Rhetoric of Ecology in Visual Culture
Retoryka ekologii w kulturze wizualnej

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"That's the Wonder of It": Affective Dimensions of Visual Rhetoric for Biodiversity Conservation
„To jest cud": afektywne wymiary retoryki wizualnej na rzecz ochrony bioróżnorodności

Abstract

In environmental communication, audience engagement is an essential prerequisite for achieving persuasive aims. This article responds to recent interest in visual storytelling and emotionalization – purposeful display and elicitation of emotions – as engagement techniques. A case study of the 2020 Global Biodiversity Festival – part online science festival, part fundraising event – provides evidence of how these techniques are employed in environmental communication for biodiversity conservation. Informed by scholarship on affect, emotion, visual rhetoric, and environmental communication, the case study analysis shows how visual representations of nature, mediated experiences of nature, and accompanying narration orient festival audiences toward specific ways of seeing and feeling that foreground emotional commitments and draw audiences into potentially transformative encounters. The visual rhetoric and affective dimensions of the festival's website, virtual field trips, and multimodal presentations focus attention, create moments of connection, and call audiences to action. The case study analysis also reveals how the festival, planned in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, treats this crisis as a *kairotic* moment for encouraging awareness, care, and pro-environmental behaviors.

W praktykach komunikacyjnych związanych ze środowiskiem naturalnym zaangażowanie odbiorców jest podstawowym warunkiem osiągnięcia celów perswazyjnych. Niniejszy artykuł wpisuje się w popularny obecnie trend badań nad wizualną narracją oraz emocjonalizacją przekazu, czyli celowym okazywaniem i wzbudzaniem emocji, jako technikami budującymi zaangażowanie odbiorcy. Studium przypadku Światowego Festiwalu Bioróżnorodności 2020, będącego jednocześnie festiwalem nauki online, jak również wydarzeniem związanym ze zbiórką funduszy, dostarcza dowodów na to, jak techniki tego typu wykorzystywane są w komunikacji środowiskowej na rzecz ochrony bioróżnorodności. Analiza wydarzeń i ekspozycji festiwalowych, oparta na badaniach nad afektem, emocjami, retoryką wizualną i komunikacją, pokazuje, w jaki sposób wizualne reprezentacje przyrody, zapośredniczone doświadczenia natury i towarzysząca im narracja nakierunkowują publiczność festiwalu na określone sposoby patrzenia i odczuwania. Na pierwszy plan wysuwa się tu kwestia zaangażowania emocjonalnego i potencjału wywołania zmiany u odbiorców w indywidualnym postrzeganiu środowiska naturalnego. Retoryka wizualna i afektywny wymiar strony internetowej festiwalu, jak również wirtualne wycieczki terenowe i prezentacje multimodalne mają na celu skupiać uwagę odbiorców poprzez generowanie poczucia jedności ze środowiskiem i budowanie zachęty do konkretnego działania. Ponadto artykuł ukazuje, jak festiwal zaplanowany w odpowiedzi na pandemię COVID-19 traktuje ten kryzys jako moment *kairotyczny*, kształtujący świadomość ekologiczną odbiorców w celu wywołania u nich potrzeby świadomego korzystania z dóbr naturalnych.

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"That's the Wonder of It": Affective Dimensions of Visual Rhetoric for Biodiversity Conservation

It is May 2020. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, I have been isolated in my suburban home since March. Suddenly, one northern white rhinoceros lumbers into view, then a second. These are the last two northern white rhinos left on Earth. I stand up and walk closer, close enough to see the texture of their hide, the steady back-and-forth movement of their ears. Tears well up in my eyes. On this second day of the Global Biodiversity Festival, I am on a virtual field trip, livestreamed from Ol Pejeta Conservancy in Kenya. I am watching the event in real time through YouTube on my television. In the foreground, a man is speaking about the rhinos—Fatu and Najin—and Ol Pejeta's conservation efforts. Behind him, men who are feeding the rhinos try unsuccessfully to move them into a more favorable position for the viewing audience. This captivating encounter with endangered animal celebrities reveals some of the complexities and intensities inherent in technology-facilitated conservation events. The conservation actors present—animals, caretakers, audience—are entangled beings, seeing and being seen, affecting and being affected.

As Jepson and Barua (2015, 96) have argued, "it is not solely human entities that act and influence [conservation] outcomes"; rather, "animals, technologies, and devices also play a role in how conservation is performed and the trajectories it takes." Therefore, the rhetorical and affective dimensions of biodiversity conservation communication—which involves assemblages of human and nonhuman entities—deserve critical attention. In this article, I present a case study of the Global Biodiversity Festival, part online science festival, part fundraising event, that took place May 22-24, 2020. The festival included a series of encounters like the one described above that brought audiences into contact with conservation professionals, charismatic wildlife, and the natural environment through livestreamed multimedia presentations and virtual field trips. The aim of my analysis is to show how still, moving, and livestreamed visuals and accompanying narration orient festival audiences toward specific *ways of seeing*

and *feeling* that foreground the emotional commitments of festival speakers and draw audiences into potentially transformative affective encounters. I argue that the rhetorical power of the festival's visual storytelling and technologically mediated ecotouristic encounters depends on the interplay between speaker and audience characteristics (e.g., dispositions toward caring for nature), context (e.g., forced isolation due to COVID-19 pandemic), affective logics, and techniques designed to shape the viewer's emotional attachments (e.g., emotional framing).

Attention to *affect* and *emotion* is woven throughout my analysis; therefore, in this section I endeavor to discuss terminology. Distinctions between *affect*, *emotion*, and *feeling* have been given a lot of attention in critical theory, cultural studies, environmental humanities, and other disciplines (Massumi 1995; Gregg and Seigworth 2010; Bladow and Ladino 2018). *Affect* and *emotion* are sometimes used interchangeably or relationally in environmental communication literature and other relevant scholarship. In light of this variability, I share the definitions that guided my work. As explained by Brennan (2004), *affect* refers to a "physiological shift accompanying a judgment" (5). *Affects* "are about what a body may be able to do in any given situation, in addition to what it currently is doing and has done" (Anderson 2014, 10). "Feelings, moods, sentiments, and emotions" are "subsets of affects" (Brennan 2004, 5). *Emotion* is "our cognitive awareness" of affective response (Weik von Mossner 2014, 1), through which we come to recognize what is valuable and significant (Furtak 2018). *Feelings* are "sensations that have found the right match in words" (Brennan 2004, 5); they are "powerfully mnemonic and can summon experiences from elsewhere, connecting time and space" (Engle and Wong 2018, 8).

Within the context of the Global Biodiversity Festival, I describe encounters among humans, animals, and environments as having *affective* dimensions. I consider how these moments of contact generate energy and potential, while also recognizing that "bodies do not arrive in neutral" (Ahmed 2010, 36). *Affects* as "automatic, visceral response[s]" (Weik von Mossner 2014, 1) are important, but they are only part of the story. I am reminded of Ahmed's (2014) egg metaphor: "The activity of separating affect from emotion could be understood as rather like breaking an egg in order to separate the yolk from the white... That we can separate them does not mean they are separate" (210). I cannot "turn away from emotion" (Ahmed 2014, 206) as I consider the ways in which hosts, speakers, and audiences come into contact with one another, with ecological social imaginaries, and with visual representations (e.g., photographs) or mediated experiences (e.g., virtual field trips) of nature. These encounters involve "corporeal intensities" as well as "speech acts" (Ahmed 2014, 84), and I will explore both in my analysis.

In the section that follows, I introduce the Global Biodiversity Festival as a *rhetorical* and *spectacular* event before transitioning into my analysis of festival field trips and presentations.

Global Biodiversity Festival as Rhetorical and Spectacular

Science festivals, Davies (2019, 538) notes, "are an increasingly important part of the landscape of science communication." For researchers interested in the affective dimensions of public engagement with science (Davies 2019, 539), a festival can be analyzed as a rhetorical event designed not only to be attended but also to be seen and experienced. The Global Biodiversity Festival website provides a starting point for examining the event's rhetorical strategy and for considering how the COVID-19 pandemic represents a *kairotic* moment for the festival's biodiversity conservation education and fundraising efforts. The festival website establishes the online event's exigence, audience, purpose, message, and means of communication. Site visitors are invited to celebrate the International Day for Biological Diversity "with a virtual extravaganza" that promises to bring "the amazing diversity of life on our planet, live into everyone's home during these challenging times" and "highlight the weird and the wonderful, but also the conservation challenges, along with the good news success stories." Scheduled speakers included "scientists, explorers, conservationists and filmmakers documenting and protecting" biodiversity, a number of whom could be considered eco-celebrities. Adjectives like *amazing*, *wonderful*, and *good* begin to set the tone for the event, which emphasizes success stories while acknowledging challenges.

The festival schedule included livestreamed presentations on biodiversity conservation topics, as well as four livestreamed special events referred to as virtual field trips. I will analyze the affective dimensions of these live special events and presentations in subsequent sections of this article. For now, I want to focus on how the festival website's visual rhetoric encourages *ways of seeing* biodiversity. These ways of seeing, I argue, contribute to the affective atmosphere and rhetorical goals of the festival. "Mediatized spectacles"[1] like the Global Biodiversity Festival "frame–implicitly and/or explicitly–how individuals, society and humans more generally should not just think about the environment but also how we should relate to it" (Goodman et al. 2016, 680). "Spectacular environmentalisms" operate not only visually but also affectively, "fostering emotion and ecologies of feeling" (Goodman et al. 2016, 681). If "affective forces are... central to constituting and

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1. Recognizing the analytical value of Guy Debord's work while also moving beyond his "narrow theory of spectacle," Goodman et al. (2016) attend to "other connotations" of spectacular environmentalisms, including those that "gesture towards the breathtaking complexity of nature, the multiplicity of ecologies, of natural assemblages, of the infinite interdependence of our natural world and the relentless attack on this by people..." (678).

sustaining particular ecological relationships" (Arnold 2018, 102-103), then *ways of seeing* that affirm or pull audiences into particular relationships with nature deserve critical attention.

Visitors to the festival home page are greeted by a colorful visual representation of biodiversity as "amazing variety." Made up of seventy-seven thumbnail images of flora and fauna, from orchids to fish and on through to megafauna (whale, tiger, lion, gorilla), this visual's point of emphasis is not on any one object but rather on the spectacular multiplicity of living things. That being said, each image brings us close to the subject. We see patterns and textures clearly; we meet the gaze of charismatic megafauna who perform affective labor for the festival and the conservation organization that compiled these thumbnails. Text at the bottom right of the image indicates that all of the species shown in the image "are protected by CITES," the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora. The image provides an example of "micropolitical orchestration of allure at work" (Barua 2020, 681). It appeals to shared values (it is right and good to protect beautiful, amazing things) and elicits affective response (a wow moment in which viewers behold with wonder this "amazing" biodiversity). It highlights what "nature lovers appear to love most about nature and natural things, their most highly valued, most sacred qualities—their beauty, their diversity, their wildness ... [and] their personhood" (Milton 2002, 110). This colorful representation of "amazing variety" and emblem of conservation success stories was used throughout the festival, appearing as a Zoom background, a YouTube thumbnail, and in the festival's e-book. Its reuse suggests that event hosts found the image particularly compelling, important, and appropriate for the festival's focus and purpose. This frequently used image contributes to the festival's affective atmosphere in which spectacular imagery "moves and engages people who are co-present, experiencing rhetoric together as it unfolds and calls upon and creates shared meanings and feelings" (Middleton et al. 2015, 75).

Website visitors encounter numerous additional images presented alone or as part of photo gallery slideshows. In the virtual field trip advertisements, close-ups, eye-level or low angles, magnification, and other techniques bring viewers close to the subjects—even closer than before and sometimes much closer than we ever really could be, evoking "affective enchantment" (Barua 2020, 679) and "feelings of closeness induced by person-based identification" (Milton 2002, 110). A baby sea turtle—larger than in real life—seems to be looking right at us, so near that we can see every detail of its head and flippers. Next, we are sitting on the ground in front of two massive rhinoceroses, one browsing, the other, head turned, returns our gaze. If we could reach out, only horns would separate us from snouts. In a tree canopy, we come eye-to-eye with a man hanging from ropes and a harness.

Then we sustain eye contact with a sloth wrapped in a blanket whose forward gaze creates a sense of intimacy with the viewer and encourages anthropomorphic interpretation. These images are affect-saturated objects of emotion (Ahmed 2014), and the animals they feature are conservation actors. The images focus attention and connect human and nonhuman bodies. "Intimacy and connectedness generated by affective nonhuman labour," as Barua (2020, 682) has argued, "is a critical element for captivating encounters to take grip." Depending on the viewer, the images may prompt visceral reactions, elicit wonder, "unleash a floodtide of identification in viewers" (Daston and Mitman 2005, 11), or call forth moments of potential in which viewers are persuaded to take available actions—join the adventure, register for the festival, donate.

While the website also features photos of conservation professionals, wildlife is the primary focus. The photos that feature animals are "lively" representations of "charismatic life" (Lousley 2016, 707), and the animals serve as ambassadors of "the amazing diversity of life on our planet." While such images are engaging, Lousley (2016, 708) questions whether "spectacle" may "reinforce the alienation of viewing audiences from the living and ecological relations" that produce "liveliness." During the forced isolation of the COVID-19 pandemic, I believe such images, rather than reinforcing alienation, actually serve to connect viewers to "living and ecological relations" in a meaningful way. The festival's visual rhetoric, therefore, attempts to "*redeem spectacle* in the name of species and ecological protection" (Lousley 2016, 705). Context matters when evaluating spectacular environmentalisms.

Ultimately, the festival website serves informational and persuasive purposes. Website photographs engage viewers, help set the tone for the festival, make ethical and emotional appeals, and advertise an event that promises to be equally spectacular. In the next section, I turn from the festival website to the virtual field trips as I continue to analyze the affective dimensions of visual rhetoric for biodiversity conservation.

Virtual Field Trips as Affective Encounters

Festival host Exploring by the Seat of Your Pants specializes in using communication technologies to "broadcast live into classrooms from the most remote regions on the planet" (Exploring, "About"). In support of the festival's mission of showcasing "the amazing diversity of life on our planet" to raise funds for conservation organizations, they used their expertise to livestream four virtual field trips: "Live with the Last Northern White Rhinos," "Live in the Rainforest Canopy," "Live from the Turtle Hospital," and "Live from the Toucan Rescue

Ranch." The COVID-19 pandemic affected the conservation organizations involved in these virtual field trips, with loss of revenue from declining wildlife tourism posing "a major threat to conservation and anti-poaching activities" (IUCN). The field trips positioned viewers as virtual ecotourists, bringing them into the field to experience the work of conservation organizations that would benefit from donations made during the festival.

The virtual field trips offered spectacular encounters, as the anecdote about my own response to the Ol Pejeta field trip revealed. On their screens, festival participants witnessed the last two northern white rhinos being fed by their caretakers, injured animals recuperating in wildlife rehabilitation centers, and conservationists setting camera traps in the rainforest canopy. Dramatic, novel, and emotionally intense, these "distanced-yet-intimate" (Barua 2020, 682) experiences were made possible by satellite communication technologies, allowing conservationists in the field to interact with festival hosts and audiences in real time. Foregrounding "the entangled, complex relations that constitute [the] world, encompassing humans, animals, then environment, and technology" (Smaill 2016, 128), the virtual field trips emphasized connections and care through an affective logic of sympathy. As Lorimer (2010, 248) explains in his work on moving images, the affective logic of sympathy draws "attention to the lived experiences of individual animals and the humans they encounter" and "bestows celebrity status upon individual animals." This was especially evident in the Ol Pejeta event. Although individual animals did not achieve "celebrity status" in the animal rehabilitation center field trips, those events encouraged sympathetic and affectionate orientations toward the animals under care.

Animals do not have to be present to be entangled in the affective logic of sympathy. Humans, their devices, and the environment were the visible conservation actors in the Costa Rican rainforest canopy livestream. Supported by ropes and a climbing harness, the speaker looked down to show a road cutting through the forest, visual evidence of habitat fragmentation. Pulling focus back up into the trees, a rope bridge, serving as a surrogate tree limb, represented reconnection efforts. The audience learned about the elusiveness, curiosity, and agency of the animals this bridge is designed to help. They are hard to see. They take apart camera traps. The conservationists were unsure whether they would use the bridge, and it is predictable what will happen if they use the road instead. In this case, care involves the power to intervene in nonhuman futures and the anxiety of waiting to see if animals will accept or thwart the efforts made on their behalf.

During each field trip, festival participants witnessed what it means to care for more-than-human life. Care is complex, sometimes dangerous, and not always enough. While virtual ecotouristic encounters may foster ways of seeing

that maintain distance, figure humans as heroes/saviors, and otherwise reinforce human-nonhuman binaries, they are equally capable of "allowing momentary deterritorializations" (Lorimer 2010, 249) and generating "a strong sense of attachment and commitment" (Puig de la Bellacasa 2017, 90) by employing an affective logic of sympathy. *Care*—figured as an obligation, a disposition toward "being open to others, or being curious about others" (Hinchliffe 2008, 95), a process that "inevitably transforms... entangled beings" (Puig de la Bellacasa 2017, 98), or in the case of wildlife and resource management, a practical duty—played a significant role in festival, as I will explore further in my analysis of the presentations.

Visual Storytelling and Emotionalization for Biodiversity Conservation

Festival presenters used visual material (e.g., PowerPoints, photographs, video clips, illustrations) to help tell their conservation stories. Each presentation can be analyzed as an *environmental narrative*, which Weik von Mossner (2017, 3) defines as "any type of narrative in any media that foregrounds ecological issues and human-nature relationships, often but not always with the openly stated intention of bringing about social change." In their environmental narratives, festival speakers used visual storytelling and emotionalization to influence the audience's ways of seeing, feeling about, and acting toward nature. As Morey (2009, 24) explains, "our current notion(s) of environment and nature could only have developed within a culture of seeing and understanding nature in terms of images; and this understanding, a construction of nature through images, has direct material effects on how we treat nature." Visual stories are uniquely able to "take [audiences] there and make them care" (Finkler and León 2019, 2), which leads me to a question Weik von Mossner (2017, 4) poses in *Affective Ecologies*: "How do environmental narratives invite us to care for human and nonhuman others who are put at risk?" This question guides my analysis of the festival presentations as environmental narratives.

Before they can invite caring orientations toward biodiversity conservation, environmental narratives must first engage audiences. As an alternative to the impersonal presentation of information, *emotionalization*, the "intentional evoking of emotions" (Flemming et al. 2018, 3), has garnered considerable attention as an engagement strategy because "communicators working at the interface of science and the environment recognize scientific information as necessary but not sufficient to engender public engagement and participation" (Davis et al. 2018, 433). Practitioners "must make science-related information engaging and relevant. In short, it is about making people care. That is why we need to go beyond presenting

facts and evidence, towards creating emotional connections between scientists and publics" (Joubert, Davis, and Metcalfe 2019, 1). Emotionalization takes various forms. For example, scientists "describe their work in terms of emotions of passion, creativity, or curiosity," and science communicators talk about "wanting to trigger emotions such as interest, curiosity, enthusiasm or appreciation in their audiences" (Davies et al. 2019, 9-10). I observed both of these approaches at work in festival presentations.

Festival presenters emotionalized their environmental narratives in two key ways: by employing *emotional framing* and affective logics. First, presenters used a technique I refer to as emotional framing. Emotional framing occurred when speakers revealed their own strongly felt responses to their visuals through the use of adjectives such as "incredible," "extraordinary," "exciting," "amazing," and "fascinating." These adjectives affirm the speakers' own feelings about the images while also inviting the audience to see and feel similarly.

As speakers shared images, they frequently recalled and appeared to re-experience the excitement of field work. During one presentation, the speaker played a video of a snow leopard hunting an unseen marmot in a field of wildflowers. After sharing facts about the leopard's location and behavior, she told the audience that seeing the snow leopard and capturing the moment on video was "one of the most beautiful experiences of [her] life." Through emotional framing, we are prompted to take the perspective of the scientist living this "beautiful experience." Now, the shaky footage may seem imbued with excitement and nervous energy. We may remember our own prized footage and lucky moments. We may sense why the scientist finds this magnificent, vulnerable cat so intriguing. Through emotional framing, a connection is established between the speaker and the audience and perhaps between the audience and the subject in the video or photograph. Milton (2002, 100) links experiencing emotion to recognizing value in nature: "We value things by perceiving meaning in them. These meanings become known to us through the emotions they induce... " Emotional framing encourages audiences to perceive meaning in unfolding narratives about animals, environments, locals, and conservation professionals; thus, it offers a way of relating to human and nonhuman conservation actors entangled in these real-life eco-dramas.

Emotional framing often emphasized the beauty or allure of speakers' subjects, making environmental narratives into aesthetic as well as affective encounters. One speaker stated, "In my opinion, this may be one of the most beautiful fishes in the world. Boom! Wow! Really stunning, I think." Another speaker, face beaming, earnestly narrates, "This is me joyously collecting samples" of whale feces, "the most beautiful animal poop in the world." Sometimes the emotional framing was even more direct, as in this statement uttered by a speaker as he played a video

clip of a young whale swimming alongside a boat: "It would be impossible not to feel empathy and awe when you see a baby minke whale wanting to play." Considering "the persistent ethos of the [scientist as] *disinterested* modest witness" (Puig de la Bellacasa 2017, 89; see also Haraway 2007), it might seem surprising to observe the extent to which conservationists talk about their feelings, engage in anthropomorphic thinking, and are susceptible to the beauty and allure of their subjects of study, but caring for nature and persuading others to care is an essential part of a conservationist's work, as Milton (2002) has shown. Although it could be fairly criticized as anthropocentric, emotional framing does the important work of orienting festival participants toward care as openness to more-than-human others.

In addition to engaging in emotional framing, festival presenters employed affective logics of wonder, sympathy, or shock (Lorimer 2010) to invite specific ways of seeing and feeling about nature. Affective logics of wonder[2] "create tension and excitement" while maintaining an "'aesthetic of distance'": "Individuation and audience identification are discouraged by the frequent use of aerial photography, flyovers and sweeping panoramas of depopulated and objectified landscapes" (Lorimer 2010, 247). These techniques were used, however, to evoke awe and wonder, especially in presentations on rainforests, wildlife preserves, and the oceans. Above the incredible density of a "spectacular, majestic" rainforest, sunlight sets clouds aglow. A video clip shows a series of stunning landscape and animal images, documenting "one of Africa's greatest wildlife restoration stories." In keeping with the festival's emphasis on biodiversity as amazing, incredible, weird, and wonderful, presenters' environmental narratives use breathtaking aerial and underwater photographs and striking images of flora and fauna to create "wow" moments. These "wow" moments decenter humans to emphasize respect and appreciation for nature as beautiful, pristine, and powerful. During the festival, moments of wonder created space for recognizing and appreciating the value of biodiversity. As Wells et al. (2018, 22) explain, "comportments such as enchantment, wonder, curiosity, and puzzlement have been urged as ways into richer ethical investments in human-nonhuman ecologies." Wonder is an "affective commonplace" with a big task: it "must not only shake apathy toward the more-than-human world and move us to curiosity without false idealization; it must also promote concern to curb the destruction of wildlife, of undeveloped space, and of human health and livelihood" (Houser 2014, 78-79). The extent to which wonder achieves this task is beyond my scope, but it is worth noting that substantial money and effort has been invested into developing technologies and techniques for documenting biodiversity and capturing nature at its most wonderous.

2. Lorimer (2010) links an affective logic of *curiosity* with distancing techniques. I instead use *wonder* because, like Puig de la Bellacasa (2011), I associate curiosity with care that refuses objectification: "Adequate care requires knowledge and curiosity regarding the needs of an 'other'—human or not—and these become possible through relating, through refusing objectification" (98).

In contrast to *zoomed out* perspectives associated with the affective logics of wonder and awe, affective logics of sympathy often *zoom in*, employing techniques like close-ups or depictions of animal "emotions" and "personalities" to evoke a sense of intimacy and connection. While affective logics of sympathy were most common in presentations on charismatic species like whale sharks and cottontop tamarins, some speakers encouraged a sympathetic orientation toward species that generally tend to elicit more ambivalent reactions. For example, bats are often feared and misunderstood, especially in the context of COVID-19. Presenters used close-up photographs, illustrations, and anthropomorphic cartoons of bats to depict them as "friends" rather than threats to humans. These visuals helped demystify bat behaviors and highlight the usefulness of bats as pollinators of plants we depend on for food and as sources of inspiration for technologies and medicines. The narratives also included visuals of threats to bats, and they ended with images showing how audiences can help. In the presentations I analyzed, visual storytelling showed what is at stake for nonhuman and human entities, linked caring for nature with human self-preservation, and encouraged specific actions, such as building bat boxes, reducing reliance on single-use plastics, or donating to conservation organizations. The festival's visual narratives situate audience members within ecological systems that biodiversity conservationists seek to preserve. Thus, one way these environmental narratives invite participants to care for others is by ensuring that audiences literally see themselves within ecological systems—not just as a threats or as a beneficiaries but also as a potential benefactors and guardians engaged in interdependent relationships.

Although the festival emphasized biodiversity conservation success stories, some presentations included sad or disturbing imagery. Environmental narratives that employ an affective logic of shock may rely on zoomed out or zoomed in approaches. In some cases, photographic techniques evoked wonder and shock in the same presentation, such as when aerial images of lush vegetation were contrasted with aerial images of deforestation. A zoomed out approach was also evident when presenters showed the many bodies of amphibians killed by chytrid fungus or piles of dead animals and tusks confiscated from illegal wildlife trade. In those cases, visual storytelling for biodiversity conservation relied on distance to dramatically highlight the extent of the devastation and evoke a sense of urgency. In contrast, zoomed in approaches engage both shock and sympathy when presenting images of a bird's stomach filled with plastic or of rangers impaled with metal objects during conflicts with ranchers. Through the affective logic of shock, some environmental narratives emphasized crises and consequences while revealing that caring for nature is not always comfortable or joyful.

A pattern emerged around the presentation of negative imagery: Although the speakers had intentionally included the images in their presentations, they often acknowledged the disturbing nature of the visuals or even apologized to participants for what they were seeing. For example, one speaker said, "I'm sorry to be showing that picture" before explaining the visual. Another speaker promised, "This is my only kind of scary graph, so bear with me." Speakers appeared sensitive to the jarring nature of such images within a festival that focused on hope. Research indicates that "while fear images may be effective in attracting attention, they do not motivate personal engagement" (O'Neill and Nicholson-Cole 2009, 164), and "affective triggers such as fear have been shown to be counter-productive to inducing pro-environmental behavior change" (Lockwood 2016, 735). Nonetheless, by contrasting so markedly with representations of biodiversity as "amazing variety," the negative imagery powerfully communicated biodiversity loss as an urgent crisis and revealed dangers and challenges faced by conservation organizations. Overall, when festival speakers depicted fearsome realities, the narrative structure of their presentations directed audience back toward hope: the problem the audience can help solve, the crisis being addressed by the conservation organization, a necessary plot element in a conservation success story.

As environmental narratives, the festival presentations invited audiences to care about human and nonhuman others through visual storytelling and emotionalization techniques. Speakers used emotional framing and affective logics to encourage specific ways of seeing, feeling about, and valuing "the amazing diversity of life on our planet." These techniques support audience engagement, without which the educational and persuasive missions of environmental communication cannot be achieved; however, the tendency to rely on charisma and allure to evoke "the need for care and sympathy" and trigger "affectionate responses" (Barua 2020, 681) deserves additional critical attention. Nonetheless, if "being moved *by* [is] a connection *to*" (Ahmed 2014, 209), then the presentations offer valuable evidence of how emotions and attachments operate within visual storytelling for biodiversity conservation.

Conclusion: Spectacular Environmentalisms, Affective Enchantments, and Caring Orientations

As Lorimer (2010, 240) suggests, "new, distributed, transmedia ecologies are inhabited by diverse virtual nonhumans and constitute the spaces in which most people encounter distant peoples, organisms and landscapes." The Global Biodiversity Festival provides a case study of how communication technologies can facilitate new modes of encounter between publics, conservation professionals,

and more-than-human conservation actors. Though virtual, the immediacy and interactivity afforded by livestreamed presentations enabled a sense of connection across distance that was particularly meaningful during the forced isolation of the COVID-19 pandemic. As a fundraiser for conservation organizations affected by the pandemic, the festival successfully drew on the unique strengths of its hosts and speakers to provide virtual field trips and presentations that foregrounded spectacular environmentalisms, affective enchantments, and caring orientations.

Visuals do important aesthetic, affective, and rhetorical work within the festival context. They invite attention, communicate what is valued, and make emotional appeals. Within environmental narratives, visuals illustrate biodiversity conservation concepts and show that conservation involves assemblages of human and more-than-human entities. We do not necessarily have the opportunity to take the perspective of other organisms in these narratives, but we witness their liveliness and corporeality. Perspective taking does play an important role in the narratives, however; like Jepson and Barua (2015, 96) observe in their work on elephants as a flagship species, "an elephant affords a sense of wonder and moral concern in relation to those people who hold, or are able to foreground, conservationist values. For others, the same animal might be vilified if it constantly raids crops or damages people's houses." Conservation efforts, in part, involve getting people to see things differently, and the processes that make re-seeing possible involve a sort of care that is arduous, sometimes dangerous, potentially rewarding, but not warm and fuzzy.

Conservation communication also involves perspective taking and encourages re-seeing, as illustrated by the bat-as-friend example. In their visual storytelling, festival presenters employed emotional framing and affective logics to connect with audiences and encourage caring ways of seeing and feeling about nature. Emotional framing in particular invited viewers to "learn from the emotions of others what it is appropriate to feel about particular things" (Milton 2002, 69). While I agree with Milton (2002, 95) that "to be *e*ffective" in moving people to action, environmental narratives "have to be *a*ffective," it is not always possible to "calculate the precise emotional effect" of a narrative (Hogan 2011, 240). Davies's (2019) research on science festivals shows that planners' ideas about emotionalization do not always align with the audience's actual experiences. This presents an opportunity for future research on audiences' experiences of emotionalization within biodiversity conservation communication and festival contexts.

It is also important to devote additional critical attention to the way environmental narratives tend to rely on wonder, allure, and affective enchantment. Though engaging, does such an orientation toward the more-than-human invite what Puig

de la Bellacasa (2011, 98) refers to as "adequate care?" "Adequate care," she explains, "requires knowledge and curiosity regarding the needs of an 'other'... and these become possible through relating, through refusing objectification." Audiences may find festival encounters transformative, and they may come away with new knowledge and affections, but "refusing objectification" seems unlikely. Still, within the context of the festival as an informative and inspirational fundraising event, the visual rhetoric of biodiversity conservation does encourage attachments that move participants toward meaningful forms of care.

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