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« Rhetorics of Opposition : 1960s and 1970s Counterculture Revived in 21st Century Environmental Movements. »

Elsa Maeder

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Master's Thesis

Rhetorics of Opposition
1960s and 1970s Counterculture Revived in 21st Century
Environmental Movements

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*The environmental movement is young,
an adolescent in the family of social movements,
but it was born running.*

Will Potter, Green is the New Red, p.65.

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1. Introduction: *Revival, Rhetorics of Environmental Activism from the 1960s and 1970s to 21st Century Activism*

1.1. *Problematic*

Opposition in our society is a cyclical mechanism, and in these last ten years, there seems to be a revival of the 1960s and 1970s countercultural dreams and struggles. Civil rights, feminist and environmental actions as well as other oppositional movements continue to fight for their vision of a just and equal world in a society that is still full of contradictions. In this work, I will focus on the environmental question, starting in the 1960s in reaction to the consumer society of the 1950s. I will explore a revival of the 1960s and 1970s countercultural speeches in 2010s speeches aiming to deal with climate breakdown. The revival will also be observed in the opponents' rhetoric using countercultural stereotypes from the 1960s and 1970s to attack 2010s activists.

The terms of this revival will be studied by comparing speeches from the hippie leader Timothy Leary and the senator Gaylord Nelson for the *Earth Day* movement with Extinction Rebellion's two-part talk and speeches from the young climate activist Greta Thunberg. These countercultural speeches will be put in dialogue with counter-discourses: an article by the 1960s journalist William Hedgepeth, statements from the President Ronald Reagan, tweets from President Donald Trump, French journalist Bernard Pivot, claims from the writer and television commentator Stephen Moore as well as Prime Minister Boris Johnson's speech at the launch of *Margaret Thatcher: Herself Alone*, all emphasizing a stigmatization of members of the counterculture. Indeed, this study will focus on the constant rhetorical negotiation between activists and opponents.

In order to illustrate this negotiation, I will first contextualize the question of environmentalism and the evolution of climate concerns from the 1960s to 2020. Then, I will focus on the issues of growth and capitalism, which function in contradiction to the actions aiming to address the climate crisis. Finally, I will explain the theoretical aspects of a rejection

of the capitalist system. This rejection will be at the center of my study and different forms of non-violent resistance will be of interest. I will also consider the actors of this movement and the power they have. Indeed, the counterculture which is of interest is characterized by white middle-class young people formulating opposition in a specific way: by opposing the older generation and using their privileges as members of the white middle class to challenge the system. This discussion of the actors of the movement will lead to the evolving concept of “charisma” for the activism leaders, fluctuating between forms of leadership and egalitarianism or “flat hierarchy.”

The theoretical framework and the analysis of the structures as well as the actors of this revival will lead me to a second part, where I will proceed to a more precise speech analysis in order to understand more of the strategies leading the dynamic between activists and opponents. In order to do so, I will study the rhetoric of mobilization speeches of the different public figures mentioned above. Tactics and tropes will be highlighted and closely analyzed in order to reveal the strategies in these mobilization speeches as well as the way these have evolved from 1960s to the 2010s. I will study the ideographic character of truth, Leary’s famous metaphor of the Veil and the problem of denial to deal with the climate crisis. I will also analyze recurrent patterns as dichotomies, the theme of time and emergency resonating differently according to the uncertain futures people face as well as the theme of war in describing the climate crisis. These thematic analyses will lead me to consider the importance of emotional engagement which is at the center of those tactics and will call on different “ideographs” concerning environmental justice, morality, spirituality as well as collective identity. The rhetorical device of irony will also be used in order to deprive opponents of their legitimacy.

After studying the revival in countercultural speeches and tactics I will consider how the reception speeches in mainstream culture integrate and uses this revival to stigmatize activists and their strategies, through 1960s and 1970s stereotypes. This will be shown by the

description of Extinction Rebellion activists in which they are characterized with a vocabulary of hippie stigmatization. Moreover, the degrowth perspective will lead to a whole pejorative vocabulary recalling the 1950s obsession for progress and technology. It will show that the opponents use a different type of discrediting strategy from the activists; President Donald Trump attacks Greta Thunberg on her youth and her Asperger syndrome, instead of commenting on the message she delivers. In a similar way, Extinction Rebellion members are also attacked for their youth, wealth and physical attributes, as well as on their behavior towards the police. The study of this counterculture-reception negotiation will show that change is often perceived as a utopia and induces backlashes from non-members but also from sympathizers of the movement.

This analysis will allow me to demonstrate the evolution in language and rhetorical strategies, as well as the meanings of these changes; evolution in types of leadership, in the discourse used by movement participants, adapting tactics to changing times and circumstances. Indeed, these texts represent power dynamics in constant negotiation between activists and opponents inflecting discourse and counter-discourse. The mobilization mechanisms, sometimes calling upon emotional aspects, shaming and attacks also raise the questions of the urgent change of a whole lifetime of habits in a world in crisis often leading to denial, rejection and stigmatization. Finally, this reflection will lead to a broader consideration of the terms by which opposition can alter mainstream culture. In this 21st century collapsing society it will probably be necessary to overcome activism stigmatization. The time has come to fulfill the countercultural dreams which gradually evolve into necessities for survival.

1.2. *Remarks on Opinion and Vocabulary*

Before entering the main body of this activists-opponents analysis, it is important to clarify the angle with which I intend to lead this study. As a matter of opinion and background, I position climate activists in the center of the analysis and consider the politicians and journalists producing counter-discourse as opponents. I realize that this work is counterculturally oriented, however, I aim to justify this focus on countercultural considerations as a necessity in order to change an unsustainable system already collapsing at the moment of this reflection.

Moreover, when it comes to qualifying the environmental issue, I align with the tendency to use the term *climate crisis* over *climate change*. As I will demonstrate through this work, language is at the center of society and shapes people's thoughts and actions. Indeed, acknowledging the critical situation by a correct wording is the first and crucial step for a more global acceptance. In October 2019, the journalist Sophie Zeldin-O'Neill published in *The Guardian* a list of six Guardian language changes on climate matters. The first change is precisely on the problematic terminology *climate change* which "is no longer considered to accurately reflect the seriousness of the overall situation,"¹ according to her, it should only be used in specific scientific sense. The activist Greta Thunberg also formulates the importance of the change in wording, in a tweet from May 2019:

It's 2019. Can we all now please stop saying "climate change" and instead call it what it is: climate breakdown, climate crisis, climate emergency, ecological breakdown, ecological crisis and ecological emergency?²

In this work, I also intend to use the lexical field of emergency and crisis when describing environmental issues. Along with that, I will follow *The Guardian* which declines to use the term *climate sceptic*. Actually, the OED defines sceptic in its etymological sense as "a seeker

¹ Sophie Zeldin-O'Neill. "'It's a Crisis, Not a Change': The Six Guardian Language Changes on Climate Matters." *The Guardian*, 16 October 2019. 5 Mars 2020. <<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2019/oct/16/guardian-language-changes-climate-environment>>.

² "Greta Thunberg on Twitter." *Twitter*. 16 September 2020. <<https://twitter.com/GretaThunberg/status/1167916177927991296>>.

of the truth; an inquirer who has not yet arrived at definite convictions,”³ this definition seems inadequate when describing individuals denying scientific truths⁴. Thus, like *The Guardian*, I will use the term *climate denier*.

1.3. Remarks on Data

In order to lead this qualitative study, I have decided to choose two types of speeches reflecting 1960s and 1970s counterculture. The first one, still part of the establishment: the speech given by the senator Gaylord Nelson for the *Earth Day* movement in 1970, and the second one, totally separated from the establishment: *The Declaration of Evolution* [1968] given by the hippie leader Timothy Leary. In the same way, for 2010s counterculture, I have chosen, on the one hand, speeches by the young climate activist Greta Thunberg, phenomenon of activism leadership, asking for help from the establishment. I chose seven speeches representing her commitment as well as the evolution of her concerns from her *Declaration of Rebellion* in October 2018 until her speech at the *Davos Forum* in January 2020. On the other hand, I chose the 2019 talk about climate breakdown given by the more provocative and anti-establishment movement Extinction Rebellion.

For the opposing data, I have decided to enlarge the notion of *speech* to different types of discourse. For the 1960s and 1970s period, I have decided to analyze an article from August 1967, written by the journalist William Hedgepeth, as well as different claims by the President Ronald Reagan representing a 1960s establishment position. Both these speeches invoke stereotypes about hippie counterculture which were present in that period. For the 21st century, I chose figures who personify the establishment by their important positions; President Donald Trump and Prime Minister Boris Johnson. Moreover, I look at right-wing writers Bernard Pivot and Stephen Moore, also representative of this establishment. In terms of sources, I used Boris

³ “Sceptic | Skeptic, Adj. and n.” *OED Online*. Oxford University Press. 13 October 2020, <<https://www.oed.com/view/Entry/172249>>.

⁴ “Climate Change Evidence: How Do We Know?” *Climate Change: Vital Signs of the Planet*. 18 December 2020. <<https://climate.nasa.gov/evidence>>.

Johnson's speech at the launch of Charles Moore's book *Margaret Thatcher: Herself Alone* [2019.] For the other figures, I collected data from 2018 to 2020 on the social network Twitter, representing a new way of communicating in politics unique to the 21st century.

This array, in which each entity is tied differently to the establishment, will allow a better understanding of the rhetorical dynamics between activists and their sympathizers as well as their opponents. It will also give me a wide range of interpretations of the revival.

2. Theoretical Framework and Structural Comparison 1960s-1970s to 2010s

2.1. *Overturn a Toxic System*

The revival currently happening in climate activism has been considered by several scholars. Timothy Miller is one of them, and in his work retracing the whole history and influences of hip culture, he notes the re-emergence:

In the early days of the counterculture, in the middle 1960s, the perception that the earth itself was gravely endangered was still a bit of a novelty not widely held as it is today. It was here, perhaps better than in any other place, that the ethics of the counterculture was visionary. Many derided hippies in the 1960s for their rather naïve love of nature and sense of portending doom. Half a century later they don't look quite so silly.⁵

It is this “visionary” character which interests me, and especially how the counterculture actors “don't look quite so silly” but are nevertheless still treated as such by defenders of the establishment.

2.1.1. *Environmentalisms: Evolution of Climate Concerns*

In order to address this revival, it is firstly necessary to understand the evolution of environmental concerns from the 1960s to 2010s. From the Transcendentalists in the 19th century but especially after the rise of consumerism in the 1950s, many people became aware of the disastrous consequences of industrialized, late-capitalist society for the world they were living in. In research, these types of reflections and behaviors bear the designation of environmentalisms. The researcher Joan Martinez Alier distinguishes three main currents of environmentalism, which he mentions in religious terms probably to signify the fervor with which they are undertaken: *The Cult of Wilderness, the Gospel of Eco-Efficiency, and the Mantra of Environmental Justice*.⁶ The first current aims to “preserve pristine nature by setting aside natural areas from where humans would be excluded, and the active protection of wildlife

⁵ Timothy Miller. *The Hippies and American Values*. 1991, p.93.

⁶ Joan Martinez-Alier. “Environmentalisms.” Joni Adamson, *Keywords for Environmental Studies*. NYU Press, 2016. p.97.

for its ecological and aesthetic values and not for any economic or human livelihood value.”⁷ This is the approach of the 1960s and 1970s, notably developed by environmentalists such as Gaylord Nelson, founder of the *Earth Day* or Rachel Carson in her famous work *Silent Spring*.⁸ In contrast, *the Gospel of Eco-Efficiency* introduces the concept of *sustainability* by “indicat[ing] how monetary profits could be made from nature by obtaining optimum sustainable yields from tree plantations.”⁹ This approach considers that human beings have the right to use nature, but it must be done in a way in which it is not destroyed beyond repair. This approach has often been criticized as a utilitarian way of seeing nature. Indeed, the word *sustainable* is equivocal as it can easily function as a cover for a capitalist system responding to the demands of the consumers. The phenomenon described by the term *greenwashing* could be developed in another study.¹⁰ The third current mentioned by Martinez Alier is the one relevant for many 21st century social movements. He underlines that “it was claimed that the burdens of pollution fell disproportionately on ethnic minorities, prompting the use of the term ‘environmental racism.’”¹¹ This issue is treated by Extinction Rebellion, emphasizing that the consequences of the climate breakdown are more destructive for poor people or ethnic minorities. Martinez Alier argues that

the environmentalism of the poor arises from the fact that the world economy is based on fossil fuels and other exhaustible resources; it goes to the ends of the Earth to get them, disrupting and polluting both pristine nature and human livelihoods, and thus exacerbating poverty and leading to inevitable resistance by poor and indigenous peoples, who are often led by women.¹²

This is the argument of many 21st century researchers as for example Giovanna Di Chiro who advances the same argument, in her article “Environmental Justice.”¹³ Indeed, by 2010s different societies have developed unequally and countries polluting the most are less subject

⁷ Joan Martinez-Alier, p.97.

⁸ Rachel Carson. *Silent Spring*. 40th anniversary ed. 1st Mariner Books ed. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2002.

⁹ Martinez-Alier Joan, p.98.

¹⁰ For further interest on this topic see: Joseph Heath and Andrew Potter, *Nations of Rebels: How the Counter Culture Became Consumer Culture*. New York: HarperBusiness, 2005.

¹¹ Martinez-Alier Joan. “Environmentalisms.” Joni Adamson, *Keywords for Environmental Studies*, p.98.

¹² *Ibid.*, p.99.

¹³ Giovanna Di Chiro. “Environmental Justice.” Joni Adamson, *Keywords for Environmental Studies*, p.103.

to the consequences of this pollution, inducing big injustices for the individuals having to deal with the disastrous effect of an economic system centralized on growth they cannot even benefit from.

2.1.2. *Capitalism and Growth: “The Iron Cage of Consumerism”*¹⁴

Subsequent to the mention of growth, activists from 1960s to 2010s address the problem of a consumerist society driven by an economic system of capitalism and lobbying. As the sociologist Doug McAdam argues in his article “Social Movement Theory and the Prospects for Climate Change Activism in the United States:”

As members of Congress devote more time to fund-raising and to cultivating relationships with the lobbyists who lubricate the system, they inevitably attend more closely to the interests of lobbyists and donors and less to those of the general public.¹⁵

The malfunction underlined by climate activists, concerns the money placements that serve this “system,” the capitalist society. Those money investments “lubricate,” they encourage growth, even in a society where this model is largely unsustainable. These structural problems are at the heart of climate breakdown, as often argued in the 1960s and 1970s they break the relationship between humans and their environment. It is still relevant today, capitalism encourages production and infinite growth in a society where resources are finite, and thus it harms the ecosystem. Many economists, notably the Professor Tim Jackson, criticizes the holy relationship between prosperity and growth and aims to develop models where growth is not at the center of society anymore. Indeed, Jackson draws attentions to the fact that “there is as yet no credible socially just, ecologically sustainable scenario of continually growing incomes for a world of nine billion people.”¹⁶ Therefore, he aims to redefine prosperity by taking into account the “finite ecology of the planet,”¹⁷ as well as aiming to deconstruct the necessary

¹⁴ Tim Jackson. *Prosperity without Growth: Economics for a Finite Planet*. Pbk. ed London; Washington, DC: Earthscan, 2011, p.9.

¹⁵ Doug McAdam. “Social Movement Theory and the Prospects for Climate Change Activism in the United States.” *Annual Review of Political Science* 20, no. 1 (May 11, 2017): 189–208, p.197.

¹⁶ Jackson, p.8.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p.7.

condition of growth for a flourishing society. His analysis takes into account the “deep-seated dilemma: growth may be unsustainable but ‘de-growth’ appears to be unstable.”¹⁸ Indeed, models of degrowth, meaning reduction in economic outputs, are not undertaken because they do not meet the expectations of the lobbyists controlling society through financial investments. Jackson underlines the fact that there is no macro-economics for sustainability and the one that should be designed has to abandon growth as the only way to achieve economic stability as well as reuniting the economy with society and environment.¹⁹ However, in the current system, the culture of consumption paralyzes and penalizes environmental choices for the people willing to undertake them. Indeed, as argued by the journalist Naomi Klein:

Meanwhile, the annual U.N. climate summit, which remains the best hope for a political breakthrough on climate action, has started to seem less like a forum for serious negotiation than a very costly and high-carbon group therapy session, a place for the representatives of the most vulnerable countries in the world to vent their grief and rage while low-level representatives of the nations largely responsible for their tragedies stare at their shoes.²⁰

This study will testify to Klein’s argument while demonstrating the way climate activism asks to deconstruct what Jackson mentions as the “iron cage of consumerism”²¹ and to think this system anew, demanding another type of governance.

2.1.3. *Opposition: Mechanisms of Nonviolent Action*

In order to deconstruct the “iron cage of consumerism,” activism functions in opposition with mainstream culture. As a way to understand the Hippies, Environmentalists such as Gaylord Nelson, Extinction Rebellion and Greta Thunberg’s tactics as activism, it is important to review the history of nonviolent resistance and its mechanisms with which they align.

In his work *The Politics of Nonviolent Action*, the American political scientist Gene Sharp retraces the history and mechanisms of nonviolent action. He separates non-violent resistance into three different forms of actions: 1. *nonviolent protest and persuasion*

¹⁸ Jackson, p.8.

¹⁹ Ibid., p.10.

²⁰ Naomi Klein. *This Changes Everything: Capitalism vs. the Climate*. London: Penguin, 2015, pp.35-36.

²¹ Jackson, p.9.

(demonstrations such as marches, parades and vigils); 2. *non-cooperation* (*social, economic and political* noncooperation, e.g. boycotts, strikes); 3. *non-violent intervention* (sit-ins, nonviolent obstruction, nonviolent invasion and parallel government).²²

Along with that, Sharp touches on the difference between violent and non-violent mechanisms:

the non-violent technique operates by producing power changes. (...) This power variability can be more extreme and occur more rapidly than in situations where both sides are using violence. (...) In addition, the nature of nonviolent struggle makes it possible for the actionists also to win considerable support even in the camp of the opponent and among third parties. This potential is much greater than with violence.²³

His argument is that non-violent resistance can redistribute power in society far better than violent resistance, as well as garnering support from both opponents and sympathizers. We will see that these arguments are supported by the activists we analyze. Therefore, this type of resistance is not in contradiction with democracy, it is merely a way of being an agent of it. The tension in non-violent resistance is the way in which it confronts and rejects the system, in this case capitalism, while still being tied to this specific system. It is this power negotiation which will be at the center of this work.

I will now focus briefly on the mechanism of civil disobedience, which is widely used by Extinction Rebellion. This strategy probably lies somewhere between Sharp's categories of *non-cooperation* and *non-violent intervention*. The apparition of the word 'civil disobedience' takes its roots in Transcendentalist Henry David Thoreau's essay *On the Duty of Civil Disobedience* [1849], written in reaction to slavery and the Mexican-American war. Thoreau is put in jail because he refuses to pay taxes for the state which, according to him, is not aligned with his values as a citizen of this country. He resists the government by arguing that:

all men recognize the right of revolution; that is, the right to refuse allegiance to and to resist the government, when its tyranny or its

²² Gene Sharp. *The Politics of Nonviolent Action* Boston: Porter Sargent Publ, 1973, p.69.

²³ Sharp, pp.69-70.

inefficiency are great and unendurable. But almost all say that such is not the case now.²⁴

This “right to refuse allegiance to and to resist the government” is the focus of the activists, when the government seems unjust in the eyes of the people, it is their duty as citizens to resist. This assertion, a founding principle of civil disobedience, has inspired many fundamental figures in civil right movements, as Mahatma Ghandi, Martin Luther King and Rosa Parks.

Nearly two centuries later, the Professor in philosophy Hugo Bedau leads an analysis of this term, in his article “On Civil Disobedience.” Where he argues that “a dissenter performs an act of civil disobedience only if he acts illegally.”²⁵ The focus on the illegality of the action is what defines civil disobedience, it is an illegal act, “committed” for democracy. However, it is never a violent act rejecting democracy, Thoreau argues that:

There will never be a really free and enlightened State, until the State comes to recognize the individual as a higher and independent power, from which all its own power and authority are derived and treats him accordingly²⁶

According to him – and this aligns with the definition of democracy – the power of the State should come from “the individual,” and not the opposite; the state should not exert power over individuals.

²⁴ Thoreau Henry David. “Civil Disobedience by Henry David Thoreau.” 29 June, 2020, <<http://www.xroads.virginia.edu/~Hyper2/thoreau/civil.html>>, pp.6-7.

²⁵ Hugo A. Bedau. “On Civil Disobedience.” *Journal of Philosophy* 58, no. 21 (1961): 653–65.

²⁶ Thoreau, p.27.

2.2. *Actors and Communication*

On the subject of opposition in social protest, according to the researcher Leland M. Griffin, two classes of agents, embracing different roles, can be acknowledged:

1. Aggressor orators and journalists who attempt, in the *pro* movement,²⁷ to establish and in the *anti* movement to destroy
2. Defendant rhetoricians who attempt, in the *pro* movement, to resist reform and in the *anti* movement to defend institutions.²⁸

According to Griffin's terminology, in my study, Greta Thunberg, Timothy Leary, Gaylord Nelson and Extinction Rebellion are "aggressors" trying to find solutions to tackle the climate crisis and "destroy" the capitalist system. In contrast, Ronald Reagan, Donald Trump, Boris Johnson, Bernard Pivot and Stephen Moore are "defendants" trying to "resist reform" and "defend [the] institutions" they represent. However, I will use the term *activists* to describe the "aggressors" and *opponents* for "defendants" of the establishment. The journalist William Hedgepeth occupies a hybrid position; he writes for *Look*, a general interest magazine which is not particularly polarized politically. However, it can be considered tabloid newspaper and therefore has to meet the interests of the readers. Hedgepeth is a "defendant," an opponent, in the fact that he ironizes the hippie culture, probably in order to meet the tabloid character of the magazine, but he could be understood as an "aggressor," or maybe at least an ally of the hippie movement because of the way he integrated their community.

2.2.1. *Young Generational Opposition*

These two classes of actors tend to be polarized in a generational opposition, where younger people position themselves in opposition to their elders. This consideration firstly draws back to Karl Mannheim's *Theory of Generations* (1928) qualifying a political *generation* as "a particular kind of identity of location, embracing related 'age groups' embedded in a

²⁷ According to Griffin:

1. *pro* movements, in which the rhetorical attempt is to arouse public opinion to the creation or acceptance of an institution or idea.
2. *anti* movements, in which the rhetorical attempt is to arouse public opinion to the destruction or rejection of an existing institution or idea.
Leland M. Griffin. "The Rhetoric of Historical Movements." Charles E. Morris and Stephen H. Browne. eds. *Readings on the Rhetoric of Social Protest* 2nd ed. State College, Pa: Strata Pub, 2006, p.11.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, pp.11-12.

historical-social process.”²⁹ On this question, in more recent works, Donatella Della Porta regroups a wide panel of researchers’ arguments about the role of young generations in social movements. She mentions the researcher Peppino Ortovola’s arguments of an “oedipal revolt”³⁰ by youth, but also “a moral rebellion against the loss of credibility of the previous generations, expressed through demystification, irreverence, and transgression.” This will meet the analysis of the young hippies as well as Greta Thunberg leading the school strike for climate, rebelling against the “loss of credibility of the previous generations” who are imprisoned by an unsustainable system and do not undertake the actions considered essential in the young generations’ eyes.

Moreover, many studies discuss what they perceive as “young people’s passivity;”³¹ nevertheless, Della Porta argues against the argument of passivity and states that young people should not be considered “as a mere subset of the general population but as a specific group with its own particular life worlds and concerns, and its definitions of politics and ‘the political,’ we might expect specific forms of political engagement”³² and this is what I will encounter with the young orators. Indeed, Theodore Roszak explores the generational opposition in *The Making of a Counterculture* and he states that:

But if one believes, as I do, that the alienated young are giving shape to something that looks like the saving vision our endangered civilization requires, then there is no avoiding the need to understand and to educate them in what they are about.³³

²⁹ Karl Mannheim. *Essays on the Sociology of Knowledge*. London: Routledge & K. Paul, 1972, p.292.

³⁰ Donatella Della Porta and Mario Diani. *Social Movements: An Introduction*. 2nd ed. Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2006, p.1410
Reformulation of Peppino Ortovola and Peppino Ortovola, *I Movimenti Del '68 in Europa e in America*, 2. ed, Il Cerchio. Roma: Editori riuniti, 1998.

³¹ Therese O’Toole et al. “Tuning out or Left out? Participation and Non-Participation among Young People.” *Contemporary Politics* 9 no. 1 (March 2003): 45–61.

D. Marsh. *Young People and Politics in the UK: Apathy or Alienation?*. London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014.

³² Della Porta and Diani, p.1416.

³³ Theodore Roszak. *The Making of a Counter Culture: Reflections on the Technocratic Society and Its Youthful Opposition*. 1st California pbk. ed. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995, p.1.

According to him, young members of the society give “shape to something that looks like the saving vision our endangered civilization requires,” indeed, their “particular life worlds and concerns”³⁴ push them to restructure society for a better functioning adapted to evolving times.

Finally, McAdam advances the argument he designates as “biographical availability”³⁵ defining an “absence of personal constraints that may increase the costs and risks of movement participation, such as full-time employment, marriage, and family responsibilities.” Young people are more likely to engage in social movements challenging the establishment because they tend to have fewer personal constraints.

Looking at the chosen periods and speeches for this study, in the 1960s and 1970s the young generation reacted to 1950s post-war consumerist society. The American dream promised prosperity in a structured life; a suburban house, a nuclear family; housewife and husband taking care of the financial demands of the family. Young generations could not stand the implications and practices of this 50s society and they expressed the desire for a new type of dream and created a counterculture based on this generational shift, on the “loss of credibility of the previous generations.”³⁶ In my study, I will characterize this type of generational speech in the terminology of *we-they rhetoric*. The Hippie leader Timothy Leary is a clear user of this type of rhetoric. In his *Declaration of Evolution*, he expresses that “it is the organic duty of the young members of that species to mutate, to drop out, to initiate a new social structure (...)”³⁷ Indeed, the “young members of that species” position themselves in opposition to “the white, menopausal, mendacious men.” The adjective “menopausal” is symptomatic of a society that is considered as infertile, probably because it is viewed by the author as totally unsustainable. Indeed, the hippie culture described the structured life of the 50s as a sterile and dehumanizing

³⁴ Della Porta and Diani, p.1416.

³⁵ Doug McAdam. “Recruitment to High-Risk Activism: The Case of Freedom Summer.” *American Journal of Sociology* 92, no. 1 (1986): 64–90, p.70.

³⁶ Della Porta and Diani, p.1410.

Reformulation of Ortoleva and Ortoleva. *I Movimenti Del '68 in Europa e in America*.

³⁷ “Internet History Sourcebooks.” 29 June 2020. <<https://sourcebooks.fordham.edu/mod/leary-decevo.asp>>.

society. When it comes to the adjective “mendacious,” it is also symptomatic of a society of denial where growth is the only variant that matters, not acknowledging (or worse, lying about) the disastrous consequences for the planet.

Finally, Leary’s mention of the “white” men bears witness to the power dynamics of 60s society, where “white men” lead society while women and other minorities have no leeway to perform differently than they are expected to. William Hedgepeth in his article *Inside the Hippie Revolution* draws attention to this *we-they* opposition, when stating that: “The dark reference to ‘Them’ means the ‘straight’ people, the non-in, tuned-out guardians of the Establishment and the status quo-in other words, just about everyone else.”³⁸ Hedgepeth ironizes the *we-they rhetoric* by underlining the exclusivity of the group *we*, considering every “non-in” as the opponents. He also discusses how the counterculture’s arguments are received, stating that “Radical change is taking place in this generation. Middle-aged people just don’t accept that their children are prophesying to them. The proof is that there’s no communication between the generations.”³⁹ The generational shift is a real drive in the hippie counterculture and seems to reveal a reverse dynamic where “children are prophesying” the older generations.

In 2010s, the opposition and “prophesying” dynamics continue to be exerted and recall the one taking place in the 60s and 70s. 90s and 2000s children confront their parents: a generation they consider as freer because relatively less conscious of the consequences of their way of living for the planet. In contrast, culpability and fear about climate breakdown is heavy on the 90s and 2000s children’s consciousnesses. This gap leads to a generational conflict accentuated by the emergency felt by the younger generations and the blame they put on their elders for knowing about climate crisis without taking action. Once again, Ortovela’s “oedipal conflict,” as well as “the loss of credibility of the previous generations” are seen, as some of the younger generations take their parents as entirely responsible for their suffering. In Greta

³⁸ William Hedgepeth. “Inside the Hippie Revolution.” *Digital Exhibits*, 22 August 1967, p.63.

³⁹ Hedgepeth., p. 63.

Thunberg's speeches, the "prophesying"⁴⁰ reverse dynamic already taking place in the hippie counterculture is extremely present between her and the world leaders. I will focus my attention on this later in the analysis.

2.2.2. *Multifaceted Counterculture: Environmentalists, Hippies and the New Left*

With regards to counterculture, it is essential to indicate that the 60s and 70s counterculture is vast and multifaceted. In this work, I focus on climate activism inscribed in societal change, and I decided to use environmentalists and hippies to represent this counterculture. When it comes to hippies, it is important to

Figure 1 : Passive resistance to the Vietnam War, USA, Late 1960s.

acknowledge that they occupied a complex relation with politics and often positioned themselves outside the world of politics. The American historian and writer Theodore Roszak indicates the diversity of this youth counterculture I am interested in for this analysis:

When one first casts an eye over the varieties of youthful dissent, it may seem that there is considerably less coherence to this counter culture than I have suggested. To one side, there is the mind-blown bohemianism of the beats and hippies; to the other, the hard-headed political activism of the student New Left. Are these not in reality two separate and antithetical developments: the one (tracing back to Ginsberg, Kerouac, & Co.) seeking to «cop out» of American *so-ciety*, the other (tracing back to C.Wright Mills and remnants of the old socialist left) seeking to penetrate and revolutionize our political life? The tension one senses between these two movements is real enough. But I think there exists, at a deeper level, a theme that unites these variations and which accounts for the fact that hippy and student activists continue to recognize each other as allies. Certainly there is the common enemy against whom they combine forces; but there is also a positive similarity of sensibility.⁴¹

According to him, there are two different currents: the hippies as the heritage of the more apolitical side of counterculture and the New Left handed down from a much more politicized vision of social change. In this work, I focus on this "mind-blown bohemianism of

⁴⁰ Hedgepeth, p.63.

⁴¹ Theodore Roszak, p.56.

the beats and hippies,” and I agree with Theodore Roszak stating that there is a “theme that unites these variations.” This “common enemy,” is represented by the establishment and the

means for deconstructing it vary at different, more or less politicized, levels of engagement. I would argue that it is this “positive similarity of sensibility” which is revived in the 2010s

Figure 2 : Stuart Hall (right) with New Left Review colleagues, Courtesy of the Stuart Hall Estate.

movements. Of course, it would also make sense to

study the similarities between the student activism from the 60s with the one from 2010s (Greta Thunberg, Fridays for future) and this could be done in another study comparing the SDS⁴² movement with Greta Thunberg, Extinction Rebellion, sometimes practicing what French militancy calls ZAD.⁴³ However, in this work, I am more interested in studying the influence of this “bohemian” side of the counterculture and its attempts to deconstruct the establishment by “cop[ping] out” from society as well as the overall “sensibility” common to the two currents which has marked history and is revived by the 2010s climate movements chosen for this analysis as well as by the opponents of these movements. Indeed, Roszak argues that:

We grasp the underlying unity of the counter cultural variety, then, if we see beat-hip bohemianism as an effort to work out the personality structure and total lifestyle that follow from New Left social criticism. At their best, these young bohemians are the would-be utopian pioneers of the world that lies beyond intellectual rejection of the Great Society. They seek to invent a cultural base for New Left politics, to discover new types of community, new family patterns, new sexual mores, new kinds of livelihood, new esthetic forms, new personal identities on the far side of power politics, the bourgeois home, and the consumer society.⁴⁴

In this analysis, I am interested in the capacity to reinvent “the cultural base for New Left politics” and especially how this “cultural base” has crossed the generations and has integrated 2010s movements. Finally, as Roszak, I would consider that these two currents are “allies”⁴⁵

⁴² “Students for a Democratic Society (SDS) Archives and Resources.” *SDS-1960s.org*, 9 November 2020. <<https://www.sds-1960s.org/>>.

⁴³ ZAD (Zone à defender) refers to militant occupation intending to physically blockade a development project for environmental concerns.

⁴⁴ Theodore Roszak, p.66.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, p.56.

and I have decided to highlight the heritage of the bohemian side of the 60s current in the “hard-headed political activism” of the climate activism of 2010s movements.

In terms of corpus, I chose to focus on the famous figure of Timothy Leary, prophet of hippie counterculture. One must not forget that he is a special case advocating the legalization of LSD and as a figure, he is not representative of the hippie counterculture on the whole, because hippies also protested against the Vietnam War and other injustices. One needs to be careful about conflating disparate elements and figures because, as this analysis will show, the image of the 60s counterculture which has survived today is often a jumble of stereotypes that one should avoid falling into. However, Timothy Leary is an extremely interesting figure as a leader and, I would argue that his speeches give a good representation of the values and demands of hippie counterculture and, notably, they involve different considerations about the environment, pertinent to 2010s climate activism.

2.2.3. Social Media: Horizontalism and Cyberviolence

Regarding generations and revival, another gap must be taken into account in terms of communication and mobilization strategies. Due to an increase of the flow of information, mobilization in the 2010s is different than in the 1960s and 1970s. Social media impact significantly the way people communicate and mobilize in the case of social movements. My work will highlight this by showing the social network Twitter as a facilitating way to touch, inform as well as gather a significant number of people within a short time frame. In these terms, when direct face-to-face public communication is not necessarily the main medium of communication anymore, the dynamic between speaker and addressee, as well as the concepts of leadership and charisma, evolve. This is the thesis of the political sociologist Pablo Gerbaudo in his study *Tweets and the Streets: Social Media and Contemporary Activism*, considering new social network mobilization as “leaderless, horizontal, and spontaneous.”⁴⁶

⁴⁶ Paolo Gerbaudo. *Tweets and the Streets: Social Media and Contemporary Activism*. London: Pluto Press, 2012, p.19.

Aligned with this argument, the terminology “social network” can be analyzed in the perspective of sociologist Manuel Castells’ theories about networks where he argues that “networks de-centre performance and share decision-making. By definition, a network has no centre.”⁴⁷ Nevertheless, Gerbaudo argues that this perspective only reflects an “imaginary of horizontalism”⁴⁸ and spontaneity, he underlines that:

The risks we face in a society of network and multitudes are made visible by the dispersion and seclusion which dominates the urban landscape, and by the danger of isolation inherent in social media, with their tendency to exacerbate the dynamics of social fragmentation. In and of themselves social media do not automatically allow for collective action to unfold without becoming channels for the construction of common identities and thick networks of solidarity and trust.⁴⁹

At first, social networks function as a catalyst for “collective action” because of the facilitation in communication. However, the author argues that there is a risk of “social fragmentation” because of this lack of unity, of a “sense of togetherness,”⁵⁰ a “common identity” which are inherent to the development of social movements.

Along with that, social media not only change the dynamics of mobilization, they also affect the relationship to the opponents. On Twitter, activists and opponents communicate rapidly and directly, which sometimes results in violent attacks and counterattacks as the screen facilitates this type of communication by giving distance and sometimes anonymity. This new type of violence has been qualified as *cyberviolence*, which, according to the researcher in Anthropology Emma Louise Backe “is meant to encapsulate the kinds of harm and abuse facilitated by and perpetrated through digital and technological means.”⁵¹ Many studies, including Backe and Al., have demonstrated that *cyberviolence* is a gendered violence and it

⁴⁷ Manuel Castells. “Materials for an Exploratory Theory of the Network Society1.” *The British Journal of Sociology* 51 no. 1 (January 2000): 5–24, p.15.

⁴⁸ Paolo Gerbaudo, p.20.

⁴⁹ Ibid., pp.20-21.

⁵⁰ Ibid., p.15.

⁵¹ Emma Louise Backe, Pamela Lilleston, and Jennifer McCleary-Sills. “Networked Individuals, Gendered Violence: A Literature Review of Cyberviolence.” *Violence and Gender* 5, no. 3 (September 2018): 135–46.

For an overview:

Lenhart, Amanda, et al. “Online harassment, digital abuse, and cyberstalking in America.” *Data and Society Research Institute*, 2016. <https://datasociety.net/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/Online_Harassment_2016.pdf>.

often affects young women in a more significant way.⁵² This will be at interest in my analysis concerning the violence on Twitter against the climate activist Greta Thunberg.

2.2.4. Power: Ethnicity and Class

If according to Leary, white men rule 1960s and 1970s society, 2010s society is still very much structured according to this power dynamic. Indeed, certain social groups are given more power in this type of society, and therefore climate activist communities tend to be mostly constituted of young white middle class people, because of the privileges they have.⁵³ Parallel to that, the police has shown to be reluctant to condemn young white activists and consequently they use this as an opportunity to practice non-violent resistance without taking too many risks. This way of bypassing a seemingly racist system has shown to be double-edged and Extinction Rebellion has been attacked on this strategy by different sympathizers. Notably in an open letter from May 2019 written by the coalition *Wretched of the Earth*, representing Global South and people of color, and signed by dozens of aligned groups. The authors underline the fact that “the experience of structural violence became part of [their] birthright”⁵⁴ and demand that Extinction Rebellion takes these different privileges into account in their tactics and demands. Along with that, the journalist Athian Akec criticizes this “glamorisation of arrest.”⁵⁵ In a *Guardian* article from October 2019, he claims that “Extinction Rebellion are designed by and for middle-class, white Britain. Their central rhetoric about a dystopian future fails to cut through for those of us already faced with a nightmarish present, surrounded by poverty and austerity.” He also mentions that the “tactic of being purposely arrested strikes an

⁵² Backe.

For further interest see:

J. F Chisholm. “Cyberspace Violence against Girls and Adolescent Females.” *Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences* 1087, no. 1 (November 1, 2006): 74–89.

⁵³ For an overview of social categories (class, gender, and ethnicity) in climate activism see:

Thomas Dietz, Amy Dan, and Rachael Shwom. “Support for Climate Change Policy: Social Psychological and Social Structural Influences.” *Rural Sociology* 72, no. 2 (June 2007): 185–214.

Thomas Laidley. “Climate, Class and Culture: Political Issues as Cultural Signifiers in the US.” *The Sociological Review* 61, no. 1 (February 2013): 153–71.

⁵⁴ “An Open Letter to Extinction Rebellion.” Redpepper.org, 20 October 2020. <<https://www.redpepper.org.uk/an-open-letter-to-extinction-rebellion/>>.

⁵⁵ Athian Akec. “When I Look at Extinction Rebellion, All I See Is White Faces. That Has to Change.” *The Guardian*, 19 October 2019. <<https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2019/oct/19/extinction-rebellion-white-faces-diversity>>.

uncomfortable note for many people of colour, given the adverse experiences people in my community have had with the police.” Indeed, he touches on the crucial issue by which, “no movement can be truly progressive if the voices of ethnic minorities are excluded.” As a response to this criticism, Extinction Rebellion apologizes in an article from 1st July 2020:

The tactics of disruption and nonviolent civil disobedience are at the heart of everything Extinction Rebellion does. We have been told that these tactics and our interpretation of them have excluded Black people, other communities racialised as non-white, and other marginalised groups, and contributed to narratives that have put those communities at risk.

We recognise now that our tactic of arrest has made it easier for people of privilege to participate and that our behaviours and attitudes fed into the system of white supremacy. We’re sorry this recognition comes so late.

We believe in peacefully doing whatever it takes by means of nonviolent direct action to raise awareness about the Climate and Ecological Emergency, which includes high-risk actions resulting in arrest. However, presenting the experience of arrest and jail time as something straightforward – rather than acknowledging the stressful, intimidating and sometimes deadly experience marginalised people face at the hands of the police – was a mistake.⁵⁶

The power dynamics concerning civil disobedience and the contact with the police is very complex and as Extinction Rebellion underlines, power dynamics are not equal between white and racialized people. They admit that their way of acting “fed into the system of white supremacy” and I would argue that hippies probably equally participated in this “white supremacy,” because they were often white middle class young people, and along with their “biographical availability”⁵⁷ they had privileges as non-racialized people to protest for a change in society. Besides, one must not forget that the act of dropping out of society depended greatly on financial means. Thus, while studying the rhetoric of opposition, it is important to keep in mind that protesting is often a privileged activity, especially when it comes to civil disobedience in a society where, according to Extinction Rebellion, the police is “an organization that is institutionally racist.”⁵⁸

⁵⁶ “Statement on Extinction Rebellion’s Relationship with the Police.” *Extinction Rebellion UK*, July 1, 2020, <<https://rebellion.earth/2020/07/01/statement-on-extinction-rebellions-relationship-with-the-police/>>.

⁵⁷ McAdam, “Recruitment to High-Risk Activism.”

⁵⁸ “Statement on Extinction Rebellion’s Relationship with the Police.”

2.2.5. *Who Are the Leaders?*

These considerations about the actors and their power lead me to the mechanism of leadership, a highly important phenomenon in activism and I will now focus on the notion of *charisma*. I intend to use John Potts' work: *A History of Charisma*, where he focuses on roots and evolution of this word, from Christian tradition to the recovery by the sociologist and economist Max Weber. As exposed in Potts' work, the word *charisma*, initially from the Greek word *charis*, sends back to the notions of "grace," "attractiveness," "favour," "gratitude" and "charm" as well as "gift."⁵⁹ In Christian tradition, "charisma is the gift of God's grace; the specific gifts (charismata) are to be used for the benefit of the community rather than for personal prestige,"⁶⁰ something spiritual and meant to serve the "community".

After many centuries of forgetfulness, the sociologist and economist Max Weber rehabilitates this notion in his work *Economy and Society* (1921) where he discusses "The Three Pure Types of Authority"⁶¹. According to him "legitimate domination" can be accessed on the basis of:

1. Rational grounds – testing on a belief in the legality of enacted rules and the right of those elevated to authority under such rules to issue commands (legal authority.)
2. Traditional grounds – resting on an established belief in the sanctity of immemorial traditions and the legitimacy of those exercising authority under them (traditional authority.)
3. Charismatic grounds – resting on devotion to the exceptional sanctity, heroism or exemplary character of an individual person, and of the normative patterns or order revealed or ordained by him (charismatic authority.)

This last type of authority interests me in this work. According to Weber "the exceptional sanctity, heroism or exemplary character of an individual person" gives authority, and in the case of climate activism helps to convince followers and opponents. When describing charismatic authority Weber gives a new definition of *charisma*:

The term "charisma" will be applied to a certain quality of an individual personality by virtue of which he is considered

⁵⁹ John Potts. *A History of Charisma*. Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire; New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009, p.12.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, p.46.

⁶¹ Max Weber, Guenther Roth, and Claus Wittich. *Economy and Society: An Outline of Interpretive Sociology*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978, p.215.

extraordinary and treated as endowed with supernatural, superhuman, or at least specifically exceptional powers or qualities. These are such as are not accessible to the ordinary person, but are regarded as of divine origin or as exemplary, and on the basis of them the individual concerned is treated as a “leader.”⁶²

The charismatic persona is almost a superhero and for this he/she is able to influence others and is treated as a “leader.” According to Potts, this definition formulated in the beginning of 20th century, has been popularized and broadened from the 1950s, indeed from there, the word charisma is used and applied in many different contexts, not only for authority and leadership but also for celebrities.⁶³ In the era of social media and the new phenomenon of the influencer, this broader concept of charisma is most relevant.

Of course, if *charisma* draws on to the concept of leadership, it is then demonstrative of power relations. This is what the sociologist Pierre Bourdieu underlines in his work *Legitimation and Structured Interests in Weber’s Sociology of Religion*; he criticizes Weber’s “naïve representation of charisma as a mysterious quality inherent in a person or as a gift of nature.”⁶⁴ Indeed, as argued by Potts:

Bourdieu, who focuses on relations of power rather than on the intrinsic qualities of individuals, charges Weber with inventing a justification for domination. In this sharp appraisal, charisma represents nothing more than a theoretical construct, justifying certain forms of power relations.⁶⁵

This structuralist approach where the notion of charisma is not purely “gift of nature”⁶⁶ but a complex result of “power relations”⁶⁷ seems relevant for this analysis.

In addition, Weber exposes his notion of “charisma of rhetoric,”⁶⁸ when he comments on what he calls “stump speeches” delivered in presidential elections. Indeed, he argues that:

The more mass effects are intended and the tighter the bureaucratic organization of the parties becomes, the less significant is the content of the rhetoric. For its effect is purely emotional, insofar as simple class

⁶² Weber, Roth, and Wittich, p.241

⁶³ Potts, pp.106-107.

⁶⁴ Bourdieu, Pierre. “Legitimation and Structured Interests in Weber’s Sociology of Religion.” *Max Weber, Rationality and Modernity*. London; New York: Routledge, 2006. <<https://www.taylorfrancis.com/books/e/9781315823935>>, p.129.

⁶⁵ Potts, p.3.

⁶⁶ Bourdieu, p.129.

⁶⁷ Potts, p.3.

⁶⁸ Weber, Roth, and Wittich. *Economy and Society*. pp.1129-1130.

situations and other economic interests do not prevail which must be rationally calculated and manipulated.

The crowd then develops what Weber calls “the service of charismatic hero worship,” the “charisma rhetoric” produces so much “emotional” appeal that the “content of the rhetoric” becomes less important. This notion of “charisma rhetoric,” is very relevant for my study of climate activist mobilization. Finally, it is important to underline the importance of media, audiovisual such as TV for the 20th century, or social media in the 21st century which can function as catalysts of the “charisma rhetoric.”

The way the speeches of the chosen activists for this analysis are given, and the speakers themselves, display several demonstrations of *charisma*, functioning differently according to approach and evolution in time. Timothy Leary’s

Figure 3 : Timothy Leary, forum on LSD, Bellingham, Washington, 1967.

The Declaration of Evolution (1968,) is modelled on Thomas Jefferson’s *American Declaration of Independence* (1776.) The analogy between this significant foundational text and Timothy Leary’s tirade about societal change undoubtedly contributes to the influence of this text. Indeed, this form calls on the “charisma of rhetoric,” since the *American Declaration of Independence* is such a famous text that the analogy inevitably produces a strong emotional appeal. As for the speaker: Timothy Leary totally embraces the role of leader. Indeed, this shows in his text *Start Your Own Religion*, where he positions himself as a sort of prophet, in the new hippie religion centered on dope. On the Canadian talk show, *Is There Life After Youth*,⁶⁹ Leary claims it himself in an interview: “Nor have I been a pusher or an advocate of LSD -- I have been in the position of prophet who has been pointing out to fellow men that this was going to happen.”⁷⁰ Even if Leary claims that he

⁶⁹ 14 October - 4 November 1974 on CBC Television.

⁷⁰ “Meet Dr. Timothy Leary - The LSD Prophet.” *Is There Life After Youth?*, 15 September 2020. <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YrEqvsyWNwQ>>, 0:22-0:36.

is not a “pusher” or an “advocate,” I would argue, according to his leading speeches and affirmative posture on television, that he is not prophet despite himself, he self-proclaims as prophet and embraces the role of leader, or at least guide. Along with that, the word “prophet” draws back to the Christian meaning of *charisma*; Leary, at the border of proselytism, becomes the leader of hippie movement with his famous motto “Drop-out. Turn-on. Tune-in”.

If Timothy Leary is the prophet of the hippie movement, the climate activist Greta Thunberg also witnesses an interesting contemporary case of *charisma*. She does not place herself as prophet of societal change, but she is given those “supernatural”⁷¹ and “superhuman”

qualities Weber mentions. Despite of her young age, she is a very good orator and is capable of moving huge crowds. She often speaks about her Asperger syndrome⁷² as something that makes her understanding of the world exceptional. The fact that she attacks world leaders makes her subject to

Figure 4: Greta Thunberg, strike outside the White House before the Global Climate Strike, Washington, September 13, 2019.

a lot of hate, especially in social media where she is constantly criticized for her disability.

Attacks to which she tends to reply:

When haters go after your looks and differences, it means they have nowhere left to go. And then you know you're winning! I have Aspergers and that means I'm sometimes a bit different from the norm. And - given the right circumstances - being different is a superpower.

Asperger syndrome, her difference, constitute the “superpower” which participates in building up her *charisma*. Thunberg’s arguments about the climate crisis are neither unknown nor new, however, her influence is huge throughout the world. This could be linked to the undeniable

⁷¹ “Greta Thunberg on Twitter.” *Twitter*, 16 September 2020. <<https://twitter.com/GretaThunberg/status/1167916177927991296>>.

⁷² 'Asperger syndrome' was introduced to the world by British psychiatrist Lorna Wing in the 1980s. The term derives from a 1944 study by Austrian pediatrician Hans Asperger. Many people who fit the profile for Asperger syndrome are now being diagnosed with Autistic Spectrum Disorder instead. Each person is different, and it is up to each individual how they choose to identify. Some people with a diagnosis of Asperger syndrome may choose to keep using the term, while others may prefer to refer to themselves as autistic or on the autistic spectrum.

“Asperger Syndrome.” *National Autistic Society*, 18 December 2020. <<https://www.autism.org.uk/advice-and-guidance/what-is-autism/asperger-syndrome>>.

amount of emotions she gives in her speeches, emotions transmitted to her audience and which draw back to Weber's "charisma rhetoric." Moreover, Thunberg seems to believe in the concept of *charisma* as she speaks to celebrities on *Goldene Kamera* and announces that "People see you celebrities as gods, you influence billions of people, we need you."⁷³ This is a contemporary expression of the notion of *charisma*, and according to her, in this society, these charismatic celebrities are absolutely needed in order to "influence" people in supporting climate activism.

If these two leaders have similar "charisma rhetoric," Leary as prophet of hippie movement and Thunberg as superwoman raising awareness for climate breakdown, Extinction Rebellion displays another type of rhetoric: the movement does not advance any leader or exceptional personality. They function with what they call "flat hierarchy:" there is a protocol for a talk explaining the reality of the climate and ecological crisis and the values of the association, and anyone who is willing to transmit the ideas of Extinction Rebellion can follow a training in order to give the talk.⁷⁴ They formulate this on their website and "actively mitigate for power"⁷⁵ by "breaking down hierarchies of power for more equitable participation." This typically reflects the new form of activism in social media⁷⁶ aiming to be "leaderless, horizontal, and spontaneous."⁷⁷ These values are in total contradiction with the exceptionalism stemming from the notion of leader and *charisma*. They are reminiscent of the hippie counterculture tendency towards a radical egalitarianism⁷⁸ where they considered every living species as equal and therefore did not see the purpose in putting someone above others (an egalitarianism which was, by the way, ambiguous, knowing Leary's position as prophet in this same movement.) Indeed, according to the scholar Herbert W. Simon "an energized

⁷³ "Greta Thunberg – Posts | Facebook." *Facebook*, 24 September 2020. <<https://www.facebook.com/gretathunbergsweden/posts/my-speech-tonight-at-goldene-kamera-in-berlin-there-is-no-recording-available-wi/801083100259512/>>.

⁷⁴ "Talks and Trainings." *Extinction Rebellion UK*. 16 September 2020. <<https://rebellion.earth/act-now/resources/talks-and-trainings/>>.

⁷⁵ "About Us." *Extinction Rebellion UK*. 16 September 2020. <<https://extinctionrebellion.uk/the-truth/about-us/>>.

⁷⁶ See Chapter 2.2.2

⁷⁷ Paolo Gerbaudo, p.19.

⁷⁸ Richard Arneson. "Egalitarianism." *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*. ed. Edward N. Zalta, Summer 2013. Metaphysics Research Lab, Stanford University, 2013. <<https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/sum2013/entries/egalitarianism/>>.

membership is the strength of any movement and its *esprit de corps* is essential to goal implementation”⁷⁹ and this is probably where the ambivalence in the hippie movement comes from. He argues that movements which promote “participatory democracy,” such as Extinction Rebellion in my analysis, tend to lack this “*esprit de corps*,” the figure of the charismatic leader, and therefore are subject to mobilization problems because of a lack of unity. This problem has been underlined by different left-wing journals,⁸⁰ as well as by the social scientist Chris Smaje, all criticizing the lack of precision concerning the demands of Extinction Rebellion as well as the organizational limitations of their civil disobedience actions.⁸¹

There is a recurrent pattern in activism and counterculture where a *charismatic* figure is needed in order to legitimate and understand where to stand in a movement contradicting the establishment. Leary and Thunberg, in their own respective ways, represent the needed leader. Nelson is a more neutral political spokesman and I would argue that he does not embrace the position of leader in the same terms as the other personalities mentioned above. Finally, in this 21st century society where the concept of fame and visibility through social media is very important, Extinction Rebellion, by reviving the hippie value of egalitarianism, aims to dismiss the exceptionalism of leadership and democratizes the functioning of the movement, with all the difficulties this lack of “*esprit the crops*” leads to.

⁷⁹ Herbert W. Simons. “Requirements, Problems, and Strategies : A theory of Persuasion for Social Movements.” Morris and Browne. *Readings on the Rhetoric of Social Protest*. 1970.

⁸⁰ *Novara Media* and *The Guardian*.

⁸¹ Chris Saltmarsch. “5 Reasons I’m Not Joining the ‘Extinction Rebellion.’” *Novara Media*. 30 June 2020. <<https://novaramedia.com/2018/11/18/5-reasons-im-not-joining-the-extinction-rebellion/>>.

Andre Spicer. “The Extinction Rebels Have Got Their Tactics Badly Wrong. Here’s Why | André Spicer.” *The Guardian*. 19 April 2019. <<https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2019/apr/19/extinction-rebellion-climate-change-protests-london>>.

Chris Smaje. “Extinction Rebellion: Four Criticisms (and Why They’re Unconvincing).” *Small Farm Future*. 22 October 2019. <<https://smallfarmfuture.org.uk/2019/10/extinction-rebellion-four-criticisms-and-why-theyre-unconvincing/>>.

3. Speech Analysis

These considerations about the speakers' various positions -- Thunberg and Leary as charismatic leaders, Nelson as a more neutral political spokesperson and Extinction Rebellion's anti-leader policy -- lead me to continue the reflection not only on the positions represented by the different movements seen from a macro perspective, but also on the content of their rhetorical acts, including a more precise micro-analysis which will bring out other mobilization strategies. Indeed, before entering the speech analysis, it is important to clarify the importance of rhetoric in the understanding of social change. In his "Functional Approach to the Rhetoric of Social Movement", Stewart defines "rhetoric as the primary agency through which social movements perform necessary functions that enable them to come into existence, to meet opposition, and perhaps, to succeed in bringing about (or resisting) change."⁸² Indeed, as this work attempts to demonstrate, language builds up society and when it comes to social change, rhetoric is the tool to execute it.

3.1. Mobilization Speeches: Tactics and Tropes

3.1.1. Take Off the Veil and Tell the Inconvenient Truth

If leadership has evolved, transformed in time and according to the situation, the lexicon of denial, secrecy and hiding behind the establishment has been fully revived from the 60s and 70s counterculture to the 2010s climate activism and is demonstrated by the rhetoric. Timothy Leary uses

Figure 5: Extinction Rebellion, at the junction of Oxford Street and Regent Street, London, April 15, 2019.

the metaphor of the "Veil" in order to describe the psychedelic experience supposedly opening your mind to a new understanding of the world: "You have a sense of being brother to God's worship or that the veil is pulled away for the first time you see how things really are."⁸³ Setting

⁸² Stewart, p.153.

⁸³ *The Summer of Love Experience*. 27 September 2020. <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SnJGYjuNBCE&t=666s>>, 11:20-11:28.

aside the spiritual part of the metaphor, this image highlights the fact that society blurs the way people see the world, and according to the hippie counterculture taking LSD allows one to clear the way and overcome the denial. The journalist Hedgepeth summarizes the hippies' conviction in his article:

They believe that social conditioning, mass taste-making and indoctrination steadily stunt and narrow the individual human potential, with the result that society itself has become fragmented, specialized and narrow- and thereby tense, alienated and lonely.

Hedgepeth describes a societal disease linked to the “mass” consumption which, according to him, breaks the relationship humans have with the real natural world. In order to reconnect with the world, one needs to “lift the veil of illusion to show the holiness and oneness of the universe.”⁸⁴

On the environmentalists' side Gaylord Nelson also mentions the problematic of denial when he repeats in his speech for *Earth Day* (April 14th, 1970): “Are we able? Yes, I think so. Are we willing? That is the unanswered question.”⁸⁵ Indeed, in this rhetorical turn lies the condition of knowing what has to be done but still remaining passive. According to both Leary and Nelson, 1960s society puts a *veil* on the real problems that need to be faced. Like the hippies, Nelson calls on the “oneness of the universe;”⁸⁶ in his words, there is an urgent necessity “to restore proper relationship between man and his environment.”⁸⁷

History has seen that this urgent situation has not been overturned after numerous calls for a change; indeed, Leary's metaphor of the *veil* that society puts on people in order to ignore

⁸⁴ Hedgepeth. “Inside the Hippie Revolution,” p.64.

⁸⁵ “Gaylord Nelson and Earth Day.”

⁸⁶ Hedgepeth. “Inside the Hippie Revolution,” p.64.

⁸⁷ “Gaylord Nelson and Earth Day,” p.8.

the inconvenient truth is revived by 2010s climate activists. The revival acknowledges the denial problem around the power mechanics of the establishment and the destruction of the environment. In order to signify this denial, Thunberg also uses a metaphor:

If there is a child standing in the middle of the road and cars are coming at full speed, you don't look away because it's too uncomfortable. You immediately run out and rescue that child. And without that sense of urgency, how can we, the people understand that we are facing a real crisis.⁸⁸

Similarly to the *veil* that must be lifted in order to see the real world, Thunberg reminds us with this metaphor that the crisis must be acknowledged in order to feel the urgency to act. In 2010s, the *veil* has still not been lifted, and once again it is due to the way information is integrated and, from my rhetorical perspective, due to word choices. I have already underlined the importance of qualifying environmental concerns in a certain way. According to Extinction Rebellion, wording participates in the denial, indeed the first of their three demands is:

to tell the truth about the ecological crisis. There's been a tendency to water down the problem. For example, for a long time the climate problem was presented as a scientific debate – so the BBC, when it had a climate scientist on, for example, to be interviewed, would have a climate-change sceptic to speak with the climate scientist in the interests of presenting “both sides” – as if there were a debate about climate change, when there *hasn't* been a debate about climate change. Science is unanimous (...) ⁸⁹

Wording is then extremely important, firstly climate change is not a “debate” it is a truth and secondly it is a crisis and not only a change.

Moreover, many ecologists and sociologists of the 2010s have acknowledged a problem in the way solutions to the crisis are presented. Indeed, culturally people tend to blame individuals for their irresponsible acts towards the planet, however, in 2010s movements the ecological problem is looked at from another angle. Instead of blaming the individuals in their daily actions, there is a tendency of blaming a system of “money and fairy tales of eternal

⁸⁸ Thunberg. “UN Climate Change Conference Speech Transcript.” *Rev.* 27 September 2020, <<https://www.rev.com/blog/transcripts/greta-thunberg-un-climate-change-conference-speech-transcript>>, p.6.

⁸⁹ “Heading for Extinction Talks Index Page Docx.” *Extinction Rebellion UK*, June 2019, 43:26.

economic growth”⁹⁰ that induces those behaviors. This can also be considered as a revival of the 60s and 70s counterculture, when hippies were convinced that society was a *veil* in front of the real world. In the 2010s, I would argue that the capitalist system puts a similar *veil* on the planet because of the lobbies preventing actions. The contemporary word for this *veil* could be *misinformation* and Thunberg underlines this problem in her *Declaration of Rebellion*:

But. No one never talked about it. (...)
But no one ever mentions it. Nor does anyone ever mention anything about the greenhouse gases already locked in the system (...)
Nor does hardly anyone ever mention that we are in the midst of the sixth mass extinction, with about 200 species going extinct every single day. (...)
So, why are we not reducing our emissions? Why are they, in fact, still increasing? Are we knowingly causing a mass extinction? Are we evil?
No, of course not. People keep doing what they do because the vast majority doesn't have a clue about the consequences of our everyday life. And they don't know the rapid changes required. (...)
Since, as I said before, no one talks about it. There are no headlines, no emergency meetings, no breaking news. No one is acting as if we were in a crisis.⁹¹

The blame should not be put on the individuals' paradoxical passivity when there is a crisis but more on the misinformation about this crisis which prevents any action. Extinction Rebellion uses the metaphor of breaking the “wall between our knowledge and our actions.”⁹²

All these speeches, from Leary's metaphor of the Veil, Gaylord Nelson's rhetorical questions, Thunberg's analogy of the child in the middle of the streets, as well as Extinction Rebellion's metaphorical wall between knowledge and actions point out a systemic problem in the way information about the ecological crisis is presented as well as how it circulates.

3.1.2. Dichotomies as Political Polarizers

In section 2.2.1, I have discussed that counterculture often functions in a *we-they rhetoric*, due to the generational opposition. This type of oppositional rhetoric can be generalized to all the chosen speeches and shows through different dichotomies. This rhetorical

⁹⁰ Thunberg. “Speech At The U.N. Climate Action Summit.” *NPR.org*. 24 September 2020.

<<https://www.npr.org/2019/09/23/763452863/transcript-greta-thunbergs-speech-at-the-u-n-climate-action-summit>>, p.2.

⁹¹ “We Don't Have Time, The Rebellion Has Begun.” *Medium*, 20 December 2018. <<https://medium.com/wedonthavetime/the-rebellion-has-begun-d1bffe31d3b5>>.

⁹² “Heading for Extinction Talks Index Page Docx.” *Extinction Rebellion UK*, 02:33.

device allows the activists to polarize the crowd and clearly show who they consider are the opponents and who needs support. Timothy Leary's *Declaration of Evolution* displays a good example of *we-they rhetoric*. Indeed, as the Thomas Jefferson's *Declaration of Independence*, Leary's text is structured in oppositions. In Jefferson's declaration the pronoun *he* is used in reference to the King of Great Britain, and in Leary's version, the pronoun *they* draws to the leaders of capitalist society. There is a clear young/old dichotomy, while he opposes the "white, menopausal, mendacious men now ruling the planet earth,"⁹³ the "tyranny of materialistic aging," with the "wisdom and innocence of the playful young, the peaceful young." This young/old opposition goes with the life/death dichotomy, the young are "life-loving," "fun-loving" but the old "are bores," "hate sex," "hate life," they are "enslaving," "destroying" and have "morbid covenants." The dichotomy goes even further when Leary puts the young people on the side of God and the older generation on the side of Satan. Indeed, the young people are "God's creatures- in harmony," "God-loving," they have the support of the "Supreme Judge of the Universe," the "Authority," the "Divine Providence." The older generation is on the side of cardinal sins with the repetitive mention of terms like "greed," "lust for control" and "lust for power."

When it comes to the environment, there is a clear dichotomy between society and nature, where again nature is associated with the young generation and society with the old one. The terms relating to nature are extremely positive and reassuring: Leary describes the "soft body of earth," "the serene harmony of the planet" whereas society is described in a vocabulary of coldness, fakeness, rigidity and scariness: "lethal carpet of concrete and metal," "artificial scarcities," "glorified material compulsory education," "unnatural sex," "mass media," "robot uniformity," "plastic conformity or despairing alienation" and the famous *they*

⁹³ "Internet History Sourcebooks."

“make a fetish out of blatant falsity and pious self-enhancement.” There is no doubt about where a sympathizer of hippie culture should stand and whom they are supposed to oppose.

Interestingly, Timothy Leary considers himself as the prophet of hip culture, but he is not part of this younger generation. Actually, when he writes the *Declaration of Evolution* in 1968, he is 48 years old – but the notion of youth seems to encompass much more than people part of a certain age group. As argued by the critic Russel Duncan:

youth became a metaphor, an attitude toward life, a state of mind that even adults could access... [a] persuasive rejuvenation mentality went on to imbue the ideology of the late-'60s counterculture.⁹⁴

For Timothy Leary, youth is a state of mind and is not linked to the actual aging of the body. Hippie counterculture sets the aim to “rejuvena[te]” the minds of the American society.

Without calling on *we-they rhetoric*, Nelson also underlines the dichotomy between society and nature, in that “industrial and technological society”⁹⁵ is put in contradiction with the “scenic beauty, wilderness and forests,”⁹⁶ “magnificent outdoors resources and rivers and waters.” According to him, “we are blessed as any State in the Nation with freshwater assets”⁹⁷ and the “highway system is half as important to this country as clean water is,”⁹⁸ because “water is the lifeblood of the whole ecosystem. Pollute the water and you corrupt the whole system.”⁹⁹ This organic metaphor, as well as all the references to nature, show the sacred aspect of it in contradiction with the “industrial and technological society” described in more factual terms.

Reaching back to *we-they rhetoric*, if Leary aims to rejuvenate society, Thunberg criticizes the leaders for their “childlike” behavior in not taking any responsibility and measures to tackle climate breakdown. Thunberg’s speeches all function in this *we-they rhetoric*, as she

⁹⁴ Duncan Russel. The Summer of Love and Protest: Transatlantic Counterculture in the 1960s. 144-173, in Grzegorz Kość, ed., *The Transatlantic Sixties: Europe and the United States in the Counterculture Decade*, Amerika: Kultur - Geschichte - Politik 4. Bielefeld: transcript-Verl, 2013. p.147.

⁹⁵ “Gaylord Nelson and Earth Day,” p.11.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 25.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, p.26.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, p.20.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, p.12.

underlines the fact the young generation has to take all the responsibility for the climate crisis and an absurd reverse dynamic takes place where children are forced to moralize adults.¹⁰⁰ This issue is extremely present in her speech at the *U.N climate Action Summit*: she tells the politicians that “This is all wrong. I shouldn’t be up here”¹⁰¹ and that “We’ll be watching you.”¹⁰² She positions herself in superiority, assuming the politicians’ role “still not mature enough to tell it like it is.”¹⁰³ The reverse situation where a teenager tells world leader that they are “not mature enough” calls into attention, Thunberg states it in her speech for the *Goldene Kamera*, where she rhythms her speech with the repetition “we live in a strange world.”¹⁰⁴ The mention of the “strange world, where children must sacrifice their education in order to protest against the destruction of their future” inscribes itself in the *we-they rhetoric*. Thunberg discredits politicians in order to arouse reaction, but she also attacks: they have “stolen [her] dreams and [her] childhood with [their] empty words”¹⁰⁵ and presses them to act accordingly:

You are failing us. But the young people are starting to understand your betrayal. The eyes of all future generations are upon you. And if you choose to fail us, I say: We will never forgive you. We will not let you get away with this.¹⁰⁶

If Leary calls upon a regeneration of society by the younger generation, Thunberg, in a slightly different mechanism, separates the two generations while still stating that the older one needs to act and that they cannot “choose to fail” the younger one.

Finally, I would argue that Leary and Thunberg, both relying on *we-they rhetoric*, produce a polarized discourse, with strong dichotomies. Extinction Rebellion, apart from their considerations about what is the right or wrong thing to do (which I will address later in this analysis,) and Gaylord Nelson’s patterns contrasting society and nature to emphasize the

¹⁰⁰ See Chapter 2.2.1.

¹⁰¹ Thunberg. “Speech At The U.N. Climate Action Summit,” p.1.

¹⁰² Ibid., p.2.

¹⁰³ Ibid., p.3.

¹⁰⁴ Thunberg. “GOLDENE KAMERA Award Speech,” 2019. <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bFvXc14g3AQ>>.

¹⁰⁵ Thunberg. “Transcript: Greta Thunberg’s Speech At The U.N. Climate Action Summit,” p.2.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid., p.3.

holiness of the latter, do not use *we-they rhetoric* and consequently their rhetoric is not centered on dichotomies.

3.1.3. *The Earth is Burning*

The generational gap in *we-they rhetoric* leads me to discuss the theme of time, crucial when it comes to the revival. I will now focus on the way the language of time perception and the future has evolved, focusing on the recurrent metaphors concerning this theme in the activists' speeches. It seems clear that a necessary change in the system suggested by environmentalists such as Nelson or Hippies such as Leary in the 60s and 70s and unheard until the 21st century, resonates in a much more urgent way fifty years later. Indeed, the speeches

from the 60s and 70s that I have analyzed lack a mention concerning the time frame for action. In contrast, in Greta Thunberg and Extinction Rebellion's speeches, the time frame dominates the rhetoric. Every word signifies the emergency, a term which is frequently used in

Figure 7: Extinction Rebellion March to Parliament Square on the Ninth Day of Protest Action, April 23, 2019 in London, England.

all of their speeches, accompanied by sentences as “we are running out of time. Change is coming, whether you like it or not”¹⁰⁷ or, similarly, “the world is waking up. And change is coming, whether you like it or not,”¹⁰⁸ or “we are rapidly running out of time,”¹⁰⁹ we “waste precious time,” we need to “act now,” “because the time taken for us to educate ourselves to do that simply does no longer exists,” “what we are doing now can soon no longer be undone.” In Thunberg's speeches, there is a clear evolution from 2018 to 2020 while she formulates

¹⁰⁷ Thunberg. “Speech to the World.” *Geneva Business News | Actualités: Emploi, RH, économie, entreprises, Genève, Suisse*. 21 December 2018. <<https://www.gbnews.ch/greta-thunbergs-speech-to-the-world/>>, p.3.

¹⁰⁸ Thunberg. “Speech At The U.N. Climate Action Summit,” p.3.

¹⁰⁹ Thunberg. “Our House Is Falling Apart, and We Are Rapidly Running out of Time - Speech to EU Parliament.” *Speakola*, 2019. 27 September 2020. <<https://speakola.com/ideas/greta-thunberg-speech-to-eu-parliament-2019>>, p.2.

more and more weariness. In April 2019, she claims that the “house is on fire”¹¹⁰ and in the last analyzed speech of January 2020, she comes back to this metaphor and states that:

I’ve been warned that telling people to panic about the climate crisis is a very dangerous thing to do, but don’t worry, it’s fine. Trust me, I’ve done this before and I can assure you it doesn’t lead to anything. And for the record, when we children tell you to panic, we’re not telling you to go on like before.¹¹¹

The sarcasm in her statement is symptomatic of her weariness, there is a discrepancy between the more and more urgent need for action and the inaction of the political sphere “go[ing] on like before.”

There is no doubt that the consequences of the ecological crisis are not part of the future anymore; it is about the present. This change in temporality generates a rhetoric about the uncertain broken future:

What we do or don’t do, right now, will affect my entire life, and the lives of my children and grandchildren. And why should I be studying for a future that soon will be no more, when no one is doing anything whatsoever to save that future?

There is a strong sense of fatality in Thunberg’s speech which is sometimes balanced by a wish to gather crowds and encourage them. At the *Goldene Kamera* she argues that “we are failing but we have not yet failed. There is still time to fix this,”¹¹² in April of the same year she tells the EU parliament that “it’s still not too late to act.”¹¹³ Of course, Thunberg needs to display the emergency rhetoric, but she cannot afford losing her audience in despair. The whole rhetorical strategy is to scare people but telling them that they can change things because they “are now standing at a crossroads in history”¹¹⁴ and giving them the heavy responsibility that “the future, as well as what we have achieved in the past, is literally in your hands now.”¹¹⁵ This is part of Thunberg’s generational *we-they rhetoric*, in the emergency she calls upon the

¹¹⁰ Ibid., p.1.

¹¹¹ Thunberg. “Davos Forum Speech Transcript.” *Rev.* 28 September 2020. <<https://www.rev.com/blog/transcripts/greta-thunberg-davos-forum-speech-transcript>>.

¹¹² Thunberg. “GOLDENE KAMERA Award Speech.”

¹¹³ Thunberg. “Our House Is Falling Apart, and We Are Rapidly Running out of Time - Speech to EU Parliament,” p.3.

¹¹⁴ Thunberg. “GOLDENE KAMERA Award Speech.”

¹¹⁵ Thunberg. “Our House Is Falling Apart, and We Are Rapidly Running out of Time - Speech to EU Parliament,” p.3.

older generation leading the world to act in order to save the future of the younger one: “You need to listen to us, we who cannot vote. You need to vote for us, for your children and grandchildren.”¹¹⁶ In order to accentuate the feeling of urgency, Thunberg recurrently uses the metaphor of the burning home: “But when your house is on fire and you want to keep your house from burning to the ground, then that does require some level of panic.” In this speech the recurrent image is “our house is falling apart,” with this metaphor Thunberg aims, as Nelson in 1970 speech “to restore a proper relationship between man and his environment.”¹¹⁷ Of course, since there has been no big action after this *Earth Day* speech, Thunberg is forced into a rhetoric of panic.

The discrepancy between the evolution of the crisis and the measures which are taken shows a temporality problem. Indeed, Extinction Rebellion mentions this issue:

We don't really know how to react to these slow, lethal events because we didn't evolve to deal with slow, quiet, lethal events – and this is one of the reasons that we've been so inactive about the climate crisis. We don't viscerally fear it, because we don't fear things like that – we fear predators, but we don't fear climate.¹¹⁸

The problem lies in the combination of the adjectives “slow” and “lethal” because it does not generate the emotions necessary in order to act.

3.1.4. *Emotional Whirlwind*

The rhetoric of panic, induced by the limited time left to act, is part of a global rhetoric of emotions commonly used by speakers I examined. This type of mobilization functions with a circulation of emotions from the public speaker to the crowd and vice-versa. The more emotions the orator generates in the crowd, the more reaction, she/he will get. However, it is important to go back to the history of emotions in rhetoric, which displays a strong dichotomy between rational and emotional.¹¹⁹ The famous philosopher Aristotle stages three pillars of

¹¹⁶ Ibid., p.2.

¹¹⁷ “Gaylord Nelson and Earth Day,” p.8.

¹¹⁸ “Heading for Extinction Talks Index Page Docx.” *Extinction Rebellion UK*, 16:26.

¹¹⁹ Jeff Goodwin, James M. Jasper, and Francesca Polletta. *Passionate Politics: Emotions and Social Movements*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001.

rhetoric:¹²⁰ 1. *pathos*, relative to the emotional appeal, 2. *ethos*, to the ethical appeal, which convinces by the “speaker worthy of credence” (linked to the notion of *charisma*) and finally 3. *logos*, relative to the logic and reason. In this section, I will deconstruct the dichotomy between *pathos* and *logos*, emotions and reason, showing that they function together in activism mobilization. In order to understand the role of emotions in activism rhetoric, I will use the work of Jeff Goodwin, James M. Jasper and Francesca Polletta, *Passionate Politics*, especially their introduction to the subject of emotions in political discourse. According to these scholars:

Mobilization theorists shared little with their predecessors except a dichotomized opposition between rationality and emotion, which led them to deny emotions altogether in the politics they studied. Today after the cultural revolution, we can begin to see emotions in a new light.¹²¹

Emotions enter rhetoric theories from the 60s and this acknowledges another argument concerning the revival theory. In their introduction, these writers give an overview of the different types of emotions and how they function. They describe emotions as the elements “connecting human beings to each other and the world around them, like an unseen lens that colors all our thoughts, actions, perceptions and judgments.” The metaphor of the lens, similar to Leary’s *veil*, is useful in understanding the way people act or don’t in dealing with climate breakdown. Goodwin, Jasper and Polletta draw special attention to the theory of the American Sociologist Thomas Scheff, stating that the emotions which are “connected to moral sensibilities” as “shame, guilt and pride” for example are “motivators of action.” They also mention other emotions which “help channel[ing] action because they offer familiar situations and narratives” such as “indignation, compassion, fear.” This is why emotions are very present

¹²⁰ Christof Rapp. “Aristotle’s Rhetoric.” *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*. Ed. Edward N. Zalta, Spring 2010 (Metaphysics Research Lab, Stanford University, 2010). <<https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/spr2010/entries/aristotle-rhetoric/>>.

¹²¹ Goodwin, Jasper, and Polletta. *Passionate Politics*, p.10.

in activists' speeches: they connect people as well as "channel action," functioning as catalysts for certain actions.

However, the dichotomy between *pathos* and *logos* still seems to influence the way speakers construct their speeches. Goodwin, Jasper and Polletta observe that:

Protestors are often ambivalent about emotions. On the one hand, they work hard to present themselves to outsiders as rational, even instrumental: they are only responding in an objective way to real threats, outside of any personal bias or interpretation. They do not want to be labeled "soft-hearted" when that is dismissively opposed to "hard-headed." On the other hand, some organizers are quite explicit about the emotional techniques they use both inside the group and outside it (Epstein 1991). They try to build solidarity, loyalty, and love among members, as one part of trying to make participation a pleasurable experience. As for outsiders, protest leaders hope to manipulate their feelings—their compassion, anger, outrage, fear—as much as their beliefs.¹²²

Protestors' behavior is ambivalent towards emotions between "soft-hearted" and "hard-headed," but as argued by these writers "cognitions typically come bundled with emotions and are meaningful or powerful to people for precisely this reason." Indeed, "moral shocks are the first step toward recruitment into social movements"¹²³ because they "provide a target against which these can be vented." Indeed, "inchoate anxieties and fears must be transformed into moral indignation and outrage toward concrete policies and decision makers." I would argue that activists have the double role of generating emotions in the crowd as well acknowledging the "inchoate" ones that are already felt. They need to channel and direct them towards the desired target in order to incite action. Finally, "activists must weave together a moral, cognitive, and emotional package of attitudes."

The process of generating emotions is demonstrated in Thunberg's speeches, notably in her speech to EU Parliament in April 2019 where she is "explicit about the emotional techniques"¹²⁴ she uses:

¹²² Goodwin, Jasper, and Polletta, p.15.

¹²³ Ibid., p.16.

¹²⁴ Ibid., p.15.

I want you to panic. I want you to act as if the house was on fire. I have said those words before, and a lot of people have explained why that is a bad idea. A great number of politicians have told me that panic never leads to anything good, and I agree. To panic unless you have to, is a terrible idea. But when your house is on fire and you want to keep your home from burning to the ground, then that does require some level of panic.¹²⁵

Thunberg's approach reveals that "panic" is a dangerous emotion, but it has become necessary in order to "channel action"¹²⁶ rapidly enough. Moreover, in the second part of her speech, Thunberg makes sure that panic drifts into "moral indignation and outrage toward"¹²⁷ responsible policies letting the house burn, then it can "channel action," stop the fire:

Our house is falling apart, and our leaders need to start acting accordingly, because at the moment they are not. If our house was falling apart, our leaders wouldn't go on like you do today. You would change almost every part of your behaviour, as you do in an emergency (...)

As already underlined earlier in this study, the metaphor of the "house (...) falling apart," for the destruction of the planet aims to bring the concern nearer; this feeling of emergency automatically induces panic. Thunberg underlines that "our leaders need to start acting accordingly, because at the moment they are not:" they do not fulfill their duty as world leaders and this immediately induces the moral shock, moral indignation. Moreover, it provides "the target."¹²⁸ "our leaders,"¹²⁹ and the address suddenly changes to "you," the members of the EU parliament. In this case, Thunberg aims to generate panic around the problem, which will evolve into a moral shock concerning the inaction of the decision makers and panic transformed into anger will, according to Goodwin, Jasper and Polletta, channel action.

Indeed, as argued by McAdam, "fear is a tricky emotion. It can paralyze as well as mobilize."¹³⁰ Thunberg underlines the "tricky" aspect of emotions:

I've given many speeches and learned that when you talk in public, you start with something personal or emotional to get everyone's attention. Say things, like, "our house is on fire", "I wanted to panic" or "how dare you". But today I will not do that because then those phrases are

¹²⁵ Thunberg. "Our House Is Falling Apart, and We Are Rapidly Running out of Time." *Speech to EU Parliament*, 2019, p.1.

¹²⁶ Goodwin, Jasper, and Polletta, p.10.

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*, p.16.

¹²⁸ Goodwin, Jasper, and Polletta, p.16.

¹²⁹ Thunberg. "Our House Is Falling Apart, and We Are Rapidly Running out of Time - Speech to EU Parliament," 2019, p.2.

¹³⁰ McAdam. "Social Movement Theory and the Prospects for Climate Change Activism in the United States," p.204.

all that people focus on. They don't remember the facts, the very reason why I say those things.¹³¹

This remark hearkens back to the notion of *charisma rhetoric*, a speech too rich in emotions can blur the “the facts, the very reason why [the orator] say[s] those things” and the speaker must pay attention to this downside, especially concerning panic.

McAdam also argues that “the combination of anger and hope has proven to be a powerful motivator in many successful movements.”¹³² Indeed, I have already analyzed anger in the targeting mechanism, but hope is also present in Thunberg's speeches, notably at the *UN Climate Change Conference*, she declares that “right now we are desperate for any sign of hope. Well, I'm telling you, there is hope. I have seen it, but it does not come from the governments or corporations. It comes from the people.”¹³³ This populist argument, which sees hope and capability as residing in the people, is a powerful motivation for action. In addition, at the *Goldene Kamera*, Thunberg equally alarms but gives hope with the solemn claim that “We are now standing at a crossroads in history. We are failing but we have not yet failed. There is still time to fix this. It's up to us.”¹³⁴ The present continuous corrected by the future form, gives the needed time margin to “fix this,” once again it triggers hope which channels action. Actually, Jasper studies the combination of different emotions in order to channel action. He calls those combinations “moral batteries”¹³⁵ consisting of:

a positive and a negative emotion, and the tension or contrast between them motivates action or demands attention. An emotion can be strengthened when we explicitly or implicitly compare it to its opposite, just as a battery works through the tension between its positive and negative poles.

He mentions a classical “moral battery” combining hope for future change and fear, anxiety in the present. According to him, “the excruciating contrast between the way things are now and

¹³¹ Thunberg. “UN Climate Change Conference Speech Transcript.”

¹³² McAdam. “Social Movement Theory and the Prospects for Climate Change Activism in the United States,” p.204.

¹³³ Thunberg. “UN Climate Change Conference Speech Transcript,” 06:36.

¹³⁴ Thunberg. “GOLDENE KAMERA Award Speech of Greta Thunberg.”

¹³⁵ James M. Jasper. “Emotions and Social Movements: Twenty Years of Theory and Research.” *Annual Review of Sociology* 37, no. 1 (2011): 285–303, p.291.

the way things might be, helps motivate protest and political action.” This description seems to match the mechanism by which Thunberg uses panic punctuated by hope.

Along with Goodwin, Jasper and Polletta’s theories, according to Stewart, in order to fulfill the anger (“moral shocks”¹³⁶) and hope (“moral batteries”¹³⁷) mechanisms to channel action, orators need to influence, with emotions, the judgment of the opponents as well as the self-perception of the audiences:

social movements must attempt to alter target audiences’ perceptions of the opposition (...) The rhetorical task is to strip such opponents of their legitimacy. Some rhetorical efforts portray the opposition as powerful, demonic, conspiratorial forces while others ridicule the opposition as pathetic disorganized, impotent obstructions. Social movements must attempt to alter the self-perceptions of target audiences so that supporters and potential supporters come to believe in their self-worth and ability to bring about urgent change. Efforts such as replacing old labels attached to groups by their oppressors are designed to instill feelings of pride and power, to help audiences discover themselves as substantial human beings, and to encourage them to question social relationships and coalitions.¹³⁸

The mechanism presented here is part of the *we-they rhetoric*; public speakers aim to “strip such opponents of their legitimacy” in order to generate the feeling of power in the supporters. Timothy Leary’s speech typically portrays the opponents as “powerful, demonic, conspiratorial forces.” Leary, always in the model of the *Declaration of Independence*, calls on “the Supreme Judge of the Universe for the rectitude of our intentions.” Moreover, he aims to “alter the self-perceptions” of the young generation by arguing that they have a “genetic necessity,”¹³⁹ speaking about “the organic duty of the young members of that species to mutate, to drop out, to initiate a new social structure.” In order to change the power dynamic between institutional power and counterculture, Leary calls on a “duty,” “necessity” dictated by a superior extremely powerful entity, “God.” This generates a feeling of “pride and power”¹⁴⁰ in the young generation: they have no choice to act because they have been chosen.

¹³⁶ Goodwin, Jasper, and Polletta, p.16.

¹³⁷ James M. Jasper. “Emotions and Social Movements: Twenty Years of Theory and Research,” p.291.

¹³⁸ Stewart, p.155.

¹³⁹ “Internet History Sourcebooks,” p.2.

¹⁴⁰ Stewart, p.155.

If Leary's speech exemplifies a case where the rhetorical act describes the opponents as "powerful, demonic, conspiratorial forces," Thunberg uses Stewart's other rhetorical device: she "ridicule[s] the opposition as pathetic disorganized, impotent obstructions." In order to do that, she uses irony to underline the inefficiency of the world leaders. In her speech to EU Parliament in April 2019, she launches that "it's okay if you refuse to listen to me. I am, after all, just a 16-year-old schoolgirl from Sweden."¹⁴¹ She retrieves the criticism that she is often subject to and uses it sarcastically to show that the argument is invalid. Later in January 2020, at the Davos forums, again, she ironizes the way her words are undermined: "I've done this before and I can assure you it doesn't lead to anything. And for the record, when we children tell you to panic, we're not telling you to go on like before."¹⁴² She describes the opponent as incapable of understanding what she demands. Moreover, she also ironizes the incoherencies many people reveal when it comes to acting for climate. At the *Goldene Kamera*, she speaks to celebrities and in an indirect address she criticizes them:

We live in a strange world, (...)
Where celebrities, film and pop stars who have stood up against all
injustices will not stand up for the environment and for climate justice
because that would inflict on their right to fly around the world visiting
their favorite restaurants, beaches and yoga retreats.

She underlines the hypocrisy of the "celebrities," but the remarks stay indirect, even if the audience she addresses is composed of those "celebrities, film and pop stars." Right after this affirmation, she calls on the concept of *charisma* concerning these celebrities: "people see you celebrities as gods, you influence billions of people, we need you." At that moment, she breaks the distance between the "celebrities" making incoherent decisions and the people she has in front of her, she addresses them directly: "you can use your voice," "you can help." In this case, Thunberg "ridicules" her audience in order to make them feel weak and guilty, but directly afterwards she gives them "power" and underlines their importance in the power

¹⁴¹ Thunberg. "Our House Is Falling Apart, and We Are Rapidly Running out of Time - Speech to EU Parliament," 2019.

¹⁴² Thunberg. "Davos Forum Speech Transcript," 00:12.

dynamic. This joins Stewart's argument: Thunberg "alters"¹⁴³ their perceptions of themselves in order to make them act in the way she desires.

These last analyses show that contemporary orators tend to be more explicit about the emotional mechanisms. This could be linked to the whole thematic of secrecy, lie and denial that I have developed in chapter 3.1.1. Indeed, while activists point out that society hides truths about the climate crisis, they underline the importance to be transparent in their actions and speeches. Nevertheless, I would argue that the 60s speeches already used these emotion mechanisms but were not developing them as explicitly. Furthermore, there is a difference in the handling of emotions between the environmentalist Nelson and hippie culture. Nelson's speech tends to return to the dichotomy between reason and emotion; he asks for a change but does not address the emotional aspect directing actions. His speech is very rational, explaining the facts about the destruction of the environment and calling for an action to clean it up. Also, he does not target any special entity responsible for the destructions, he asks for a general change. The level of emotions is incomparable with Thunberg or Extinction Rebellion's speeches. Of course, Gaylord Nelson is a politician and his position is different from Thunberg and Extinction Rebellion, more radical activists that do not have the same institutional political background.

When it comes to Timothy Leary, the hippie counterculture is very much focused on the emotional part of life, recalling Roszak's argument about "positive similarity of sensibility."¹⁴⁴ Indeed, Leary give his speech "in the name and by the Authority of all sentient beings who seek gently to evolve on this planet."¹⁴⁵ The term "sentient" is linked to the radical egalitarianism practiced in hippie culture. This consideration for the "sentient" creatures could be an emotional trigger, for compassion (for example), which coming back to Goodwin, Jasper

¹⁴³ Stewart, p.155.

¹⁴⁴ Theodore Roszak, p.56.

¹⁴⁵ "Internet History Sourcebooks," p.3.

and Polletta, “help[s] to channel action because they offer familiar situation and narratives.”¹⁴⁶

Finally, Leary clearly triggers anger in sympathizers by demonizing the opponents.¹⁴⁷

In the previous sections, public speakers aimed to generate emotions in the crowd (opponents and activists). However, climate activists also work towards acknowledging and dealing with sympathizers’ existing emotions about climate breakdown. The treatment of these emotions (often anger, fear or despair) is not something easily seen in 1960s and 1970s speeches; this psychological axis seems to have been developed in reaction to the crisis of the 2010s. Extinction Rebellion is explicit about this mechanism; they place themselves on the side of the sympathizers and help them deal with their emotional despair. In their two-part talk, they dedicate a whole section about the emotions felt towards the ecological crisis:

It’s very much like receiving a fatal diagnosis from the doctor – there’s a lot of conflicting emotions, a necessity to rearrange how you thought the future was going to be, a lot of grief. Every doctor knows that there’s also a lot of anger and denial, and all sorts of strange emotions that come about with a hard diagnosis. And also, strangely, there’s often quite a lot of relief – because in some subterranean levels of our minds we know that there’s a problem, and to have somebody actually say “Yeah, we all know there’s a problem” – that can be quite liberating, in fact. And in particular, people who join Extinction Rebellion, myself included, find that the experience of joining that movement is actually very therapeutic when it comes to dealing with this problem.¹⁴⁸

This process acknowledges the emotions: “anger,” “denial,” “grief,” felt towards the climate crisis. I would argue that the “therapeutic” aspect mentioned in this paragraph is actually the mechanism of transforming these “inchoate”¹⁴⁹ emotions into a “moral indignation and outrage toward concrete policies and decision makers;” in this case, the first step is to acknowledge the systemic problem, a mechanism which induces “relief” concerning the rough-hewn emotions. The comparison with the “fatal diagnosis of the doctor” allows the sympathizers to accept (as with a sickness) the emotions felt towards the diagnosis in order to target the causes of the

¹⁴⁶ Goodwin, Jasper, and Polletta. *Passionate Politics*, p.10.

¹⁴⁷ C.f Chapter 2.2.1.

¹⁴⁸ “Heading for Extinction Talks Index Page Docx.” *Extinction Rebellion UK*, 3:14.

¹⁴⁹ Goodwin, Jasper, and Polletta, p.16.

disorder. Finally, dealing with raw and violent emotions in reaction to the climate crisis is part of Extinction Rebellion's training on non-violent direct action (NVDA). They have implemented what they call, the "weather of emotions," where at the beginning and end of the training, they ask participants how they feel in the moment and about the ongoing crisis. This participates in the therapeutic aspect of activism which seems to have developed in recent years.

3.1.5. *Duty of Justice and Right of Freedom*

Goodwin, Jasper and Polletta demonstrated a rhetorical mechanism where "moral shocks" lead to strong emotions targeting the oppressors and channeling action. The term "moral" leads me to another rhetorical mechanism, in which activists use extremely persuasive although ill-defined words, such as 'justice,' 'moral,' 'equality' or 'liberty' to mobilize. In order to grasp the power of these words, it is important understand what role they play in the social structure. This brings me to the unavoidable concept of ideology developed in *The German Ideology* by Marx and Engels [1845,] where these authors describe ideology as a superstructure, the conventions and culture forming the dominant ideas of a society. According to Marx and Engels, the ruling class creates these dominant ideas: the ideology.¹⁵⁰ In 1980, the rhetorical theorist Michael Calvin McGee discusses the link between 'myth' and 'ideology' stating that:

Both 'myth' and 'ideology' presuppose a fundamental falsity in the common metaphor which alleges the existence of a 'social organism.' 'Ideology,' however, assumes that the exposure of falsity is a moral act: Though we have never experienced a 'true consciousness' it is nonetheless theoretically accessible to us, and, because of such accessibility we are morally remiss if we do not discard the false and approach the true. The falsity presupposed by 'myth,' on the other hand, is amoral because it is a purely poetic phenomenon, a 'suspension of disbelief.'¹⁵¹

¹⁵⁰ Karl Marx, Friedrich Engels. *The German Ideology: Including Theses on Feuerbach and Introduction to The Critique of Political Economy*. Great Books in Philosophy. Amherst, N.Y.: Prometheus Books, 1998.

¹⁵¹ Michael Calvin McGee. "The 'Ideograph': A Link between Rhetoric and Ideology." *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 66, no. 1 (February 1980): 1–16, p.2.

The concept of “falsity” concerning ideology, even if it still considered as a “moral act,” is extremely important when it comes to the analysis of activist speeches. Indeed, McGee argues that “truth in politics, no matter how firmly we believe, is always an illusion. The falsity of an ideology is specifically rhetorical, for the illusion of truth and falsity with regard to normative commitments is the product of persuasion.”¹⁵² In other words, ideology, stemming from the ruling class of society, functions with a certain rate of falsity and illusion and is able to control public beliefs and behaviors. According to this theory, the human objective environment is different from the socially-projected one: ideology.

In relation to the concept of ideology, I will focus on McGee’s article, “The ‘Ideograph’ a Link Between Rhetoric and Ideology,” presenting the notion of ‘ideograph.’ According to him “the political language which manifests ideology seems characterized by slogans, a vocabulary of ‘ideographs’ easily mistaken for the technical terminology of political philosophy.” In this work, as speech represents society, I will consider ideographs as the persuasive tool of a certain ideology. McGee gives the definition of an ideograph as:

an ordinary language term found in political discourse. It is a high-order abstraction representing collective commitment to a particular but equivocal and ill-defined normative goal. It warrants the use of power, excuses behavior and belief which might otherwise be perceived as eccentric or antisocial, and guides behavior and belief into channels easily recognized by a community as acceptable and laudable. (...) Ideographs are culture-bound, though some terms are used in different signification across cultures. Each member of the community is socialized, conditioned, to the vocabulary of ideographs as a prerequisite for ‘belonging’ to the society.¹⁵³

In other words, ideographs are easily-recognizable, culturally-specific, political slogans or buzz words. They are extremely persuasive in rhetoric because, although “ill-defined,” they are all commonly accepted and represent the same values for the socialized individuals.

These ideographs are very present in the chosen speeches. For example, Timothy Leary’s *Declaration of Evolution* is very symbolic and uses many different words of an

¹⁵² McGee, p.5.

¹⁵³ *Ibid.*, p.15.

ideographic character. He calls on “Freedom to Live,” “Supreme Judge of the Universe,” “Authority,” “Allegiance,” “Acts and Things,” “Freemen and Freewomen,” “Declaration of Evolution,” “Divine Providence,” “Lives,” “Fortune,” “Sacred Honor.” All these words could be classified in two categories of ideographs, the first one “freedom” and a second one that I will call “divine.” When it comes to the first category, every individual, especially in the United States since the *Declaration of Independence*, knows that freedom is a right and if it feels removed, one needs to fight in order to have it back. However, freedom is a blurry notion; it actually encompasses a very wide range of situations, varying according to the people looking for it. Nevertheless, it represents this “particular but equivocal and ill-defined normative goal” that anybody wishes to attain. If Leary underlines freedom as a right, Nelson presents environmental concerns as another one:

I am pleased to come in to you for passing today a resolution proposing an amendment to your constitution respecting the right to a clean environment. It is a sound and dramatic step in the right way and emphasizes something that we have neglected for a long time, and that is that we have a right to a clean environment, and we should stop recognizing, formally, the right of people to pollute the environment.¹⁵⁴

The term “right” is repeated several times and is part of this ideographic rhetoric; whatever the ill-defined turn “step in the right way” means, every socialized individual recognizes it. Moreover, Nelson puts the argument of the “clean environment” on the same level as Leary’s argument for freedom. These two arguments are part of the basic rights of human beings, and therefore the “right to a clean environment” is absolutely crucial in order to survive.

With regards to Leary’s speech, the second category concerning the “divine” is linked to religion and contrary to freedom it implies a common duty, “Allegiance” to this “Supreme Judge of the Universe,” a rather “ill-defined” goal. Individuals are persuaded to act because they have a duty to do so, they have been chosen, and they need to do it in order to achieve liberation, “freedom.” Leary uses capital letters emphasizing the universality of these terms,

¹⁵⁴ “Gaylord Nelson and Earth Day,” pp.4-5.

sometimes bordering on personification, for the terms “Authority” and “Allegiance.” Along with that, Leary’s spiritual rhetoric plays a significant role in the symbolic argument about duty. I have analyzed Leary’s position as that of a prophet, and indeed his speech is given as a prayer, in a ceremonial way, he calls on “God’s creatures – in harmony” and emphasizes the word “harmony,” calling back to the peace and love rhetoric of the hippie counterculture. Along with that, he uses the cardinal sin “greed” to describe the opponents, the non-turned on people in mainstream society. This spirituality vocabulary draws the arguments of duty towards a sort of mysticism which could be linked to the consumption of drugs, notably LSD which, according to hippie culture, opens the brain to a new, true way of seeing and understand the world.

Without the strong spiritual or religious aspect, the concept of duty is extremely developed in *Extinction Rebellion* as well as in Thunberg’s speeches. The argument is constructed with words that can also be considered as ideographs. In a paragraph of *Extinction Rebellion*’s two-part talk concerning “moral obligations,”¹⁵⁵ it is argued that “as moral beings, we have obligations to other human beings, ecological justice.” The concept of environmental justice¹⁵⁶ has been defined earlier in this work and words as “justice,”¹⁵⁷ “simple justice,” “moral obligation,” “right thing to do,” “decide whether it’s right or wrong” as well as “right side of history” are part of the ideographic rhetoric. *Extinction Rebellion*’s strategy is to polarize the field of action in a dichotomous and affirmative way, showing what is the “right thing to do” and the wrong one: “that’s not right, not a fair and just and right thing to do.” This action, not only in their own life but in the all-encompassing term “history,” gives supporters importance and adds pressure to their duty to take action. They call on the ideographic character of the term “justice,” adding the adjective “simple” to indicate the clarity of the direction in

¹⁵⁵ “Heading for Extinction Talks Index Page (July 2019).Docx.” *Extinction Rebellion UK*, 30:49.

¹⁵⁶ Di Chiro. “Environmental Justice.”

¹⁵⁷ “Heading for Extinction Talks Index Page (July 2019).Docx.” *Extinction Rebellion UK*, 30:49.

which individuals need to act. This legal vocabulary very present in the paragraph concerning “moral obligations” is probably justificative of the civil disobedience Extinction Rebellion uses in order to raise awareness about the climate crisis. Their rhetoric justifies the fact that they break the law because they call on the ideograph “justice” which tends to function as undeniable truth; if they are on the side of “justice” then there should be no scruples about breaking the law, indeed “they have a right to protect [them]selves.” Consequently, the vocabularies of justice and freedom function together: “freedom” is a right and “justice” a duty.

In her speech at the *UN Climate Change Conference* in December 2019, Thunberg also calls on these two themes, *freedom* and *justice*, she states that:

[hope] comes from the people. Democracy is happening all the time. Not just on election day, but every second and every hour. It is public opinion that runs the free world. In fact, every great change throughout history has come from the people. We do not have to wait, We can start the change right now. We the people.

The “free world” and “democracy” are coupled with typical populist rhetoric, “we the people,” “public opinion” is in the right when supporting action for the environment. “Democracy” as “justice” is a duty that every individual wanting to take part in society relates to in the same way, giving it the character of ideograph. She equally mentions the ideographs “equity”¹⁵⁸ and “climate justice” in her speeches of October and December 2018, drawing on a similar rhetoric as Extinction Rebellion.

All these different ideographs, according to McGee, “slogan-like terms signifying collective commitment,”¹⁵⁹ participate in creating a feeling which is a very important concept in activism: “collective identity.” Even if they are ill-defined, they have the special characteristic of speaking to everyone in the same way. In *Passionate Politics*, the authors define the notions of “identity” as well as “collective identity”:

Identity is usually contrasted to ‘interest’, suggesting a connection to movement aims that is closer to kinship than to material interest. Most commonly, identities are based on ascribed traits such as sexual

¹⁵⁸ Thunberg. “The Rebellion Has Begun.” and “Speech to the World.”

¹⁵⁹ McGee. “The ‘Ideograph,’” p.15.

preference, nationality, race, class, and gender-although one can also identify with beliefs or principles, such as religions. Collective identity is also used to describe a sense of solidarity among members of a social movement itself, suggesting bonds of trust, loyalty, and affection.¹⁶⁰

One can argue that climate breakdown should draw a very strong sense of collective identity since it concerns the earth as a whole; however, it has been observed that environmental activists generally struggle in gathering sympathizers. Indeed, the climate crisis is not directly specific to a “sexual preference, nationality, race, class, and gender,” nor “religion.” I would argue that public speakers then use ideographs in order to generate this “connection” close to “kinship.” In order to tackle the important theme of “collective identity,” I will work with the study of Aidan McGarry and James M. Jasper, *The Identity Dilemma: Social Movements and Collective Identity*, as well as Alain Touraine and his student Alberto Melucci’s theories on this subject. McGarry and Jasper argue that “collective identities are today universally recognized as crucial to mobilization.”¹⁶¹ In 1981, Alain Touraine theorized what he called the I-O-T, outlining three conditions for a true social movement. The importance of the activist-opponent dynamic “‘I’ is the identity of the movement itself (...) ‘O’ is the identity of their opponents (...) ‘T’ stands for totality, or the stakes of the struggle.”¹⁶² One of his students, Alberto Melucci, develops the notions of identity and collective identity in an insightful way with regard to the strategies of mobilization. According to Melucci, “the term ‘identity’ is most commonly used to refer to the permanence over time of a subject of action unaffected by environmental changes falling below a certain threshold;”¹⁶³ this definition considers identity as something rather fixed. In contrast, Melucci argues, collective identity is

the process of ‘constructing’ an action system. Collective identity is an interactive and shared definition produced by a number of individuals (or groups at a more complex level) concerning the orientations of their action and the field of opportunities and constraints in which such action is to take place. By ‘interactive and shared’ I mean that these

¹⁶⁰ Goodwin, Jasper, and Polletta. *Passionate Politics*, p.8.

¹⁶¹ Aidan McGarry and James M. Jasper. *The Identity Dilemma: Social Movements and Collective Identity*. Politics, History and Social Change. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2015, p.29.

¹⁶² *Ibid.*, pp.26-27.

¹⁶³ Alberto Melucci. *Challenging Codes: Collective Action in the Information Age*. Cambridge Cultural Social Studies. Cambridge [England]; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996, p.71.

elements are constructed and negotiated through a recurrent process of activation of the relations that bind actors together.¹⁶⁴

The key terms are indeed “interactive and shared,” raising the paradox McGarry and Jasper mention about identity being fixed and stable and at the same time, especially if constructed collectively, constantly evolving.¹⁶⁵

As McGarry and Jasper argue collective identity is extremely important for mobilization and it is very present in Gaylord Nelson’s speech, where the arguments of universality and globality are abundant:

It is concerned with all the ramifications of all the relationships, of all the living creatures, to each other and their environment.
Our goal is an environment of decency, quality and mutual respect for all other human beings and all other living creatures, an environment without ugliness, without ghettos, without discrimination, without hunger, without poverty. Without war. Our goal is a decent environment in its broadest and deepest sense.¹⁶⁶

“All” is the main argument of his speech, because the environment is a whole and “all [is] critically important,”¹⁶⁷ “public.”¹⁶⁸ Nelson tries to restore the relationship with the environment in order to construct a powerful collective identity that will mobilize individuals into protecting the environment they live in. Nelson attempts to demonstrate the paradox of the collective identity shared by individuals and the earth. Indeed, this relationship, even if it should ultimately be “fixed and stable,” has to be restored, rebuilt.

Extinction Rebellion also underlines the importance of a community, where people can recognize each other as part of the group:

Once you start doing something it’s amazing how much your spirits lift – because suddenly it feels like there’s A Thing To Do that could be done and it could work. And when you start getting involved you meet a whole bunch of people who are very similar to you: they are also moral people who care about the planet, who care about the future, who have the get-up-and-go to do something ... and they’re very committed and enthusiastic and warm and amazing... it’s the most amazing bunch of people I’ve ever met.¹⁶⁹

¹⁶⁴ Melucci, p.70.

¹⁶⁵ McGarry and Jasper. *The Identity Dilemma*, p.27.

¹⁶⁶ “Gaylord Nelson and Earth Day,” pp.6-7.

¹⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, p.12.

¹⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, p.28.

¹⁶⁹ “Heading for Extinction Talks Index Page (July 2019).Docx.” *Extinction Rebellion UK*, 57:50.

The collective identity is recognized by the “bunch of people who are very similar to you”, who are “enthusiastic and warm and amazing”. This emphasis on the importance of community harkens back to the hippies’ emphasis on the communal aspects and togetherness of their movement.¹⁷⁰

Freedom as an undeniable right and *justice* or *allegiance to the divine* as duty are widely used as arguments of persuasion. These ideographs, resonating equally in socialized individuals, allow the construction of *collective identity* “crucial to mobilization”¹⁷¹ in the fact that it creates a sense of belonging to a group, a community sharing those rights and duties and thus acting together.

3.1.6. War and Battle Patterns

Freedom and justice are achieved by the activists in the logic of a fight for the environment and against the establishment. This leads to a vocabulary of destruction present from Timothy Leary and Gaylord Nelson’s speeches to Greta Thunberg and Extinction Rebellion who uses the same metaphors. It seems important to underline that their fight is slightly different, as Gaylord Nelson, Greta Thunberg and Extinction Rebellion lead a clear fight to save the environment. However, hippies reject the establishment (i.e. consumer society, which of course destroys the environment) but the environment is not the main focus of their confrontation.

In *The Declaration of Evolution*, the theme of war is extremely present, since it was written in the middle of Vietnam War, and hippies were diametrically opposed to the mobilization of American soldiers in this conflict.¹⁷² This opposition, among others, polarized the speech where counterculture is shown as synonym of life and on the contrary mainstream

¹⁷⁰ For further interest on this subject see:

Alan Watts Snyder Timothy Leary, Allen Ginsberg and Gary. “‘The Houseboat Summit’ by Alan Watts, Timothy Leary, Allen Ginsberg and Gary Snyder (Complete Discussion and Transcript).” *The Organism.Earth Library*. 29 June 2020.
<<https://www.organism.earth/library/document/houseboat-summit>>.

Timothy Miller. *The 60s Communes: Hippies and Beyond*. 1st ed Syracuse NY: Syracuse University Press, 1999.

¹⁷¹ McGarry and Jasper. *The Identity Dilemma*, p.29.

¹⁷² Sarah Pruitt. “How the Vietnam War Empowered the Hippie Movement,” HISTORY, 25 September 2020,
<<https://www.history.com/news/vietnam-war-hippies-counter-culture>>.

culture is associated with death and destruction. In rhetoric, the opposition is described in the metaphorical language of war: for Leary “genocide is their habit,”¹⁷³ and he refers to the Vietnam War by stating that “they have coerced the peaceful young against their will to join their armies and to wage murderous wars against the young and gentle of other countries,” “they have made the manufacture and selling of weapons the basis of their economies,” they have “glorified murder, violence,” “they unceasingly trumpet the virtue of greed and war,” “they have instituted great armies of secret police to spy upon the privacy of the pacific.” As it comes to hippie movement, the reference to the Vietnam War is frequent and accompanied by a metaphorical war against the establishment. However, the war metaphor is ambivalent, as hippies are pacifists; they intend to deconstruct the establishment, but they do not go on to launch an attack, except maybe the hypothetical project of polluting San Francisco water with LSD in order to turn people on. Hippies merely want to detach from the establishment that is leading absurd wars. This ambivalence is noted by Miller as the “Disloyal Opposition”¹⁷⁴ stating the paradox that “the culture of peace and love was also a culture of confrontation and conflict.”

Slightly differing from the hippie rhetoric, Gaylord Nelson 1970 in his speech for *Earth Day* on the 14th of April, as an environment defender, refers to “the environmental war”¹⁷⁵ as “a whole lot tougher challenge by far that winning any other war in history of man.” Like Timothy Leary, he refers to Vietnam stating that:

We could terminate our involvement in Laos in 30 days – and I think we should – and we could stop our involvement in the killings of Vietnam very shortly – and I think we should. But wish for it, work for it, fight for it, commit unlimited resources toward it; nevertheless, the battle to restore a proper relationship between man and his environment, between man and other living creatures, will require a long, sustained, political, rural, ethical, financial commitment far beyond any effort we ever made before in any enterprise in the history of man.

¹⁷³ “Internet History Sourcebooks.”

¹⁷⁴ Miller. *The Hippies and American Values*, p.103.

¹⁷⁵ “Gaylord Nelson and Earth Day,” p.8.

Are we able? Yes, I think so. Are we willing? That is the
unanswered question.¹⁷⁶

Nelson compares the “killings of Vietnam” to the “battle to restore a proper relationship between man and his environment,” stating that Vietnam war could be stopped more easily than the environmental crisis. This analogy serves his argument about the “commitment” and “effort” demanded by the climate issue: “Are we able? Yes, I think so. Are we willing? That is the unanswered question,” and “where do you stand on this issue and what kind of a fight are you willing to make on this issue?”¹⁷⁷ The rhetorical questions form the rhythm of his whole speech and state once again the problem of denial: environmental defenders are left alone to lead a “battle” to save the planet.

This metaphorical war has continued to be fought to this day and shows through Thunberg’s speeches. She demands to act “as if there was a world war going on”¹⁷⁸ at the *Declaration of Rebellion*; as in Leary’s *Declaration of Evolution*, the reference to the *Declaration of Independence* denotes importance. Later at the *Goldene Kamera* she mentions that the “climate activists fight to keep fossil fuels in the ground everywhere”¹⁷⁹ and this year she announces that her “generation will not give up without a fight.”¹⁸⁰ Tackling climate crisis is a battle for which Thunberg looks for soldiers, because it must cease to be a lonely war.

In the tradition of hippie counterculture, Extinction Rebellion also praises non-violence. However, one could argue that they embrace the same “disloyal opposition”¹⁸¹ as the hippies; they actually lead a war against the establishment, but a non-violent one. In October 2018 they made the *Declaration of Rebellion*, stating that “it’s necessary to be disruptive – to get in people’s way – in order to get attention;”¹⁸² following the same theme, they also use the word “resistance,” belonging to this martial vocabulary. Moreover, in August 2020, they launched

¹⁷⁶ “Gaylord Nelson and Earth Day,” pp.8-9.

¹⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, p.47.

¹⁷⁸ Thunberg. “The Rebellion Has Begun,” p.2.

¹⁷⁹ Thunberg. “GOLDENE KAMERA Award Speech.”

¹⁸⁰ Thunberg. “Davos Forum Speech Transcript.”

¹⁸¹ Miller. *The Hippies and American Values*, p.103.

¹⁸² “Heading for Extinction Talks Index Page (July 2019).Docx.” *Extinction Rebellion UK*.

an action where campaigners poured fake blood on Trafalgar Square in solidarity with indigenous people dying of COVID-19 in Brazil.¹⁸³ The blood symbolizes the war metaphor: climate crisis is a war killing thousands of people every year. The ambivalent violent/non-violent dynamic is explained in their two-part talk:

We're moral people, we don't want to cause harm. But there's also a practical reason that the moment you become violent; you enable the authorities to marshal forces that could reign in that movement. Provided the movement remains non-violent and peaceful, it's very difficult for the authorities to act because they will be perceived as being overly repressive.

Non-violence is a value but also a strategy to condemn the authority as “overly repressive.” This tactic, aligning with Sharp’s theory, is probably more effective in gaining sympathizers than is being perceived as overly violent. This is the aim of civil disobedience and other forms of non-violent resistance – to show the state as “overly repressive.” In his study, “Movements: Confrontation as Rhetorical Form” the scholar Robert S. Cathcart argues that “confrontation as rhetoric is not an act of violence per se; nor is it a method of warfare. Rather, it is a symbolic enactment which dramatizes the complete alienation of the confronter.”¹⁸⁴ However, even if it is not “warfare” and it is only meant to show the separation from the establishment, the way it is sometimes pursued does not protect the activists from being condemned by the law.

The warlike vocabulary has crossed the years and the comparison to other wars is definitely a tool used to emphasize the importance of this metaphorically armed fight. However, for the hippies’ pacifist convictions or Extinction Rebellion’s non-violent politics, the warlike vocabulary remains paradoxical, as the practice of non-violence is used as strategy to exacerbate the violence of the opponents and to fight against the establishment, a mechanism which does not really meet the strict convictions of pacifism.

¹⁸³ Jemma Carr. “Extinction Rebellion Protesters Pour ‘blood’ on Trafalgar Square Steps,” *Mail Online*, 9 August 2020. <<https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-8609333/Extinction-Rebellion-protesters-pour-fake-blood-steps-Trafalgar-Square.html>>.

¹⁸⁴ Robert S. Cathcart. “Movements : Confrontation as Rhetorical Form.” Morris and Browne, *Readings on the Rhetoric of Social Protest*, 1978, p.101.

3.2. Political Reception and Backlash: Criticism and Rejection

Many mobilization mechanisms from 60s and 70s counterculture are revived in the 2010s mobilization. The representations of charisma have evolved, as well as the treatment of the emotions and the relation to temporality. However, other rhetorical devices such as the *we/they rhetoric* (which polarizes speeches in a dichotomous way,) the theme of denial, the war metaphor as well as the use of different ideographs concerning justice and freedom, are used very consistently from 1960s to 2010s. These different findings about the mobilization speeches lead me to continue my exploration in the reception of speeches in order to understand how the revival takes place in the opponents' discourse.

3.2.1. Revival of Hippie Stigmatization

In order to understand the reaction and revival in the opponents' discourse, it is first important to acknowledge how 60s and 70s mainstream culture received the hippies and their new countercultural ideas, and for this section, we will concentrate on the negative reception. Many

historians have analyzed the hippie movement and the excesses this counterculture has led to: Theodore Roszak,¹⁸⁵ Timothy Miller¹⁸⁶ (more recently) and others have written entire chapters on this. As an example of the skepticism which characterized the movement's reception in the 60s and 70s, I will use William Hedgepeth's article (August 1967) about the hippie community living in the Haight Ashbury area, San Francisco, during the famous 1967 Summer of Love.

Figure 8: William Hedgepeth (in the middle holding the hat), Inside a Hippie Revolution, Haight Ashbury, San Fransisco, 1967.

Hedgepeth took part in the hippie life as an infiltrating journalist and wrote an ambivalent report about his

¹⁸⁵ Theodore Roszak, *The Making of a Counter Culture: Reflections on the Technocratic Society and Its Youthful Opposition*.

¹⁸⁶ Miller, *The Hippies and American Values*.

experience. Many stereotypes show through the article: firstly, there is the passivity of the hip life, exemplified by the anecdote of Hedgepeth asking a hippie in the street for the time:

“Naw man we never know what time it is.” As I came to learn time is one of the many things that mean nothing here. The days blur namelessly into one another without regard to date or hour or light or darkness.¹⁸⁷

In reaction to a forcefully productive and strict 50s society, hippies deconstructed the notion of time and stopped stigmatizing passivity. This relates to O’Toole and Marsh’s study of “young people’s passivity.” The hippie motto is verbalized as “don’t do it if it doesn’t groove ya,”¹⁸⁸ and Hedgepeth describes them as “utopian-minded idealists.”¹⁸⁹ Nevertheless, according to him, this passivity is also characteristic of a sort of despair about the society they live in:

A suspicious, paranoid style of thinking is really very common here, partly because hippies are so passive in all they do. (...) The Establishment is seen as controlling the country as a whole; and on the local level, police and narks snoop everywhere. In addition, the hippies’ almost-unanimous faith in astrology and fatalism further convince them they are powerless to cope with anything that might happen.¹⁹⁰

This “fatalism” does not help in finding purpose in a mainstream-oriented life. However, hippies do believe in a form of religious faith. I have discussed the case of Leary’s prophesying; hippies have “faith,” not in capitalism but in other social systems. If Hedgepeth mentions their “faith in astrology,” he also underlines the new form of religious belief they embrace:

For unlike the nihilist “Beat Generation” of the 1950s, this is a proselytizing, revolutionary kind of soft-sell Mass Movement. What it offers, the hippies say, are new depths of sensitivity and feeling between people and new styles of perception, all along with the abstract ideas of the crusade, there are the causalities. Cases of hepatitis and syphilis are rising, keeping pace with the hippie population growth; immature minds have sometimes permanently derailed along every day by powerful chemicals the users neither understand nor often can even pronounce; and in many cases the Hashbury becomes simply a sanctuary for the shiftless.¹⁹¹

¹⁸⁷ William Hedgepeth. “Inside the Hippie Revolution.” *Digital Exhibits*. 22 August 1967, p.59.

¹⁸⁸ Hedgepeth, p.63.

¹⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, p.60.

¹⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, p.63.

¹⁹¹ *Ibid.*, p.64.

Firstly, the term “proselytizing” and the reference to the “crusade” polarize the way hip culture is promoted. The word “proselytizing” evokes a negative connotation, almost colonialist, alongside the notion of indoctrination with regard to the “immature minds.” Moreover, the reference to the “crusade” adds the violent dimension of war, which is opposed to the hippies’ *peace and love* politics. Secondly, the negative vision of the way hippie culture expands itself comes from narcotics-based deviance. Leary suggests to “Turn on,” with LSD, a substance that he puts in the category of dope: the mind-freeing group of drugs. Hedgepeth’s whole article is full of irony and seems to mock an idealist conception of drug consumption leading to a kind of deviance. History has shown that in the summer of love, many of the people coming to Haight Ashbury were very young, the “immature minds,” and the *peace and love* revolution induced consequences such as a rising of STD cases and other sicknesses linked to malnutrition or dangerous consumption of narcotics and alcohol. Haight-Ashbury transformed into “Hashbury,” a “sanctuary for the shiftless.” Hedgepeth summarizes the deviant way hip culture expands itself in these words:

Hip life is like a religious movement gathering converts; and religion, like drugs, is mind-expanding. Morton, top, uses Buddhism for spiritual discovery; Felix prefers to inject his visions.¹⁹²

This is the way people from the mainstream culture perceived the hippies: a religious movement rejecting the structure of mainstream society, “utopian mind idealists”¹⁹³ subject to dangerous behaviors because of their “anarchistic mode of life.”¹⁹⁴ The ironic tone of the whole article also demonstrates the way hippies were portrayed by mainstream culture in the 60s: they are not taken seriously and tend to be shown as really naïve. The journalist is very witty when states that:

In spite of these omens, the hippies all share the confident belief that they are on the right astrological track and that their gentle, anarchistic mode of life is in line with the universal plan.¹⁹⁵

¹⁹² Tim Jackson. *Prosperity without Growth: Economics for a Finite Planet*. London; Washington, DC: Earthscan, 2011, p.60.

¹⁹³ Hedgepeth, p.60.

¹⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, p.63.

¹⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, p.63.

The use of the term “omen” referring to drug abuses mocks a naïve religious belief in “astrolog[y]” and in the “universal plan,” underlining the paradox presented by the combination of faith and an “anarchistic mode of life.”

Indeed, members of the counterculture were often mocked by politicians representing the establishment. One can remember President Ronald Reagan’s famous statement:

We have some hippies out there in the Haight Ashbury district, San Francisco, one of them the other day was giving some advice to his companions, he said you know your parents take care of you till you’re 21, the government takes care of you after you are 65, you only got 44 of lousy years you gotta look out for yourself. This fellow that was doing the talking had a haircut like Tarzan, he walked like Jane and smelled like cheetah.¹⁹⁶

His assertion amplifies the stereotypes present in Hedgepeth’s article. He describes hippies as rather passive, counting the “lousy years you gotta look out for yourself.” He also uses the accusation of dirtiness as they smell “like cheetah” and have long hair like “Tarzan,” a fictional character who lives in the jungle. The couple (Tarzan and Jane) are used metaphorically for mockery, but also with an underlying sexism, considering that the man in question has a presumably feminine gait, which of course is a negative thing in Reagan’s point of view.

Figure 9: Ronald Reagan, ‘Morality Gap’ speech, Cow Palace, San Francisco, May 12, 1966

Moreover, Hedgepeth’s argument of “utopian-minded idealists”¹⁹⁷ is also articulated on several occasions by Reagan. On May 12th 1966, at the Cow Palace in San Francisco, he criticizes student radicalism at UC Berkeley by stating that “this is not only a sign of a leadership gap, or not the only sign.”¹⁹⁸ Reagan calls on the widely discussed notion of leadership and according to him the student protest took place:

¹⁹⁶ “Ronald Reagan Hated Hippies.” 2019. <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=014UGDcYbZ4>>.

¹⁹⁷ Hedgepeth, p.60.

¹⁹⁸ Ronald Reagan. “Morality Gap Speech (1966).” *Bay Area Television Archive*. 4 November 2020. <<https://diva.sfsu.edu/collections/sfbatv/bundles/229317>>, 3:00-3:05.

when those of you who know better and are old enough to know better let young people think that they have the right to choose the laws they would obey so long as they were doing it in the name of social protest.¹⁹⁹

Reagan refers to the 60s campus riots in Berkley and argues that professors did not provide sufficient leadership for the students. According to him, young members of the counterculture need to be guided otherwise they would fall in a form of anarchism “in the name of social protest.”

Now that 60s and 70s negative reception of hippie counterculture have been examined, in contemporary activism reception there is a phenomenon by which 2010s politicians attack climate activists by reviving these stereotypes about hippies. Extinction

Figure 10: Boris Johnson, Launch of Margaret Thatcher: *Herself Alone*, London, October 8, 2019.

Rebellion is often subject to this type of discrimination and Boris Johnson’s speech at the launch of *Margaret Thatcher: Herself Alone* exemplifies it:

My own team did not want me to come to this event tonight because they said that there were some uncooperative crusties and protestors of all kinds littering the road and they said there were some risk that I would be egged on my way in here and so I immediately asked the fainthearts in my private office “What would Margaret Thatcher have done, tonight?”, “What would Maggie do?”²⁰⁰

The UK prime minister was blocked by Extinction Rebellion activists on his way to the launch of the book *Margaret Thatcher: Herself Alone*. The Prime Minister refers to the activists as “uncooperative crusties.” The term crusty is used in UK slang as a synonym of new-age traveler or hippie.²⁰¹ This reference to the 60s and 70s is striking: right-wing politicians discredit climate activists in comparing them to the counterculture movement of the 60s and 70s. This results in the fact that the stereotyped vision of climate activists who are “uncooperative” and react by

¹⁹⁹ “How Reagan Handled Out of Control Berkeley Hippies.” *The Liberty Conservative*, 3 February 2017.

<<https://libertyconservative.com/reagan-handled-control-berkeley-hippies/>>.

²⁰⁰ “Boris Johnson Speaks at the Launch of Margaret Thatcher: *Herself Alone*.” *YouTube*. 2019,

<<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3egD1e8gmh8>>, 0:18-0:43.

²⁰¹ “crusty.” *English-French Dictionary WordReference.com*. 7 September 2020. <<https://www.wordreference.com/enfr/crusty>>.

“egg[ing]” people on their way instead of communicating their approach to the problem is described in a hippie-based vocabulary. Johnson, and other opponents, draw a direct connection between Hippies and Extinction Rebellion by applying the characteristics formulated by Hedgepeth and Reagan to Extinction Rebellion activists. Thus, when activists block the streets in order to demonstrate, they are immediately categorized as “passive”²⁰² “utopian-minded idealists.” Boris Johnson not only opens his speech on these activists but also adapts his closure according to the incident:

And I hope therefore tonight, that when we go out from this merry gathering and when we are waylaid in the streets, as I’m sure we will be, by importunate nose-ringed, dreadlocked, climate change protestors we remind them that she [Margaret Thatcher] was also right before her time about greenhouse gases and she took it seriously, she took it seriously long before Greta Thunberg, and the best thing possible for the education of the denizens of those heaving hemp smelling bivouacs that now litter Trafalgar square and Hyde Park and the rest, the best things for them would be to stop blocking traffic and buy a copy of Charles’ magnificent book, so that they can learn about a true feminist green and a revolutionary who changed the world for the better.²⁰³

He uses the terms “nose-ringed” and “dreadlocked,” which convey the contemporary stereotypes of counterculture. This criticism is based on presumed physical attributes, placing those activists as outsiders because they do not align with a standard way of dressing. Moreover, the reference to the “heaving hemp smelling bivouacs that now litter Trafalgar square,” describe their way of occupying the streets as a dirty, smelly rudimental form of camping, in order to evoke an image of disgust in the listeners’ imagination. The countercultural physical attributes, the dirtiness as well as the reference to drug use are entirely part of the stereotypes about hippie culture. This negative connotation tends to constitute the 2010s inherited image of hippies, and seemingly supplants other positive aspects of the counterculture.

²⁰² Hedgepeth. “Inside the Hippie Revolution,” p.60.

²⁰³ “Boris Johnson Speaks at the Launch of Margaret Thatcher,” 5:21-6:20.

3.2.2. *Personal Attacks and Discrediting*

The revival of hippie stereotypes exemplifies one mechanism taking place between climate activists and opponents, but establishment politicians use different types of rhetoric in order to attack activists. Another one consists in personal attacks, on physical attributes, age and the way activists behave, instead of judging the delivered message. This type of rhetoric is described by the philosopher Arthur Schopenhauer in his *Eristische Dialektik*, defined as “the art of intellectual fencing used for the purpose of getting the best of it in a dispute,”²⁰⁴ and this art is not directly linked to truth. It has often been underlined that the descriptions of the different techniques to get “the best of it in a dispute” have ironic undertones. However, regardless of that, the rhetorical mechanisms he describes remain useful for this analysis. At the end of his essay, he demonstrates “the Ultimate Stratagem”

A last trick is to become personal, insulting, rude, as soon as you perceive that your opponent has the upper hand, and that you are going to come off worst. It consists in passing from the subject of dispute, as from a lost game, to the disputant himself, and in some way attacking his person. It may be called the *argumentum ad personam*²⁰⁵

The ironic tone is clear; however, the *argumentum ad personam* remains very present in political debate on Twitter.²⁰⁶ Surely it does not demonstrate a very convincing attack, as a weak form of reasoning. If, remembering Stewart, one of the mobilization tactics is to “strip the opponents of their legitimacy,”²⁰⁷ *argumentum ad personam* is a way of doing it without using convincing arguments on the subject since it does not touch on the ideas conveyed by the activists, but merely their image. This tends to make any debate impossible since the two parties argue on different issues and levels. It is “the Ultimate Stratagem,” and is used only when the speaker has no argument left to lead the debate.

²⁰⁴ Arthur Schopenhauer. “Die Kunst, Recht Zu Behalten / Fragment Der Einleitung.” 13 November 2020. <<http://www.coolhaus.de/art-of-controversy/>>.

Translated 1896 by T. Bailey Saunders, M.A.

²⁰⁵ Schopenhauer.

²⁰⁶ Cf. to Chapter 2.2.2.

²⁰⁷ Stewart, p.155.

Trump is a clear user of Schopenhauer's *argumentum ad personam* and it shows when he attacks Thunberg on Twitter. This platform opens a political debate, unlimited in time and space, between a very wide range of agents who do not have to meet in person in order to exchange or debate about ideas. In a tweet from 24th September 2019 Donald Trump mocks the activist in response to her speech at the UN Climate Action Summit 23rd September 2019 by arguing that "She seems like a very happy young girl looking forward to a bright and wonderful future. So nice to see!"²⁰⁸ Trump attacks Greta by underlining that she is a "young girl," probably implying that she does not understand anything about the climate debate. He mocks her misery by sarcastically claiming that she is "happy" about the "bright and wonderful future." He uses sarcasm in order to attack Greta's concern and fear for the future by formulating the opposite of the way she feels and sees this future. In this way, he makes her look like an eternal complainer as well as he discredits her emergency rhetoric and urgent demands for actions by making them seem exaggerated.

Figure 11: Trump's inaugural address, Washington, January 18, 2017.

On 12th December 2019, *Time magazine* named Greta Thunberg Person of the Year. Trump directly reacted to this announcement: "So ridiculous. Greta must work on her Anger Management problem, then go to a good old fashioned movie with a friend! Chill Greta, Chill!"²⁰⁹ Once again, Trump discredits Thunberg, stating that she has an "Anger Management problem," which again is an attack *ad personam*. He underlines a stereotypical vision of the teenager supposed to "go to a good old fashioned movie with a friend," disqualifying Thunberg not on her discourse but on her age. This is emphasized by the fact that he uses her first name informally; after all, she is just a "young girl."²¹⁰ Greta reacted to this attack by changing her

²⁰⁸ "Donald J. Trump (@realDonaldTrump)." *Twitter*. 24 September 2019. 3 September 2020. <<https://twitter.com/realDonaldTrump>>.

²⁰⁹ "Donald J. Trump (@realDonaldTrump)." *Twitter*. 12 December 2019.

²¹⁰ "Donald J. Trump (@realDonaldTrump)." *Twitter*. 24 September 2019.

Twitter bio where she described herself as: “A teenager working on her anger management problem. Currently chilling and watching a good old fashioned movie with a friend.”²¹¹ She picked up on Trump’s attacks and showed how ridiculous they are when actually applied to her. This discrediting method is recurrent in her rhetoric and is also characteristic of a new way of communicating on social media, which I have classed as cyberviolence. The attacks and discrimination circulate rapidly and even if Thunberg and Trump have never met, they can attack each other easily, in the view of a wide public. Social media marks a significant difference from the way counterculture evolved in the 60s and 70s. Attacks circulate rapidly and without censorship. Indeed, we need to remember that Trump uses a personal account (@realDonaldTrump) and that he is completely free in the use of this account.

If Trump discredits Thunberg mostly on her youth, some right-wing politicians operate other types of *argumentum ad personam*. Bernard Pivot, a French journalist and writer, similarly to Trump, mocked Thunberg on Twitter after her speech at the UN Climate Action Summit 23rd September 2019:

Dans ma generation, les garçons recherchaient les petites Suédoises qui avaient la réputation d’être moins coincées que les petites Françaises. J’imagine notre étonnement, notre trouille, si nous avons approché une Greta Thunberg...²¹²

This tweet attacks Thunberg on her youth, talking about children (“garçons,” “petites Suédoises,” “petites Françaises,”) but also adds gender discrimination. With the expression “petites Suédoises,” “petites Françaises” and the reference to the Swedish girls being more sexually relaxed than the French ones, Pivot explicitly objectifies young women, reducing them to sexual objects. As already brought up in chapter 2.2.3., Backe and al.²¹³ as well other studies

²¹¹ “Greta Thunberg répond à Trump... dans sa bio Twitter.” *L’Obs*. 4 September 2020.

<<https://www.nouvelobs.com/planete/20190924.OBS18879/greta-thunberg-repond-a-trump-dans-sa-bio-twitter.html>>.

²¹² “(20) Bernard Pivot (@bernardpivot1).” *Twitter*. 25 September 2019. 2 September 2020, <<https://twitter.com/bernardpivot1>>.

[In my generation, boys looked for young Swedish girls who had the reputation of being less hung-up than the young French girls. I imagine our surprise, our fear, if we would have approached a Greta Thunberg...]

²¹³ Backe, Lilleston, and McCleary-Sills. “Networked Individuals, Gendered Violence.”

For an overview:

Lenhart, Amanda, et al. “Online harassment, digital abuse, and cyberstalking in America.” *Data and Society Research Institute*. 2016.

<https://datasociety.net/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/Online_Harassment_2016.pdf>.

on the issue of gender in cyberviolence have shown that women are often more subject to cyberviolence, and Thunberg is victim to this discrimination.

3.2.3. *Climate Crisis is a Hoax*

In this study, I have considered climate crisis as an undeniable scientific truth. Nevertheless, the opponents' attacks which have been underlined in this analysis take the form of stereotypical references about the excesses of hippies or weak *argumenta ad personam*. Due to the importance of the subject, this weak counter-rhetoric seems paradoxical: why do climate activists' protests lead to such undermining criticisms and mockeries from their opponents? Of course, every counterculture induces counter-discourse and especially discourse protecting the establishment, but the ones studied in this analysis are rather weak compared to the arguments of the activists. In his study, "Movements: Confrontation as Rhetorical Form," the scholar Robert S. Cathcart studies this dynamic between the *aggressors* and *defenders*. The weak rhetoric can be understood in his words:

It is the act of confrontation that causes the establishment to reveal itself for what it is. The establishment, when confronted, must respond not to the particular enactment but to the challenge to its legitimacy. If it responds with full fury and might to crush the confronters, it violates the mystery and reveals the secret that it maintains power, not through moral righteousness but through its power to kill, actually or symbolically, those who challenge it.²¹⁴

Based on mockery and jokes, these climate denialist arguments justify the power structure. If the establishment reacts with "full fury," then the state is considered "overly repressive"²¹⁵ and loses the pretense of acting in complete "moral righteousness."²¹⁶ If, on the contrary, the state gives no serious reaction and considers the activists as the ones acting in an "overly" aggressive way in light of the situation, then it is less at risk of losing its "legitimacy." According to Cathcart, "the response of the establishment to confronters is to treat them as moral lepers: to

²¹⁴ Robert S. Cathcart. "Movements : Confrontation as Rhetorical Form." Morris and Browne, *Readings on the Rhetoric of Social Protest*, 1978, p.101

²¹⁵ "Heading for Extinction Talks Index Page (July 2019).Docx." *Extinction Rebellion UK*, 50:54.

²¹⁶ Cathcart, p.101.

isolate them and pin the anarchist label on them. Such response fuels the confrontation and points the way for the movement.”²¹⁷ This is what seems to happen between the duo of defendants Johnson and Trump and the aggressors Thunberg and Extinction Rebellion. The defendants’ weak rhetoric “isolate[s] them” and “pin[s] the anarchist label on” Extinction Rebellion, and on Thunberg “pin[s]” a childish, psychiatric label. This is done in order to paint their demands as illegitimate and disproportionate.

The weak counter rhetoric is also often formed by climate denialist claims. The defenders of the establishment construct climate denying discourse in order to maintain their system. As underlined earlier in this work, it is difficult to believe and accept climate breakdown in a system where growth is at the center of society and it seems easier to cover the problem with denial. This mechanism leads Trump to tweet climate denying remarks:

Patrick Moore, co-founder of Greenpeace: “The whole climate crisis is not only Fake News, it’s Fake Science. There is no climate crisis, there’s weather and climate all around the world, and in fact carbon dioxide is the main building block of all life.” @foxandfriends
Wow!²¹⁸

In this provocative tweet, Trump denies the climate crisis by stating that it is “Fake News, it’s Fake Science.” In order to defend his politics, he declares that the climate crisis is “fake” and generalizes about carbon dioxide being “the main building block of all life,” which is not wrong but completely off topic. Once again, Trump’s rhetoric in defending the establishment is unconvincing because it does not respond to climate activists’ attacks. This tweet is part of a series of other climate denying reflections from the president:

In the East, it could be the COLDEST New Year’s Eve on record. Perhaps we could use a little bit of that good old Global Warming that our Country, but not other countries, was going to pay TRILLIONS OF DOLLARS to protect against. Bundle up!²¹⁹

Trump personifies the climate crisis with the expression “good old Global Warming” and advances an incorrect scientific claim declaring that “Global warming is a total, and very

²¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p.102.

²¹⁸ “Donald J. Trump (@realDonaldTrump).” *Twitter*. 12 Mars 2019.

²¹⁹ “Donald J. Trump (@realDonaldTrump).” *Twitter*. 29 December 2017.

expensive, hoax.”²²⁰ All this discrediting and weak rhetoric function within the logic of the capitalist system. Indeed, if climate crisis is considered a “hoax” by the most influential person in the country, the President, then activists have no power.

3.2.4. *Degrowth: The Fear of Regression and Restriction*

In addition to climate denial, in the logic of protecting the capitalist system, opponents also discredit any alternative political system which would be less invasive of the environment. In 1972, the *Club of Rome*²²¹ published *The Limits to Growth*, a computer simulation report acknowledging exponential economic and population growth and taking into account the finite supply of resources. This awareness of the limits of growth led to the development of a degrowth trend centered on reduction in economic output. As already discussed in *chapter 2.1.2.*, a system centered on growth is totally incompatible with the climate crisis: according to Jackson “there is as yet no credible socially just, ecologically sustainable scenario of continually growing incomes for a world of nine billion people.”²²² Thus, in order to protect the capitalist system, politics tends to deconstruct and discredit degrowth models by circulating discourse that paints this other political system as restrictive and punitive. Indeed, a model centralized on degrowth would induce the change of a whole lifetime of habits as well as the social infrastructure, which could feel destabilizing and discouraging. Hence, the suggestion of undertaking such a deconstruction induces a rhetoric of punishment and restriction.

The American writer and television commentator on economic issues, Stephen Moore, who advised Donald Trump’s 2016 presidential campaign, represents a good example of someone who engages in this rhetoric

Figure 12: Stephen Moore, *Freedom Works*, September, 2019.

²²⁰ “Donald J. Trump (@realDonaldTrump).” *Twitter*. 6 December .2013.

²²¹ Till Kellerhoff. “Homepage.” *Club of Rome*. 18 November 2020. <<http://clubofrome.org/>>.

²²² Jackson, p.8.

of discrediting. In September 2019, Moore spoke on behalf of *Freedom Works*, a group defending conservative and libertarian interests in USA:

Today, we're gonna talk about what I call climate change crazies. Did you all watch any of the CNN Townhall debate about climate change policies? I have never heard so many radical pro-government anti-freedom ideas ever, put forward by politicians in Washington.²²³

In a similar rhetoric to that of Trump and Johnson, he defines climate defenders as “climate change crazies.” What interests me more in this excerpt is the claim that “climate change policies” display “anti-freedom ideas.” We have recognized that freedom is used by many activists as an ideograph representing an essential right for American citizens.²²⁴ Moore’s first argument is that climate crisis policies are “anti-freedom;” according to him, “these are highly radical ideas and they are dangerous, they all restrict our freedom and they all cost a huge amount of money.”²²⁵ He goes until stating that “they would bankrupt United States,”²²⁶ touching on the issue of money, the absolute center of the capitalist system. Climate change is then restrictive in terms of freedom but also in terms of money. In addition, he adopts an interesting position describing the climate crisis policies as over-controlling:

We don't need the government telling us what we can eat, what kind of cars we drive, whether we can fly airplanes, how many children we have. Those are dangerous ideas that have been discredited over time. Let's use freedom and innovation and free market. That's what freedom works stands for. That's what we stand for. It will lead to more economic growth and a cleaner environment. I wonder, does Bernie Sanders, or does Joe Biden or does Elisabeth Warren want more freedom or do they simply use the issue of climate change to have a more of a command and control over our economy and our individual lives. You know where we stand please work with us to expand freedom and fight against the climate change crazies.²²⁷

Firstly, he describes degrowth policies as controlling, hinting at Neo-Malthusian birth control and other restrictions on freedom, leading to the description of a sort of environmental tyranny: “we don't need the government telling us.” Secondly, the mention of “dangerous ideas that

²²³ “The Climate Change Crazies.” *Moore Money with Steve Moore*, 2019. <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EygwK98gLXg>>, 0:13-0:31.

²²⁴ See *Chapter 3.1.5*.

²²⁵ “The Climate Change Crazies.” *Moore Money with Steve Moore*, 2019. 1:05-1:12.

²²⁶ *Ibid.*, 1:48.

²²⁷ *Ibid.*, 4:07-4:55.

have been discredited over time,” designates that the idea of embracing a simpler life is an overrated way of thinking. According to him, degrowth is not only punitive but also an antimodern way of living. Indeed, in the capitalist belief system, growth automatically induces progress – logically implying that degrowth induces regression. These different s spread the idea that degrowth policies are retrograde and antimodern. However, these considerations only make sense in a capitalist belief system and many researchers have attempted to show their irrelevance once considered outside this system. One of them is the French philosopher André Gorz, who works in political ecology and degrowth theories. Christophe Gilliland comments on Gorz theories in his book *Eloge du suffisant* focusing on the importance of the norm of *sufficiency*, which is the standard according to which the level of effort is regulated to the level of satisfaction.²²⁸ According to him, the problem in the current system of belief is the fact that:

le capitalisme a aboli tout ce qui, dans la tradition, dans le mode de vie, dans la civilisation quotidienne, pouvait servir d’ancrage à une norme commune du suffisant; et qu’il a aboli en même temps la perspective que le choix de travailler et de consommer moins puisse donner accès à une vie meilleur et plus libre.²²⁹

Thus, the fact that capitalism has abolished the entire concept of sufficiency while aiming towards endless growth in order to achieve prosperity explains the tendency to consider degrowth with skepticism, as a restrictive policy. For the opponents analyzed, it has become impossible to imagine that working less and consuming less could actually lead to this prosperity and freedom which are so sought after. In order overcome the retrograde, anti-progress and restrictive arguments and re-establish the notion of sufficiency, it seems necessary to deconstruct the capitalist system and, according to Gorz, to re-establish the correlation between less work, less consumption and more independence and existential security.²³⁰

²²⁸ André Gorz. *Éloge Du Suffisant*. Paris: Puf, 2019, p.38.

²²⁹ *Ibid.*, p.48.

Translation: capitalism has abolished everything in tradition, in lifestyle, in everyday civilization that could serve as an anchor for a common norm of sufficiency; and at the same time it has abolished the perspective that the choice to work and consume less can give access to a better and freer life.

²³⁰ *Ibid.*, pp.77-78.

3.3. *Towards Consensus*

In *chapter 3.1.*, I have demonstrated the revival of different tactics of mobilization from the 60s and 70s to contemporary climate activism and in *chapter 3.2.*, I have treated the contemporary reception in the political sphere, and thus the systematic rejection of climate crisis speeches. These two sections lead me to explore the possibility of a consensus between activists and opponents. This would be a step towards overcoming activist stereotypes and making tactics of climate action more effective. Many scholars have underlined the issue of activism and its backlashes. Activists always pursue actions dealing with members as well as opponents and as argued by Stewart:

Tactics such as strikes and boycotts often affect ‘innocent people’ and may provoke ‘backlashes’ that are fostered by established orders. Thus, movements must defend their actions and changes in actions to both members and non-members.²³¹

The issue described is often faced by Extinction Rebellion: when they decide to pursue actions and block bridges or streets, they are liable to lose “innocent” people, potential sympathizers, because they are bothered by the blockade. Every radical movement is subject to this issue; concrete, sometimes violent, actions such as “strikes and boycotts” polarize the political field. The journalist André Spicer in a *Guardian* article argues that Extinction Rebellion’s tactics “appeal to the left but antagonize the right.”²³²

Simons examines the tension in the activists’ need to succeed in changing the social structure without being completely rejected by everyone. He uses the terms ‘militant’ and ‘moderate:’ the first to describe the activists who “by means of direct-action techniques and verbal polemics, (...) threaten, harass, cajole, disrupt, provoke, intimidate, coerce,”²³³ and the second to describe the activist who “adapts to the listener’s needs, wants, and values; speaks his language, adjusts to his frame of reference; reduce the psychological distance between his

²³¹ Stewart, p.157.

²³² Spicer. “The Extinction Rebels Have Got Their Tactics Badly Wrong. Here’s Why.”

²³³ Herbert W. Simons. “Requirements, Problems, and Strategies: A theory of Persuasion for Social Movements.” Morris and Browne, 1970, p.40.

movement and the larger structure.” He concludes that in order to be the most effective “the great contemporary movements all seem to require combinations of militant and moderate strategies,”²³⁴ and I would agree that this seems to be the only way opposition can alter mainstream culture. A 2015 study in the journal *Nature and Climate Change* actually proposes this argument:

The key implication is that the divisions between sceptics and believers are unlikely to be overcome solely through communication and education strategies, and that interventions that increase angry opposition to action on climate change are especially problematic. Thus, strategies for building support for mitigation policies should go beyond attempts to improve the public’s understanding of science, to include approaches that transform intergroup relations.²³⁵

According to the researchers Ana-Maria Bliuc and al., climate activists need to work on “intergroup relations” and this argument seems to join Griffin’s “combinations of militant and moderate strategies.”²³⁶ Indeed, this analysis has demonstrated that the hippies’ separatist politics between the turned-on and turned-off has not led to a complete societal change but more to a stigmatization of the hippie culture across the ages. The same could now happen to Extinction Rebellion and Greta Thunberg, who, as my analysis has shown, use the rhetorical devices of the “militant” and would maybe attract more sympathizers and power with some “moderate” strategies. However, we must stay aware that the limited amount of time remaining to take action is a reality which tends to weaken such a consensus.

²³⁴ *Ibid.*, p.42.

²³⁵ Ana-Maria Bliuc et al. “Public Division about Climate Change Rooted in Conflicting Socio-Political Identities.” *Nature Climate Change* 5, no. 3 (March 2015): 226–29, p.226.

²³⁶ *Ibid.*, p.42.

4. Conclusion

In conclusion, my research has allowed me to build on the analytical tools I have learned in the Faculty of Arts in order to understand and explore ways to address the urgent societal problem of climate breakdown. In this study, I have put forward a revival theory concerning the evolution of the environmental question between the two periods of the 1960s-70s and the 2010s. I have addressed both the politically mainstream and the counterculture speeches. Indeed, societal change functions in a dynamic whereby established narratives automatically induce counter-narratives, which in turn lead to the production of new narratives and change. Therefore, in order to understand how counterculture functions, it is important to analyze the power negotiations that take place between protesters and defenders of the establishment. This investigation has confirmed the revival of 1960s and 1970s counterculture in 2010s climate activism, present in its mobilizing rhetoric but also in its political reception. Moreover, the analysis of the contemporary political backlashes has illuminated certain reasons why climate activism often remains marginalized despite the importance of its claims.

In terms of revival, I have acknowledged that Thunberg and Leary's speeches operate with an oppositional *we-they rhetoric* in reference to disappointing older generations. These two orators have also similar dichotomous patterns linked to the *we-they rhetoric*. In addition, they display similar leadership mechanisms as they both embrace the role of charismatic leaders. Nelson displays a more neutral approach because of his status as a politician, and in its own way Extinction Rebellion totally refuses the concept of individual top-down leadership and delivers a flat hierarchy. In addition to the leadership mechanisms, this study has put forward that it is important to take into account the privileges of white middle class actors, which constitute a major part of the hippie culture as well as Extinction Rebellion's activists. This conceptualization of hierarchy, which is leaderless, horizontal and sometimes spontaneous, has shown to be linked to the functioning of social media. On this subject, I have

discovered that social media provides more space for activism; however, it has also shown to be dangerous as it is a wide and an uncontrolled field of communication, where violent conversations can easily take place.

In terms of thematic speech patterns, Leary's metaphor of the Veil is revived in Thunberg's and Extinction Rebellion's speeches, which give significant importance to the issue of denial about the climate crisis. In addition, environmental concerns are characterized in the vocabulary of war and battle from the 60s to contemporary climate activism. Interestingly, these war patterns can be seen as paradoxical in movements that precisely espouse nonviolence. Thus, the metaphorical language of the 1960s and 1970s seem to have had a significant influence on the activism of the 2010s. Finally, temporality has changed a lot in fifty years; the feeling of urgency is undeniable and has changed the rhetoric concerning the environment.

In a wider analysis, I have identified that emotions are very important in order to channel actions. Panic and fear get triggered and are transformed into anger, indignation in the targeting mechanism (moral shock) or into hope (moral batteries) in order to channel actions with more efficiency. The hippie sensibility mentioned by Roszak is also revived, especially by Extinction Rebellion, which gives importance to the process of dealing with emotions concerning the climate crisis. Furthermore, freedom and justice are used as ideographs in order to touch as many sympathizers as possible and create a collective identity, which will increase concerns about climate crisis and help channel action. Finally, different types of non-violent activism are revived from the hippie and environmentalist counterculture into 2010s activism and serve to exacerbate the violence of the establishment.

Concerning the reception, I have firstly acknowledged that some criticism about hippies survives in contemporary mainstream culture. Thus, political reception applies stereotypes about hippies to contemporary climate activists such as Extinction Rebellion. Moreover, such weak rhetoric as *argumentum ad personam*, which sterilizes the debate and alienates the

activists, has shown to be very recurrent as well. Finally, climate denying claims are abundant because humans have instituted a relationship of domination towards their environment.

An interesting solution to tackle climate breakdown would be to follow degrowth policies. However, in the capitalist system of beliefs, degrowth is almost impossible to undertake because it is viewed as restrictive and regressive. Hence, the solution lies in the overturn of the capitalist system and in the rehabilitation of the notion of sufficiency.

This is where the countercultural mobilization tactics and tropes are imperative societal elements. Indeed, speeches are essential and have proven that the power of language is huge: it helps to gather people, creating meaning as well as changing society. Thus, there is no doubt that 1960s and 1970s counterculture, which separated itself from the establishment, has had a strong influence on the 21st century in terms of mobilization. However, fifty years ago, it did not succeed in changing the mainstream consumerist culture and today, certain counterculture members tend to survive in the common imaginary as a cliché-like embodiment of their excesses. Hence, I would argue that contemporary climate activists would need to find an equilibrium between moderate and militant verbal strategies in order to achieve the most efficient social change without being totally excluded and alienated from society. They would need to apply the analyzed revived tactics that have had evidence of success, while moderating them in order to avoid an extreme polarization of the political field. On the one hand, I would argue that the use of metaphorical language concerning denial, urgency and environmental battles is effective. Triggering emotions and dealing with the existing ones as well as using ideographs in order to channel action is also powerful. Additionally, opting for nonviolent strategies in order to exacerbate the violence of the establishment seems to be a very efficient strategy as well. On the other hand, the dichotomous rhetoric should probably be more nuanced, as well as the strategy of designating opposed political power as the target towards which the activists should direct their emotions. The white middle class agents would also have to remain

aware of their privilege with regard to activism and act accordingly. Finally, the new powerful tool of social media would have to be used carefully; while it has shown to be very useful to spread demands in a horizontal way, it also tends to facilitate violent backlashes.

I want to close this study with a word on the power of counterculture: it has proven to be an absolutely essential part of the social system, preventing the establishment from solidifying unjust frames and rules, while aiding crucial social improvements.

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