaluation.” There should not be an effort to create an ethical dilemma by creating a false rhetoric, not only because it is much easier to uncover such behavior in a technological age, but because there has always been a call to such action. Mumford (1952, p. 11) asked:

What is that missing element? That missing element, I suggest, is the human person. Our power and knowledge, our scientific discoveries and our technical achievements, have all been running wild because Western man turned his back upon the very core and

center of his own life. He has not merely lost confidence in himself: he has made his proper life insignificant, and so he finds the rest of the world equally empty of values, equally insignificant.

Perhaps the evaluation should be on the errors of allowing rhetoric to be abused, as it has been throughout history. There should be an embracing of the ethical standard in the age of information, for it keeps humans closer to a true rhetoric. People are at their best when they are observed, and they tend to be more civil in their actions and our dialogue. This civility opens up the discussion to more “diversity of ideas” and, as Arnett noted, offers “a place for conversation that permits talking, requires listening, and invites reciprocal learning” (2001, p. 328).

Humans should continue to write well, not because they can, but because they should. They should work creatively and analytically, for as Wallace (1970, pp. 121-122) stated, “(t)he heart of rhetoric is not the forms of grammar nor the structures of linguistic behavior. In a word, a rhetor-in-practice learns to think substantively and to speak substantively as a rhetor would.” Rhetors work not just on “motor skills” and “forming speech sounds,” but seek to develop the communicative act. Without the ethical standard set forth by Aristotle—wisdom, virtue, and goodwill—the communicative act fails, regardless of the medium. Mumford (1966, p. 316) noted how the ethical rhetor would arise from the technology by saying the “deliberate expression and fulfilment of human potentialities requires a quite different approach from that bent solely on the control of natural forces and the modification of human nature in order to facilitate and expand the system of control.” He further stated (1952, p. 17) that “(m)an’s technical contrivances have their parallel in organic activities exhibited by other living creatures... (b)ut the arts represent a specifically human need, and they rest on a trait quite unique in man: the capacity for symbolism.” Humans clearly seek substantive discourse.

Chapter Three

Is Social Media a “Knack” Environment Where One can Form a Synthetic *Ethos*?

Arendt (1998, p. 180) noted that when human togetherness is lost, speech becomes a mere means to an end. This togetherness is found in the “revelatory quality of speech and action,” where “people are *with* others and neither for nor against them.” Then speech becomes “mere talk...whether it serves to deceive the enemy or to dazzle everybody with propaganda,” and thus, the words have no revelatory power. But what kind of power ought words to have? Aristotle’s *Rhetoric* laid the foundation for the understanding of persuasion. He defined appeals by dividing them into two categories: artistic and inartistic. The inartistic category includes accounts from witnesses and “testimony of slaves taken under torture.” The artistic category includes *ethos*, *pathos*, and *logos* (*Rhetoric*, 1356a), which are the proper concern of rhetoric. Rhetors use inartistic appeals, but they invent or discover the artistic (Killingsworth, 2005, p. 250). Aristotle noted the three categories of *ethos* that assist in developing a high *ethos*: *phronesis*, *arête*, and *eunoia*. *Arête* is a means of excellence and virtue. In rhetorical terms, it is the speaker living up to his or her full potential. *Eunoia* means “well mind” and is indicative of a state of sound mental health. For the rhetor, it is the goodwill or benevolence that a speaker generates with the audience. *Phronesis* is practical wisdom. It is a consideration of action to enhance the quality of life. It not only considers the change but the outcome of such action. Aristotle found fault with the sophistical rhetoricians for ignoring the importance of the *ethos* of the speaker (*Rhetoric*, 1356a10-13), as a rhetorician is persuasive through *ethos* when he speaks in a way that makes him worthy of belief (*Rhetoric*, 1356a6-8). Since *ethos* has a status as an

artistic proof that is generated by rhetorical text, then does a rhetor need to successfully employ all three categories of Aristotelian *ethos* to be considered an artful rhetorician, especially in communicatively lean environments, such as online forums, message boards, and social networking platforms?

Aristotle attributed intellectual and moral virtues to the virtuous person. The intellectual virtue of *phronesis* allows one to deliberate well; the moral virtues include courage and justice. Aristotle noted the moral virtues are importantly different from the intellectual virtues, but the moral virtues are also different one from another (Deslauriers, 2002, p. 101). Aristotle also identified three virtues that are non-emotional modes of social interaction: friendliness, wittiness, and truthfulness (Fortenbaugh, 1975, p. 87-88). Fitz noted “the cardinal virtues for the ancient Greeks were basically courage, temperance, justice, especially as fairness, and wisdom which embraces the other three” (2007, p. 5).

Aristotle noted that virtue in action brings about happiness, and that virtue as a state of the soul is of value only for the activity which it makes possible (Broadie, 1991, p. 57). While one moves virtue toward happiness, one is also responsible for vice (Aristotle, NE, 1113a ch. 4; 1113a ch. 5). Aristotle placed upon the citizen the task to instill virtues in others (Deslauriers, 2002, p. 108). Living according to virtue is a way of life, and virtue must be taught, practiced, and developed. A community or large segment of a society “must share the values and beliefs underlying the virtues so that they will be supported and upheld” (Fitz, 2007, p. 2). In an age of rapid and global information dissemination, the idea of community has changed. Man and the arts have been displaced by the machine; the “Post-Historic Man” has emerged and blends in with the fanciful nature of the machine (Mumford, 1952, p. 5). To meet this change, perhaps it would be wise to understand the importance of a virtuous foundation and call to action.

It is through virtue that man is made good and able to show excellence in work. The morally virtuous man must possess practical wisdom, justice, temperance, and fortitude. He must also intellectually act in accord with a right rule (Gallagher, 1956, p. 33). Aristotle's supreme good is functioning well in accordance with virtue and excellence; and practical virtue becomes the focus of attention (Broadie, 1991, p. 57). Actions require morally valuable choices, but they are not the same as desires. Virtuous choices involve rational desires which are desires for the good (Deslauriers, 2002, p. 104). A virtuous person acts well when occasion arises, causing certain changes in the world with the right frame of mind or with the right motive. A person's action includes involvement, not just the physical act (Broadie, 1991, p. 58). There is need for *phronesis* as a method of involvement to see what is required to prolong the good (Robinson, 2008, p. 691). Aristotle's practical wisdom depends upon the relationship between theory and practice (Statler, et. al., 2007, p. 158). He noted that virtue is a state in accordance with right reason and a state together with right reason. It is "the state of character that is formed to preserve right reason as a rule of action, and that is why this state cannot be understood without the presence of right reason, which is denoted as *phronesis*" (Michelakis, 1961, p. 48). This action of practical wisdom certainly translates across multiple media, as the need to act in the right frame of mind and motive enhances Aristotle's notion of the good, regardless of dissemination of information.

Aristotle noted that some individuals will have a heightened perceptive ability, a *phronesis* (Robinson, 2008, p. 690), which leads one to excellence in deliberation (Michelakis, 1961, p. 23) in a practical way. Practicality shows the rational choices that drive action and the process of deliberation or reflection used to form a rational choice.

To Aristotle, these concepts were intertwined (Broadie, 1991, p. 179). Aristotle did differentiate between the intellectual ability for scientific knowledge and the ability to take judgment-informed action that promotes the good life (Statler, et. al., 2007, p. 155). “*Phronesis* is an active condition for inexact practical wisdom, enabling a person in changing circumstances to see and calculate and do what is good for oneself and conducive to the good life in general” (Wivestad, 2008, p. 310). This moral wisdom is supported by *techne*, which is an active ability to attain specialized knowledge. Practical wisdom largely is connected to moral virtue; although knowing what ought to be done and doing what ought to be done are not the same, practical wisdom serves action beyond itself (Robinson, 2008, p. 690).

Again, one can see the necessary function of acting in a virtuous manner and its impact on the good life. While the attainment of scientific knowledge is separate from judgment-informed action, it is still necessary to support wisdom. Knowledge of communication technologies and platforms, as well as the method of their usage, can help promote and further the good life. Aristotle questioned whether practical wisdom is useful in enhancing the ability of a virtuous man to do what is morally right. He noted that practical wisdom is concerned with what is just, noble, and good (NE, 1143b18-36). Aristotle answered his question by noting that practical wisdom is a virtue and therefore desirable in itself, even if it does not produce anything. Moral virtues make the goal correct, and practical wisdom makes the means correct (NE, 1144a1-9). Proper performance benefits from practical wisdom (Fortenbaugh, 1975, p. 75). Aristotle’s *phronesis* is an intellectual virtue that serves the moral virtues. *Phronesis* is not only about universal values “since it is concerned with action and action is about particulars” (NE, 1141b). Intellectual virtue guides moral virtues toward their right ends and finds suitable means to those ends (Kristjansson, 2005, p. 464). Aristotle noted that *phronesis* “is a state grasping the

truth, involving reason, concerned with action about what is good or bad for a human being” (NE, 1140b).

Aristotle had concerns about the ability of practical wisdom to increase one’s ability act in a just and noble manner, so he noted that a good man chooses his actions for their own sake and that choice is made correct by moral virtue (NE, 1144a11-b1).

Aristotle noted that man has capacity toward cleverness to help determine his steps for the sake of choice. Cleverness can be praiseworthy if the goal is noble, but knavery if the goal is base. Postman (1976, p. 251) noted:

We are bound together by thousands of unwritten contracts without which we would lose the entire basis of predictable continuity in life. And there is a certain craziness in any talk that places such continuity in jeopardy. In a fundamental sense, there may be nothing crazier than the philosophy which advocates ‘doing your own thing.’ For in the sense in which it is sometimes meant, the phrase implies a releasing of oneself from social contracts, including semantic restraints and rules.

A moral man follows the principles of being just and noble, as well as acting in the best interest of the community, where a wicked man distorts principles of action (Fortenbaugh, 1975, p. 76-77). Practical wisdom is not viewed as a scientific process, as it is connected with the unpredictable aspects of human social life. “[I]t does not refer to the kind of clever intelligence that enables people to survive or achieve advantage through cunning. Instead, it refers to the capacity to make judgments and take actions that are *good*. A process-oriented notion of the ethical ‘good’ appears necessarily to involve creative processes of dialogue and interpretation” (Statler, et. al., 2007, p. 159). Language can also shift and be shifted. Postman (1976, p. 226) noted: Postman:

The important idea about verbal inflation is that as it increases, distinctions become less accessible. A word not only suggests meanings; it excludes other meanings. The more meanings a word is allowed to suggest, the less usable it becomes for precision talking. If we cannot distinguish a ‘friend’ from an ‘acquaintance,’ a ‘right’ from a ‘privilege,’ a ‘radical’ from a ‘lunatic,’ a ‘conservative’ from a ‘fascist,’ etc., we are, of course, disarmed.

Dialogue and interpretation as creative processes can be manipulated as they move through a medium. This further enhances the need for a rhetorician to act in a noble and just manner. It also is based upon the need for the audience’s desire to learn—which has only been made more fluid through modern communicative practices.

Aristotle believed the natural human condition was geared toward learning (Rhetoric, 1371a30-1371b10). Human beings are considered to be both—and equally—an intellectual and a social being (Cooper, 1975, p. 177-178). Gallagher (1956, p. 52) noted that “men are made virtuous by the harmonious action of nature, by habit, and by reason.” The philosophical belief of Aristotle was that human desire is aimed at “developing the potentiality for virtue implied by man’s unique characteristic, reason” (Mulgan, 1977, p. 4-5). An intellectually virtuous possesses intuitive reason, and understanding of science, philosophic wisdom, practical wisdom, and art. The wise man deliberates and determines that the end of human life is reached by intermediate actions, not following an extreme. This action is a moral virtue (Gallagher, 1956, p. 34).

Aristotle recognized first principles of knowledge, from which particular rules of human conduct are derived. Practical principles of *phronesis* are concerned with the particulars and general principles are concerned with universals (Michelakis, 1961, p. 16-17). Humans possess a mind and desires, and thus humans are both emotional and intellectual beings. Since humans

have both intellectual and emotional needs, which lead to the possibility intellectual and emotional satisfaction, then both intellectual and moral virtues are needed to achieve good things (Cooper, 1975, p. 147). Fortenbaugh (1975, p. 45) noted that Aristotle believes “emotions are cognitive and therefore open to moral education.” Moral qualities are part of a person’s nature, which are acquired through upbringing and maintained through practice (Broadie, 1991, p. 103). This practice is achieved by approaching each situation with openness. This is a reflection of good training and good living that leads to wisdom (Robinson, 2008, p. 691). Aristotle’s tradition of virtue calls for one to become wise, strong, and virtuous (Wivestad, 2008, p. 312).

Arendt (1998, pp. 50-52) noted that the public is where everything can be seen and heard by everybody. This idea calls humans to act in a way that is beneficial to community. The earliest training moves a person away from appetite and impulse, and begins to steer one toward general openness (Broadie, 1991, p. 108). “Aristotle tells us that, except for the exceptional instances of aimless behavior, human beings always act with some end in view” (Adler, 1978, p. 71). This is as true for learning as it is for teaching and speaking. Humans are purposeful in action and think about a goal and a means toward achieving it. Aristotle also said that people act for some good they wish to obtain and possess. He noted that it makes no sense at all to say that we are acting for an end that we regard as bad for us (Rhetoric, 1360b10-14). It for this reason that humans should move toward virtue, even in learning. It is not enough to know about communication platforms—the science aspect that details the functionality, but it is also important to understand the method of the production (the art), the movement toward the desired end (the practical wisdom), and the understanding of how the principles proceed

through the science (the intuitive reason) in order to understand creation, delivery, understanding, and learning of the message (NE, 1139b-1140b). Aristotle noted in *Rhetoric* the pleasure and nature of learning, and men seek to fulfill a natural desire to know when pursuing ordinary pleasures. Since men are natural, rational beings, learning is a pleasurable activity. This gives men have a natural openness to persuasion through speech, making rhetoric possible (Arnhart, 1981, p. 99). Aristotle considered the foundation of the rhetorical art is based in the cohesion of “the intellectual and appetitive elements in man” (Grimaldi, 1972, p. 24).

Aristotle believed that a fine education leads to the exercise of practical wisdom (Statler, et. al., 2007, p. 157). *Phronesis* is primarily created and matured through instruction and practice, so it is “very important, indeed all-important” for youth to be trained (NE, 1103b). *Phronesis* is an intellectual mindset, rather than a moral foundation of action and reaction, that is promoted through performance of activities; intellectual virtues are fostered through habit. *Phronesis* works through time and experience (Kristjansson, 2005, p. 464). “Aristotle’s consistent view about rhetoric, throughout the *Rhetoric*, is that some things are essential to the art, and other things are merely accessory. So, the proofs are essential, and everything else is accessory” (Dow, 2007, p. 397). If humans have a natural inclination toward learning, as Aristotle posited, then why would one expect that attitude to change in a different communicative medium? An intellectual mindset that works through time and experience would adopt whatever communicative means are necessary. It stands to reason that any manner of usage by rhetoricians and audience would also be learned and retained through habit of use. This seems to indicate that proofs and accessories would be understood, acknowledged, and used.

Human thinking and knowing are based on language and modes of persuasion are furnished by the spoken word (Aristotle, *Rhetoric*, 1156a). Aristotle noted that words and

language express human ideas and thought (Adler, 1978, p. 130). A true statement expresses knowledge, and a false statement expresses error. Aristotle claimed that if a word is significant, there is a definition for it; and if a word is significant, there is an essence corresponding to it. “But Aristotle does not, generally, want to say that there are essences wherever there are significant words, or that an essence is given us by the definition of any significant word” (Dancy, 1975, p. 131). Words in and of themselves are without merit, for the function of rhetoric is not to create the art, but to promote it (Rhetoric, 1355b9-14). Indeed, Aristotle placed the importance on the planning—not the execution—of rhetoric (Arnhart, 1981, p. 35).

Aristotle viewed rhetoric as an art that is concerned with deliberation and judgment between the speaker and the audience, regardless of the medium. Rhetoric can be broken down into three areas: deliberative, judicial, and epideictic speech (Grimaldi, 1972, p. 38). Aristotle noted the importance of setting the end and deliberating the means (NE, 1112b). He addressed excellence in deliberation; deliberating well is good, and excellence in deliberation attains what is good (Michelakis, 1961, p. 51). Speakers show a persuasive character if he shows “prudence,” “virtue,” and “goodwill” (1378a5-19). Arnhart stated:

Audiences believe that speakers without these three qualities are untrustworthy. Without prudence, a speaker is unlikely to have correct opinions. But even if his opinions are correct, he cannot be trusted to deliver his opinions sincerely if he lacks virtue. And even if he is both prudent and virtuous, he might still mislead his listeners if he is not well disposed toward them. A speaker wins the trust of his audience by showing that he is a good man, that he knows what he is talking about, and that he wishes to do what is best for his listeners. (1981, p. 112)

Wisdom may be needed to display correct opinions, but one with a lack of wisdom is correct some of the time. Would this person, at the moment of speaking, appear to have wisdom at the moment he or she gets something right? Does the speaker display *ethos* at that moment? If a person lacks virtue, are they not able to hide that during the moment of speech? Can the speaker's ill will toward the audience be successfully hidden? Perhaps these questions become even more difficult when adapting them to contemporary communicative platforms. Moments of oratory can reveal many things about a speaker, but the speaker cannot be seen or heard through many communication technologies. At this point, the virtuous nature of the audience becomes more important than ever. There is a moral necessity to understand the argument and analyze it before accepting or rejecting it. Postman (1976, p. 10) noted that it is not the language that is corrupted, but "the relationship of their remarks to the totality of the situation they are in."

Aristotle believed the skill of rhetoric will enable rhetors to see the elements that favor his or her argument, as well as the best way to use those elements. He noted the importance of facts and the ability of techniques to "unleash whatever persuasive power the facts possess" (Dow, 2007, p. 396). Rhetors may issue appeals to authorities, invoke common values, compile information for the claim, and speak to multiple audiences at the same time (Killingsworth, 2005, p. 259). This concept of multiple audiences is interesting, as the understanding of audience was made up of the different people before the speaker. It has now grown to a global scope. Aristotle insisted that one must discern the principles of persuasion (Arnhart, 1981, p. 35) and discern the particular circumstances affected the deployment and persuasive power of rhetoric (Dow, 2007, p. 396). The rhetorician is like an artist in knowing the means necessary to create an end; however, both are at the mercy of the situation and being able to achieve the end. Both may be productive of the object of the art, but they may not always be successful in

producing it; “possession of the art does not guarantee the actual production of the object” (Arnhart, 1981, p. 34). Rhetorical persuasion can be explained by referencing the components of the art itself. Other features—accessories—may also aid in the persuasion; excellent delivery and gaining the audience’s attention are types of accessories. Persuasion can take place without them, but without the essential components, persuasion will not occur. Accessories simply “create conditions in which rhetorical persuasion could easily take place” (Dow, 2007, p. 397-398).

The art of rhetoric may be morally neutral, but a rhetorician is restricted by his audience in a manner that forces him to display good moral character. The morally poor speaker can speak in a way so as to appear virtuous, so he is not free to speak as he pleases—he is required to speak like a man of virtue (Arnhart, 1981, p. 36). Sometimes an audience can be deceived by the appearance of a good character or by a speaker’s genuinely good character; in both cases, they will accept incorrect opinions. Audiences are most often intelligent enough to recognize a speaker as trustworthy if he or she is prudent, virtuous, and shows goodwill toward them. A successful speaker will respect and embrace this judgment. A speaker is unlikely to prosper if he displays his belief that his listeners are foolish (Arnhart, 1981, p. 112-113). Arnhart continued:

Moreover, it is clear that the persuasiveness of a speaker’s character cannot be dismissed as irrational. For is it not quite rational to judge a rhetorician’s reliability as proportional to his prudence, his virtue, and his goodwill? It would seem, then, that Aristotle’s account of this element of rhetoric further confirms the solidity of the commonsense judgments of listeners. (1981, p. 113)

The appeal’s success depends upon the movement of the audience, which may be tethered to contextual elements that include social, cultural, and historical factors (Killingsworth, 2005, p.

261-262). Further, Aristotle made it clear that rhetorical persuasion is neither forced nor guaranteed. While rhetoric may have power, it is not irresistible. The audience is free to accept or reject the speaker's claims, regardless of the persuasive nature of the speaker (Arnhart, 1981, p. 35). It appears that a speaker can deceive an audience for a time, thus having a synthetic ethos, created for that moment to achieve success. As Arnhart mentions, the speaker may not prosper, but for the time of that particular delivery, the speaker can succeed without wisdom, virtue, and/or goodwill. It is unfortunate that communication technologies can help shield the deception.

Aristotle appeared to accept the argument made by Plato's Socrates about the artful nature of rhetoric. It can only be an art if the rhetorician is able to provide a rational account of the nature of persuasion. The rhetorician merely possesses a "knack" for rhetoric if he lacks knowledge of the reasons for his success. Rhetoric only becomes a genuine art when one has knowledge of the causes of persuasion. "Like every art, rhetoric must combine theoretical and practical components. Success in practice is not enough: rhetorical practice must be guided by rhetorical theory" (Arnhart, 1981, p. 15). Through communication technologies, one can certainly produce an artful display, regardless of the values and goodwill of the rhetorician. And this is also a result of being enchanted by irrelevant, small things (Arendt, 1998, p. 52). Art does not imitate nature's products but instead imitates nature's productive activities. It is a pushing of technical developments as a means of escape of the natural world (p. 1). In one's mind, the first activity is making a form of "that which is to be," and then shaping and forming the matter that imitates nature. The artist works within the existing world; just as the poet's activity is not to describe what has happened, but what might be probable or necessary to happen (Chambliss, 1974, p. 25). As an art, rhetoric is concerned with all subjects discussed in the *polis*. It is not

restricted to specialized subject matter or confined to specialized groups of people; it is not a special science, but rather a universal art (Arnhart, 1981, p. 14). The art just happens to be transferred through a scientific means in communicative technologies.

The rhetorician who moves into the *polis* should show a desire to exhibit and employ virtue, wisdom, and goodwill. The rhetorician should argue in a way that displays his own practical knowledge, moral virtue, and goodwill, but he should also conform to the character of the audience, in both an individual and collective manner. Postman (1976, p. 114) noted that “what we *are* is simply a composite of all the roles we know how to play well and comfortably. In other words, we do not have a Self, but a set of interconnected selves which we resourcefully call upon as we move from one situation to another.” To do this a rhetor “should display the required character not only in the form of his arguments, but also in the style of his presentation” (Arnhart, 1981, p. 37). Aristotle viewed rhetoric as an art that played an important role in the life of the *polis* (Grimaldi, 1972, p. 21-22). Aristotle believed that men strive to live well individually and together. They maintain a political partnership for the sake of living (Lord et. al., 1991, p. 56). Mulgan noted that “[e]very *polis* is a community of persons formed with a view to some good purpose.” The members of the community join together over a shared interest established for a good (1977, p. 13). Aristotle understood community to be part of the human political nature and reason of the formation and sustenance of political society (Lord et. al., 1991, p. 69). “The *polis* can exist without the individual but the individual cannot exist without the *polis*” (Mulgan, 1977, p. 31).

It a voluntary act for humans to form these communities that fulfill particular purposes (Adler, 1978, p. 111). Aristotle considered the *polis* as the architectonic community that serves as the most important and complete of human ends. As Aristotle often put the point, the *polis* is

for the sake of the good life, not merely for the sake of the requirements of living (Lord et. al., 1991, p. 140). Aristotle's *polis* is a true community where humans value it as an organic system, rather than an association that serves a means to individual ends (Mulgan, 1977, p. 34-35). Adler continued:

When Aristotle says that man is by nature a political animal, he is saying more than is meant by the statement that man is a social animal. Only men organize their societies voluntarily, purposefully, and thoughtfully and establish laws or customs that differ from one society to another. That is one meaning of the statement that man is a political animal. He is a custom-making and law-making animal. When Aristotle declares that man is by nature a political animal, he is also saying that human beings cannot live well, cannot achieve the best kind of lives for themselves, by living together only in families and in tribes. To do that, Aristotle thinks that they must live together in cities or states. The Greek word for a city or states is *polis*, from which we get the English word "political." The Latin word for a city or state is *civis*, from which we get the English words "civil" and "civilized." Being political by nature, men must live in states to live as well as possible. The good life is the civil or civilized life. (1978, p. 112-113)

A virtual *polis* is no different in construction or purpose. People still assemble with the intent to promote a good purpose. It is most certainly an organic system, as people move in and out of the community. And different communities are formed in a fluid fashion to meet the needs of the individuals and the group. Most of these societies have codes of conduct and the inhabitants act within a civilized lifestyle.

Aristotle viewed friendship as important to strengthen the teaching and development of virtues within the *polis*. As people are bound together through friendship, the result is a

strengthened community; as friendship binds people together they become bound to—and committed to—the *polis* (Fitz, 2007, p. 7). A virtuous man must live a good life in the political community to have grounding and integrity (Gallagher, 1956, p. 34). Aristotle believed that if one truly wanted to be a citizen, then that person would actively engage in the deliberations of public life (Lord et. al., 1991, p. 34). This action would develop moral and virtuous members of the *polis* or city-state (Fitz, 2007, p. 1). The focus of human beings is not merely to stay alive but to live as well as possible. When one avoids living a solitary life and chooses to associate with others, a good life can be lived that sustains and preserves their lives, as well as those of the following generation (Adler, 1978, p. 110). In an ideal situation, this focus would lead people away from a synthetic ethos and toward a genuine, virtuous ethos as put forth by Aristotle.

Unfortunately, humans have a basic potential for many vices; some of the human goodness, if carried further, can lead to meanness, vanity, arrogance, stubbornness (Aristotle, Rhetoric, 1366a-1368a). He also noted that a speaker may be pleased by the thought of his or her own superiority, which is mere insolence (1389b11-12, 1378b23-28). Aristotle (Poetics, 1448b25-1449a2) rejected unqualified delight in superiority. “Crude insolence is a mark of poor education and something to be avoided.... [P]ersonal abuse or invective is primitive and less desirable than the laughable or ridiculous” (Fortenbaugh, 1975, p. 20-21). Arendt (1998, p. 50) noted that when humans bring intimate things into the public, those sacred items become “transformed, deprivatized, and deindividualized.” One must learn what the appropriate thing to do in the community, not necessarily what one feels like doing (Broadie, 1991, p. 108). Seeking the best life under the given circumstances is the meaning or significance of cultural and

political organization. Humans “have a profound biological need for an institution that will shape our desires into healthy patterns” (Lord et. al., 1991, p. 31). A virtuous life is also a common life lived in a good political community. Man has a natural ability to receive goodness of character and can achieve his or her full development by habituation (Gallagher, 1956, p. 33). When one serves others, he or she feels friendship and love for those they served. A craftsman loves his handiwork and a poet loves his poetry; existence is found by virtue of activity (Aristotle, NE, 1167b-1168a).

Aristotle’s *polis* is different from the contemporary world in terms of scale, but contemporary communication abilities have altered the way in which we approach the *polis*. Humans should note the similarities with the virtual *polis*: Man is still a political animal and still seeks meaning, satisfaction, and social connectivity from political participation (Lord et. al., 1991, p. 134-135). The unity of the *polis* consists of a uniform collection of ingredients in which the original parts are still recognizable; it is not a blended solution. Each participant, no matter how connected, is still visible to those inside and outside the *polis*. Different people and groups participate by performing different—yet complementary—functions (Mulgan, 1977, p. 28-29). Aristotle thought that human beings would likely have been content to continue living in smaller societies, such as families or tribes, but the move to larger societies happened to gain the advantages from larger and more inclusive associations (Adler, 1978, p. 110).

Hartman (1977) recalled the saying that you never step into the same river twice, which calls forth the thinking that the *polis* is continually changing as people enter, pass by, and exit. In the same spirit, one never surfs in the same Internet twice. Communicators enter, passes by, and exit the virtual *polis* of the technological platforms. The speakers and the audiences would be best served to seek Aristotle’s good life by acting in a civil manner and communicating with

an *ethos* that displays virtue, wisdom, and goodwill—even if one with a knack for rhetoric can get away without doing so. Arendt (1998, p. 2) warned that mankind often seeks to sever ties with the natural world and embrace an artificial life. This attempt to defraud human communication would be such a violation against nature.

Chapter Four

Implications of Social Media for Interpersonal Communication

“New technologies are being developed even before old ones have had time to stabilize (and hence be examined). What was new is rapidly becoming old and without looking ahead, one falls behind” (Krikorian, Lee, Chock, & Harms, 2006, p. 1). This quote appears to be prophetic, as social media tools seemingly fluctuate at a faster rate each year. The “face” of communication is changing, as an online presence has become a reality for the people who once lived in a face-to-face world. Researching the field is problematic, as well, for the statistics of each social media system continually change: Research done today is nearly obsolete tomorrow. Even as these new media have led to changes in our styles of communication, they have not changed basic communication, as they have remained governed by longstanding principles of human social interaction (Kleinberg, 2008, p. 66). Electronic and Internet technologies may come and go, but their common ground is that they are all means to communicate (Krikorian, et al., 2006). The one constant in all technological advances on the Internet remains communication. The Internet is merely a feedback mechanism which allows people to interact and share information with each other (2006). And, as noted previously, Aristotle’s classification of humans as social animals fits in well with social media scholarship.

Mumford (1952, pp. 34-35) noted that the concept of man being a tool-using animal is a myth. It is also a myth that the original source of man’s development was Prometheus stealing fire from the gods and giving it to man. Rather, it is more accurate that Orpheus was the source...

...because he found it possible by means of his symbols, to express fellowship and love, to enrich his present life with vivid memories of the past and formative impulses toward the future, to expand and intensify those moments of life that had value and significance for him.

Mumford (pp. 17-18) also noted how infants begin with gestures and moves to “identifiable word-sounds.” This shows how communication precedes work and is crucial for developing a society. In a related manner, Postman (1976, p. 37) noted:

The anthropologists tell us that humanity is a tool-making species. No doubt. But humanity is also the rule-making species. Put two people together with a common purpose, and in two minutes they will turn themselves into an organization. Then they will produce a rule book. And soon after, a ritual or two to seal their bond.

The contemporary social media systems are composed of text that is rich in social cues, including emotions, opinions, style, and genres (Abbasi & Chen, 2008, p. 812). These systems, organizations, and rules are not the heart of the interaction. The basis is in the interaction of people. Postman (1976, p. 156) further noted that it is merely a misunderstanding that words have fixed meanings since they are based in a fixed structure; rather, the truth is that the interaction has meaning not because of the words, but because of the people. The virtual *polis* is made up of social animals who want to communicate for a variety of reasons. The importance of this medium has been explored in different realms, including its impact on social capital, which is defined as “connections among individuals—social networks and the norms of reciprocity and trustworthiness that arise from them” (Beaudoin, 2008, p. 550). Regardless of the reason, individuals post material in a public location, so taking part in this virtual *polis* is open to be considered as a social activity.

This communicative activity mimics analog interpersonal communication, although there is a difference. Berger and Luckmann (1989, pp. 28-29) wrote a clear introduction into interpersonal communication:

The reality of everyday life is shared with others. But how are these others themselves experienced in everyday life? Again, it is possible to differentiate between several modes of such experience.

The most important experience of others takes place in the face-to-face situation, which is the prototypical case of social interaction. All other cases are derivatives of it.

In the face-to-face situation the other is appresented to me in a vivid present shared by both of us. I know what in the same vivid present I am appresented to him. My and his "here and how" continuously impinge on each other as long as the face-to-face situation continues. As a result, there is a continuous interchange of my expressivity and his. I see him smile, then react to my frown by stopping the smile, then smiling again as I smile, and so on. Every expression of mine is oriented toward him, and vice versa, and this continuous reciprocity of expressive acts is simultaneously available to both of us. This means that, in the face-to-face situation, the other's subjectivity is available to me through a maximum of symptoms. To be sure, I may misinterpret some of these symptoms. I may think that the other is smiling while in fact he is smirking. Nevertheless, no other form of social relating can reproduce the plentitude of symptoms of subjectivity present in the face-to-face situation. Only here is the other's subjectivity emphatically "close." All other forms of relating to the other are, in varying degrees, "remote."

Postman (1976, p. 234) noted that “the meanings of sentences are not in *sentences* but in *situations*—in the relationship between *what* is said and to whom, by whom, for what purposes, and in what set of circumstances.” Abbasi and Chen (2008, p. 813) noted the language usage in social media is like face-to-face interaction, in that it can be categorized by age, gender, education, culture, and context. Quite possibly the greatest aspect of contemporary communication technologies is the complexities it introduces to language as compared to other forms of text (p. 816). Communication technology text has an inherently communicative nature that makes it rich in interaction (p. 813). Hian, Chuan, Trevor, and Detenber (2006, p. 8) addressed the use of emoticons (and now, emojis) to announce the feelings and emotions of social media users, so the recipients of the messages would have a clearer idea of how the sender feels about a given issue. As one considers language and its complexities, note the basic functions as noted by Abbasi and Chen:

Language has three meta-functions: ideational, interpersonal, and textual. The *ideational* meta-function states that language consists of ideas. The ideational meta-function of language suggests that a message is “about something” or “construing experience.” It pertains to the use of “language as reflection.” The ideational meta-function relates to aspects of the “mental world” which include attitudes, desires, and values. The *textual* meta-function indicates that language has organization, structure, flow, cohesion, and continuity. It relates to aspects of the “physical world” pertaining to the manner in which ideas are communicated. The textual meta-function therefore serves as a facilitating function enabling the conveyance of the ideational and interpersonal meta-functions. The *interpersonal* meta-function refers to the fact that language is a medium of exchange between people. It pertains to the use of “language as action.” The interpersonal meta-

function is concerned with the enactment of social relations; it relates to aspects of the “social world.” It is generally represented using computer-mediated communication interaction information. (2008, p. 816-817)

Huan et al. (2006, p. 2) analyzed the work of Walther (1992, 1994) and social information processing theory, “which asserts that all communicators experience similar needs for uncertainty reduction and affinity, regardless of medium. To meet these needs, [users]...will solicit and present socially revealing behavior.” Kleinberg (2008, p. 70) also noted how a message that spreads across communication networks is not unlike the diffusion of innovations model. The spread is quite epidemic in nature, as communication, such as a rumor, a political message, or a link to an online video contagiously spread from person to person on the network. This is an important process to understand because it is part of a broader pattern by which people influence one another over longer periods of time, whether in online or offline settings, to form new political and social beliefs, adopt new technologies, and change personal behavior. The concept of diffusion appears to be as relevant online as it is in the face-to-face world. People’s adoption of new behaviors of communication and social networking is connected to the behaviors of their fellow users that are part of their social network: as more and more of a user’s friends buy a new product or take part in a new activity, that user is more likely to be influenced to participate, as well (p. 70).

Self-disclosure concepts also reveal similarities and differences with social media and interpersonal communication. Kleinberg (2008, p.68) noted that self-disclosure needs are rooted in geographical closeness. In the virtual *polis*, geographical closeness is quickly reduced, as the communicators are just a screen away from each other. The act of adding even a small number of random social connections to networks that are highly clustered causes a rapid transition to a

small virtual world, with seemingly short paths appearing between most pairs of people. In other words, the world may look orderly and structured to each person—with friends and colleagues tending to know each other and have similar attributes—but a few unexpected links shortcutting through the network are sufficient to bring closeness (2008, p. 68). So what is written in one small social network can easily find its way into many social networks. A major difference comes from Huan et al. (2006, p. 2) and their inclusion of Walther's hyperpersonal communication model, which explains how some individuals experience a closer level of intimacy than those who participate in face-to-face communication. The necessary conditions are:

1. The receiver's idealization of the other due to over-attributions, whereby the receiver assigns magnified positive values to his or her partners
2. The sender's selective self-presentation, in which the sender has the advantage of being able to optimally edit his or her message before transmitting
3. A feedback loop or reciprocity of interactions, whereby the interplay of idealization and self-presentation becomes a dynamic process and creates a self-reinforcing cycle

Clearly embedded in this model is a level of narcissism among the users that is not as evident as traditional face-to-face communicative methods. Arendt (1998, p. 2) warned about humanity moving toward an artificial life. While she was focused on the development of scientific solutions to prolong what is natural, it is analogous that humans have created a virtual life where one can escape the boundaries of the physical life. Also, there is a violation of *ethos*, as discussed in the previous section, which leads to a synthetic *ethos*. Finally, at its heart is the overwhelming artificiality that comes with deceit. While some may view this activity as a large-scale, roleplaying game, it is still the manipulation of truth in order to present oneself at a higher

position, which is a violation of Aristotle's concept of a virtue ethic. Turkle (2011, p. 1) echoes this sentiment, noting:

Technology is seductive when what it offers meets our human vulnerabilities. And as it turns out, we are very vulnerable indeed. We are lonely by fearful of intimacy. Digital connections and the sociable robot may offer the illusion of companionship without the demands of friendship. Our networked life allows us to hide from each other, even as we are tethered to each other.

These interconnected social networks do have a real downside, as they can suffer from lurkers and agitators that decrease the signal to noise ratio in communication technologies, casting doubts onto the reliability of information exchanged (Abbasi & Chen, 2008, p. 811). These "trolls" attack social networks in order to create chaos and disrupt the useful and orderly flow of information. Additionally, it is possible that online communities can encompass very large scale conversations involving thousands of users. The enormous scope of information flow, as well as the sheer quantity of information, make such places difficult to navigate and analyze (p. 811). The quantity of users and of information could possibly hamper trust issues. Interpersonal, or social, trust is a critical component of social capital. Social trust is "the lubricant of the inevitable frictions of social life" (Beaudoin, 2008, p. 552). Several potential indicators of the human voice as it might be identified in computer-mediated communications include familiar qualities such as being open to dialog, welcoming conversational communication, providing prompt feedback, communicating with a sense of humor, admitting mistakes, and treating others as human (Kelleher & Miller, 2006, p. 399).

Another area where the two worlds are analyzed is in not in human nature, but the status of the human condition. Arendt (1998, p. 9) noted that all humans "are always conditioned

beings.” Humans exist, then they create new things to escape existence, but the result is that the thing becomes part of the human condition. The result of this is that some carry face-to-face etiquette into the online world, while others bring the online world into face-to-face communication. Both lives become the same thing: a “condition of human existence.” This is echoed by Heidegger (1977, pp. 3-4), who noted that technology has an essence because it is created by humans, and therefore part of humanity; and:

Everywhere we remain unfree and chained to technology, whether we passionately affirm or deny it. But we are delivered over to it in the worst possible way when we regard it as something neutral; for this conception of it, to which today we particularly like to do homage, makes us utterly blind to the essence of technology.

Arendt (1998, pp. 28-30) also notices tension between the *polis* and the household. She notices a shift from a division between what is public and what is private to a cohesive development, known as *Volkswirtschaft*, or collective housekeeping. This amalgamation is what she dubs a “super-human family” or society. This society is easily felt in McLuhan’s “global village” just as easily as it is felt in Mumford’s “megamachine.” No matter the largess of the communication structure, Arendt, like Plato 2300 years prior, noted the importance of stepping back into the security and boundaries of private home life.

The final step in dissecting the tensions between social media and interpersonal conversation is centered around efficiency. Turkle’s (2011) introduction details anecdotal evidence of efficiency in action. The concept is simple: humans are using highly efficient communication tools to make it far simpler for the sender to interact with the other. The goal is not richness of communication, rather, it is the opposite. How can a message be sent in the simplest, clearest, most controlled manner possible, but also done in such a way that the other

will not be bothered, nor bother to respond? It is a very narcissistic view of interpersonal communication, as the results shows very little “inter” connectivity and no “personal” involvement. This is the “certain setback” that Ellul (1990, p. 40) feared when discussing technical progress. This progress, easily seen in communication technologies, is disruptive to biological processes (p. 43). If Aristotle’s maxim is true, and humans are social animals, then why do the animals choose to use devices that make them less social? Is it possible to be social animals on social media? Relationships that develop in online social constructs can be very different from relationships that develop through traditional face-to-face channels (Johnson, et al., 2008, p. 385). Recent studies, however, have noted that Web discourse is indeed rich in opinion and emotion-related information (Abbasi & Chen, 2008, p. 813). The Internet has a capacity to foster—via symbolic and informational means—the development of community, social interaction, and open debate, and thus predicts interpersonal trust (Beaudoin, 2008, p. 562). Another rationale for this linkage can be found in research that has demonstrated that Internet use allows people to mitigate uncertainty, solve problems, control communication, and communicate effectively (2008, p. 562).

Hian, et al. (2006) and Qian and Scott (2007) have studied the concept of hyperpersonalization that occurs in relationships of communication technology users. The perceived anonymity that exists with the users serves as a self-disclosure mechanism, resulting in oversharing of personal information and thoughts. There is also increased efforts for image enhancement and impression management, where users inflate personal information to deceive the other in believing that the sender is more attractive, smarter, or more talented than in reality. The concept of hyperpersonalization foster a greater acceleration of relational intimacy than face-to-face interactions, and these individuals can reach deep levels of perceived intimacy based

on idealized versions of their partners communicated through technological channels (Johnson, et al., 2008, p. 397).

In contemporary times of communication technologies, the new channels of communication “provide opportunities to exchange rewards in other ways besides face-to-face; therefore, there are fewer distinctions between geographically close and long-distance relationships than there have been in the past” (p. 395). Studies of long-distance relationships have shown that the positives of keeping up with each person in the relationship through mediated channels such as e-mail may outweigh the negatives of less frequent face-to-face interaction. The equity theory of interpersonal relationships holds that members pursue and maintain their relationships based on the perceived rewards of each relationship (p. 382). “An equitable relationship is one in which participants perceive that both parties are incurring equal amounts of positive and negative consequences from the relationship” (p. 382). The tremendous increase in the number of Americans that use communication technologies means that there are more users that can use the Internet to keep in touch with a larger proportion of their friends and relationships. Because equity theory suggests that “people are motivated to maintain a relationship to the extent the relationship is equitable and rewarding,” communicating via e-mail appears to be merely one way to increase equity, particularly in long-distance relationships (p. 382).

Communication technology methods, such as e-mail affords people an inexpensive and convenient way to continue their relationships, to be open, and to accomplish goals. Additionally, e-mail and other forms of communication have technological and natural elements of message control, particularly editorial functions and time delay, which offer people the ability to communicate more strategically than they might in face-to-face interactions (p. 383). Thus,

communication technologies can provide a rewarding medium for maintaining relationships. Individuals negotiate their communication channel choices in their relationships in such a way as to provide an equitable and rewarding relationship with the other (p. 396). Effort and reward during these communicative episodes are important, for “if an individual does not engage in such behaviors, such as failing to respond to an e-mail message from a friend, the interpersonal partner may begin to feel underbenefited and change his or her behaviors or satisfaction level in regards to that relationship” (p. 396). Maintaining a conversational voice appears to be an appropriate relational maintenance strategy through communication technology contexts (Kelleher & Miller, 2006, p. 408).

Ultimately, the humans that take part in communication are the important part of dialogue. Moving toward an adoration of the technology misplaces the true value of dialogue. Mumford (1952, p. 9) warned that the focus on the technology will make man a “Displaced Person.” He also cautioned (p. 58):

If we are to save ourselves from the threatening miscarriage of the technical functions, we must restore primacy to the human person; that is to say, we must nourish those parts of man’s nature that have been either neglected or made over in the image of the machine. To overcome the distortions of technics, we must cultivate the inner and the subjective as our ancestors during the last three centuries cultivated the outer and objective. But our proper goal is a balance between these essential aspects of the personality.

Postman (1976, pp. 111-112) offered another Mumford warning:

As Lewis Mumford points out: “Life cannot be reduced to a system: the best wisdom, when reduced to a single set of insistent notes, becomes a cacophony: indeed, the more

stubbornly one adheres to a system, the more violence one does to life.”

Arendt (1998, pp. 182-184) noted that action and speech of men to each other is intangible, but it is still real. It is a “web” of human relationships. This web “produces” stories that are real and tell more about the subject of the story than the created works that helped deliver the story. The message is clear that humans should focus on the other, not the technology, for that will lead to more fulfillment in discourse, even when using the technology.

Aristotle noted that friendship aids humans, regardless of age or circumstance, in order to avoid poor judgment and to encourage thought and proper action (NE, 1156a-b). He also noted that friendship can even hold states together, and that lawmakers value friendship over justice (NE, 1155a). Arendt (1998, pp. 24-25) also noted Aristotle’s belief that action (*praxis*) and speech (*lexis*) are the basis of human affairs in communities. This frames friendship in a manner that is helpful for this discussion: friendship is not reserved for interpersonal activity, but can also be cherished on a macro level. Indeed, Aristotle continued by noting that “friendship depends on community,” which shows the collaborative effort that is involved. To establish the concept of a noble friend, it is once again helpful to turn to Aristotle (NE, 1156a-b), who noted there are three types of friends: the pleasure friend, the utilitarian friend, and the perfect friend. The pleasure-based friendship is the closest to the concept of selfishness, as the members seek to gain something that benefits only them. The utility-based friendship seeks ways to obtain a product or service from another, but not at the expense of the other. The perfect friend is based on respect and mutual understanding, and they only seek the best for the other.

These three types of friendship still make sense today when one thinks about those attached to social media accounts. The pleasure friend is concerned with trivial things, such as friend counts and followers, as well as access to the photos and information of others. The

utilitarian friend is concerned with networking, and is reflected by befriending peers, coworkers, professors, and supervisors. This access keeps all members informed of what is important in areas of interest. The perfect friend is concerned with the whole being of the other, and can be found in those with close ties, such as a spouse, parents, long-time friends, and siblings.

Aristotle (NE, 1158b) also discussed the nature of reciprocity and unequal friendships, as well as the tension between them. Both parties must have mutual respect for each other and a desire to do what is right. This action fosters friendship and love. Aristotle (Rhetoric, 1381a-b) noted that when one treats another well, there is a friendly feeling toward the other, and when unmasked kindness is directed toward others, friendship is fostered. Friends also seek to “secure good” for one another. Not following these actions are obstacles to friendship, and that friendship will never move toward the perfect (NE, 1157a). Aristotle called this action a choice; people can choose to spend time with another to foster that relationship. The three components of *ethos* (*phronesis*, *arête*, and *eunoia*) are important in friendships. Aristotle noted that the calling toward virtue is both “noble” and “necessary” in order to create friendships, refuge, and benevolence. It also creates a condition where friends are able to “think and act.” The presence of virtue among friends expels vice, and people would ideally seek this bond to create lasting impact with those “friends” encountered in the virtual and physical worlds (1155a). Aristotle noted that there are differences in humans, and only those who have similar interests and can spend time together delighting in those interests. This highlights the interplay between the state of friendship and the activity of friendship. Those with differences do not spend as much time together, as the differences push them in other directions (1157b).

These requirements do not diminish when there is a movement from face-to-face interaction to mediated communication. A social media society is not one to ignore, as it has

only grown in scope (Lovejoy & Saxton, 2012, p. 338). Dilenschneider (2010, p. 10) called the movement to social media a “historic paradigm shift” that has given a voice to all members of a communicative society. Păun (2009, p. 123) quoted Mayfield (2008) in noting that social media offers participation and engagement, openness, conversation, community, and connectedness. This friendship of a communicative society is well within Aristotle’s vision of rhetoric, as Edwards (2006) noted Farrell’s (1993) scholarly view of how audience judgment and choice “are at the heart of rhetoric” (p. 838). Edwards also looked at Perelman (1979, p. 14) and noted that “(t)he part played by the audience in rhetoric is crucially important, because all argumentation in aiming to persuade, must be adapted to the audience and, hence based on beliefs accepted by the audience with such conviction that the rest of the discourse can be securely based upon it (pp. 842-843). This is a necessary view of the audience because to start and maintain friendships, the other must be fully considered before ethical interaction could occur. Sweetser (2010) claimed that public relationships have fewer differences than before, especially when compared to interpersonal relationships (p. 290). The era of social media communication tools has created opportunities where various actors can interact and discuss items that may strengthen their relationships (Lovejoy & Saxton, 2012, p. 339).

As with unmediated communication, there are downsides with social media. Aristotle discussed reciprocity and unequal friendships (NE 1158b). This binding is based on both parties having respect for each other and the desire to do what is right. This fosters friendship and love. There is a dilemma regarding friendship and community. Aristotle rightly noted that those who are friends of utility or pleasure have an immovable obstacle because the human mind and heart lacks the capacity for perfect friendship with such large quantities of others. Those with tremendous power, stature, or fame can certainly be friendly with a large group; they may also be

friends with members of that large group. However, this does not diminish the need to properly act with one another in an ethical and virtuous way. Arendt (1998, pp. 48-49) noted that *arête* “has always been assigned to the private realm where one could excel, could distinguish oneself from all others.” Others are required, by definition, for excellence to occur. The social realm “made excellence anonymous, emphasized the progress of mankind rather than the achievements of men.”

Aristotle also noted in *Rhetoric* that when actors treat others well, then they feel friendly toward the actors, regardless of scale or crisis (1381a), and that doing unmasked kindness toward others, without announcing that the act has been done, that friendship is fostered (1381b). Postman (1976, p. 115) noted that “all selves are social roles which we either play or can imagine ourselves playing.” Bridgen (2011, p. 62) discussed the blurring of boundaries between the personal and private. This is an echo of Arendt’s (1998, pp. 28, 38-41) concern with moving conversation between the private, public, and social realms. There is also the capacity to interact with far more people than before, given the global scope of social media. This stands in stark contrast to the “Dunbar number” (Standage, 2013, p. 12), which claims that the largest group size in which members can know each other is limited to 150 people. Social media systems place no such limits on the size of groups or friendship connections. Ward and Wasserman (2010, p. 281) noted that the mediated culture demands transparency because of the incredibly personal nature of social media. This is an affront to those who wish to keep their lives securely in the private realm.

The strength of the relationship is what builds interpersonal trust (Himmelboim, Lariscy, Tinkham, & Sweetser, 2012, p. 97), and a strong moral compass guides one toward a right action (Tilley, 2005, p. 308). Aristotle maintained “that ethical or right behavior is the balance or

'mean' between thinking and acting in extreme ways" (Martinson, 2000, pp. 19-20). This action is good. The friend should seek ethical and friendly behavior in order to foster better relationships with others. Friends seek to "secure good" for others (Aristotle, Rhetoric, 1381b). Friends are best served by understanding Aristotle's teaching on the best and inferior kinds of friendship. Unless one chooses to spend time with another, in both quantity and quality, then that friendship will never move to the level of greatness (Aristotle, NE, 1157a). This high level of friendship would guide friend toward an ethical response during times of good or of crisis, for in friendships, ethics becomes habit (Martinson, 2000, p. 19).

Social media usage certainly has downfalls, but as Coman and Păun (2010) stated, the relationship connections built or fostered online have "the potential of adding...meaning, understanding, life/humanity" (p. 48). Again, this falls on the shoulders of the humans using the systems. Humans certainly do not need technology to be uncivil toward another. An ethical foundation of trust and openness can move a relationship forward. Lovejoy and Saxton (2012, p. 349); Himelboim, et al. (2012, p. 96); and Avery, Lariscy, and Sweetser (2010, P. 189) noted in their scholarship that social media can create an open, interactive, dialogic, and civil society. And this "hospitality" and openness would even include diverse voices, including the negative ones (Ward and Wasserman, 2010, pp. 281, 288) that may be avoided or shut out from practice and scholarship. An understanding of how people should use newer technologies is needed. Coman and Păun (2010) quoted Drury (2008, pp. 274-277) and noted that the biggest mistake made by those in a relationship is that they focus on the "media" instead of the "social" aspect of social media. Instead of "building a relationship and conversation" (p. 46-47) with the other, users become fixated on the technology itself. Users become compelled to enjoy the perceived benefits offered by the technology instead of enjoying the benefits of friendship with the other.

The importance of the message has not changed, but adapting to social media has become critical (Dilenschneider, 2010, p. 24). Analog methods of communication have not disappeared, but the trend toward a social media society has certainly grown in scope (Lovejoy & Saxton, 2012, p. 338). This is not to say that analog forms of communication are secure. This “historic paradigm shift” has altered human communication, pulling it away from those who possess the traditional tools and giving a voice to all members of a communicative society (Dilenschneider, 2010, p. 10). This shift is further complicated by the nature of digital social tools. While traditional forms were unidirectional—typically from the media to the public—social media allows multi-directional flow of information between all members of a communicative community (Himmelboim, et al., 2012, p. 94). Mumford (1952, p. 6) noted that humans are more interested in the technology than in art or leisure that would cultivate the inner life.

Coman and Păun (2010) define social media as “the various forms of user generated content and the collection of websites and applications that enables people to interact and share information online” and note that it has “significantly altered the world of media unlike any other medium, and it will continue to grow and change and present new opportunities...” (p. 46). Păun (2009) quoted Mayfield (2008) in noting the characteristics of social media:

1. Participation and engagement: social media is a means of making everybody interested provide contributions and feedback. Thus the border between media and audience seems to disappear.
2. Openness: participation imposes some freedom that the audience enjoys through voting, comments or sharing information.
3. Conversation: unlike traditional media which is focused on one-way communication, social media provides a two-way conversation, thus

communication is instantaneous.

4. Community: the most important outcome of social media is forming communities. The backbone of these communities is a sharing of common interests.
5. Connectedness: social media creates a sort of chain effect, making use of links to different sites, resources and persons. (p. 123)

Duke (2009, pp. 323-324) and Lovejoy and Saxton (2012, p. 350) noted an issue with using social media: the understanding of communication needs for using social media, especially considering how personal the tools have become. The skillset of the technology notwithstanding, a major juncture of using the new media is “how” the media will be used. One should not simply use social media tools because they exist. The latest tool may be trendy, but communication needs and relationship types should dictate which tool should be used in which circumstance. There is also a chance for fostering dialogue and building community because of the communicative traits brought about by social media (p. 349).

Another important aspect of social media usage was brought up by Ward and Wasserman (2010), who noted that the new, global voices that are inherent with social media will have an effect on media ethics (pp. 287-289). They noted, “(t)o assume that new media themselves will create a wonderful new world of open ethical discourse is not only naïve; it also adopts a technologically determinist position which disregards the way that technologies support rather than replace existing social relations and power dimensions.” In other words, while the technology may be useful, the usage of that technology by the people is what will drive the understanding of media ethics. And the treatment of the technology is a critical part of the discussion, as well.

The latest and greatest social media software may come and go, but the digital culture appears to be entrenched in human communication. One possible solution for communicators: “Jump in—and play in traffic. Being a willing player, who both participates in and observes online activities” (Dilenschneider, 2010, p. 36). While this analogy seems counterintuitive to those who prefer survival, playing in traffic works because if one simply stands on the curb, no forward movement will be made and no interaction will take place. Sure, it is a safe place to be, but traffic is moving. And the social media user will need to be constantly moving, keeping up with the latest trends, in order to survive. Social media provides an instant, direct linkage between groups (Waters, Tindall, & Morton, 2010, p. 259), and real conversations are enabled. Users fundamentally have to understand that social media is simply another tool, albeit a powerful one, to enable communication. Without playing in traffic, users will not understand the differences, similarities, and benefits of social media systems. Păun (2009) noted the work of Haven (2008) for helping others recognize social media characteristics:

1. Reach – A tribe, a family, friends, neighbours or the local community have been social habitats which we belong to. Nowadays the new technologies offer a new opportunity of crossing the local borders in order to reach a global audience.
2. Accessibility – The advantage of new technologies is to reduce the costs of traditional media and to allow freedom to access to everybody.
3. Usability – One consequence of accessibility is the freedom provided to everybody to create and operate the means of production. Creative and technical skills are no longer compulsory.
4. Transparency – Nowadays it has been observed a craving for information. The new technologies provide the space where everything can be posted by

everybody. But this sort of transparency might fire back sometimes since there is little control on the content.

5. Recency – Instantaneity seems to be the governing word nowadays. People become addicted to emails, facebook or twitter and they seem to have forgotten the pleasure of holding a letter in their own hands. (p. 123-124)

How does one measure the quality of friendship? Is it determined by the volume of contacts stored in a mobile phone? Is it based upon the amount of connections made through social media? Is it based on face-to-face interactions? Aristotle noted a division into two categories:

Now it seems that, as justice is of two kinds, one unwritten and the other legal, one kind of friendship of utility is moral and the other legal. And so complaints arise most of all when men do not dissolve the relation in the spirit of the same type of friendship in which they contracted it. The legal type is that which is on fixed terms; its purely commercial variety is on the basis of immediate payment, while the more liberal variety allows time but stipulates for a definite quid pro quo. The moral type is not on fixed terms; it makes a gift, or does whatever it does, as to a friend; but one expects to receive as much or more, as having not given but lent; and if a man is worse off when the relation is dissolved than he was when it was contracted he will complain. This happens because all or most men, while they wish for what is noble, choose what is advantageous; now it is noble to do well by another without a view to repayment, but it is the receiving of benefits that is advantageous. (NE, 1162b)

It is easy to note how the utilitarian friendships can easily fit into the “legal” category. This is a

simple movement, as services are sought, contracts are signed, boundaries are recognized, goods are delivered, and products are consumed. There appears to be nothing noble in the entire transaction, short of being skillful at the craft. Communication occurs between businesses, between colleagues, and across organizational hierarchies. These may not be suitable relationships for Aristotle's perfect friendship, but the utilitarian friendship, by definition, is indeed useful. Can this transaction be fundamentally altered by moving the relationships into the noble? Edwards (2006, p. 839) credited Augustine (trans. 1958) as noting that the tools of persuasion can be used for reputable purposes. Thus rhetoric, and by extension, communication within utilitarian friendships, can be used in an ethical manner.

Two-way communication is vital to creating the building blocks of this noble relationship between utilitarian friends, and these efforts toward relationship management influence how members perceive one another (Waters, Tindall, & Morton, 2010, pp. 244-245). Sweetser (2010) also noted the importance of trust, openness to dialogue, and credibility (p. 292). This relationship can be fragile, as often realized in interpersonal communication interactions. Damage to credibility or trust by unethical acts—such as lying—will certainly harm the relationship. So, if this damage can happen on a basic, interpersonal level, why not among professionals and entire organizations and publics (p. 293)? Postman (1976, p. 24-25) added some clarity to this by separating the individuals from the purposes of the gathering:

There is a difference between the purposes of any individuals in a social situation and the purposes of the situation itself. Every semantic environment is an abstraction—an idea, if you will—and, therefore, has an existence independent of the individuals who make use of it. In other words, a semantic environment does not wholly belong to individuals. It is a product of our collective imagination; it belongs largely to tradition, and it is

fashioned from a society's experience of what is useful conduct.

Social media are indeed communication tools that are available to all parties in the relationship process. These tools can certainly be used to further the noble relationship. They enable the creation and promotion of a “culture of sharing and endorsement” (Sedereviciute & Valentini, 2011, p. 235) between communicators. The importance of transparency and disclosure, as mentioned previously, cannot be understated, as doing so builds awareness and trust. All parties involved are encouraged take part in this effort. Once it becomes a common act, the parties will begin to cultivate understanding about each other's roles and build a stronger relationship (Waters, Tindall, & Morton, 2010, p. 245). Of course, it would be naïve to claim it was that simple. All parties involved would certainly have figured out these basic concepts without any scholarship. The temptation is to blame communication, especially communication technologies, such as social media, for the ills of the trade. Ultimately it comes down to the humans communicating and seeking ways to build stronger relationships. Aristotle noted:

Those who are really fond of their friends do not desert them in trouble; of all good men, we feel most friendly to those who show their goodness as friends. Also towards those who are honest with us, including those who will tell us of their own weak points: it has just been said that with our friends we are not ashamed of what is conventionally wrong, and if we do have this feeling, we do not love them; if therefore we do not have it, it looks as if we did love them. (Rhetoric, 1381b)

But what about conflict? Or conflicting demands communicators? Martinson (2000) correctly called upon Aristotle's selection of the "the mean between the extremes of excess and

defect in action” (NE, p. 20). An ethical act would find balance, as an ethical communicator is responsible to multiple members in a community. Again, the move toward transparency would benefit all members. Arendt (1998, p. 38) stated that the Greek and Roman terms for “privacy” meant that one was truly devoid of contact, but the definitions have shifted as mankind has moved more into the public sphere. This becomes highlighted in the world of social media, as the lack of gatekeepers and oversight (Burns, 2008, p. 42), as well as the speed and reach of the medium, can cause misleading information to be disseminated, outside influences to be hidden, and errors to be committed. And Sweetser (2010) noted a call to ethics, as well, for the negative aspects of social media can lead to poor communicative efforts, which would damage the relationships and credibility of those involved (p. 305). Instead, those in the relationship can seek openness and trustworthiness in order to foster noble friendship. This leads to better dialogue, argumentation, and impact (Jin & Liu, 2010, p. 437). Adherence to the act of ethical behavior is critical for relationships to build and friendships to move into the noble. This movement is required of all communicators in the relationship.

Aristotle claimed that “(f)riendship based on utility is for the commercially minded “ (NE 1158a). He further stated:

The friendship of utility is full of complaints, for they want to use each other for their own interests, they always want to get the better of the bargain, and think they have got less than they should, and blame their partners because they do not get all they “want and deserve.” (NE 1162b)

Humans have a desire to organize and friendships are no different, making change difficult. Postman (1976, p. 47) noted that “role structures are exceedingly resistant to change, partly because people tend to be unaware of them and partly because they give an essential stability to

situations.” Aristotle also gives a direction to move past this quandary, which is through making ethical decisions a habit and using “the intellectual virtue of prudence or practical wisdom” (Martinson, 2000, p. 19). Tilley (2005) noted that one must move past “good intent” and put ethics in “verifiable practice,” and approach it the same way as other stage of friendship (p. 305). Sweetser (2010) called on utilitarian friends and academics to find ways to investigate communication technologies in order to create relationship-building strategies (p. 295). After all, this move to friendship, especially a noble one, creates benefits for all members involved. Social media is simply a tool that can be used to further the friendship and maintain close ties. Ethical, noble relationships between members are mutually beneficial for stories to be created, disseminated, consumed, and discussed (Avery, Lariscy, & Sweetser, 2010, p. 193). Perhaps Aristotle best understood the practice, the scholarship, and the impact of ethical communication, regardless of the available tools, among friends (Rhetoric, 1361b):

The terms ‘possession of many friends’ and ‘possession of good friends’ need no explanation; for we define a ‘friend’ as one who will always try, for your sake, to do what he takes to be good for you. The man towards whom many feel thus has many friends; if these are worthy men, he has good friends.

Ultimately, it would appear that Postman (1976, p. 253) had the best solution for dealing with conflict in dialogue: a sense of humor.

I mean by a sense of humor an active appreciation of the fact that time’s winged chariot is always at our backs and that therefore there is a profound and essential foolishness, transiency, and ineptitude to all our adventures, including the hardest of all, talking to each other. Without a sense of humor, almost any talk will, soon or late, descend into craziness, brought down by its own unrelieved gravity. I believe that a sense of humor is

at the core of all our humane impulses, and he who would make us mad must first exercise our appreciation of human frailty, which is what a sense of humor is.

Chapter Five

How the Use of Technology may Revive Modernism in a Postmodern Age

Just when communication scholars believe that the modernity coffin has been nailed shut and buried, some mobile phone company releases a new, cannot-live-without phone. People with fully functional mobile phones stand in lines for hours—even days—in order to get their hands on the slick, little bundle of marketing genius. Ironically, they use their “old” phone in order to take a picture of their new phone and quickly upload it to one of the many social media interfaces. The picture then becomes an eternal marker of that person’s life, placed forever next to a joke, meme, pithy comment, or picture of what they had for breakfast. This move towards a Hobbesian “vainglory” is destructive to humanity (Arendt, 1998, pp. 56-57). It is a public display of a trading in of the free gift of the natural for the manmade creation; it is a rebellion against human existence (pp. 2-3).

It is an age when it is uncommon to find a person who does not own a technological gadget that is an integral part of their lives. The scholars of today find themselves asking the same questions of the scholars of the past when confronting the technological age. Pillars of technological critique, such as Lewis Mumford (1895-1990), Kenneth Burke (1897-1993), Jacques Ellul (1912-1994), and Neil Postman (1931-2003), tried to sort through the issues that permeated their own observations of the newest technology. Their critique of modernity is still relevant today as postmodernity fails to slay the old demons of how humans use and misuse technology. While these scholars are not the only ones who forged media ecology scholarship, each one offers a unique perspective toward understanding the experiential environment of social

media and the associated technologies used within. The entry point for each scholar will be based in their terms of technic (Mumford), terministic screens (Burke), the technological society (Ellul), and Technopoly (Postman).

Mumford was one of the earliest voices of the twentieth century to write about the possibility that at some point in the future, people might be controlled by technology, instead of the proper arrangement of people controlling technology. The central premise of Mumford's *Technics and Civilization* (1964) rests on his definition of technic as "the original exploration of the raw environment, the utilization of objects shaped by nature—shells and stones and animal gut—for tools and utensils: the development of fundamental industrial processes, digging, chipping, hammering, scraping, spinning, drying: the deliberate shaping of specific tools as necessities pressed and as skill increased" (p. 60). In this view, technic is the obvious use of tools for humanity's well-being. Technology—what we might think of as a complex electronic device—is simply a tool put to use for the good of a person. Mumford (1952, p. 49) explained this symbiotic relationship:

[I]n the period when handicraft dominated, the artist and the technician arrived, as it were, at a happy compromise, because, for one thing, their roles were assumed by the same person. By this *modus vivendi*, the artist submitted to the technical conditions of fabrication and operation, schooling himself to do a succession of unrewarding acts in return for two conditions: first, the comradeship of other workers on the job...and second, the privilege of lingering with loving care over the final stages of the technical process and transforming the efficient utilitarian form into a meaningful symbolic form. That extra effort, that extra display of love and esthetic skill, tends to act as a preservative of any structure; for, until the symbols themselves become meaningless, men tend to

value, and if possible to save from decay and destruction, works of art that bear the human imprint.

Mumford's critique moved through different phases of humans interacting with technology, each one more negative than the last. The first phase is the eotechnic. "At the bottom of the eotechnic economy stands one important fact: the diminished use of human beings as prime movers, and the separation of the production of energy from its application and immediate control" (1964, p. 112). In this era, tools separate humans on one level from the objects that they are manipulating. The second phase is the paleotechnic age (p. 152):

Paleotechnic industry, on the other hand, arose out of the breakdown of European society and carried the process of disruption to a finish. There was a sharp shift in interest from life values to pecuniary values: the system of interests which only had been latent and which had been restricted in great measure to the merchant and leisure classes now pervaded every walk of life. It was no longer sufficient for industry to provide a livelihood: it must create an independent fortune: work was no longer a necessary part of living: it became an all-important end.

In this age, work gained higher value not only as a way to earn a living; it became a societal value. The third phase is the neotechnic, which was described as a takeover (p. 216):

With the neotechnic phase, two facts of critical importance become plain. First, the scientific method, whose chief advances had been in mathematics and the physical sciences, took possession of other domains of experience: the living organism and human society also became the objects of systematic investigation, and though the work done in these departments was handicapped by the temptation to take over the categories of

thought, the modes of investigation, and the special apparatus of quantitative abstraction developed for the isolated physical world, the extension of science here was to have a particularly important effect upon technics.

These different stages of technics are the stream of evolution that Mumford saw as leading up to the creation of “the machine.” Described in negative tones, Mumford (p. 364) believed that it ... was not, we have seen, the passive byproduct of technics itself, developing through small ingenuities and improvements and finally spreading over the entire field of social effort. On the contrary, the mechanical discipline and many of the primary inventions themselves were the result of deliberate effort to achieve a mechanical way of life: the motive in back of this was not technical efficiency but holiness, or power over other men.

Mumford was convinced that humanity has brought this age of technology on itself—that in idolizing technological progress and the integration of complex tools into the daily lives of humans, they have in essence created a society that is subservient to the machines. The machines provide human sustenance and jobs, and the constant servicing of the machines was like the worship of a god (p. 390). Mumford (1964, p. 303) saw this stage as intentional detachment from nature and a surrender to the machine:

In terms of the currently accepted picture of the relation of man to technics, our age is passing from the primeval state of man, marked by his invention of tools and weapons for the purpose of achieving mastery over the forces of nature, to a radically different condition, in which he will not only have conquered nature but detached himself completely from the organic habitat. With this new megatechnics, man will create a uniform, all-enveloping structure, designed for automatic operation. Instead of functioning actively as a tool-using animal, man will become a passive, machine-serving

animal whose proper functions, if this process continues unchanged, will either be fed into a machine, or strictly limited and controlled for the benefit of depersonalized collective organizations.

This evolutionary process traced humanity's creation of "the machine" (1964, p. 364) that was used to move life to a mechanical existence, which gave "holiness" and "power over other men." Mumford also lamented the folly of attempts to humanize the machine, which only resulted in a debasement of both art and the machine itself (1952, pp. 80-81).

Later in his work, Mumford introduced the fourth phase, that of monotronics. This notion is an extension of the ideas previously discussed. Monotronics is the concept that the worship of the machine has led to a phenomenon where people want more technology much more frequently than at any time in the past. This "dogma of increasing wants" permeates society to the extent that it is accepted as the norm (1964, p. 390). Unlike in the past when people used tools to work for basic necessities, people now feel entitlement to many items which in the past would have been entirely out of reach or superfluous. These tools have become so ingrained in the societal mindset that individuals are indignant when they do not have the resources to purchase these new basics.

Mumford's idea of technics is especially important when considered in conjunction with Burke's terministic screen. According to Burke, the terministic screen is the net of the terms that we use for things that shapes the way that we view reality. Even though we don't realize that our names for things affect how we think about them, Burke explained it like this: "Even if any given terminology is a *reflection* of reality, by its very nature as a terminology it must be a *selection* of reality; and to this extent it must function as a *deflection* of reality" (p. 45). In the naming process, certain features are chosen as the most important to emphasize. Whether we realize it or

not, these features are emphasized to the exclusion of other, possibly equally important features. These names become a part of our terministic screens, which exist as the lenses through which our world is filtered. Combining this with the idea of the concept of Mumford's technics reveals the trend that technology not only controls users because of the distance that technology has put between the person and the task, and by creating an era of frenzied purchases, but technology has also influenced our terministic screens so that we view the world is through the technological lens.

Burke's (1966) critique was more focused on how humans use language to shape their view of reality. This "terministic screen" is the collection of terms that are used for deflecting views in one direction or another (p. 45). An object may be viewed differently by different people, based upon the terministic screen that they employ. This screen is developed by using language that is both scientific and dramatic, meaning language framed by definition and by action (pp. 44-45). When applied to humanity and its usage of technology, one can see how the shaping of reality can be framed, or even manipulated, by the conditions set forth and the language used in the technology. This terminology is placed between human and human, and human and nature, which is quite similar to Mumford's phases of technic. Further, he stated that "...any nomenclature necessarily directs the attention into some channels rather than others" (p. 45), which directly excludes those without knowledge or understanding of the particular terministic screen being used; they are essentially blocked from the process.

The proliferation of social media tools has only increased the size, scope, and amount of terministic screens. Each system has its own messaging style and format, as well as the multitude of terms that correspond with each part of the framework. This is further complicated by the use of slang, cultural terms, and acronyms, which have been in use in all social media

systems since Antiquity (Standage, 2013, pp. 22-23). If one is not aware of the scientific and dramatic structures of language, they cannot fully participate. The usage of such terms can thus also be used to restrict others from usage of a system or from understanding the nature and content of a discursive action. Ultimately, what Burke's work shows is the need for humans to create and define symbols, then put them into action with other communicators. As Standage (2013) has shown, this has been the case throughout social media history. It is simply relevant in this discussion because of how modernity dictates that progress should drive communicative forms, thus communicators must keep informed of the terminology or be disenfranchised of communication opportunities.

Jacques Ellul wrote decades later on his reservations about the plethora of technological progress in works such as *The Technological Society* (1964) and *The Technological Bluff* (1990). His opinion can be concisely summed up by what he said in *The Technological Bluff*, "The bolder the technique and the greater the achievements, the more unheard-of the danger" (p. 59). Ellul expounded upon this idea by giving a multitude of examples of how technological progress comes at the expense of aesthetics, cleanliness and pollution, and the destruction of natural resources. He wanted to make sure that the reader is aware that even though technology is often heralded as some sort of ultimate good in current society, it is not without its side effects. These side effects are sometimes so detrimental to culture that they outweigh the progress, but sometimes the benefits can outweigh the unintentional side effects.

An example that Ellul provided to support his idea of progress being detrimental, at times, is the example of creating pollution in the effort to fight pollution. At the time when his book was written, attempts to purify the air created new acidic pollutants which rain on houses and damage crops. In this case, the problem of smoke pollution was being remedied with

technological processes, but unintentional problems were being generated – problems which may even have been worse than the first one (p. 59).

Ellul then asked the question: If there are so many negative effects because of these products, why do humans continue making the products? His answer argued that one major factor is that the benefits of these advances are immediately felt, while the consequences are often not realized until much later on. For instance, there were at the time of the book's writing approximately 12,000 deaths per year in France were caused by automobiles. Yet, we still produced cars as we did before. That is because these events were isolated and were felt only by a small portion of the population. It is the same with technological consequences. Even though there are many widespread effects of technology that are harmful to users, we continue to produce and utilize technology extensively because of the immediate pain that it eases (p. 73). Perhaps only now are some of the more harmful consequences being fully realized.

Ellul used the term “technique” throughout his writing to frame his struggle with technology and its interface with humanity (1964, p. 26):

(This) does not mean machines, technology, or this or that procedure for attaining an end.

In our technological society, technique is the totality of method rationally arrived at and having absolute efficiency (for a given stage of development) in every field of human activity.

The principal use of technique, in this definition, is to achieve efficiency. In a day when society is practically obsessed with efficiency, it is easy to see where this concept can be applied to the modernist culture. This idea is intimately connected with Mumford's machine. Ellul spoke negatively of technique because he loathed the machine, and he saw the two phenomena as

inseparable. Ellul wrote that “wherever a technical factor exists, it results, almost inevitably, in mechanization: technique transforms everything it touches into a machine” (1964, p. 41).

Postman’s critique was a hybrid of the works of Mumford and Ellul. This is seen in his ideas of technocracy and Technopoly described in his book, *Technopoly* (1992). First, he made it clear that technology does, in fact, shape the way that people think. He cited Marx’s understanding of how “technologies create the ways in which people perceive reality, and that such ways are the key to understanding diverse forms of social and mental life” (p. 21). Because of this, he argued, it is of utmost importance to understand the ways in which tools are shaping reality.

Tools, according to Postman, were originally invented to solve specific and urgent needs that had to do with physical needs or symbolic life such as art, politics, myth, ritual, and religion. Many practical inventions were created through these needs. The important thing about these types of inventions was that “tools did not attack (or, more precisely, were not intended to attack) the dignity and integrity of the culture into which they were introduced” (p. 23). This would be what Postman called a “tool-using” society. The society leverages its assets in a way which solves true needs.

The next level is “technocracy.” A technocracy uses tools to a degree that is more thorough than a tool-using culture. At this level, the society itself begins to function primarily as an enabler for the technology. All aspects of the culture must be molded to the development of the technology. In this case, “Tools are not integrated into the culture: they attack the culture” (p. 28). All other aspects of culture must conform to technology, to the detriment of these other important aspects. In this type of society, the society values technology above all else and exists primarily as inventors of new technology.

The last, most severe level of technology in culture is the Technopoly. In Huxley-like tradition, Technopoly occurs when tools are so integrated into society that they become invisible to its users. Without even realizing it, technology takes over and redefines “what we mean by religion, by art, by family, by politics, by history, by truth, by privacy, by intelligence, so that our definitions fit its new requirements. Technopoly, in other words, is totalitarian technocracy” (p. 48). Far past the dangers of monotronics and a narrow terministic screen, Technopoly is perhaps the most frightening idea because Postman proposes that society will only know that it has come to pass by the startling absence of concern over technology’s widespread reign. This stage represents the total release of society into the hands of tools. The tools which were originally created to serve humanity would now be served by humanity. And the worst part is that humanity would not even be bothered by this. Postman absolutely seems prophetic in light of the legality and morality of governments accessing information from the technological devices of individuals. And, in a Postmanian oddity, citizens respond with “If you have nothing to hide, what is the problem with it?”

“For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil. Some people, eager for money, have wandered from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs” (1 Timothy 6:10, NIV Bible). Mumford, like Burke, believed humanity was defined by the use of symbols, not the use of tools, and this belief demanded a proper framing of mankind. Loving the machine has become the root of all evil. He also viewed technology as a tool that has become far more the master than the servant during the modern age, and he lamented the machinery of human progress and called communication and information the “coin” of technics (1964). This metaphor has a resounding message, as society’s desire for newer, faster, more efficient communication tools require a great deal of money. And it is with machine-like precision that these new devices are dreamt, drafted,

created, tested, mass produced, packaged, marketed, distributed, and sold. Mumford (1952, p. 84) even went as far to offer a stark, biblical warning to those who refuse to believe in the proper place of the machine:

[T]he chief duty of man, according to the utilitarian catechism, is to adapt himself to such mechanical changes as rapidly as is necessary to make them profitable. But this stale view assumes that we are capable of learning nothing, that we are incapable of mastering the machine we have created and putting it in its place; that we shall not emancipate ourselves from the manias and compulsions that our preoccupation with the machine has brought into existence; that philosophy and religion and art will never again open up to man the vision of a while human life. It assumes indeed that we shall never call our soul our own again. But once we arrive at a fuller degree of self-understanding, we shall render unto the machine only that which belongs to the machine; and we shall give back to life the things that belong to life: initiative, power of choice, self-government—in short, freedom and creativeness. Because man must grow, we shall be content that the machine, once it has achieved the power and economy of a good type, should stand still—at least until the creator again places himself above the level of his mechanical creature. If this is too much to expect, then the time has come to set the stage for Post-Historic Man: the man without memory or hope.

Mumford's monotechnic glorified the machine and placed it above humanity. This forms the basis of "megamachines" that feature humans as part of the machine. Except, unlike the science-fiction world of *The Matrix*, where humans are unknowingly placed into the machine, the modernist society willingly places itself into the machine. And the creation of terministic

screens ensues. Whether by technology or terminology, the citizenry begin to create screens in ways to frame access to the world and block access from the world. The megamachine seemingly requires this screen to work at Ellul's feared efficiency. Instead of using technology to further the human condition, humans instead allow the efficiency of the megamachine to determine how to properly communicate. Mumford (1952, p. 82) also noted this phenomenon, by saying:

What is peculiar to the machine is that choice, freedom, esthetic evaluation, are transferred from the process as a whole, where it might take place at every moment, to the initial stage of design. Once choice is made here, any further human interference, any effort to leave the human imprint, can only give impurity to the form and defeat the final result.

Indeed, a system of code is created, and it is devoid of human imprint. Instead of ones and zeros that form the basis of computer code, the system of e-jargon forms the basis of megamachine code. Communicators no longer speak eloquently to each other—they Tweet in 140-character epistles with the e-jargon of “LOL” and “TTFN.” The personal(ized) pronoun of “your” become efficiently and inhumanely reduced to “ur.” Postman (1972, pp. 53-54) noted that these technological vocabularies “are so specialized or technical that they never appear in any semantic environment other than the one which has given them life and to which they, in turn, give life.” As Mumford warned, a structure of language merely replaces another structure. It is not creative; it is a required structure to communicate in the newest media. If any human imprint is left in the code, as with binary computer code or HTML, the system malfunctions. And the great irony is that, as mentioned previously, humans have put themselves into the machine.

This ties into Mumford's view of the quantitative nature of modern technology, calling the clock the true basis of the industrial revolution, as it began the strict categorization of time and labor (1963, p. 14). This created the groundwork for "megatechnics," the modernist framework of technology that focuses on expansion, production, perfection, and efficiency. Humans no longer have time to "reach out and touch someone," as sending a text is much quicker and more efficient. And because of the permeation of mobile phones, the traditional clock—the wristwatch—has become an afterthought. Mankind, according to Mumford (1952, pp. 46-47), has even turned the machine on science itself, attempting to quantify everything, which is a violation of the scientific method.

Mumford's opposing vision was "biotechnics," which framed the qualitative aspect of humans and technology synthesizing as a living organism that seeks balance, growth, self-correction, and wholeness (1974). This viewpoint coincides with Burke's work on language and humanity, as he viewed mankind as a "symbol using, making, and mis-using animal, inventor of the negative, separated from his natural condition by instruments of his own making, goaded by the spirit of hierarchy, and rotten with perfection" (1966, p. 16). This misuse of symbols leads to humans being used by symbols in the pursuit of the efficient, instead of humans using symbols to further humanity.

Burke's concept of the terministic screen furthers our understanding of the modernist usage of communication technology because it shows how language is constructed in denotative (scientific) and connotative (dramatic) forms, then used to frame human communication forms and humanity itself. (1966, pp. 45-49). The more the screen is used—for and by technology—to frame understanding of humanness, the greater the chance of humans being ensnared in one of Mumford's megamachines. This is at the heart of the analysis of technic.

Ellul and Postman both recognized isolation and autonomy as modernist flaws brought about by devotion to technology. Both scholars viewed humanity as diminished in the shadow of technology, as the perceived need for greater amounts of information and the efficient began to push aside the value of humanity, such as education, religion, freedom, and socialization. Ellul lamented the push for the artificial over the natural world, and viewed this as a form of idolatry, while Postman viewed a repeal of human judgment and enlightenment. Arendt (1998, pp. 58-59) feared that mass society has destroyed the private realm and has created a mass phenomenon of loneliness, which is extreme and antihuman. She believed that modern men are losing their place in the world and their private home.

Ellul noted that technology was so loved and sought that it had become sacred (Fasching, 1981, p. 35). In the modernist tradition, man then congratulates himself on the great works that he has done in fashioning this new idol. The irony, according to Ellul, is that man thus created his own method of alienation and enslavement by putting so much emphasis on the created works of man (Ellul, 1976, p. 251). Mumford (1952, p. 46) noted that in order to do mechanized work, and to “fare well at these tasks modern man must, to a certain degree, turn his back on more organic interests; to succeed in operating machines he must himself become a subsidiary machine.” Postman similarly lamented the overreliance on technology and information, which diminished the human values of philosophy, literacy, and knowledge. He called information a commodity to be traded (1990), calling the deluge of information available to humans “garbage” (1992, p. 69). This overload of “garbage” information—trucked efficiently over the Information Superhighway—overwhelms the communicator, who likely knows little about what information to use and how to use it. Instead of relying on religious and educational leaders, humanity has

instead turned to scientists and technical experts for wisdom (1990). Mumford (1952, pp. 35-36) also noted this epistemological turn:

So far have our American schools during the last generation become thing-minded, tool-minded, object-minded, so distrustful are they of symbols, that the fundamental instruments of thought—language, number, and logic—have almost disappeared from the curriculum, or are taught with confusing correctness in the common belief that true education should be restricted to an experience with ‘things’ and with ‘real’ situations. And similarly, the same spirit has led to a pervasive neglect of religion, ethics, the humanities, because these disciplines have, in a world of machines, no operational value.

Like Ellul, Postman saw the focus on the created aspect of humanity and noted that human in a technological society could believe in anything and everything, as opposed to a “benevolent design” and an established order to human beliefs (1990). Ultimately, Postman believed that computing systems would establish a break in humanity when individuals would no longer socialize as citizens and human beings (1995).

Postman’s critique of modern medicine (1992) seems apropos in this historical moment of technological communication. The surrender of culture to technology has indeed placed humanity on life support, while the technological, efficient megamachine has “revived” modernity. Just when communication scholars believe that the modernity coffin has indeed been nailed shut, the modernist tradition is rescued by humanity’s slavish consumption of technic, technique, and technology. Mumford (1952, p. 47) went as far as saying that the modern man has thrown “his whole subjective and qualitative life overboard” in order to pursue technological prowess. Postman (1976, p. 109) believed that this intentional attachment to technology is because humans think that they are “sufficiently clever, knowledgeable, and multi-perspectived

to design complete and just about perfect systems of human activity.” Further, he noticed that mankind apparently thinks it can do no wrong in its pursuit of technology:

Systemaphiles do not like [talk of Faustian bargains] because it threatens the purity of their systems. It implies a dark side to what they propose, a contradiction. There is, of course, something about a contradiction that no one loves. But systemaphiles hate them most of all. [...] What you will find missing from it are any prophecies about what will go wrong, what mistakes will be made, or what the negative consequences will arise from it. These considerations are absent because systemaphiles create plans based on oversimplified assumptions and one-dimensional metaphors. In an effort to reduce a situation to a single set of clear principles, systemaphiles have to ignore all paradoxes, contradictions, and competing principles. They have to overlook the possibilities of error, and to pretend that nothing of value can be lost.

By understanding the philosophies and scholarship of Mumford, Burke, Ellul, and Postman, humanity can move forward in understanding the “nature” of communication technology and how and when it can be used to further humanness. Mumford (1952, p. 47) noted that the “development of technics, in its pure form, was curbed by man’s inveterate tendency toward play and make-believe, toward fantasy and symbol, toward values that derive from other aspects of the personality.” Communication technologies are not to be shunned, but to be analyzed and recognized as a creation that has a place in the order of things. It is merely a tool for humans, not a machine that uses humans. It has a quality that must be valued and situated in human narrative, not a quantity that is used to control human narrative. After all, as Mumford (1952, pp. 75-76) noted, the mechanical printing press was beneficial because it made

a standardized process more efficient and it freed up the craftsman from the drudgery of the press. Both movements are worth the change so the world could benefit from more books.

Finally, the tool should not be the culture of monotronics. Postman (1995) asked:

(A)m I using this technology, or is it using me? Because in a technological culture it is very easy to be swept up in the enthusiasm for technology, and of course, all the technophiles that are around, all the people who adore technology and are promoting it at every turn.

Arendt (1998, p. 9) continued this thought by noting that the “world in which the *vita activa* spends itself consists of things produced by human activities; but the things that owe their existence exclusively to men nevertheless constantly condition their human makers.”

These four critiques offer a greater window into the contemporary world and how it came to be. They also show a different view of humanity and how it is affected by technology and technological process. Each treat the concept of choice in differing fashions. Mumford and Burke appear to suggest that humans can seek, to some degree, escape or control of the technologization of society and culture. Ellul appears to condemn humanity to be forever linked and controlled by technology. Postman appears to be in the middle, but very close to Ellul. One can see how each scholar is correct in viewing the overarching themes of communication technology, but the concept of choice is a powerful force that serves no master. Arendt (1998, pp. 305-306) noted the outgoing era:

(A)mong the outstanding characteristics of the modern age from its beginning to our own time we find the typical attitudes of *homo faber*: his instrumentalization of the world, his confidence in tools and in the productivity of the maker of artificial objects; his trust in the all-comprehensive range of the means-end category, his conviction that every issue

can be solved and every human motivation reduced to the principle of utility; his sovereignty, which regards everything given as material and thinks of the whole of nature as of ‘an immense fabric from which we can cut out whatever we want to re sew it however we like’; his equation of intelligence with ingenuity, that is, his contempt for all thought which cannot be considered to be ‘the first step...for the fabrication of artificial objects, particularly of tools to make tools, and to vary their fabrication indefinitely’; finally, his matter-of-course identification of fabrication with action.

Choice, by definition, gives humanity the option to use technology for virtues or vices. Humans can opt to use technology to varying degrees, perhaps becoming a near-primitive tool user, surviving in rustic situations and working alongside nature; or perhaps as a tool super-user who cannot seem to function without having a face pressed into a screen for hours on end. One can use communication technologies and social media for good or for evil. One can embrace the natural world or one can hide in the virtual one.

But there is hope for humans and the machines they have created. Mumford (1952, p. 11) framed his view of the solution:

The great problem of our time is to restore modern man’s balance and wholeness” to give him the capacity to command the machines he has created instead of becoming their helpless accomplice and passive victim; to bring back, into the very heart of our culture, that respect for the essential attributes of personality, its creativity and autonomy, which Western man lost at that moment he displaced his own life in order to concentrate on the improvement of the machine. In short, the problem of our time is how to prevent ourselves from committing suicide, precisely at the height and climax of our one-sided mechanical triumphs.

Arendt (1998, p. 15), in referencing Aquinas, noted the need to find stillness, not to solely reside in the “un-quiet” of the *vita activa*. As Postman (1993, p, 181) puts it, perhaps humans can become “loving resistance fighters” and save themselves before it is too late. Perhaps the best solution comes from Mumford (1952, pp. 72-73):

One must never let the development of the machine get so far away from its sources in art and handicraft that we could not reinvent the art all over again if its higher secrets were lost. To speak in biological terms, man’s relation to the machine must be symbiotic, not parasitic: and that means he must be ready to dissolve that partnership, even forgo temporarily its practical advantages, as soon as they threaten his autonomy or his further development.

Chapter Six

Reconciling Social Media-in-Itself with Social Media-for-Itself

The phenomenological approach to life is useful in the scholarship of how humans use social media. While previous critiques have focused on many aspects of the field, the treatment of experiential use has received less attention than it deserves. This approach would show why users interact with each other instead of how they interact. Social media users face conflict and internal struggles, just as traditional communicators do. They struggle over how they will be perceived, over self-promotion, over image maintenance, and over proper methods of engagement. Users also struggle over how to use different social media tools for different tasks. As with the traditional communication, the online counterpart is also subject to cultural implications and norms of usage. In short, there is an engagement with Arendt's (1998, p. 5) central question when wrestling with the human condition: "What are we doing?"

Paul Ricoeur (1913-2005) engaged the history of human progress, ambiguity, and hope in order to display the search for knowledge and consciousness. Ricoeur (1965, p. 82) framed his inquiry into history and culture by providing three guide words: progress, ambiguity, and hope. He stated that "[t]hey stand for three stages in the flux of history, three ways of understanding and recovering meaning, and three levels of interpretation: the abstract level of progress, the existential level of ambiguity, and the mysterious level of hope." First, mankind is "transitory" but the "tools and works endure." This treatment notes that progress happens because humans use tools, which coincidentally separates mankind from the animals. Ricoeur called this a truly irreversible phenomenon (p. 82) because "the tool and its products are preserved and

accumulate.” He also noted that knowledge is a tool and it also becomes stratified (p. 83). He believed that “[o]n the basis of this sedimentation, the quest for knowledge, like the technical pursuit, is irreversible. For all new thought uses the thought of the past as a tool or instrument and in this way carries history forward.” There is also a “moral and spiritual ‘experience’ of mankind which is put aside like a treasure” (p. 83). Mumford (1966, pp. 304-306) also noted this framing, by noting that researchers only find fragments of bones and durable tools and use contemporary, tech-based mind to assign value and meaning. No traces of the far richer, organic material survived. Anthropologists have tied using tools with development of human intelligence, but do not evoke mental acuteness. Animals had better displays of technology in the building of their homes than early man did with primitive tools.

Ricoeur then moved from the abstract to the concrete nature of man in ambiguity. He noted bluntly that “civilizations rise and fall” and that mankind still manages to endure, and that placing humanity in the “concrete” aspect of existence bounds mankind by temporality, not by a forward trajectory (p. 87). He calls the “history of technics” merely a “history of means.” And the rise and fall of civilizations show that existence and progress are divorced terms. Existence allows for the best and the worst (p. 88). History is categorized by “significant events and personalities,” and the technologies that occur in human history are often ignored, adopted, and shaped by willing participants in each society, civilization, and culture (pp. 89-90). The dramatic aspect of history is what makes history historical, and not forgotten to time (pp. 90-91). Arendt (1998, p. 193) noted that human essence “can come into being only when life departs, leaving behind nothing but a story.” In short, while tools exist, what frames mankind are man and his enduring qualities and spirit. This leads to hope and its ambiguity. For Ricoeur, this is the home of the Christian meaning of history, which notes that all history, religious and secular, is

categorized by oneness and is sacred (p. 94). It does remain a mystery, as an object of faith. He noted that progress is the rational part of history and ambiguity is the irrational part of history, which places hope as the surrational meaning that is eschatological (p. 94). He worked through this thought by noting (p. 95):

We must now show the other aspect of this hope in research and action. Hope tells me that there is a meaning and that I should seek it. But it also tells me that this meaning is hidden; after having encountered the absurd, it now faces the system. Christianity has an instinctive distrust of systematic philosophies of history which would like to provide us with the key to intelligibility. One has to choose between system or mystery. The mystery of history puts me on guard against the theoretical, practical, intellectual, and political fanaticisms.

The critical part of Ricoeur's scholarship is found in his concept of neighbor. He reviewed the parable of the good Samaritan and found that as the story unfolded, the neighbor is not an *is*, but rather an *event* (p. 99). This is a turn from the notion of being-in-itself to being-for-itself, as Ricoeur noted the phenomenological move that one makes to turn another into a neighbor (p. 99). The neighbor has become concrete treasure, worthy of investigation and appreciation. In communication scholarship, how often does the neighbor receive such a treatment? How often is the focus on the tool? The application of Ricoeur shows that there is great foolishness in planting faith in tools, but there is also foolishness in outright rejection of tools.

There needs to be an understanding of the tool, not as a stratified object, but as a mysterious and hopeful item of value, worthy of Ricoeur's historical treatment. Man does

indeed add drama to the lifeless. Man does indeed add value that converts the ordinary into treasure. The tools should never be allowed to become abstract, unless value cannot be assigned to them; however, if a tool can be turned concrete by human experience, if they can be carriers of event, then they hold meaning. And as Ricoeur noted, this humanization of a lifeless tool *is good*. This interplay with Aristotle's Golden Mean is also noted by Mumford (1952, p. 50):

[W]here both aims, the esthetic and the technical, were pursued together, it had the happy result of producing a harmonious relation between the subjective and the objective life, between spontaneity and necessity, between fantasy and fact. These moments of balance between art and technics, when man respects nature's conditions but modifies them for his own purpose, when his tools and machines regulate his life, freeing it from disorderly subjectivity, but do not dominate it, represent a high point in any civilization's development.

Mumford also noted (p. 63) that "handicraft itself was the mediating factor between pure art and pure technics, between things of meaning that had no other use and things of use that had no other meaning." While the tool itself is without meaning, the careful, loving interaction from mankind gives the situation drama and meaning.

Social media studies and critique has covered many aspects of the field, ranging from workplace access to student usage. The phenomenological approach, one that reviews social media user experience, has received less attention than it deserves. This approach shows why users interact with each other, rather than focusing on how they interact. A review of the existing literature shows a treatment that brushes against the phenomenology of social media scholarship, rather than a direct engagement of the material. An anchor in this phenomenological study can be found in the work of Paul Ricoeur, who engaged the history of

man's progress, ambiguity, and hope in order to display the search for knowledge and consciousness.

The users face conflict while walking into the world of social media (Phua & Jin, 2011; Brandtzæg, 2012; McKinney, Kelly, & Duran, 2012; Stephenson-Abetz & Holman, 2012; Turan, Tinmaz & Gotktas, 2013). These scholars note that there is an internal struggle about how they should interact with others and how they will be perceived. There is a struggle concerning how they choose to promote themselves in the online world. There is a struggle over how they will maintain their online persona. And there is a struggle over one engages and interacts with another through social media tools. Mumford (1952, p. 55) called on humanity to find a solid grounding when wrestling with such questions:

[T]rue objectivity must include every aspect of an experience, and therefore one of the most important sides, the subject, himself, must not be left out. When we are truly objective we not merely see things as they are, but reciprocally things see us, so to say, as *we* are: how we think, how we feel, what our purposes and values are, all enter into the final equation.

Arendt (1998, p. 31) noted that freedom “is located in the realm of the social.” While she was not directly speaking to social media usage, this framing helps scholarship move forward, as people have made a very visible life shift into the social realm. And that shift has brought about the internal and external struggles previously mentioned. Arendt (p. 186) calls this step courageous, for it is bold to leave “one’s private hiding place and showing who one is, in disclosing and exposing one’s self.”

Social media tools are used for multiple reasons that vary from person to person, yet each social media tool can be used differently by different people (Brandtzæg, 2012, pp. 467-468).

While millions of people use Facebook, Twitter, etc., those systems are not used the same way. Users approach the tool differently, much the same way as one would grab a screwdriver to remove a screw, to pry a lodged object, or to scratch a surface. There are different tools for different jobs, but the experience of the user dictates how a particular tool in the shed is used at a particular moment. Why would social media tools be used in a differing manner?

Cultural implications also alter the experience of social media tools. Young, old, male, female, and region to region, the tools are differently used. Previous studies have shown that gender and age are differences in which users interact with social media tools, as women are often seeking emotional support, maintenance, and entertainment much more than men do, while youth focus on entertainment as their older counterparts use it for social surveillance (Ancu, 2012, p. 3).

Facebook will receive the greatest treatment, as it has the greatest amount of global users at the time of this writing. Valtysson (2012) thoroughly defined Facebook as such:

“Facebook is a multi-semiotic media environment where users communicate with text, links, photos, videos, and sound – using different features such as chat, messages, status updates, and the wall. In addition, users can participate in networks, groups and ‘like’ pages, confirm or decline participation in upcoming events, accept game and app requests, ‘check in’ in places, account for their geographical location, write notes, tag photos (both their friends but also brands, products and companies), post classified ads on the Marketplace, purchase and use Facebook Credits to buy gifts and virtual goods (currently only for games), watch Facebook Live, receive sponsored stories and sponsored ads – and now, construct their own timeline. (p. 81)

This definition helps to capture all of the current features of social media, which shows why a

phenomenological approach is necessary. It is not simply a tool to use, but an experience that Facebook claims to be enjoyed by over one billion global users. The definition shows that Facebook is not merely a messaging service, but a communication multitool that replaces many of the old, standard tools in the shed. This multitool does nearly all of the other tools' jobs fairly well, and can be easily worn on the hip. But it is just a tool, and as Ricoeur (1965) noted, it will be stratified in history with other tools (p. 83).

Experience, as mentioned, is also multifaceted, as users have internal and external issues that face them as they engage a communication tool. Social media, while a handy tool, is still just a tool. Like all other tools before it, users experience struggle and success as they approach, grasp, and put the tool to work. McKinney, Kelly, and Duran (2012, p. 109) reinforce this tool metaphor, in noting that critiques of social media are often "based on limited empirical evidence, and fail to consider that such sites are inherently communication tools." This is where Ricoeur can be useful in rescuing the scholarship of social media. His focus on the phenomenological approaches of man to knowledge and consciousness helps scholars understand how to frame man's tools and works in the totality of history, not merely a snapshot in time.

Stephenson-Abetz and Holman (2012, p. 189) quote Gergen (1991) in pondering if new media relationships have fully "saturated" users, which has led to a "complicated fragmentation of the self." They note a paradox where social media tools, and the way they are used, are redefining the self and the relationships with others, as one chooses to establish an online identity. The user sets up an individualized page, adorned with individualized photographs, and cemented with individualized "likes." The paradox is that users are using "social" media to establish a "self." This was addressed by Mumford (1952, p. 34, pp. 61-62) in that when humans take a mechanized system, both become depersonalized; it is a degradation of the nature of

humanity. It then becomes clear why some academics look at social media as a method to decrease social situations and increase isolation and loneliness (Brandtzæg, 2012, p. 467). In a twist of irony, though, usage of social media tools has been found to increase self-esteem because of this focus on self-presentation (Wilcox & Stephen, 2012, p. 95). There is also an increase in empowerment that is generated by the ability of users to co-create information using online tools (Christodoulides, Jevons, & Bonhomme, 2012, p. 55). Sherblom (2010, p. 504) noted how those with communication apprehension are able to reduce withdrawal behaviors (Patterson & Gojdydz, 2000) and increase social interaction (Keaten & Kelly, 2008) in order to enhance the experience of social presence.

Bouvier (2012, p. 52) noted how identity can be viewed as “unstable, changing, and constantly fluctuating” as language is used to shape the self. This is limited to the availability of societal categories, as one cannot assume an identity that has not been communicated. Ancu (2012, p. 3) also noted how people change behaviors over time while using social media tools. This challenge to the boundaries between self and others is highlighted in social media, as users construct an image that is both self-created and co-created by fellow users. This “puzzle” metaphor by Stephenson-Abetz and Holman (2012, p. 189) shows how communication helps produce a picture of the self. The picture may become blurry as users focus on greater numbers of social media “friends.” Brandtzæg (2012, p. 483) introduced “Dunbar’s number,” which notes the ability to effectively keep 150 friends over time (Dunbar, 1996). Beyond that, the connections become a stressor rather than a communicative possibility.

There are, of course, downsides to any communication tools, and social media is no different. Some researchers have noted how social media usage by youth has had an impact on socialization, and “emotional and affective aspects of their development” (Almansa, Fonseca, &

Castillo, 2013, p. 127). The focus of image by teenagers is also carried out on Facebook, as they spend far more time developing image through photographs instead of textual messaging, which become the “starting point of conversations and relationships” (p. 130). As the youth age, they also continue social media usage and habits into college, where Ancu (2012, p. 3) noted women use Facebook for “social and emotional support,” while men use it “to meet new people or to develop romantic relationships” (Sheldon, 2008), while “women also used Facebook as an antidote to boredom more than other age and gender groups.”

College students wrestle experience of leaving home and adapting to a new community with the aid of social media tools. Some researchers note an adaptation to the new world, while others note an attachment to the old world, while others note an attempt to straddle both. Stephenson-Abetz and Holman (2012, p. 182) discovered that the college experience could be made positive with social media, giving students the ability to rapidly connect with new friends, while remaining connected with old friends. Students also noted a chance to reinvent themselves with a fresh start. Other pressures were noted by the desire to communicate uniqueness, but still find a way to fit in and conform to those on the list of friends (p. 184). Phua and Jin (2011, p. 504) noted this conflict as the bridging and bonding of social capital, connecting to the people in the old community while developing new ties in the new community. This scenario is not always a negative, as students also viewed the social media experience as one helping them through times of homesickness and as a prompt of good memories (Stephenson-Abetz & Holman, 2012, p. 181).

Regulation of time is also an issue with social media tools. Non-users, which includes those who used social media tools and left, as well as those who never adopted the tools, expressed concern with the excessive time that is spent on social media, instead valuing other

forms of communication (Turan, Tinmaz, & Goktas, 2013, pp. 142-143). Internet addiction was also listed as a concern for non-users. Francois, Hebbani, and Rintel (2013, p. 24) discovered that younger users reported a greater ability to regulate usage of social media tools.

The experiences of social media utilization are not limited to youth. Studies by others, particularly Ancu (2012), show that older populations have internal differences in the social media experience. Users in their late 40s to mid-50s “tend to find more social utility in Facebook than older adults” (p. 10). Older users seek entertainment, emotional connectivity, expression of opinions, and relationship establishment far more than content creation (p. 1). Older users use social media to “play games and pass time when bored” and to combat loneliness, much like younger users (p. 9). However, younger users still emphasize social connections and surveillance.

Relationships also were an area of struggle for those involved with the social media experience. Some users found it difficult to announce relationship status via social media because of the wide reach of friends that would see the news, making assimilation difficult (Stephenson-Abetz & Holman, 2012, p. 184). This disconnect with friends on social media systems created a “pull of conforming to old and new expectations” which lead to “desires to reveal and conceal” that “are interwoven with desires for connection, reinvention, and preservation” (p. 189). Clipson, Wilson, and DuFrene (2012, p. 65) note a study by Benson, Filippaios, and Morgan (2010) that showed women often use social media tools to keep in touch with current contacts, while males are more influenced by peer pressure to join and to attempt to make friends. Female users are also noted to be cautious when using new technologies, while men quickly adopt technologies and lose interest (p. 65). Ancu (2012, p. 4) cites many studies (Joinson, 2008; Namsu, Kee, & Valensuela, 2009; Raaeke JD, Bonds-Raaeke, 2008) that note

males are interested in “information gathering and sharing, while women spend more time changing the look of their profiles and looking at photos.”

Interestingly, despite online and offline interaction, those who use social media tools are more likely to disclose feelings of loneliness, which Brandtzæg (2012, p. 484) noted that in “this respect, the finding in this study supports some of the negative claims by academics.” Self-esteem was found to increase among users who have an interest in maintaining strong ties, while those who had weak ties saw no increase in self-esteem (Wilcox & Stephen, 2012, pp. 93-94). Females form greater relational bonds than males, which would seem to correspond with the feelings of loneliness that males note, regardless of social media usage (Brandtzæg, 2012, p. 483). Brandtzæg also noted studies by (Ling, 2005; Kaare et al., 2007) that show males are much more curt with texting, while women use it for socializing and emotional ties. Unfortunately, Greenfield (2014) has noted scholarship that shows women are greatly harmed by the critique of physical attributes on social media because of the close ties found online (para. 2). Further, the “more time women spent on Facebook, the more likely they were to be overly concerned with their physical appearance and feel badly about themselves after seeing another woman’s photos. Those already prone to low self-image were particularly affected” (para. 4). While the offline world can create feelings of inadequacies, the social media realm “simply expands the opportunities for appearance-conscious women to obsess over images and feel inadequate” (para. 7). Another issue is the concepts of popularity and jealousy, which become major issues for social media users. Utz and Beukeboom (2011, p. 511) note how low self-esteem and social media usage lead to jealousy and idolization of self-presentation, while users with high self-esteem were focused on grooming tendencies on social media systems. The authors also found that jealousy was prevalent in high self-esteem users, as well (pp. 522-523).

Privacy and surveillance issues are also part of the phenomenological experience of social media tools. Trottier (2012, p. 320) noted how some researchers (Murakami Wood & Webster, 2009; Brighenfi, 2010) discovered that while users feel violated by interpersonal surveillance aspects of social media, they see it as a condition of the tools; a normalization of the action where one can “watch and be watched.” Valtysson (2012, p. 78) views this a “process of colonization” that simultaneously has “potentials of emancipation, for instance in terms of cultural capital, networking, exposure, political empowerment, etc.”

Multiple scholars have researched the inner struggles of workers and how they experience social media tools in the workplace. While some institutions do not note a difference between personal and professional usage of social media, there is scrutiny of the employee and the ability to self-regulate usage (Francois, Hebbani, & Rintel, 2013, p. 16). Those who rejected social media at work noted the need to separate personal and professional worlds, as well as the potential for damage to one’s work ethic and time management skills (Francois, Hebbani, & Rintel, 2013, p. 19). Those who were able to use social media tools were concerned about workplace happiness if those tools were removed (p. 25).

Finally, in regards to the inner conflict brought about by narcissism, McKinney, Kelly, and Duran (2012, p. 116) noted how the posting about oneself does not make one narcissistic if that is the method of the tool, but rather it is the narcissist who wishes to truly be the center of attention who seeks out the best communicative tool to further that goal. Their research highlighted the Twitter microblogging service as such a tool.

The issue of narcissism is an interesting one, as the concept of setting up an online account to showcase oneself does appear to be incredibly self-centered. The notion of promoting an image of a person, online or offline, certainly carries an amount of arrogance with it. The

social nature of social networking certainly fosters such an appearance, and as Christodoulides, Jevons, and Bonhomme (2012, p. 57) noted in the work of Burmann and Arnhold (2008), social media tools “can set the stage for self-presentation and new identity creation, rewarding users with recognition from their community peers.” And as noted previously, Twitter was a considerably more recognizable home for the narcissist who uses Twitter to send Tweets about oneself (McKinney, Kelly, & Duran, 2012, p. 115). And while Facebook has similar self-post abilities, the narcissism is more tied to the “self-reported number of Facebook friends” (p. 115).

The experience of social media tool users, though, has been given proper attention concerning “how individuals present themselves and create friendships through the online networks, their structure and privacy” (Almansa, Fonseca, & Castillo, 2013, p. 128).

Stephenson-Abetz and Holman (2012, p. 177) looked at the research of Liu (2007) and noted how the interests that users display and highlight on social media communicate identity and act as a performance to viewers. Gil de Zúñiga (2012, p. 331) noted Harter’s (1999) work in how the multiple communication channels found in social media tools can enable interpersonal feedback, which in turn produces social capital.

Popularity is not a new concept for humans; it has just become part of the fabric of social media. This move toward the online world “adds a new level of complexity to the social lives of some youth” and causes users to seek measures to ensure online awareness of self (Zywica & Danowski, 2008, p. 22). This may be a sign of growth or perhaps narcissism, but it is also a sign of increased communicative awareness of social media tools when pursuing popularity online (p. 23). Social media offers users the chance to create a matched identity to their physical selves, or to many users, the chance to create a new identity. Stephenson-Abetz and Holman (2012, p. 182) noted this “process of reinvention” and also discovered a paradox of “reaching out for a

new emergent identity while holding safely onto the security of the old identity and old connections.” Other scholars (Bouvier, 2012, p. 41; Almansa, Fonseca, & Castillo, 2013, pp. 130-131) proffered the desire of social media users to show an image, rather than tell a story to create a new image. This was done by filling profiles with pictures, both unmodified and modified, in order to proclaim a new image.

Instead of narcissism, the experience of social media seemed to be wrapped in this communication of self. Users believe that choosing pictures, statuses, and interests, as well as posting selected pictures, shows uniqueness and displays personalities and priorities (Stephenson-Abetz & Holman, 2012, p. 184). To the contrary, McKinney, Kelly, and Duran (2012, p. 109) highlighted a study by Bergman, Fearington, Davenport, and Bergman (2011) that showed users were not acting in a narcissistic manner when posting status updates, posting pictures of self, or spending large quantities of time online. The narcissism was found in the desire to have and display large quantities of social media “friends” and the belief that those friends are interested in the lives of the users. However, young users spend a great deal of time and effort taking, selecting, and editing photos to be displayed on social media tools (Almansa, Fonseca, & Castillo, 2013, p. 130). These photos were found to almost always be self-composed (“selfie”) and taken in front of a mirror. This effort by users and the friends of the users becomes a ritual of communication. Bouvier (2012, p. 41) even described the Facebook community as a “team performance.”

Narcissism is simply too negative and short-sighted for the promotional experience found in social media users. While it may be the case that younger users “may be more likely to exaggerate or make up information on Facebook” (Zywica & Danowski, 2008, p. 22), it is worth noting the personal experience found in self-esteem and the search for recognition. This

differing identity found in social media is often tied with low self-esteem and high sociability (Zywica & Danowski, 2008, p. 22). Sherblom (2010, p. 504) noted many types of research that noticed the perceived safety of communicating behind a screen:

Individuals who are socially anxious in face-to-face interactions are often more at ease communicating through CMC (Rice & Markey, 2009). Caplan (2007) describes a positive relationship between high social anxiety and the degree to which people prefer CMC over face-to-face interaction. The idealizing – hyperpersonal - potential of CMC reduces the effects of less attractive vocalizations and physical cues (Walther, 1996). Socially anxious people benefit from these reduced nonverbal cues because they appear less anxious to their conversational partners and experience a potentially enhanced interpersonal interaction and relational social presence (High & Caplan, 2009). Individuals can present positive information while hiding negative physical and behavioral cues, and often find the de-emphasis on physical presence conducive to more genuine, free, and open communication (Hancock & Dunham, 2001).

Romantic relationships are also experienced differently through social media tools. Almansa, Fonseca, and Castillo (2013, p. 130) found that teenagers view the “reality” of the online world to a reflection of the real world, thus using technology to mediate love. Users can easily promote romantic interests by displaying photos and status updates, as well as setting relationship statuses (Utz & Beukeboom, 2011, p. 512).

The public sphere is also a realm for social media promotion and experiences. Valtysson (2012, p. 80) noted that the “mass media is and has always been central to Habermas’ writings on the public sphere and even though he does not directly address the ‘digital add-on,’ he is

attentive towards the need of self-regulating media systems and the importance of audience response.” And the public has been interacting with others in the sphere. User-generated content by consumers and producers have created how brands are promoted in the community (Christodoulides, Jevons, & Bonhomme, 2012, p. 53). Value is created or negated by online discussions that can be viewed and joined by the public, and experiences are shared and shaped through this co-creation of meaning with online tools for consumer expression (p. 56; Christodoulides, Jevons, & Bonhomme, 2012, p. 61).

Further into the sphere, the news media have also adopted social media tools for promotion of stories, as well as the brand of the media organization itself (Broersma & Graham, 2012, pp. 403-404). The organizations use tools, such as Twitter, to gather news, report news, promote stories, and push advertising. Media organizations have found that Tweets not only serve as color for stories, but can also serve as the story (p. 405). The use of Twitter by politicians and organizations serve as an outlet for those users to promote themselves, but they simultaneously serve as “a rich, quick, and easy-to-access harvest of utterances that would have not been available in this amount and variety without social media. They use tweets from voters to indicate the public sentiments about politicians and their performance, and they use posts of politicians to illustrate their opinions and acts, especially when they are not (easily) available for comments or post inappropriate messages” (p. 417). As Tweets are almost always reported in entirety, there is a great opportunity for all users to promote themselves (p. 418).

Beyond the task of promotion rests the mundane, yet necessary task of maintenance. Social media users have become familiar with maintenance of the virtual self, as using these tools has become part of the daily routine (Wilcox & Stephen, 2012, p. 100). Francois, Hebbani, and Rintel (2013, p. 17) noted that nearly 75% of their research respondents admitted to using

Facebook while at work. Research has shown that users strive to keep up with contacts to learn about their daily lives, all while working on self-preservation through the careful crafting of our identities (Gil de Zúñiga, 2012, p. 331; Bouvier, 2012, p. 40).

Almansa, Fonseca, and Castillo (2013, p. 128) reviewed the work of Skog (2005), who argued that because of the activity to maintain identity, the social media users were not merely passive users, but rather participants in the evolution of the medium. This reflects the sentiments of Gergen (1991) who noted how “identity is created and reproduced in communication, not static but evolving and changing over time and context” (Stephenson-Abetz & Holman, 2012, p. 178). Users accept this responsibility, even while noting the change and visibility on social media (Trottier, 2012, p. 322).

This view allows further treatment of the concept of narcissism. The maintenance task is viewed in a positive light, based on the “disclosure norms” found on social media sites, which serve to allow users to connect with one another (McKinney, Kelly, & Duran, 2012, p. 116). It is this construction and maintenance of the virtual self that allows individuals to “present themselves and develop friendships” (Almansa, Fonseca, & Castillo, 2013, p. 128). Further, Sherblom (2010, p. 507) noted the studies of Walther, Van der Heide, Hamel, Kim, Westerman, and Tong (2008) that noted how many maintenance efforts lead the online experience to move into the offline world, where digital relationships aid in forming in-person relationships. However, this was not echoed by Bouvier (2012, pp. 54-55) whose research into identity showed that user construction followed what is popular, not necessarily a move toward new forms of discourse:

They appear to be little more than people exhibiting choices, over fashion, activities that are temporary and focused towards micro communities of interest. At least in this

research no evidence was found that users were looking outwards to embrace or be challenged by difference, to places where new discourses might be experienced. While social media contain all the potential for global interactions they appear to foster more specialist interactions. And we must not make the mistake of assuming that new forms of media will automatically foster new kinds of identity patterns. Identity categories are not given in nature and nor are they created spontaneously. They are created in language, and we cannot describe ourselves outside of the categories available in any society at a given time. Facebook may simply be one site where we can assess those that are dominant in society at this given time.

Maintenance, as it seems, can have dialogical benefits, but is first and foremost, maintenance. The experience of interacting with others is important, as users take advantage of the asynchronous nature of social media to construct image-maintaining comments and replies (Stephenson-Abetz & Holman, 2012, p. 184). Sometimes, this maintenance is quick and responsive, while other times it is slow and reasoned. Often, users will use the maintenance function to clean up and embarrassing messes or drama that could harm the user's image (Wilcox & Stephen, 2012, p. 91). And just as online text carries power, so do photographs, as users are aware that images are available to friends (pp. 90-91).

Phua and Jin (2011, p. 506) note the work done by Putnam (2000) in the differences between bridging and bonding social capital:

Bridging social capital refers to weak ties between individuals (e.g., casual acquaintances) that may not provide emotional support but may result in opportunities for new ideas and information. Bonding social capital, on the other hand, refers to close

relationships (e.g. family members, close friends) that provide emotional support. For the idea of maintenance, users are faced with the issue of how to direct efforts, fully aware that both groups are represented on their social media networks. Where this is clearly problematic is in the world of college students, and how they seek autonomy while away from home, yet they are still anchored to home. Privacy becomes an issue, especially for those who hold bonding ties (i.e. a parent or best friend from home), while the student is working on forming bridging ties (i.e. new acquaintances at college), and there is a strain in the effort to maintain the social identity (Kanter, Afifi, & Robbins, 2012, p. 901). Social media tools are still viewed as a positive connection to both groups, allowing users to enjoy the ties found with both groups, as well as maintain the image presented to both groups (Stephenson-Abetz & Holman, 2012, p. 182).

Social media does present challenges of privacy and disclosure when trying to maintain an online image. Users who have sought privacy did so before the use of social media. Trottier (2012, p. 321) notes that they simply moved that action online. If they wanted privacy from parents in the in-person activities of their lives, they also seek the same level of privacy online. They find that the challenge is when a friend posts something that they do not want parents to read (Kanter, Afifi, & Robbins, 2012, p. 903). Stephenson-Abetz and Holman (2012, p. 183) note how students see the experience of moving to college as an opportunity to renew image, however, the ties to home via social media cause great strain.

Ultimately, it is considered “appropriate and enjoyable” to post information, thoughts, and images on social media tools (McKinney, Kelly, & Duran, 2012, p. 116). Users claim personal satisfaction and autonomy when using social media (Francois, Hebbani, & Rintel, 2013, p. 24). Loss of privacy is factored into the social media experience, and some users do note it as

“unwanted exposure, an inability to manage one's reputation, and a compromised virtual self” (Trottier, 2012, p. 321). But the alternative is viewed as worth the maintenance effort. Sharing information invites openness that facilitates communication with new users and maintains relationships with current online friends (McKinney, Kelly, & Duran, 2012, p. 109). While this may be an uncomfortable proposition for some users, Brandtzæg (2012, p. 484) noted that new skills and capabilities are part of the participative act of a networked society. Valtysson (2012, p. 79) remarked:

But just like the original blueprint of Habermas’ public sphere, Facebook is a pre-programmed environment that allows for certain interactions, encouraging certain behaviors, communicative acts, and users – thereby excluding certain users, certain semiotic expressions, and communicative acts. In short, Facebook is not an inclusive communicative space, but on the contrary, an exclusive one.

Maintenance is an experience, and it is part of the social media experience. Vigilance is necessary to shape identity and communication to care for virtual selves (Trottier, 2012, p. 320). Exposure to peers – how they view profiles and how they can add to profiles – shows a level of power and trust that users must place on the social media world (p. 320).

At some point in the experience of social media, users must take the step to experience others. Social media tools provide “the potential for much wider forms of discursive sharing” (Bouvier, 2012, p. 54) on a global level. Valtysson (2012, p. 77) noted how Facebook has become its own “micro public sphere” and affected “general behavioral patterns of citizens.” This sphere also has agendas and power, but it certainly promotes communicative acts (p. 79). Also, Gil de Zúñiga (2012, p. 319) noted how “seeking information via social network sites is a

positive and significant predictor of people's social capital and civic and political participatory behaviors, online and offline.”

Moving forward into the sphere and experiencing the other is not terribly complicated, as Sherblom (2010, p. 504) cited multiple researchers who discuss the need to “be attentive, show interpersonal concern, manage the communication, and show emotional expressiveness, confidence, composure, and comfortableness” in their efforts to “engage in social interaction, and achieve a sense of social presence and competence.” Phua and Jin (2011, p. 505) also cited researchers who point to the need for “norms, trust, and reciprocity” as social media users seek to improve and enhance social ties. Trottier (2012, p. 320) offered the same advice, stating further that users “watch over each other, as opposed to communicating directly with one another.”

Socializing is indeed a key feature of the social media experience, as expected. The research of Francois, Hebbani, and Rintel (2013, p. 17) showed this to be the case, as their respondents “overwhelmingly chose the personal-sounding choices of socializing with friends (Facebook chat, sending private messages or making wall posts, replying to events) (48.2 per cent) and/or checking out what people they know are doing (45.8 per cent).” Social media tools also shrink geographical limitations. And as Sherblom (2010, p. 508) discovered in his analysis of Greenhow and Robelia (2009), the friendships and acquaintances still provide emotional support, social learning, and interpersonal connectivity, despite the lower need for maintenance. This digital closeness allows others from varying backgrounds and experiences to offer help and advice to users (Phua & Jin, 2011, p. 505). One particular challenge is based upon gender, most notably how men and women use social media tools (Clipson, Wilson, & DuFrene, 2012, p. 64).

Almansa, Fonseca, & Castillo (2013, p. 128) noted Schwarz's 2011 study that showed young adults are moving away from telephones and face-to-face communication in favor of text-

based communication platforms. Students value the simplicity of social media tools and the ability to easily connect with new friends and maintain old relationships (Stephenson-Abetz & Holman, 2012, p. 187; Kanter, Afifi, & Robbins, 2012, p. 901). Even college students in other countries appreciate the ability to connect with new friends in the host country and stay connected with old friends and family in the home country (Phua & Jin, 2011, pp. 504-505). Phua and Jin (p. 505) also cited multiple scholars who discovered that the connectivity increases higher satisfaction with college life, increased self-esteem, and increased engagement with the college and civic community, as well as increased political participation.

A major critique of the social media tool experience is the ability to use (or misuse) the tools to violate the privacy of the other. “Privacy concerns and cyber-bullying may lead to the perception that SNSs are dangerous environments” (Turan, Tinmaz, & Goktas, 2013, p. 143). As mentioned previously, studies have shown users have come to accept the lack of privacy as a necessary element of the tools. However, Ancu (2012, p. 2) highlighted the work of Bumgamer (2011) to note the use of the tool to facilitate gossip and to check the status of other user’s personal relationships. Trottier (2012, pp. 321-322) noted how peer pressure serves as a major component for joining Facebook, only to discover the high levels of surveillance and visibility. He called out the terms “creeping” and “stalking” to note the movement from the private world into the public world, which then leads to increased tactics to manage virtual selves while communicating with others. Almansa, Fonseca, and Castillo (2013, p. 127) discovered that users certainly know the risks, yet they still accept strangers as friends in the online world, and they continue to post large amounts of private and personal data on their social media networks. Further, they noted how a Facebook friend can be someone never met, with teenagers using minuscule levels of investigation into the person. “They use two criteria to add unknowns as

friends: in their pictures they must be ‘good looking or cute’ and must have friends in common. However, the former may be sufficient to accept a request to be a friend” (p. 130). These friend requests were accepted in less than 20 seconds, and few were rejected. A majority of students do recognize these virtual friendships are “either dangerous or fake,” yet they still hold them as meaningless (Turan, Tinmaz, & Goktas, 2013, p. 143). Clipson, Wilson, and DuFrene (2012, p. 65) cited a study by Shen & Khalifa (2010) that found that “female students tended to believe that people on Facebook were honest and reliable, whereas the male students seemed to have the opposite view.” This is certainly not a great action for surviving and thriving in the public sphere, and it is not a great method to experience the other in a meaningful, dialogic way.

However the leap is made into experiencing the virtual other, the majority of users move into the social networking world because they wish to be visible to their friends, peers, and colleagues to offer support and discourse, acting together and promoting community (Trottier, 2012, p. 322; Bouvier, 2012, p. 53; Palmén & Kouri, 2012, p. 195). And as Valtysson (2012, p. 79) noted, “like any other public sphere, Facebook is a fluid, ever-changing environment, which affects the types of publics, and the agency of different kinds of publics that choose to communicate within its sphere.” Often this change can be in the form of new language styles and use of image that change linguistic meaning (Almansa, Fonseca, & Castillo, 2013, p. 131). Sherblom (2010, p. 509) also noted the work of other scholars who observed how nonverbal cues affected communication in the virtual world.

Social media tools simply allow “more avenues for communication with diverse groups of people in our relational lives” where users can “form relationships, make mistakes, negotiate life decisions, and communicate” social experiences (Stephenson-Abetz & Holman, 2012, p. 189). Brandtzæg (2012, p. 483) noted how females tend to use social media tools and show

greater social behavior than males. Also, McKinney, Kelly, and Duran (2012, p. 109) discovered in their research of other scholars that social media tools tend to support intimacy with others instead of undermining it. Gil de Zúñiga (2012, p. 329) detailed an important aspect of interacting with others on social networks: “Learning about what happens around us and in our community, reflecting on it, and discussing about it with others constructively affects the political realm; as well as it facilitates a cohesive community by enabling citizens to engage in civic action.” He further noted how a greater exchange of information will build trusting relationships (p. 331). Sherblom, 2010, p. 504) also noted how training can help users of social media tools overcome issues that occur in the synchronous world. Ultimately, users can put forth effort to learn how to act and interact in the online world, much as they do in the offline world. The experience of the human condition can continue if users face each other as they have in the past.

Ricoeur passed shortly after the start of Facebook and the global surge of social media tools, yet his writings remain relevant, and at times, poignant in regard to the phenomenology of social media scholarship. His work *History and Time* (1965) highlighted the wrestling of man with each other through communication, as man sought knowledge and purpose. Particularly, his second chapter, *Theological Perspectives*, framed the meaning of history with the metaphors of progress, ambiguity, and hope. The writings also show the existential conflict between the being-in-itself with the being-for-itself. Ricoeur’s writings add further depth to the continued discussion of social media tools, their usage, and the user experiences, whether internal, external, or when interacting with the other.

Ricoeur was seeking to show how there are multiple ways to find meaning in history. It is here where he showed the importance of progress and hope and mystery (p. 81). He noted a

major error in the study of history: opposing progress by viewing it only as “the accumulation of acquisitions.” Without man, he claimed, there is no drama (p. 81). He explained it as such:

There is a second level of interpretation in which history takes on a dramatic character with its decisions, crises, growths, and declines; passing from an abstract history, where only the works of man and the accumulation of his vestiges are considered, to a concrete history in which events take place. (p. 82)

Without consideration of man, the viewers and scholars of history stumble by only considering things. Man adds the dynamic that gives history. Is there not the same error today where some communication scholars focus on the tools rather than the users of the tools? Ricoeur seemed to dismiss this pattern of thought by anchoring his work in progress, ambiguity, and hope, which he described in this way: “They stand for three stages in the flux of history, three ways of understanding and recovering meaning, and three levels of interpretation: the abstract level of progress, the existential level of ambiguity, and the mysterious level of hope” (p. 82).

It is here where one can see Ricoeur moving from the being-in-itself to the being-for-itself. Ricoeur continued that the phenomenon of how man produces works with tools, yet while man moves along in history, the tools and the works endure; this is the realm of progress. Yet progress cannot happen without tools, and Ricoeur firmly planted knowledge within the scope of tools and instruments, which becomes “stratified” and is left behind in books and libraries (p. 83). He believed that “the quest for knowledge, like the technical pursuit, is irreversible.” He also placed the search for consciousness into the category of instruments, as “moral reflection, self-knowledge, and the understanding of human nature accumulate in the form of instruments for living. There is a moral and spiritual ‘experience’ of mankind which is put aside like a treasure.” The tools exist, but man gives them a story to be told. Ricoeur made progress move

into the phenomenal by stating:

...man fulfills his destiny through this technical, intellectual, cultural, and spiritual experience; yes, that man fulfills his role as a creature when he breaks away from the repetition of nature and makes his history, integrating nature itself into his history and pursuing the vast enterprise of the humanization of nature. It would not be difficult to show in detail how technical progress in the narrowest and most material sense, realizes this goal of man: it has allowed us to lighten the workingman's load, to broaden human relationships, and initiate man's dominion over the whole of creation. And that is *good*. (p.85)

Yet Ricoeur did not blindly praise the technical or progress; he viewed it as what it is: an ambiguity that coexists as "a blessing and a danger" (p. 86). It is up to how humans choose to interact with the tools that determine the events of history. Tools come and go throughout existence, and Ricoeur provided insight into how ambiguity is either shaped or overcome.

What best proves the inadequacy of knowing about the equipment of a civilization in order to understand it, is the fact that the significance of this equipment does not lie within the equipment itself; it depends upon the fundamental attitudes taken by the men of a given civilization in respect to their own technical possibilities. (p. 87)

Ultimately, tools need to have worth and value, or they are simply tools. Without the human to grasp the tool, it is merely an object, a being-in-itself that has a static disposition and definition. When the user chooses to use a tool, then puts the tool to use in a craft, then we see the being-for-itself arise, the connotative determination that is judged by history.

Ricoeur then discussed the concept of hope, which he summarized in two words:

meaning and mystery (p. 93). Meaning is determined as a unity, as the “fundamental source of the courage to live in history.” And mystery is hidden, it cannot be relied upon, and no one can draw assurance from it. Hope then tells Ricoeur that there is meaning and should be sought, yet it is hidden (p. 95). But “the sense of mystery encourages the desire to multiply” the outlook on history, “to correct one interpretation with another” (p. 96). Here, the conflict of understanding how humanity wrestles with courageously moving into the unknown, but not in a way that simply notes the existence of tools but also the value of the experience.

Finally, Ricoeur noted the concept as neighbor. His framework was within the parable of the Good Samaritan and the questioning of Jesus about “Who is my neighbor?” that was turned around by Jesus into another question of “Which of these men has acted like a neighbor?” (p. 99). Here, there is another turn from the notion of being-in-itself challenged with a being-for-itself. Ricoeur deftly stated his observation of the event of the story: “Thus there is no sociology of the neighbor. The science of the neighbor is thwarted by the praxis of the neighbor. One does not *have* a neighbor; I make myself someone’s neighbor” (p. 99). He followed that statement with the more prescient:

There is still another source for our astonishment: the point of the parable is that the event of the encounter makes one person present to another. It is striking that the two men who do not stop are defined by their social category: the priest and the Levite. They are themselves a living parable: the parable of a man as a social function, of man absorbed by his role. They show that the social function *occupies* them to the point of making unavailable for the surprise of the encounter (p. 99).

For Ricoeur, the neighbor is no longer one who *is*. The neighbor is now an *event*. The neighbor has moved into the realm of the being-for-itself. The neighbor is concrete and has value. The

neighbor is more than sedimentary. The neighbor is now treasure, worthy of historical investigation and appreciation. In communication scholarship, how often does the neighbor receive such a treatment? How often is the focus on the tool?

What this means for social media scholarship is that there is great foolishness in planting faith in tools. Equally, there is foolishness in outright rejecting a tool. There is progress in communication tools, and as Ricoeur noted, there always will be. But can users attach knowledge and experience to those contemporary social media tools, as humans have been doing with other communicative tools for centuries? This is the ambiguity. Tools exist and users can use them in the now; however, the scholars will look back and determine what value was added. Is there a story to be told, or are the tools just another stratified layer? But there should also be hope. Yes, it is a mystery to hope, but that is what makes it the carrier of meaning. Without hope, what meaning can be carried along and left for history? And without the consideration of the neighbor, how does one even properly use a communicative tool? The introduction of the Internet and computer-mediated communication generated a great deal of “small, shrinking world” discussion, thus making everyone with an Internet connection an instant neighbor. But is this the great, mysterious hope that should be left for history? The meaning rests with how the neighbor is approached. That is the heart of Ricoeur’s understanding of the value and of the event. That is how social media tools reconcile the move from the “abstract” being-in-itself to the “concrete” being-for-itself.

Social media tools are simply tools, but because of their popularity and focus in contemporary society, they are given their own personalities, and then they are framed in terms of how wonderful or how revolutionary or how evil they are. Yet they are tools.

They are not always condemned to be tools. The true area of scholarship is the use of the

tools. How will users interact with the tools, and more importantly, how will users interact with each other? How will value be added to the human experience? How will they be moved from “social media-in-itself” to “social media-for-itself”? Mumford (1952, p. 78) saw hope, based in humans making the shift from using machines at quantification devices to using machines to build quality in humanity. This phenomenological experience is a major component of social media scholarship, and it should be approached in such a way to inform the human condition and its response to the other. Stephenson-Abetz and Holman (2012, p. 190) noted this as such:

The dialectical struggles college students experience may offer several heuristics for understanding how Facebook is changing the way we think about communication, from any perspective. This may be particularly evident in our shifting notions of what is, or should be, public and private communication, and the way we meet and maintain relationships. From a broader perspective, Facebook may be changing the way we communicate social support to others; shaping our sense of agency in influencing political and social change, including the way we organize to bring about that change; and cultivating a sense of how communication connects us, both locally and globally, to others. We all have different aspects of our identities that we share with different people in our lives. Facebook brings those people together and creates a space where the different parts of our identities collide in both positive and negative ways in front of the different communities we are a part of.

People have internal struggles with communication. They also struggle with promotion and maintenance of the image of self. And they wrestle with connecting with others. Users of social media tools have the same struggles; it simply happens in a different communicative

forum. In 20 years, scholars, theorists, and historians will no doubt be wringing their hands about what to do about the new technology. But just as seen during the writings of Ricoeur and of today, the question is concerning what will be done about communication and communicators, if communicators can approach the other with the spirit of a neighbor.

There needs to be an understanding of the tool, not as a stratified object, but as a mysterious and hopeful item of value, worthy of Ricoeur's historical treatment. Man does indeed add drama to the lifeless. Man does indeed add value that converts the ordinary into treasure. The tools should never be allowed to become abstract, unless value cannot be assigned to them; at this point, they should retreat "into the background" and become discreet and silent fixtures" (Mumford, 1952, p. 79). However, if a tool can be turned concrete by human experience, if they can be carriers of event, then they hold meaning. And as Ricoeur noted, this humanization of a lifeless tool *is good*.

The research into social media tools could be enhanced by further analysis of users and nonusers, as well as how digital natives (those born into the technology of the time) approach the tools. Brandtzæg (2012, p. 467) noted how without scholarship that compares social media users and nonusers, the media is left with anecdotal evidence that highlights negative implications of social media tools. Further, Stephenson-Abetz & Holman (2012, p. 177) noted how current college students have been using Facebook since childhood, which would affect their perceptions of how communication "ought to be." Finally, with contemporary social media tools existing for a generation, the proliferation into the workplace via computers, and more importantly, smartphones, should be a topic for consideration, as communication in the workplace may have been fundamentally altered.

Ultimately, Mumford (1952, p. 81) framed this struggle in a clear and understandable

manner that should hold up to generations of scrutiny:

[T]he machine is not a substitute for the person; it is, when properly conceived, an extension of the rational and operative parts of the personality, and it must not wantonly trespass on areas that do not belong to it. If you fall in love with a machine, there is something wrong with your love life. If you worship a machine there is something wrong with your religion.

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