Introduction to Volume 8,1

David Depew
Iowa City, IA USA

Volume 8, No 1, of *POROI: An Interdisciplinary Journal of Analysis and Invention*, offers three essays and, in accord with our practice, summaries of the Proceedings of 2011 Preconference of the Association for the Rhetoric of Science and Technology (ARST).

James Throgmorton writes about the rhetoric of sustainability. He uses pork production in the Midwest as his focus. Throgmorton, who recently retired from the University of Iowa, has been active in *POROI* from its founding. A faculty member, now emeritus, of the University of Iowa's Urban and Regional Planning Department, Jim almost single-handedly led his self-consciously technical field to grasp the importance of narrative understanding as a way of gaining reflexive awareness about the way planners intervene in particular rhetorical situations. Jim remains eager to put into action his understanding of how the general meets the local through the activity of storytelling. He was recently elected to the City Council of Iowa City, an office in which he also served about a decade ago.

Glenn Richardson, Political Science, Kutztown University of Pennsylvania, offers a detailed analysis of how "ad watch" has monitored truth telling in presidential elections. Over recent election cycles communication technologies have radically changed.   This has made possible enhanced monitoring of the veracity of candidates' claims. It has also made the results of ad watching far more accessible. Glenn argues, however, these that these potentialities have not been entirely successful. He offers suggestions for building a better ad watch for the 21st century.

Julie Homchick, Communication Studies, Western Washington University, takes a new tack on the fraught subject of scientific creationism and intelligent design. By discriminating various meanings of imitation, rhetoric's central concept about learning, she shows how the authors of Of Pandas and People—a text that figured in the now famous "Scopes II" trial, *Kitzmiller v. Dover Area School District* (2005)--failed to use imitation as an instrument of genuine invention and, partially in consequence, failed to make their case.

The Association for Rhetoric of Science and Technology (ARST) is an integral part of the larger enterprise of rhetoric of

inquiry. It brings the insights of rhetorical scholars to bear on what is generally regarded as the key site for knowledge production in modern societies. For this reason, POROI publishes each year summaries of ARST's deliberations.

A central theme of ARST's 2011 Preconference was the rhetoric of risk. The examples on which speakers and panels reflected were particularly appropriate to the location of the Preconference, New Orleans. Panelists discussed the rhetorical dimensions of Hurricane Katrina and the BP Gulf Oil Spill, as well as other interesting sites of controversy. In all of these controversies, tangled relations between public, technical, and personal spheres manifested themselves.

Our ARST reports begin with a panel on the way risk is defined. Members of the panel were **Mariaelena Bartesaghi**, University of South Florida; **Stephanie Houston Grey**, Louisiana State University; and **Steven Gibson**, California State University, Northridge. The report includes a fascinating discussion of how risk was actually created by the turn-taking conversational communicative style of certain authorities during Hurricane Katrina.

We continue with a panel by **David Clanaugh**, Michigan Technical University, and **Hamilton Bean**, University of Colorado, Denver, on distorted ways in which risk is measured, assessed, and communicated, especially with a view to hiding the influence of private interests. Clanaugh develops an example of from mining practices in Michigan's Upper Peninsula. Bean discusses national security issues.

In their panel, **Z. Hall**, Independent Scholar from Lawrence, Kansas; **Brent Kice**, Communication Studies, Frostburg State University, Maryland; and **Jinhong Choi**, Journalism & Mass Communication, Texas State University, San Marcos, report on BP's rhetorical style, a style in which highly technical in-house communication practices got in the way of BP's effort (if effort it was) to address the questions and anxieties of various publics.

The flip side of this rhetorical difficulty can be seen to good advantage in the panel on Controversy, Conflict, and Conflicting Expertises. **Aalok Mehta**, Annenberg School, University of Southern California; **Zoltan P. Majdi**k, North Dakota State; and **Carrie Anne Platt**, also of North Dakota State, focus on cases in which the suspicions of ordinary people about expert authority encourage them to assume the mantle of technical ethos themselves and to throw confounding technical (or at least technically framed) arguments back in the face of official experts. In Los Angeles, for example, opponents of a proposed subway route through their neighborhood successfully imitated the kind of arguments designed to silence them.

There were two other reports at the ARST Preconference.

Nathan Johnson, Purdue University, Indiana, offers reflections that emerged from a panel on how infrastructure, including digital infrastructure, constitutes a rhetoric in its own right.

The issue concludes with a lament on the failure of the discourses of science and religion (in the intelligent design case, of course, but in many other cases too) to energize rather than enervate each other. The panel consisted of another POROI founding father, **John Lyne**, University of Pittsburgh; **Joe Rhode**, Louisiana State University; **Ron Von Burg**, Christopher Newport University; and **Mark A. Steiner**, also of Christopher Newport. The reflections of this panel were presided over by the energetic shade of the late great Charles Sanders Peirce.

The editors wish especially to thank **Aimee-Marie Dorsten**, Wilson College, Pennsylvania, and President of ARST for her effective work in nurturing and editing the ARST reports in this issue.

 The editors encourage readers to submit contributions through the journal portal on the POROI web site (http://poroi.grad.uiowa.edu).

The Editors