

power of the “spectacular Tea Party,” this question is commensurate with Janack’s (2006) query as to whether the institution will be able to successfully co-opt the spectacle as their own. Taking into account the broader social implications portended by Bakhtin’s theory of the carnivalesque, we integrate a framing of Janack’s methodology along with Fettisenko’s (2009) criticism of Janack’s utilization of inversion. This analysis aims to first gain insight into the use of *Carnival* in rhetorical theory and second to derive some insight into the strategy of the Tea Party’s rhetorical choices.

Ritual Spectacle

“Oh you betcha,” she said—and one might even argue that *you betcha* is American for “Yes we can.” At least, in a certain sort of America: the land of simple truths, where nothing Barack Obama does makes sense (Klein, 2010, p. 21).

A key component to Bakhtin’s ritual spectacle is an emphasis on the corporeal, which functions within the carnival through exaggeration. Janack explains, “Carnival celebrates those bodily activities that must remain hidden in dominant culture” (Janack, 2006, p. 202). This argument is drawn from Bakhtin’s original work, “The body discloses its essence as a principle of growth which exceeds its own limits only in copulation, pregnancy, childbirth, the throes of death, eating drinking or defecation” (Bakhtin, 1984, p. 26). Analysis of Sarah Palin’s rhetoric reveals numerous examples of Palin invoking the notion of body through her emphasis on motherhood as experience for political office. Few can forget her infamous jest at the 2008 Republican National Convention (RNC): “You know they say the difference between a hockey mom and a pit bull...lipstick” (Palin Steals Hockey Mom Joke from John Magee?, 2008). Palin went on to extend that joke as evidence of her fitness for office: “I was just your average hockey mom and signed up for the PTA because I wanted to make my kids’ public education better...I didn’t need focus groups and voter profiles” (Transcript: Gov. Sarah Palin at the RNC, 2008). Palin’s courtship of mothers is important to this analysis because much like the instinctual nature of Bakhtin’s corporeal, so too is the notion of motherhood. Palin is essentially saying just as you need no formal education to be a good mother, neither do you need it to have a say in government. Her form of logic appears to work like this: being an American is instinctual, so too is making choices for America.

These types of continual references to motherhood earned Palin a caucus of support from mothers that would follow her into the ranks of the Tea Party. On March 25, 2009 a group of self-proclaimed “regular” mothers organized “Moms Tea Party” protests against the stimulus bill in Florida. In an interview with Glenn Beck, the organizing mothers explained that the moms that attended the protest reported that they were “Just glad that someone was reaching out to them and trying to give them an outlet to have their voices heard” (Moms Organize Tax Protest ‘Tea Party’, 2009).

Analysis of Sarah Palin's Tea Party Convention address provides evidence of her continued courtship of the "mom contingent" when viewing her references to her children. We can see this demonstrated by looking to her rationale for her opposition to granting U. S. Constitutional rights to Guantanamo detainees. Palin does not attempt to delve into the intricacies of the constitutional debate; instead, she invokes her role as a mother: "The rights that my son, as an infantryman in the United States Army, is willing to die for. The protections provided" (Transcripts: Sarah Palin Speaks at Tea Party Convention, 2010). Perhaps, even more revealing is Palin's creation of the "Mama Grizzly" phenomenon. In June 2010 Palin announced her support of three "mama grizzly" Tea Party candidates in the midterm elections by likening them to the animal that "would instinctively rear up on her hind legs when her cubs were threatened," a tag phrase that she coined in a May 2010 address on abortion ("Sarah Palin Endorses Three New 'Mama Grizzlies'", 2010). Palin's continuing reference to motherhood, childbirth and decision making are in direct contrast to traditional hegemonic conceptions of what constitutes experience for political office. "In carnival the old order is killed and buried while simultaneously something new and better is brought forth" (Janack, 2006, p. 204). Through Palin's rhetorical choices and courtship of mothers as a political base we can see an element of Palin attempting to disrupt old criteria for political office by offering the alternative of "instinctual knowing" as articulated through metaphors of motherhood.

Comic Verbal Compositions

An April 2009 town hall meeting in Dartmouth, MA pitted constituent against congressman when Barney Frank was asked, "Why are you supporting this Nazi policy?" Frank responded "On what planet do you spend most of your time?" and follows that by asserting, "Trying to have a conversation with you would be like arguing with a dining room table" (Barney Frank Confronts Woman at Townhall comparing Obama to Hitler, 2009)

Janack (2006) asserts that "the most significant aspect of comic verbal compositions for the study of Jesse Ventura's rhetoric is the process of inversion" (p. 204). For his analysis Janack reported two primary criteria of inversion: suspension of hierarchical rank and the notion of the free and familiar. "Carnival, according to Bakhtin, is a purely popular phenomenon, though authorities can appropriate it" (p. 205). To explore the previous criteria, Janack looked at Ventura's rhetoric by placing Ventura as separate from his audience and as an authority. His explanation of how "suspension of hierarchical rank" functions within Ventura's rhetoric looks to themes of the candidate rhetorically positioning himself as the common citizen and as a separate part of the government.

In his critique of the utility of Bakhtin's carnival in modern day

politics, Fettisenko (2009) took great issue with this portion of Janack's analysis. Fettisenko questioned exactly what "impenetrable hierarchical barriers" existed between Ventura and his audience. His second critique was of the importance of the role of "free and familiar" in modern day politics. Fettisenko argues: "The ability to establish 'free and familiar contact' with the voters makes electoral success in a representative democracy more likely, so most politicians operating in political systems with at least some democratic pretensions try to include such contact in their repertoire" (Fettisenko, 2009, p. 95). Essentially, Fettisenko is echoing the common critique of carnival when applied to modern day politics by stating that these two notions no longer act as "reliable tests" because they are now expected and commonplace in American politics. From the lens that Fettisenko applies to these two criteria he would appear to be correct. One would be hard pressed to find a successful campaign bid in modern day American politics that ran on a platform featuring the message "I am not one of you." In this sense, Fettisenko's argument that Janack needed to explain how the notion of "free and familiar" is not better explained by Burke's theory of identification appears to be valid. An important point, however, is that Janack's and Fettisenko's treatment of "Carnival" is but one way to position the lens over our political artifacts.

First, it is essential to focus on the origins of the carnival, "Carnival inverts the roles of spectator and participant, commoner and elite. 'Carnival is not only presented for the people but also by the people' (Janack, 2006, p. 205). Although quoted from Janack's work, these sentiments are not represented in how he conceptualized his analysis. In the case of Palin and the Tea Party, I believe it is more appropriate to consider this an example of a carnival being presented by the people. Second, in carnival there is no distinction between audience and spectator or even audience and speaker. This is important because elements of inversion and suspension of hierarchical rank becomes relevant if we treat Palin as the speaker and members of the Tea Party as the audience. Given this premise, Palin and the Tea Party become the jester that exists in tension with the larger realm of the Republican Party. The inversion is not between speaker and audience; it is between commoner and elite, the marginalized and the hegemony. In this court Palin and the Tea Party act as the jester, and traditional requirements of entering political discourse as defined by the Republican Party act as the king. Inversion through suspension of hierarchy and free and familiar contact can be seen when treating the Tea Party, of which Sarah Palin is a part of, as the commoner and the reigning establishment as the elite. As illustrated earlier, the Tea Party is looking for their place at the proverbial political table. In this pursuit they must either join or reject the hegemonic ideal of a political elite; one that relies on reason-based modes of knowledge. The urgency of the rhetorical exigency provided by the economic crisis demands immediate action and so makes it more likely that the formerly politically uninvolved would choose the latter option and reject the

hegemony. Carnival, then, becomes the expression by which the Tea Party may demand a chair at that table. When placing the Tea Party's celebration of instinctual knowledge as an aggressor to the hegemonic preference for learned knowledge, the utilization of inversion appears.

"I'm just like you, probably so tired of hearing the talk, talk, talk," is representative of Sarah Palin appropriating the notion of free and familiar contact as an authority (Transcripts: Sarah Palin Speaks at Tea Party Convention, 2010). Moving past this formulaic use to accept Bakhtin's assertion that the audience and spectator become one provides a richer illumination of inversion in Sarah Palin's rhetoric. Bakhtin's notion of a "suspension of hierarchy" can be seen in Palin's attempt at arguing against the need for the "learned knowledge" to understand the political situation. "Now the foundational principles in all of this, it's easy to understand. It really is even though I think D.C. would just love for us to believe that this is all way over our heads...no this is pretty simple stuff" (Transcripts: *Sarah Palin Speaks at Tea Party Convention*, 2010). Palin's use of reducing political discourse and reasoning to foundational principles of values held on the individual level, instead of structural issues that must be gained through specific experience or education, can be read as an attempt to make "room at the table" for the less politically adept. For her, these foundational principles reside around common sense and a love of freedom that preferences individual instinctual values. The concept of common sense in decision making is prevalent in her address: "What is their intention when they won't consider even these common sense...ideas." This is further seen in her aversion to debate: "We wanted common sense conservative principles and they wanted to keep debating" (Transcripts: *Sarah Palin Speaks at Tea Party Convention*, 2010).

Palin utilizes the concept of free and familiar by attempting to first illuminate the supposed opposition to including the Tea Partiers in the discussion: "They are seeking to marginalize this movement," and then "Who can argue of a movement that is about the people and for the people? Remember all political power is inherent in the people and the government is supposed to be working for the people" (Transcripts: *Sarah Palin Speaks at Tea Party Convention*, 2010). From this, Palin's argumentative strategy becomes clearer; she is working to erase the distinction of learned knowledge as a prerequisite for political involvement, thus evening the playing field in political discourse. Her argument attempts to legitimate value driven, instinctual knowledge as the warrant for political policy. This rhetorical move is key to the overall strategy of the Tea Party: mobilization of voters. By Palin inverting the traditional qualifications to be politically active she is providing a justification for Tea Party followers to engage in political activity without specific issue-oriented platforms for political change. This can then allow for the "special type of communication during carnival time" (Janack, 2006, p. 208).

Billingsgate

"Carnival encourages more free and familiar relations between people. Such relations lead to the relaxation of norms and prohibitions people cling to outside of carnival" (Janack, 2006, p. 209). Specifically, billingsgate is seen in the form of impropriety through abuses, popular blazons, and profanity (Janack, 2006). Admittedly, these types of impropriety do not readily appear in Palin's rhetoric, but that may be attributed to how billingsgate may function differently for men and women in the political arena. Janack cited Ventura's narratives of public urination and adventures with prostitutes; it may be a future area of research to analyze the limitations of billingsgate for female politicians. We can, however, easily find instances of billingsgate in the rhetoric of those to whom Palin has linked herself. By defining popular blazons as an ostentatious display, there are few less ostentatious than the actions of Tea Partiers to invoke symbols of the American Revolution at their rallies by dressing up in colonial garb. This visual argument serves to underscore their foundational argument of anti-institutionalism.

Profanities may not have been Palin's purview, but they are prevalent in the rhetoric of other Tea Party candidates. In March 2010, Tea Party- and Sarah Palin-backed gubernatorial candidate Paladino was reported as having sent a letter to a New York politician that stated, "I am not impressed that you kissed enough asses to chair a committee of politicians in the Congress" (Paladino in 'ass kissing' jibe at congressman who criticized his Obamacare and 9/11 comparison, 2010). In addition, in September 2010 Paladino was criticized for publicly questioning his opponents "cajones" ("Below the Belt? Carl Paladino Attacks Andrew Cuomo's 'Cojones'," 2010).

These are but a small sample of instances of impropriety that Tea Party candidates for the 2010 mid-term elections utilized. The overall key to the strategy of utilizing the invectives of billingsgate is that the audience feels it is appropriate to the situation despite the traditional normative conceptions of impropriety. Some may note that the aforementioned candidates did not win election in the aftermath of the 2010 election, and so there is an argument that this utilization was not electorally effective. While that assertion may be true, the candidates use of profanities and abuse can arguably still be said to have contributed to the overarching goal of carnival.

Discussion

It may be easy to summarize the 2010 mid-term elections as chaos resulting from widespread outrage of the national economic situation, but application of Bakhtin's theory of carnival offers us significantly more insight into the spectacular nature of the Tea Party's foray into election politics. Before we look to any implications or conclusions, we must first review the limitations of this study from the author's point of view. In contrast to the advice of Griffin (2001), this study took a "bird's eye view" of the rhetoric of the Tea Party

movement. This author realizes that future studies will be able to draw more significant conclusions by adhering to a more specified rhetorical strain in the movement. The difficulty of specificity to a single rhetor when utilizing Bakhtin's carnival to the Tea Party is two-fold. First, the Tea Party and Sarah Palin have been loath to assign a leadership role to any one person. While an argument could be made for Sarah Palin's rhetoric to be the sole representation of the movement, that argument would immediately fall to criticism due to the prevalence of certain types of carnival in other rhetor's words. Second, the movement is relatively new so it is difficult to isolate one strain of rhetoric as representative of the movement as a whole. Future work may enjoy the added benefit of additional hindsight to enhance the depth of analysis.

Conclusions

We can now look to the overarching question on the minds of politicians across the nation: where does the Tea Party go from here. This author believes that this analysis offers support to the hypothesis that because the Tea Party is a reactionary movement that will cease to have purpose, clarity and defense once in office. Proponents of this theory explain that the elected Tea Partiers will lose the ability to blame the institution once they become a part of it. Conclusions from this analysis mirror this prediction but for slightly different reasons. If the Tea Partiers were utilizing carnival to carve themselves a place in traditional displays of political discourse, then the very methods that got them that niche will take it away once in office. Essentially, the experience and information that the office will afford to successful Tea Party candidates will inherently provide those candidates with the "learned knowledge" they spent their campaigns fighting against. While it is certainly possible that the candidates may still appeal to the instinctual knowledge that brought them into the debate, it will be a harder sell to the audience if they are not able to utilize it in eradicating the exigency that brought about their need for an American carnival.

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Practical Corner

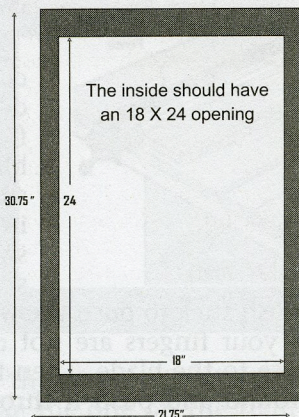
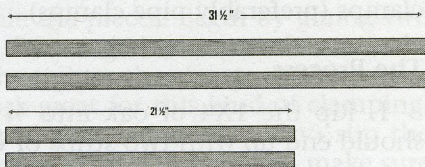
EDITOR'S NOTE: In the course of receiving submissions for THE FORENSIC, we sometimes receive some articles that deal with practical issues that help serve our Forensic educators. This article presents an idea on how to construct and use a tool for presenting visual aids in a more professional and appealing way.

A Cheap and Easy Way to Mount Visual Aids

TODD T. HOLM, MIAMI UNIVERSITY – OHIO

One of the most time consuming pragmatic aspects of preparing a public speaking event for years has been adhering the visual aids to foam board or tag board. The process involves geometry, measuring, aligning, keeping adhesives within the lines and a good deal of time. For some coaches it is just easier to throw money at the problem and pay to have it done at a cost of up to \$100 per visual aid. Others find art classes who need to practice mounting pictures and that can be "hit or miss" because, after all, they are students who are practicing. On average I estimate that we used to spend 20 minutes mounting each visual aid. Now we use a jig and mounting visual aids takes less than five minutes (and is perfectly centered with no excess adhesive peeking out from behind the image).

With a simple jig you can easily mount five perfectly centered posters on foam board with a spray adhesive in 20 minutes the very first time you use it. In short, a "jig" is an open frame used to hold the foam board (the work) in place for proper spacing and machining (in this case spraying with adhesive). I no longer dread the prospect of students using visual aids. We have used this jig on over 50 visual aids and it has



saved us hours of time and immeasurable frustration. The jig, however, takes a little woodworking knowledge. If you are not a woodworker, and do not have a friend that is a woodworker, you might want to try asking the person who runs your theatre's set shop. If "bad turns to worse" your facilities management people can probably be contacted (and contracted) to make one. For someone who works with wood regularly it is not a difficult build. If you are a novice, get help. A similar jig could also be made by simply cutting an 18 X 20 hole in the center of a piece of foam board and laying it on top of the foam board you are mounting the visual aid onto. Aligning the edges and keeping it in place while placing the poster, however, will be problematic.

Parts List

Outer Frame: The frame is made of $\frac{3}{4}$ X $\frac{3}{4}$ inch oak. You can use a cheaper wood like pine, but the oak is more durable and stronger. A six foot 1X4 of red oak should be enough to make the outer frame.

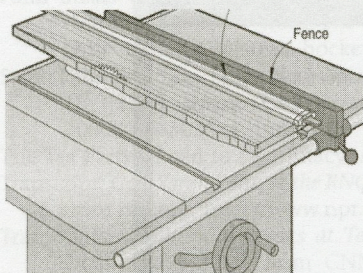
Inner Frame: The inner frame is cut from a form of manufactured wood called hardboard. You can usually buy a "half-sheet" that is four foot square.

Miscellaneous: You will need some wood glue and maybe some small brads or $\frac{1}{4}$ dowels to reinforce the lap-joints in the corners.

Tools: Table saw, jigsaw or router, drill or hammer, two or four wood clamps (preferably pipe clamps).

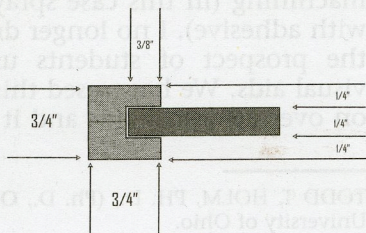
The Process

1. Rip the 1X4 of oak into $\frac{3}{4}$ inch strips on the table saw. You should end up with two strips of wood 72 inches long.
2. Cut the frames to length. Cut two strips 21 $\frac{1}{2}$ inches long and two strips 21 $\frac{1}{2}$ inches long.



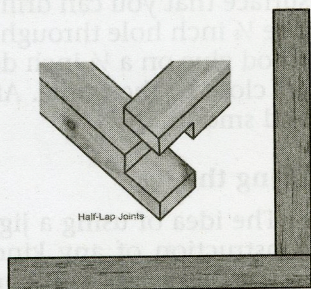
3. Cut the dado (a slot or trench cut into the surface of the board) down the middle of one side of the frame. To do this set the table saw blade to $\frac{3}{8}$ of an inch above the surface of the table saw and $\frac{1}{2}$ of an inch from the fence (the fence is shown in the image to the right). Use scrap

wood or a push stick to push the wood through so your fingers are not dangerously close to the blade. Then turn the strip around and push it through again. Blades are typically $\frac{1}{8}$ of an inch thick and you are trying to remove the $\frac{1}{4}$ inch in the center of the strip of

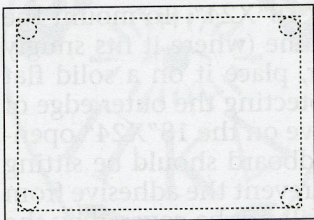


wood. By running it through twice (once from each side) you are making sure the groove is perfectly centered because it is the same distance from both sides.

4. Make the half-lap joint on each corner by removing half of the thickness of the strip ($\frac{3}{8}$ of an inch) on the last $\frac{3}{4}$ inch of each strip of the frame. Make sure you remove the wood from the same side of each end and not from the edge with the dado groove or the side opposite that groove. Lap joints are cut on the *sides* of the frames.

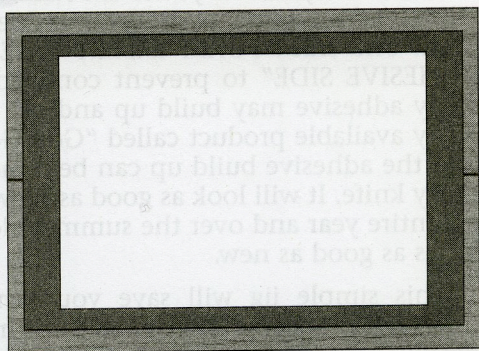


5. Cut the hardboard. Cutting the outside dimensions of the hardboard is easy. Cutting the center out of the piece is more complicated because the lines need to be straight and the corners need to be square. A small bit in a router run along a straightedge will do that



fairly well. You can clean up the corners with a chisel if you need to. But the easiest thing to do would be to use a jigsaw. Drill $\frac{3}{4}$ inch holes in each corner to insert the jigsaw blade and follow the line to the opposite corner. When you are done roughing out the center you can go back and square up the corners.

6. Now you are ready to assemble the pieces. Begin by gluing two corners of the frame and clamping them together (remember to make sure the groove is on the inside). The tighter the clamp, the better the bond. Pipe clamps or C-clamps work great for this kind of clamping. Once you have two corners clamped (but before they dry) slip the hardboard into the groove in the frame. This will help you make sure the frame is square too. Then put the final piece of the frame together and glue and clamp those corners.



7. This would be a good time to measure to make sure that the inside diameter are exactly 20 X 30. If it is an $\frac{1}{8}$ of an inch smaller you will get bowing in your foam board and spray adhesive could go places it was not intended to go. Leaving you with a white halo effect around the visual aid. At this point you should have a frame that looks like the one on the right. Allow the wood glue to cure for at least 24 hours.

8. If you want to increase the strength and durability of the jig I

would strongly recommend reinforcing the corners of the jig with wooden dowels. This is very easy to do. Simply set the jig on a flat surface that you can drill into without damaging anything. Then drill one ¼ inch hole through the face of the jig on each corner. Put a little wood glue on a ¼ inch dowel and push it through the hole and cut it off close to the frame. After the glue has dried you can sand it flush and smooth.

Using the Jig

The idea of using a jig is common for anyone who does repetitive construction of any kind. The concept is simple; you have an oak frame that is 20"X30" on the inside edge of the frame which is the size of your foam board. Inside that you have a second frame made of hardboard that has an 18"X24" inch opening. Have all of your visual aids printed to exactly 18"X24". If your image is smaller than that or differently proportioned, just add a black border to the background and you will be fine. Make sure whoever prints the visual aid knows that the outside dimensions must be exactly 18"X24". To mount the image put the foam board inside the oak frame (where it fits snugly and stays positioned). Then you flip it over, place it on a solid flat surface with the hardboard covering and protecting the outer edge of the foam board, and then apply spray adhesive on the 18"X24" opening where you see the foam board. The hardboard should be sitting flush and flat on the foam board and it will prevent the adhesive from getting on any part of the foam board that will not be covered by the image you are mounting. Then you simply line up the edge of the VA you have had printed (usually this is a two person job but a careful person can do it alone) and lay it carefully onto the foam board. Then smooth out any wrinkles and make sure you have good contact across the VA and remove the outer frame. You have a perfectly centered VA.

Make sure you always use the same side to insert the foam board so adhesive from previous mountings does not get on the new visual aid. Mark one side "FOAM INSERT SIDE" and the other side "SPRAY ADHESIVE SIDE" to prevent confusion. Over a period of time the spray adhesive may build up and get messy, but there is a commercially available product called "Goo Gone" that can be sprayed on it and the adhesive build up can be removed quickly and easily with a putty knife. It will look as good as new in five minutes. We used it for an entire year and over the summer cleaned it with Goo Gone and it looks as good as new.

This simple jig will save you time and money by preventing improper mounting of visual aids. While it is not an earth shattering development, it is one of the little things that can make the life of a coach a little easier and give us the time to get through one more speech, or grade one more set of assignments, or get to bed 20 minutes earlier. A little extra work up front making the jig (or a little money spent on having someone else make the jig) has big savings down the road.



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