Circumnavigation

World/Listening/Dwelling

There's you, the time, the logic, or the reasons we don't
understand.

—Yes, "Close to the Edge"

What I see is thinking; what I hear is thinking, too.
—Atom Heart, "Abstract Miniatures in Memoriam Gilles Deleuze"

Existence is not an individual affair.
—Karen Barad, *Meeting the Universe Halfway*

As we move into the second millennium, we enter a time when new
and often digital technologies are increasingly enmeshed with our
everyday environment. Computer and telecommunications technologies
are not only converging but also permeating the carpentry of the world,
doing so in networks and technological infrastructures, houses and
buildings, manufactured products, various sorts of content, and more.
Information is not just externalized; it vitalizes our built environs and the
objects therein, making them "smart," capable of action. These innovations
call us to reflect anew about our surroundings and the dispositions
through which our rhetorical work emerges. We are entering an age of
ambience, one in which boundaries between subject and object, human
and nonhuman, and information and matter dissolve. While postmodern
theory has contributed much to these shifts, contemporary science, digital
production, radical connectivity, and ubiquitous technology push us still
further. They not only impact our environment and how we interact with
and within it but transform our knowledge about self and world.

Such issues are not confined to academies, laboratories, think tanks,
and boardrooms. Popular culture is replete with them, as the following two

examples suggest. First, in the film *Minority Report*, database-driven ads liberated from their confinement to computer screens address citizens everywhere. In one scene, Tom Cruise's character, fleeing from authorities, is confronted by a lively American Express ad that points out, "It looks like you need an escape, and Blue can take you there." Such ads exemplify the externalization of information, for they are ubiquitous, interactive, and "smart." Second, in M. T. Anderson's adolescent novel *Feed*, children implanted with digitally connective "wetware" develop with immediate, internalized access to futuristic equivalents of our mobile phones and their various functions, including messaging, chat, and the transfer of various sorts of content, such as film, video, and music, thus replacing earlier methods of data access, including gaming platforms, radio, the Internet, and libraries—although in the novel these distinctions no longer apply. Just as in *Minority Report*, such technology also interacts with and monitors the citizenry. Looking at store merchandise immediately results in personally tailored sales pitches; trying to access certain kinds of data leads to investigative probes by obscure administrative authorities. Those who lack this technology are considered lesser humans. As the novel (troublesomely) makes plain, the convergence of informational, communications, and biological technologies changes what it means to be human and creates new distinctions in what it means to be different.

These examples are significant not simply because they come from popular culture but because, given that origin, they already speak to everyday concerns. What is fictional and fantastic here permeates our everyday world, albeit without any sense of wonder or space for reflection. Both these examples portray imagined transformations in our senses of human being and how people interact in their environments, and as they do so, they elicit a small sense of celebration and a greater sense of unease. While this unease is not unwarranted, I would rather use it as a window on the fact that both examples involve communicative exchange and persuasion, and they do so in ways that challenge us to rethink accepted notions about these processes. In the *Minority Report* example, advertising is fully mobile and interactive; it is "smart" because it can assess, adapt to, and influence emerging situations, such as a man on the run who has been identified by networked computers accessing circulating data that are empowered to capitalize on his predicament. "Who" are the agents here? It would be arbitrary if not simplistic to assign agency solely to the human programming of computers. What *technai* are at work? Can the traditional emphases on sociality, discourse, intention, and so on suffice to describe such a rhetori-

cal situation? In the *Feed* example, where can we locate rhetorical work and exigence? Given the far-reaching technological extensions of humankind's cognitive processes, it again seems simplistic to relegate rhetorical powers to humans alone. Does it not seem that rhetoric circulates through both human and nonhuman elements in these examples? If so, how can rhetoric be understood to suffuse the entire situation if its traditional definition largely confines it to the persuasive (and symbolic) activity of human subjects?

These questions open us onto the main claim of this book, which is really quite basic: an ambient age calls us to rethink much of our rhetorical theory and practice, indeed, calls us to understand rhetoric as ambient. Rhetoric can no longer remain centered on its theoretical commonplaces, such as rhetor/subject, audience, language, image, technique, situation, and the appeals accomplishing persuasive work, at least as they are predominately understood and deployed. Rather, it must diffuse outward to include the material environment, things (including the technological), our own embodiment, and a complex understanding of ecological relationality as participating in rhetorical practices and their theorization. Of course, a growing body of scholarship seeks to rework these commonplaces for rhetorical theory and practice, and I will engage much of it, but the challenge remains focused on determining how to come to a more comprehensive understanding. An ambient rhetoric is just such an attempt.

As I describe later in this chapter and in chapter 4 in regard to prehistoric cave art, even some of our earliest practices were ambient. That is, the external environment was an integral aspect of ancient people's practices. So ambience here refers to the active role that the material and informational environment takes in human development, dwelling, and culture, or to put this differently, it dissolves the assumed separation between what is (privileged) human doing and what is passively material. The prehistoric cave paintings discovered in Europe at Altamira (Spain), Lascaux (France), and other places in the late nineteenth century—and subsequently discovered all over the world, from China to Africa—are typically hailed as some of humanity's earliest visual artworks, evoking tremendous respect and passion. In just the last decade, however, interpretations of this wall art have shifted. The images are now understood as not just visual but multisensory artifacts. A singular focus on visual representation blocked access to that insight for nearly a century; indeed, even the term "wall art" betrays the visual bias.[1] A new form of archaeology concerned with acoustics and sounds in the ancient world has discovered that the visuals are carefully placed for aural accompaniment, so that the sites are better understood as

immersive and interactive, or ambient in the sense I am developing here (Blesser and Salter 74).[2] Further study has demonstrated the importance of the characteristics and layout of the cave walls and spaces, such as the famous painting of the "bird-man" shaman at Lascaux, which is located at the bottom of the Shaft, six meters below one of the main forums, the Apse.[3]

An important lesson here is that humans have always attended to the ambient, even if we are only now gaining self-reflexive access to that insight. Today, as the digitization and externalization of information through networks and other media accelerate, and as ubiquitous computing (also called ambient intelligence, among other labels) comes into its own and promises further radical transformations of the built environment, we are confronted quite strikingly with the question of our relation to that technologized world—and its relation to *us* (Aarts and Marzano, Greenfield, Morville). As I intimated already, to say that such transformations challenge long-established theories and concepts concerning rhetoric would be an understatement. Ideas about subjectivity, agency, context, invention, persuasion, and even discourse and its operations stand to be revised yet further in subtle and not so subtle ways. If discoveries such as that of the cave paintings at Lascaux can significantly revise our sense of the capacities of early humans, what in turn does the discovery of their sophisticated deployment of ambient sound and spatial *technē* suggest about them? While it certainly asks us yet again to revise our understanding of early humans, more pertinently for my project, it suggests changes in our contemporary self-understanding. In short, why did this insight, so long obscured, suddenly become available? I am suggesting that issues raised and questions posed by ambience are in the air, as it were, because culturally we are inundated by ambience.

The question of ambience is thus also a question of perception, recognition, or, as Heidegger might say, "wakefulness" (*O* 12). To take another example from Neolithic cave art, while the art was first recognized as prehistoric in the late nineteenth century, the caves were known and visited long before that. The art was frequently seen and sometimes noted; graffiti in the caves goes back to 1602. But the art was not *recognized*. As Mats Rosengren points out, as late as 1861 the scholar Dr. Felix Garrigou, on seeing the wall markings, wrote in his notebook, "There are drawings on the wall; what could that possibly be?" (83). Indeed, Rosengren goes on to show that the art at Altamira was not actually recognized by Don Marcelino de Sautuloa, the first scholar to publish on the cave art (in 1880), but by his daughter, whose questions sparked his curiosity (82, 84). While the scien-

tists of the time knew much, they had not yet cultivated a relation to the past that allowed drawings on cave walls to show up for them as prehistoric cave art or really as significant in any sense; the images did not register as meaningful to them. Rosengren concludes that this is an example of the primacy of *doxa* over *epistemē*, but that seems untenable. Rather, it is an issue of ambience in a twofold sense. First, ambience conveys what Heidegger describes as the background of intelligibility and practical coping from which we work; that background had to change before the cave drawings became disclosed to us in a newly meaningful manner. Second, ambience invites us to understand the complex give-and-take we have with our material surroundings, as I have been describing, but this brings us back to include background intelligibility, that in which and from which we dwell (akin to the *en hō* and *ex hou* Plato attributes to the *chōra*—see chapter 1). Such intelligibility is inseparable from its materiality. Ambience, then, becomes a useful distillation of ongoing dynamic shifts in a vibrant, robust environment that we seek to understand, explain, and work through; ambience is itself ambient, meaning, in part, that ambience, even in such seemingly subjective forms as recognition, is not solely human doing. The work of ambient disclosure includes ambience, too.

But perhaps I am getting ahead of the story and should ask, more basically, what ambience has meant. Where did the word come from? In the rest of this introduction, I will lay out the basic meanings of ambience, address some central terms, such as *attunement*, and then work through the thought of some of the key theorists, researchers, and practitioners who underpin the rest of the book. Finally, as a preview to the more detailed argument of the book, I examine Thomas Cole's self-admittedly conservative definition of rhetoric, using a brief but specific example to demonstrate its differences from a definition of rhetoric as ambient. I am not looking for a supersession, however, simply replacing or countering older, more traditional understandings of rhetoric with an ambient one. Rather, I am attuning us to what those earlier understanding exclude and what the costs and stakes of such an exclusion might be.

The Concept of Ambience

According to the *OED*, the word *ambience* comes from the Latin *ambientem*, the present participle of the verb *ambīre*, meaning "to go about" (*amb-*, "on both sides," "around," "about" + *īre*, "to go"). It encompasses various shades of meaning, but largely it refers to what is lying around, surrounding, encircling, encompassing, or environing. Labeling an environment

ambient, then, at the very least picks out its surrounding, encompassing characteristics. When the French refined the term, they added an aesthetic dimension, so that *ambiance* can mean the arrangement of accessories to support the primary effect of a work. But it does significantly more than that. It begins to convey more elusive qualities about a work, practice, or place. Often these are keyed to mood or some other form of affect. Music in particular has adopted this sense of the word, using it to describe the acoustic qualities of a particular environment. Thus, caves such as those at Lascaux can be said to have general ambiences that help constitute work placed there, the spatial properties at particular spots yielding the sounds desired, a long, round reverberation here or a short, clipped echo there. Without those properties, the human design for the caves would not be possible. Ambience melds the materiality of the cave with its other properties, and all become integral to the achievement of the whole, from the base material structure to the achievement of the design to the feelings and thoughts that are evoked. The caves at Lascaux attune (us) to ambience in that the achievements of humans in terms of design are inseparable from the affordances of the caves.

When we make such an encompassing move, however, we also see that while we get our word specifically from its French cognate, the concept inherits a far more ancient legacy. Leo Spitzer's marvelous historical study demonstrates that a consideration of what we call ambience was already in play going back at least to the ancient Greeks. The Greek expression *o periechon aer* or *to periechon* literally means "that which surrounds, encompasses"; when Anaximenes says, "ton kosmon pneuma kai aer periechei" ("The universe is surrounded by spirit and atmosphere"), his statement thus indexes an awareness of the power of our surroundings, both material and spiritual (divine, sacred), in constituting the human condition (Spitzer 2). Similar usages appear in writings from Hippocrates, the Peripatetic school, Empedocles, Diogenes, Anaxarchos, Anaximander, and more, all conveying an insight into the way air, climate, and even cosmos influence or otherwise shape what they surround (Spitzer 2–3). In *On the Nature of the Gods*, making a move somewhat prescient of Heidegger's claim that language does not represent things so much as co-responsively bring them into an open region where they can become what they are for us (which I address in chapter 5), Cicero argues that not only do we see and hear by means of air, but air itself "sees and hears with us: ipseque aer nobiscum videt, nobiscum audit" (*De nat. deorum* II, 83, qtd. in Spitzer 4). Just as I will show to be the case with Heidegger, we can glimpse here an idea of a fun-

damental reciprocity between world and person, one that suggests that the subject/object dichotomy characteristic of modern thought has not always held such sway. Spitzer goes on to argue that the Greek term *to periechon* overall has connotations of warmth, protection, and embracement, a sense that an environment conditions and encompasses, connecting humans to the earth and cosmos (11). This is a striking sense of attunement, one difficult to understand. The Romans, for instance, when using their ambience-connoting terms stemming from *ambi-*, *circum-*, and the like, "were unable to decant into their own idiom the richness and fullness of the Greek term [*periechon*]" (16). It was not until medieval thought, and the recapture of Latin *ambiens* through Christian notions of a loving God, that the warmth and vitality suffusing Greek *periechon* began seeping through.[4] Whether the context be ancient Greek, medieval, or contemporary, however, each age's group of words for ambience retains its particularity, and we must be careful about weighting one over another.[5]

A number of contemporary studies have attempted to bring more theoretical precision to the concept of ambience, many doing so by resuscitating the more active, embracing connotations of the Greek *periechon*. These contemporary attempts characteristically emphasize ambience's role in perception, as when Jean-Paul Thibaud says that "ambience puts us in immediate contact with a situation in its entirety" (2). Such an approach rejects the notion of situations as mere composites of what is subjectively requisite, or the intersection of networking strands, with everything else relegated to epiphenomena, and instead sees all elements as operational and even necessary, albeit at various levels of scale. But not all these elements are oriented on the perceiving subject, making ambience transubjective, hence the necessity for an ecological conception of the perceptual environment in which various levels of attention and attunement are in play. Thibaud further remarks that ambience situates us in a "certain bodily and emotive disposition" that is experienced, meaning, importantly, that ambience cannot be reduced to interpretative acts; it is a "diffuse, disseminated presence" not reducible to the salience we customarily seek through interpretation and analysis (4). In this way, ambience is given a more vital quality; it is not an impartial medium but an ensemble of variables, forces, and elements that shape things in ways difficult to quantify or specify. These elements are simultaneously present and withdrawn, active and reactive, and complexly interactive among themselves as much as with human beings. Indeed, as Thibaud argues via J. J. Gibson, on this count human perception is not solely human doing, since it requires activity that re-

sponds to and depends on the external environs being perceived (Thibaud 8). I address these issues more extensively in chapters 5 and 6.

Indeed, to give an example that bridges the millennia, we can compare the designed use of Lascaux as afforded by its spatial, acoustic, and material properties to musicians' attempts to get a certain sound by recording in a specific environment. For instance, some of John Bonham's most famous drum sounds on Led Zeppelin albums—reputedly the most sampled drums in the digital age—were achieved using specific recording techniques in suitable places, such as the former poorhouse Headley Grange, in East Hampshire, England. Such sound—the "sound of sound," as it were—was achieved by making the environs integral to the recording process. In songs such as *Led Zeppelin IV*'s "When the Levee Breaks," the recording captured not just Bonham playing the drums or just the drums responding to the room but the room responding to the drums (E. Davis 74).[6] We understand that recording technology is artfully deployed to capture not an isolated drum sound or just a drum sound as perfected through Bonham's considerable technique but a sound's ambient fulfillment in an environment that brings its own unique qualities. In another environment, other qualities emerge, and even with the same drums and drummer in the same band, a different sound will result. Thus, despite the differences in technologies and purposes, in principle the ambient songs at Lascaux and Headley Grange remain the same.

Ambience and Attunement

While perception remains important to understanding ambience, other important aspects include feeling, mood, intuition, and decision making. This gets us to the issue of *attunement*. That is, ambience involves more than just the whole person, as it were; ambience is inseparable from the person in the environment that gives rise to ambience. There is no person who can then be tacked onto the environment. Attunement is not additive. Rather, there is a fundamental entanglement, with the individuation of particular facets being an achieved disclosure. Thus, wakefulness to ambience is not a subjective achievement but rather an ambient occurrence: an attunement. Attunement can, of course, take place at numerous levels, with consciousness being only one. Further, attunement is nothing static. It is always ongoing, and achievement of some sense of harmony or synchronicity would, on this account, be fleeting. It is not given that we are simply at home, in ourselves, in our lives, in our world. As I will argue more fully later on, attunement is given in its dynamic unfolding by an originary,

worldly rhetoricity, an affectability inherent in how the world comes to be. Attunement conveys the countless modalities of responsiveness to this affectability, which is why Heidegger remarks that attunements are in some sense *already there* (*FCM* 59). The word Heidegger uses is *Stimmung*, which English-speaking scholars usually translate as "attunement" (or sometimes "mood"); it indicates one's disposition in the world, how one finds oneself embedded in a situation. This point needs emphasis: being so entangled, so caught up in the richness of the situation, an attunement is nothing subjective. It is neither inside nor outside, as Heidegger says, but "the way of our being there with one another" (*FCM* 66). It results from the co-responsive and inclusive interaction that brings out both immersion (being with) and specificity (the way of our being there). We are always already attuned; there are only changes in attunement (*FCM* 68). But as the later Heidegger and other thinkers will help us realize, it is not simply a matter of the attunement of human beings; attunement, insofar as it opens us onto the ambience of all and not just human existence, implicitly changes our view of human being.[7] The conception of humans as the rational animal, the *zoon logon echon* attributed to Aristotle, would, alongside modernist conceptions of the autonomous subject, be jeopardized.[8]

These points self-reflexively include (our awareness of) ambience itself because our ambient environment is itself changing; it has accumulated greater conceptual weight and scope alongside the emergence of practices, arts, and sensibilities that are themselves ambient. The word itself changes hand in hand with more self-consciously ambient technologies and practices. Indeed, as the example of the recent acoustic researches into Lascaux and other ancient sites shows, there is a sense in which human practices in the world gave rise to a need for such a term, and *ambience* came to fulfill such new or emergent needs. In ways that both resonate with and transform the Greek *periechon*, the surrounding environment becomes understood as more than a neutral, objective stage on which human drama and activity play out or the objective, at-hand material we source, craft, and use. However, rhetoric has so emphasized cognitive content in intention and reception that even in more robust theories of context, salient variables always take priority, and ambience is relegated to the margins, if dealt with at all. As Gerald Hauser has it, even when we acknowledge the role of arational communication in the public sphere, it is invariably a matter of "rhetorically salient meanings," a phrase that gains weight in being repeated numerous times and comes to shore up what is meant by "the public sphere" (63). This book argues that what is public is as ambient as it is sa-

lient, indeed, that to get at salience, we already reach for and work within what is ambient.

The growing interest in ambience extends to scientific research, with work in a number of fields seeking to demonstrate the importance of material agency and the ways it directly emplaces and situates humans within an environment. I aim to show that this indicates a substantial theoretical shift, one that impacts our larger senses of world and human being. Contemporary cognitive science, one of four theoretical strands I am bringing together to theorize ambience, calls this, variously, embodied/embedded cognition (EEC) or extended mind (see Clark, *Being* and *Natural*; Varela, Thompson, and Rosch; Dourish; Wheeler). Contra the mind-body dualism inherited from Descartes, in which an ultimately rational mind transcends its baser materiality (although Descartes's notion of a matière subtile introduces complications; see n. 2), the extended mind perspective sees mind as bodily but not contained by the biological body, so that it extends to include various aspects of our material surroundings. Cognitive science is also attending to the more fundamental role of feelings and emotions (see Damasio, *Descartes'* and *Feeling*; LeDoux; Greenspan and Shanker) for all aspects of human life. The importance of embodiment has thus been coupled to a materialist sense of situatedness in which the local environment is not just a passive stage for human activity but an integral, active element in its own right. A mind needs a body, and a body needs a world. Or to put this in a slightly different form, we do not have a body; we are bodily. We do not have a world; we are worldly (Thiele, *Timely* 47).[9]

Such an assertion may appear entirely commonsensical. Nonetheless, while it is obvious that there are bodies situated in a material world, to raise the question of ambience is to ask about the extent to which embodiment and situatedness take part in who we are and what we do. The point is not just that we are bodily and feel or need, or that being worldly is characterized by constraint and enablement, deprivation and sustenance; rather, it is that we must attend to "the ways that the body and the local environment are literally built into the processing loops that result in intelligent action" (Clark, *Being* xii). The change in perspective is crucial: not subjective agency in a (necessary) context but a dynamic interchange of powers and actions in complex feedback loops; a multiplication of agencies that in turn transform, to varying degrees, the agents; a distribution of varied powers and agencies. Such an assertion dethrones the idea of mind as the engine of reason and seat of the soul. And not only that. There are profound implications for rhetorical theory as well, since the bulk of our conceptual framework and

terminology focuses on cognitive agents wielding symbolic power via language and image with the world as backdrop, stage, or exigence. This is not to ignore that emotion (pathos) and credibility (ethos), or concepts such as kairos, *already* lend themselves to richer, more ambient theorizations (see Gross, "Being-There"). Indeed, that is my task: how can we augment and rethink ancient and contemporary rhetorical theory? Thus, in reaching back to, say, kairos (chapter 2) or the *chōra* (chapter 1), I seek not only to upgrade our conceptual apparatus but to further the scope, reach, and power of our explanations for rhetoric's operations. This has implications for understanding how and why rhetoric works (or does not work), for obtaining fresh insights on rhetoric's past, and for practicing it in the everyday world. That is, such a project can, at least potentially, attune us differently to what rhetoric is or might be and what is entailed when we practice rhetoric.

Before getting to these particular issues, I want to enrich the concept of ambience by previewing the four different fields of thought with which I am working. They include contemporary cognitive science; the hermeneutic phenomenology of Martin Heidegger; twentieth-century ambient music; and a variety of new, emerging stances on materiality, including speculative materialism, spearheaded by Graham Harman, "thing theory," and others.[10] While these areas differ substantially from one another, they provisionally share a strong emphasis on situatedness, interaction or feedback loops, affect, and the strong materiality of places and things. I expand on these themes in the following sections.

Heidegger and the World Round-About

Heidegger's work provides the latticework for the concept of ambience, sometimes directly, other times less so. Heidegger's thought permeates my use of cognitive science and speculative realism, although such work frequently clarifies, updates, or otherwise improves on Heidegger's accomplishments. While many have placed Heidegger among the twentieth century's most influential thinkers, his insights in the later, lesser read, more "poetic" works have yet to flower as fully as they might. The world of the early twenty-first century, however, seems to resonate more fully with his later work. Heidegger's targets—the subject-object relationship, representational thinking, Cartesianism, technological enframing, instrumental mastery of word and world—all now manifest themselves differently than they did formerly. Clark argues that the world's growing biotechnological webs "have the power to transform our sense of world, of location, of embodiment, and of our own mental capacities. . . . They impact

who, what, and where we are" (*Natural* 198). Heidegger would not have said that, but the statement captures something of Heidegger's sense that human beings show up only insofar as they have a world and that change in that world must include changes in human beings, too—or more precisely, in the dispositions and practices that stem from everyday life.

Heidegger provides many contributions to an ambient rhetoric, but we might begin by considering how he problematizes the subject-object relationship in the constitution of language and knowledge. The modern world is often held to have been ushered in on new goals for objectivity and realism built on a dichotomy between subject and object that constitutes the very essence of things. Subjects must accordingly temper their partiality in apprehending and understanding an objective world. Descartes's "cogito ergo sum" has spurred a significant amount of philosophical work directed at rationalist explanations for human connectedness to the world, which include, nontrivially, a correspondence theory of truth, an understanding of "reality" that showcases the difficulty of overcoming human finitude and partiality (i.e., the "subjective") to achieve objectively truthful knowledge. Given this legacy, Heidegger recognizes the difficulty of reaching for an alternative grounding for thought since, as grounding, it is the "from which" where thought emerges (a point that connects with Plato's *chōra*, discussed in chapter 1). This insight contributes to Heidegger's rich notions of attunement and situatedness (*Befindlichkeit*, or "how one finds oneself").[11] Heidegger explores emplacement in various permutations throughout his work, going back to the beginning of his career. The modernist problem of a rationalist reconnection of human and world is from Heidegger's perspective a false one already derivative of a fundamental ontological weddedness. Even the earliest Heidegger, prior to formulating our "being there" as *Dasein*, was aware of this problem, referring to a person as an "I-situation" (*TDP*), which I address in chapter 3. The deep insight here is that apodictically asserting "I am" does not require us first to say "I think," as Descartes asserted; rather, it is already to say that "I dwell," and to dwell is already to be in a world: *Dasein* can exist in fact only "because its essence is being-in-the-world" (Heidegger, *MFL* 169). How could there be people if there were not already a world into which they could be born and within which they could be reared?

This understanding of the inseparability of world from human being operates in all Heidegger's major concepts. In his discussion of forehaving in another early seminar, *Ontology—The Hermeneutics of Facticity* (1923),

Heidegger demonstrates that hermeneutics depends on a priori lived under-
standings, so that all interpretations reflect the contingencies of history,
culture, affiliation, learning, and other everyday phenomena, both concrete
and ephemeral.[12] Heidegger's term for human being, *Dasein*, meaning "be-
ing there," already glosses this sense of being situated in a world. Further,
Heidegger tells us, world is "something we are concerned about and attend
to, the world is there as an environing world, environs, the round-about" (*O*
65). The German Heidegger deploys is important to a fuller sense of what
he is saying: *Umwelt* for "environing world" and "world round-about" and
das Umhaftes for "environs" and "round-about." These terms, in particular
the preposition *um* ("about," "around"), carry multiple meanings. First is
the sense of the "surroundingness" of the world, its spatial encompassing.
Such surroundingness is not an abstracted, objective world but rather a
world we are immersed in and care about (*sorgen*) (*O* 122n75). We are not
just surrounded by an environment; for Heidegger, to have a world is also
to be invested in that world, to have a full range of interests, cares, and con-
cerns emerging with our encounters. The world is simultaneously material
and meaningful, although meaning, as I will show, never exhausts material
thereness, and for that matter, neither does the coming to presence of the
material. What comes to presence and is disclosed to us has various modal-
ities, but the primary one is not the theoretical. Rather, forehaving, a being
situated, comes before the rational focus of the theoretical, and it rein-
forces a sense of coming from somewhere, including social, historical, and
material aspects thereof. The worldliness of being situated is the means by
which we are attuned.

    The importance Heidegger places on world thus transforms the locus of
agency. This transformation occurs not only through argument but through
Heidegger's terminology and syntax. In his translation of *Ontology*, John
van Buren explains that many of Heidegger's verbs, including *begegnen* (to
encounter), are best understood in a middle voice that muddles or even re-
verses the subject-object relationship: with Heidegger, a phrase that might
customarily be translated as "the world is something we encounter" would
more accurately be rendered as "the world is what en-counters (us)" (*O*
118n53).[13] In his study of the problem of the will in Heidegger's thought, Bret
Davis argues that Heidegger often uses this middle voice at decisive points
to convey "an 'activity' prior to or other than that which can be articulated
in a subject/predicate grammar and a subject/object ontology" (15–16).
From his earliest to his late writings, such grammatical and terminological

constructions abound, including also the sort of "verbing" that sounds tautological: "the world worlds," "the thing things," or most infamously, "the nothing nothings" (B. Davis 16).

Heidegger's most famous book, *Being and Time*, lays out the situatedness (*Befindlichkeit*) of *Dasein* in an ontological framework with great nuance and detail. While place and environment are important here, we should look again to Heidegger's discussion of attunement, or mood. Attunement or mood is ontological and primordial, meaning it precedes all cognition and volition (*BT* 175). Mood "assails us," arising "out of Being-in-the-world, as a way of such Being," so that *"the mood has already disclosed, in every case, Being-in-the-world as a whole, and makes it possible first of all to direct itself towards something"* (*BT* 176). For instance, something in the environment appears as threatening only because *Dasein* is attuned to fearfulness (*BT* 176). Affect is a modality of the entanglement of world and body. Indeed, this attention to attunement/mood leads to Heidegger's praise of Aristotle's *Rhetoric* as "the first systematic hermeneutic of the everydayness of Being with one another" (*BT* 178). Importantly, current studies in neuroscience can be seen as empirically verifying Heidegger's philosophical claims (see Ratcliffe). Mood is not reducible to psychological or conscious cognitive states, to "interior" phenomena, since it is constitutively entangled within and emerges from the environment in which we are situated and therefore also is a prerequisite for intelligibility as such (Ratcliffe 289).[14] Still, the extended mind perspective of cognitive science has not always attended to affective states as much as it should, although recent work by Damasio and others is certainly starting to have wide impact. But it is worth emphasizing that the phenomenological concept of *Befindlichkeit* as worked out by Heidegger through attunement/mood does emphasize feeling and emotion, and in this and other ways, cognitive science still has much to gain from an engagement with Heidegger (see Ciborra). Finally, as Daniel Gross demonstrates, Heidegger makes a contribution to rhetoric in emphasizing that pathos is the ground of logos, not vice versa. In his 1924 seminar on Aristotle, Heidegger states, "insofar as the *pathē* are not the annex of psychical processes, but are rather *the ground out of which speaking arises, and which what is expressed grows back into*, the *pathē*, for their part, are *the basic possibilities in which being-there* [Dasein] *itself is primarily oriented toward itself*, finds itself" (*BCAP* 176; transliterations added). Indeed, Gross remarks, here we have "[a] world seen and prefigured by the pathē" (Gross, "Being-There" 38; see also Greenspan and Shanker). On this account, then, feelings, whether they are socially refracted and circulated emotions or the

more deep-seated moods characterizing how we find ourselves, are neither subsidiary to human existence nor an impediment to rational activity. Rather, they are fundamental. This remains an extremely important point for rhetorical study and practice.

Significantly, a number of contemporary theorists have interrogated the social aspect of being-with in rhetorical studies, with a notable example being Diane Davis, who theorizes a primary affectability that emerges before all symbolicity and constitutes the very ground of persuasion (*Inessential* 2–3). Her argument is important for advancing rhetorical study and fruitfully updates and extends Ernesto Grassi's earlier attempt to make rhetoric primary by asserting an originary metaphoricity that, by virtue of its grounding tropology, founds human being in the world. While Davis provides the stronger argument, both writers are important for putting rhetoric before philosophy—indeed, in making rhetoric inseparable from the being together of humans in toto. In his interpretive reading of Heidegger's *Basic Concepts of Aristotelian Philosophy*, Daniel Gross also argues for a presymbolic affectability grounded in pathos. Gross writes, "What we share with things of all sorts is body-in-movement, a movement characterized by pathos" ("Being-Moved" 13). We can extend these insights by considering how affectability is lived in the *attunements* that illuminate our being-together-in-the-world. The world, as both matter and meaning, is inseparable from how we are and what we do. Affectability, or being-moved, "is essential to all" (Gross, "Being-Moved" 13). When Heidegger introduces the concept of "dwelling," for instance, he means it to complement being-in-the-world; not only must we already have a world and other beings to show up in the first place, but that world calls us, occasions us, moves us to particular comportments: we are "the conditioned ones" (*PLT* 181). Such conditionings induce attunements. Dwelling, he tells us, is a mode of thriving—knowing, doing, and making—attuned to what an environment affords (*PLT* 147–48). The things of the world take on real agency; we do not gather things but are rather gathered across them (*PLT* 152–53). The later Heidegger, then, engages things and technology so as to suggest a profoundly ecological understanding of human flourishing, one that tethers building, doing, and sociality to a dynamic sense of emplaced attunement. This reimagines human agency less as a form of potent mastery than as caretaking, shepherding, sparing, or cultivation (*PLT* 147, 149). Agency emerges as activity both occasioned and conditioned by surrounding lands, communities, and forces.

Heidegger's notions of world and *Dasein* bring a number of important

themes to the concept of ambience. First, ambience is what surrounds us as material, spatial, and environmental. Second, it conveys our affective investment and emplacement within an environs. Third, ambience itself has a kind of agency, or more precisely, ambience connotes the dispersal and diffusion of agency. While it may not be the agency we customarily attribute to human beings—and while we must grant such agencies different weights and values (which is of itself rhetorical work)—nevertheless, it is of a magnitude and scope to challenge more traditional notions of human agency. Such ambience bears some (distant) affinity to the Greek *to periechon*, which I discussed previously, in that the later Heidegger, particularly with the notion of the fourfold (earth, sky, gods, and mortals; see chap. 7), suggests a worldly haleness, even holiness, to which we should attune ourselves via our disclosive practices. This is crucial for understanding Heidegger's discussions of dwelling (to which I will return), particularly how dwelling (i.e., the way our creation, construction, and building indicate how we are together in the world) brings out an ethical dimension implicit in ambience. Just as his discussion of hermeneutics highlights how interpretation is not a subjective activity humans perpetrate on an object but rather an implicit affordance already knit into the nature of things, so here ethical calls—if we can call them that—are threaded into the fabric of the world; things and world supply "directives" should we cultivate an attunement to them (Heidegger, *PLT* 158).[15] As I will show, similar ideas are emerging in other fields of study as well, albeit with different shape, scope, and impetus.

Cognitive Science and Embodied-Embedded Cognition

Cognitive science is a large, diverse, vibrant field, so I draw only on work that contributes to theorizing ambience. Not coincidentally, much of that work resonates with Heidegger's. Cognitive science (as well as computer science, technology design, ethnomethodology, information technology, and so on) has to varying degrees drawn on Heidegger in shifting from a subject-object to an embodied-embedded paradigm. In particular, two widely read books, Winograd and Flores's 1986 *Understanding Computers and Cognition* and Suchman's 1987 *Plans and Situated Actions*, drew on Heidegger and Heideggerian commentary by Hubert Dreyfus (Ciborra 130). Of further import, and also widely read at the time, was Pelle Ehn's *Work-Oriented Design of Computer Artifacts*, which included a favorable chapter on Heidegger and also referenced Dreyfus, in particular Dreyfus's influential 1972 book *What Computers Can't Do*.[16] Their influence spread, so that even books that make only passing mention to Heidegger contain