Acknowledgments

All books begin and, if we are lucky, end in intellectual community. My community begins with the students, staff, and faculty of the University of Wisconsin–Madison and the Wisconsin residents who fund the state university system. I have found many homes on this campus, most notably in the department of Communication Arts but also in the department of Life Sciences Communication, the Holtz Center for Science and Technology Studies, and the Disability Studies Initiative. Thanks especially to Rob Asen, Anirban Baishya, Elizabeth Bearden, Kelley Conway, KC Councilor, Caroline Druschke, Rob Howard, Vance Kepley, Jason Lopez, Lori Lopez, Linda Lucey, Lynn Malone, Sara McKinnon, Nicole Nelson, Lynn Nyhart, Allison Prasch, and Ellen Samuels. Many thanks to my brilliant advisees Liz Barr, Amanda Friz, Erin Gangstad, Allyson Gross, Liam Randall, Dominique Salas, Grant Suhs, and Kendra Winchester, who have all taught me so many things. In many ways, this book began in my 2007 Limits of the Human undergraduate seminar at Louisiana State University, where my students and I wrestled with many of the questions in the pages that follow, conversations that continued in my Limits of the Human and Environmental Rhetoric courses at UW-Madison.

UW-Madison’s Constellations program provided me with research support through the Mellon-Morgridge Professorship I held from 2016 to 2021. This funding provided summer funding as well as research assistance from Liz Barr, Amanda Friz, Erin Gangstad, Allyson Gross, Caroline Hensley, and Liam Randall: thank you all from the bottom of my heart. UW-Madison’s Institute for Research on the Humanities awarded me a residential fellowship that allowed me the time to push the project to completion and the opportunity to receive feedback from a brilliant group of colleagues from many disciplines. In addition to presenting my work at the IRH, I have presented portions of this book at the National Communication Association’s annual conference in 2015 and 2018; the Rhetoric Society of America’s biannual meeting in 2014 and 2018; the Society for Literature, Science, and the Arts’ annual conference in 2013 and 2015; and the Rhetoric, Politics, and Culture weekly colloquium. Portions of chapter 3 were published as “The End of the World, the Future of
Beyond Wisconsin, I am lucky to be part of a broader intellectual community both inside and outside the academy. This project benefited tremendously from conversations with Allie Rowland and Stuart Murray at the 2014 RSA Summer Institute workshop on bioethics and biopolitics. I first learned about identification in Debbie Hawhee’s seminar room over twenty years ago, and it has shaped the way that I think about rhetoric ever since. Thanks also to Vanessa Beasley, Catherine Belling, Jeff Bennett, Kevin Browne, Suzy Cerrato, Karma Chávez, Josh DiCaglio, Scott Graham, Kelly Happe, Robin Jensen, Krista Kennedy, Marina Levine, Melissa Littlefield, Lisa Melonçon, Jodie Nicotra, Ersula Ore, Blake Scott, Susan Squier, Robyn Thoren, Louise Whitely, and so many others in rhetorical studies and beyond.

Caroline Druschke, Melissa Littlefield, John Lynch, Sara McKinnon, and Mike Xenos talked through many ideas with me at length and read early drafts of chapters: thank you all, and a special thank you to Krista Kennedy for essential moral support and advice as I finished this project. My eternal gratitude to Christa Olson, who has given me so much feedback on this project over the years. Many ideas in this book are the product of lengthy conversations with Christa over coffee and croissants as we wrote together on Friday mornings, and she rescued this book from my self-doubt more than once. All errors and oversights are, of course, my own.

Catharine Conley, Dorion Sagan, and Kyle Whyte graciously agreed to be interviewed during some of the darkest days of the pandemic—thanks to all of you for your important work and the inspiration it has given me and for your precious gifts of time and attention.

Thank you to the activists in Extinction Rebellion Madison for your friendly, fierce commitment to a habitable planet and a just world.

This book would not exist without Penn State University Press, the Rhetoric Society of America, and the Transdisciplinary Rhetoric book series that they sustain. I am grateful to the two anonymous reviewers of the manuscript, who helped me to clarify some key points and improve the organization of the argument. Thank you to Josie DiNovo, Andrew Katz, and Laura Reed-Morrisson for shepherding the project through the process and to Ryan Peterson, Kendra Boileau, and Michael Bernard-Donals for their editorial support, and a huge
thank you to Leah Ceccarelli for her support of this project from the very begin-
ning and her generous mentorship over the years.

And last, immeasurable gratitude to my family for their love and support—
especially Jim and Joy Johnson; Jodi, Ryan, Jack, and Grant Carreon; and Jenna, 
Kevin, Holden, and Harper Clay. Daily walks with Mabel, the world’s sweetest 
and most stubborn hound dog, helped me untangle many ideas as we wound our 
way through the grass, leaves, and snow of Hoyt Park each day. But, as always, 
my most profound debt is to Mike Xenos—for our unending conversation and 
for being the person I live with, in all the ways that we live together.