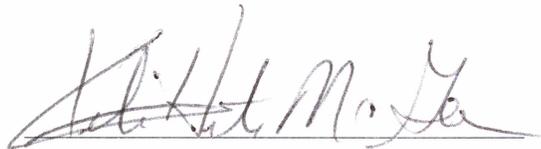


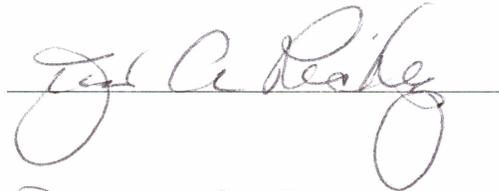
SENSE VERSUS SENTIMENT: EMERGENT PERSUASIVE STRATEGIES OF
NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATIONS IN DICHOTOMOUS ECONOMIC CLIMATES

By

Alexis S. Miller

RECOMMENDED:





Robert B. Crumley



Advisory Committee Chair



Chair, Department of Communication

APPROVED:



Dean, College of Liberal Arts



Dean of the Graduate School

Apr 7, 2011

Date

“SENSE VERSUS SENTIMENT”
EMERGENT PERSUASIVE STRATEGIES OF NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATIONS IN
DICHOTOMOUS ECONOMIC CLIMATES

A
THESIS

Presented to the Faculty
of the University of Alaska Fairbanks
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

By
Alexis S. Miller, B. A.

Fairbanks, Alaska

May 2011

Abstract

This study seeks to explore the rhetoric employed by the United Way in contrasting economic contexts. With a theoretical framework of Aristotle's Theory of Rhetoric, this study employs rhetorical criticism. Interpretation of results suggests that pathos is most prevalent in crisis conditions, such as a recession, whereas logos is most prevalent under stable economic circumstances. Initial conclusions drawn from the study highlight the importance of community supportiveness appeals in crisis conditions.

Table of Contents

	Page
Signature Page	i
Title Page	ii
Abstract	iii
Table of Contents	iv
Acknowledgements	vii
Chapter 1: Review of Related Literature	1
1.1 Statement of the Problem	1
1.2 Theory of Rhetoric	3
1.3 Rhetoric of Economics	8
1.4 Bitzer versus Vatz	9
1.5 United Way	12
1.6 Research Rationale	13

Chapter 2: Methodology	15
2.1 Research Contexture	15
2.2 Epistemology	15
2.3 Theoretical Perspective.....	16
2.4 Research Methodology/Method.....	17
2.5 Design	19
2.5.1 Procedure	20
2.5.2 Selected Marketing Materials	20
2.5.2.1 United Way of the Tanana Valley: 2005 Campaign Video	20
2.5.2.2 United Way of the Tanana Valley: 2009 Campaign Video	21
2.5.2.3 United Way California Capital Region: 2009 Flash Mob Video.....	21
Chapter 3: Results	23
3.1 Data – United Way of the Tanana Valley 2005 Campaign Video.....	23
3.1.1 Logos.....	23
3.1.2 Pathos.....	25
3.1.3 Ethos	27
3.2 Data – United Way of the Tanana Valley 2009 Campaign Video.....	28
3.2.1 Logos.....	28
3.2.2 Pathos.....	29
3.2.3 Ethos	31
3.3 Data – United Way California Capital Region 2009 Flash Mob Video	33
3.3.1 Logos.....	33

3.3.2 Pathos 35

3.3.3 Ethos 35

Chapter 4: Interpretation of Results 37

4.1 Logos..... 37

4.2 Pathos 37

4.3 Ethos 39

4.4 Conclusions..... 40

4.5 Practical Implications..... 42

4.6 Limitations and Future Research 44

References..... 47

Appendix..... 54

Acknowledgements

Words will never adequately describe my infinite gratitude for my thesis chair, Dr. Karen Taylor. Without your patient guidance, positive encouragement, and upbeat demeanor this journey would have been seemingly endless. Thank you for the immeasurable amount of support you offered. Dr. “Big Papa” Arundale, your wisdom has been invaluable and I am incredibly fortunate to have had the opportunity to study under a distinguished scholar like yourself. Dr. Richey, you always seemed to intuitively know when I was discouraged and never failed to offer an inspirational word when I felt like giving up. Thank you for your kind and thoughtful insights. Keli Hite-McGee, it was an honor to have worked with you throughout this process. Your professionalism is inspiring and your own success has provided me with a benchmark for what I would like to someday achieve. I’d also like to extend a special thank you to Bev Fantazzi, Resource Development Director for the United Way of the Tanana Valley, and Amber Murry, Vice President of Marketing and Communications for the United Way of the California Capital Region. Without their help, this thesis simply would not have been possible.

To my parents, Joy and Dave, I don’t know what I would do without you two. You are my biggest advocates and have always been in my corner. Dad, thank you for teaching me the value of work hard. Thanks to you, I will never deem anything less than my personal best as “complete.” Mom, you are my best friend and role model. You have taught me patience, poise, and virtue. Without such principles, I would not be where I am today. Mom and Dad, you truly are the best parents a kid could ask for. This thesis is for you.

Chapter 1

Review of Related Literature

1.1 Statement of the Problem

In 2005, the unemployment rate in the United States rested at a steady 5.1%, consumer confidence was high and the economy remained solid and seemingly secure. In a matter of four years, however, the U.S. economy had hit rock bottom. The real estate market began to collapse, as housing prices fell 10.6% nationwide and families across the nation were being forced out of the homes they could no longer afford. Meanwhile, the unemployment rate skyrocketed to upwards of 9.3%, and consumer confidence plummeted (Dillon, 2009). The U.S. economy had entered the stage of recession.

A wide range of individuals, industries, and organizations were negatively affected by this economic downturn. Non-profit organizations were perhaps one of the most adversely impacted organizational sectors. Nearly all of a non-profit's revenue relies on financial contributions. In 2009, however, financial contributions were down considerably from 2005 (Dessoiff, 2009). With a large number of the American people in desperate need of the services that many non-profit organizations offer, coupled with a major decrease in donation volume, many non-profit organizations found themselves in a state of helplessness and financial turmoil.

The majority of non-profit organizations have been able to keep their doors open due to federal and state grants, successful fundraising campaigns, and other financial pledges from community members and local and national organizations (Gronbjerg,

1991). While most fundraising campaigns occur every year, there is no guarantee how much funding an organization will collect annually. For this reason, non-profit organizations are in near-constant struggle to remain operative. Needless to say, economic instability amplifies the adversity they face and forces many non-profit organizations to reach out to their communities for additional donations.

Over the years, research has indicated that emotional appeal as a persuasive strategy proves more popular than logical appeal (Ray & Batra, 1982). In turn, most public relations practitioners and non-profit organizations pitch fundraising requests with an emotional appeal toward the target donor population (Lindahl & Conley, 2003). However, while heart-rending messages may strike a cord within some, economic circumstances can greatly impact one's willingness to contribute financially. In cases when a country as a whole is experiencing economic hardship, people may more willingly respond to messages focusing on pragmatic motives based on logic and, in turn, a shift in persuasive tactics might be expected.

Louden (2002) argues that human beings by nature are, for the most part, rational. Pollock (2004) supports this argument by stating, "rational agents think about the world, evaluate various aspects of it, reflect upon how they might make it more to their liking, and act accordingly" (p. 1). In turn, logical inference is applied, as it is inherent in rational decision-making. Further, rational explanations necessarily involve both justification and motivation (Okrent, 2007). Arguments such as these may lead one to suspect that logical appeals may become more prevalent in crisis situations compared to non-crisis conditions.

The present study incorporates a rhetorical framework to examine the modes of persuasion used in the primary marketing materials produced by the United Way in different economic contexts. In an attempt to examine whether or not there was a shift in the dominant modes of persuasion, by means of rhetorical criticism this study had three primary objectives: (a) to compare the modes of persuasion employed in the 2005 United Way marketing materials when the U.S. economy was stable to those utilized in the 2009 United Way marketing materials, to (b) determine whether or not there was a shift in the prevalence of logical appeals, and to (c) determine whether or not this shift was more recognizable in regions that had been most adversely affected by the recession.

1.2 Theory of Rhetoric

Aristotle's theory of rhetoric will be used as this study's primary theoretical framework. Aristotle (1991) defines rhetoric itself as the process of finding the available means of persuasion. He states that, "to persuade is to cause a hearer to decide to believe or do as the speaker desires" (p. 94). Aristotle extends the idea of persuasion by referring to it in terms of three powers, "the speaker's power of evincing a personal character that will make his speech credible (ethos), his power of stirring the emotions of his hearers (pathos), and his power of proving a truth or an apparent truth by means of persuasive arguments (logos)" (p. 67). Ethos, pathos, and logos have been sustained as the foundation for rhetorical uses of language for millennia. These persuasive appeals, known to appeal to audiences in a logical (logos), emotional (pathos), and credible (ethos) sense, are fundamental to the rhetorical tradition.

First, logos references a shared reality of the author and audience. Commonly

referred to as logical appeal, logos refers to “the internal consistency of the message—the clarity of the claim, the logic of its reasons, and the effectiveness of its supporting evidence” (Henning, 1998, p. 2). However, as Berbrier (1997) states that one must recognize, “knowledge is not a matter only of logical inference and reason (logos) but of persuasive rhetorical strategies aimed at aligning emotional ties to world-views (pathos)” (p. 36), therefore representing the importance of pathos.

Pathos involves the audience, specifically the emotions of the audience. Aristotle (1991) defines emotions as “those things through which, by undergoing change, people come to differ in their judgments” (p. 121). According to Budd (1992), emotions can be considered either episodically or dispositionally. As an episode, “an emotion is an occurrence: it is something felt, experienced or undergone at a certain time.” When understood dispositionally, “an emotion involves a tendency to undergo the emotion when certain thoughts are present to the mind” and, therefore, “under these conditions episodes of emotion are likely to occur” (p. 1).

Finally, ethos focuses on the message creator and the sense of authority he/she inspires. On the surface, some may be tempted to identify superficial or materialistic attributions as ethos. However, Aristotle (1991) warns against decoys such as appearances, as the appeal from ethos comes from a person's use of language. Instead, Aristotle argues that three things “Inspire confidence in the rhetor's [speaker's/writer's] own character—the three, namely, that induce us to believe a thing apart from any proof of it: good sense, good moral character, and goodwill” (p. 121). He argues that it is these three aspects of character that have the potential to gain credibility for a speaker's ideas.

Apart from language, Henning (1998) argues that ethos can be “affected by the writer's reputation as it exists independently from the message—his or her expertise in the field, his or her previous record or integrity, and so forth” (p.4).

The inextricable and intertwined presence of ethos is precisely why it has always been highly regarded as the most important and influential mode of persuasion.

Throughout the centuries, key rhetoricians have reiterated the significance of ethos.

Roman rhetorician Quintilian argues that ethos and pathos remain thoroughly intertwined. He argues, “if we wish to give our words the appearance of sincerity, we must assimilate ourselves to the emotions of those who are genuinely so affected” (as cited in Encyclopedia of Rhetoric, 2001, p. 269).

Saint Augustine also illustrates the importance of ethos through his conviction to choose goodness and live righteously. He asserts, “the life of the speaker has greater weight in determining whether he is obediently heard than any grandness of language,” and continues by stating, “there is a kind of eloquence fitting for men most worth of the highest authority and clearly inspired by God” (as cited in Encyclopedia of Rhetoric, 2001, p. 269).

Burke (1969), arguably the greatest rhetorician of the twentieth century, depicts the importance of ethos and persuasion through the following declaration:

You persuade a man [sic] only insofar as you can talk his [sic] language by speech, gesture, tonality, order, image, attitude, idea, *identifying* your ways with his [sic]. Persuasion by flattery is but a special case of persuasion in general. But flattery can safely serve as our paradigm if we systematically widen its meaning,

to see behind it the conditions of identification or consubstantiality in general (p. 55).

Through this reappropriation of ethos Burke identifies the value of scapegoating, wherein a speaker self defines his/her difference from the threatening other. Although an alternative approach in comparison to historical accounts, Burke recognizes the importance of a speaker's portrayal of moral character.

A number of studies have further highlighted Aristotle's Theory of Rhetoric. Killingsworth (2005) explains the pragmatic nature of the modes of appeal in modern rhetoric as being "efforts to overcome oppositions and divisions either by forming new solidarities, by reinforcing old ones, or by revealing distances and likenesses in order to transform attitudinal conflicts into communal forms of action" (p. 250). Based on this description of the pragmatic nature of rhetoric, one can recognize the various roles that rhetorical appeals serve in fundraising campaigns. Each mode of appeal accomplishes Killingsworth's explanation.

Gallo (2009) argues that the ability to persuade involves inspiring and exciting an audience. In order for these components to be present in communication, one must be concise, gain instant credibility, and strive for simplicity. Consistent with Gallo's (2009) definition of persuasion, Campbell summarizes persuasion as producing an attitude and ultimately attitude change (2006). The source must be credible, likeable, and have power, status, and authority. Messages display persuasive intent by being informative, explanatory, or directive. Typically, when an organization engages in advertising, it has a goal of communicating a certain message. According to King (2010), a rhetor typically

has a goal for conveying certain messages. For example, the goal may be to inform others, ensure that others comprehend the message, and in some cases, act on the informative message. It can be assumed that in non-profit organizations' fundraising campaigns, the goal is to sustain and increase fundraising, which requires audiences to take action. How an organization chooses to appeal to their target audience is essential to its ability to successfully persuade, resulting in action.

Previous research suggests that emotional appeal is most successful for fundraising (Katula, 2003). In messages such as these, organizations may attempt to hone in on an audience's identification or connection to a certain issue or on a cause for critical change. Although emotional appeal historically has been the most effective persuasive appeal, White (2006) maintains that these messages must make sense, or have certain logic to them. Further, Berbrier (1997) argues that "logos and pathos are distinct only in philosophical space; in the social world, intersubjective agreement is always achieved patho-logically, in cultural space and affective context" (p. 47).

Consistent with Tellis and Tellis' (2009) argument that advertisements must be adjusted in a manner that is relative to public trends, attitudes, and motives, King (2010) contends that, along with rhetorical appeals, the medium of exchange, the textual context of language and signs, the cultural context, and the background of the appeal (or the former position of the author and audience) must also be considered. Further, Puddifoot's (1996) argument that communicator variables, respondent variables, communication content, and variables regarding attitudes and their effects highlights all important

components to analyze when investigating persuasive communication. Rhetorical appeal, therefore, must adapt to current economic circumstances.

1.3 Rhetoric of Economics

Anderson (2011) argues that “too often, economists abstract away from men and women in their complex reality, positing economic actors who exist only in theory and ignoring history, social thought, emotional and spiritual commitments, and much else that makes up the fabric of the human world” (para. 11). Unavoidably, however, “rhetoric is everywhere in the speech of human persuaders” (McCloskey, 1998, p. 8). Therefore, the rhetoric employed by economic scientists contributes to the social construction of one’s past, present, and future perceived economic circumstances.

McCloskey (1998), pioneer to the study of the rhetorical construction of economics, highlights the importance that rhetoric plays in the interpretation of economics. McCloskey contends that “what distinguishes good from bad economists, or even old from young economists, is additional sophistication about the rhetoric. It is the ability to read the depth and the surface of the text at the time, to toggle” (p. 5). She continues by stating, “The reasons to do a rhetorical analysis of an economic text are various: to understand it, to admire it, to debunk it, to set it beside other works of persuasion in science, to see that science is not a new dogma but is thoroughly and respectably part of the old culture” (p. 19).

McCloskey (1998) argues that ethos, the fictional character an author assumes, is one of the most important elements an economic scientist must establish. A common way in which scientists accomplish this is through the use of metaphors. Like poets,

economists often employ metaphors to assist in the illustration of complex economic issues. Additionally, economic style, claiming authority for example, appeals in various ways to an ethos worthy of belief (p. 11). However, while ethos may be a significant component of rhetorical economics, logos plays an important role as well. McCloskey acknowledges this by stating “fact and logic also come into the economics in large doses” (p. 19) because of its scientific nature and because “rational expectations can be conveniently modified to fit the imperfections of the social world” (p. 64).

1.4 Bitzer versus Vatz

When a country enters a recessionary state, the social context in which an organization is launching fundraising campaigns changes drastically. For historical and contextual purposes, this study acknowledges the arguments that have surfaced concerning rhetorical situations. Bitzer (1968) argues that rhetoric is situational, maintaining, “it is the situation which calls the discourse into existence” (p. 2). Rhetorical situation, then, can be defined as, “a complex of persons, events, objects, and relations presenting an actual or potential exigence” which “can constrain human decision or action as to bring about the significant modification of the exigence” (Bitzer, 1968, p. 6).

Bitzer (1968) strongly argues that rhetoric is situational, taking the position that meaning resides in events. For example, in the opening lines of “The Rhetorical Situation” Bitzer states, “If someone remarks ‘I find myself in an embarrassing situation,’ the statement implies certain situational characteristics” (Bitzer, 1968, p. 1). From Bitzer’s perspective, there is an intrinsic nature in events or situations from which rhetoric follows (Vatz, 1973). Bitzer maintains a perspective on rhetoric and situation that

requires a realist approach, which according to Vatz can have serious implications for rhetoric. Vatz contends that descriptive statements on situation do not imply situational characteristics, rather characteristics of the speaker's attitude (1973). Further, "no situation can have a nature independent of the perception of its interpreter or independent of the rhetoric with which he chooses to characterize" and when describing situations, one is essentially "fitting a scene into a category or categories found in the head of the observer" (p. 154).

In support of Vatz (1973), Blumer (1969) criticizes Bitzer's (1968) position that meaning resides in events by stating,

To regard meaning as intrinsic to the thing that has it as being a natural part of the objective makeup of the thing. Thus, a chair is clearly a chair in itself, a cow a cow, a rebellion a rebellion, and so forth. Being inherent in the thing that has it, meaning needs merely to be disengaged by observing the object that has the meaning. The meaning emanates, so to speak, from the thing, and as such there is no process involved in its formation; all that is necessary is to recognize the meaning that is there in the thing (pp. 3-4).

Bitzer (1968) claims, "the exigence and the complex of persons, objects, events, and relations which generate rhetorical discourse are located in reality, are objective and publicly observable historic facts" (1968, p. 11). Vatz (1973), however, argues that facts are not publicly observable; rather "we learn facts and events through someone's communicating them to us" (p. 156). In doing so, one must make a choice of events to communicate. Where as Bitzer contends that the nature of context determines rhetoric,

Vatz argues that one never runs out of context, and therefore never runs out of facts to describe a situation. Therefore, one must choose which to communicate. Then, in communicating the choice of events, one must translate the chosen information into meaning. Counter to Bitzer, Vatz argues this to be a creative, interpretive, and rhetorical act of transcendence. He argues that, “the adjectives into which a ‘situation’ are communicated cannot be the ‘real situation’; they must be a translation” (p. 157).

Bitzer and Vatz’s differing perspectives have implications for rhetoric. If one identifies meaning as intrinsic to situations, “rhetorical study becomes parasitic to philosophy, political science, and whatever other discipline can inform us as to what the ‘real’ situation is.” On the other hand, if one views meaning as emergent from rhetorical creation, the primary “concern will be how and by whom symbols create the reality to which people react” (Vatz, 1973, p. 158).

Despite its contradictive nature to a constructionist epistemology, Bitzer’s (1968) arguments serve as an important aspect to understanding social constructionism. Meaning is between people’s perceptions; therefore interpretation is not inherent in things or external to human apprehension. However, context is an important aspect of social constructionism and ultimately contribute to Bitzer’s arguments. An epistemology is “a way of understanding and explaining how we know what we know” and historical reference and context are closely integrated into any epistemology, including social constructionism (Crotty, 1998, p. 3). This study does not agree with Bitzer’s argument, but rather chooses to recognize it as providing context for rhetorical theory. Bitzer introduced context as an issue to be considered in persuasion, which Vatz argued to be

socially constructed, rather than situation-based. McCloskey has, then, provided a view of an economic context as a social context.

1.5 United Way

The marketing materials from the United Way of the Tanana Valley and the United Way California Capital Region were examined for the purpose of this study. Originally established in 1887 by a priest, rabbi, and two ministers, the United Way has blossomed into a global leadership and support organization for roughly 1,800 community-based United Ways in 45 countries and territories (United Way, 2010a). The overlying mission for the United Way is to “advance common good by focusing on improving education, helping people achieve financial stability, and promoting healthy lives, and by mobilizing millions of people to give, advocate, and volunteer to improve the conditions in which they live “ (United Way, 2010a, para.1).

The United Way serves as a fundraising umbrella for smaller community-based non-profit organizations. The focus of the United Way's fundraising efforts is in the workplace, with emphasis on payroll deduction giving. The United Way campaigns in over 300 companies in the Tanana Valley, and in over 350 in the California Capital Region. Today, the United Way of the Tanana Valley consists of 23 member agencies (United Way, 2010a, para. 4), while the United Way California Capital Region has three (United Way, 2010b, para. 2). Financial contributions from community members stay local, and in turn, help to improve their very own community.

Because the Tanana Valley area has not been affected as adversely as other parts of the U.S., the United Way of California Capitol Region marketing materials were also

examined. Concerning the recent economic recession, Dillon (2009) states, “In the midst of a recession that will surely go down as one of the worst financial crises in U.S. history, California is leading the pack” (p. 19). Therefore, materials produced by the United Way California Capital Region served as a paradigmatic representation of response to crisis conditions to the marketing materials generated for the United Way of the Tanana Valley fundraising campaigns.

1.6 Research Rationale

A variety of studies have investigated persuasion and its influence on non-profit organizations’ fundraising and philanthropic success. These studies, however, were done at a time when the country was maintained in a stable economy, where employment opportunities were plentiful and money was not as scarce among households as it is today. Needless to say, economic circumstances can greatly impact the results in a study focusing on one’s willingness to contribute financially. Additionally, Stafford et al. (2004) claim that little research has examined the impact and influence that advertising appeals have on perceptions of an organization and its services. The purpose of this study is to examine how the rhetoric in the United Way’s primary marketing tool was used in different economic contexts. Aristotle’s rhetorical theoretical framework will be used for this analysis.

For exploratory purposes the study seeks to answer the following research questions:

RQ1: Is pathos most prevalent in 2005 when the U.S. economy was stable compared to logos?

RQ2: Is there a stronger rhetorical influence of logos than pathos present in the United Way's 2009 campaign video?

RQ3: Is logos most prevalent in the United Way California Capital Region 2009 campaign video compared to the United Way of the Tanana Valley 2009 campaign video?

Chapter 2

Methodology

For it is not the bare words but the scope of the writer that gives the true light, by which any writing is to be interpreted; and they that insist upon single texts, without considering the main design, can derive no thing from them clearly. –Thomas Hobbes

2.1 Research Contexture

Research contexture serves as one of the most crucial components of any given piece of research. In order for any research to be deemed credible, it must be firmly grounded in a research contexture. Consisting of a single ontology and epistemology, a particular theoretical perspective, provides direction for the methodology and method(s) utilized for data collection and analysis. Because of the interdependence between ontology and epistemology in the research contexture, the ontological assumptions that influence this study cannot be separated from the chosen epistemology.

2.2 Epistemology

Crotty (1998) defines epistemology as “a way of understanding and explaining how we know what we know” (p. 3). The present research is grounded in a constructionist epistemology, therefore rejecting the idea that meaning is a reified entity simply waiting to be discovered. Constructionism contends that meaning is not inherent in an object, nor does meaning, reality, or “truth” exist “out there.” Constructionism argues, rather, that meaning is created through interaction. Crotty supplements this epistemological stance by stating, “meanings are constructed by human beings as they engage with the world they are interpreting” (p. 43). Moreover, “different people may construct meaning in different ways, even in relation to the same phenomena” (p. 9).

Therefore, because of the uniqueness of human beings and their interactions, all meaning is socially constructed and dynamic, vulnerable to change.

2.3 Theoretical Perspective

Defined as “the philosophical stance that lies behind our chosen methodology” the theoretical perspective provides “a context for the process involved and a basis for its logic and criteria” (Crotty, 1998, p. 7). Contrary to positivism, interpretivism “looks for culturally derived and historically situated interpretations of the social life-world” (Crotty, 1998, p. 67). Rather than focusing on explanation, an interpretivist approach seeks understanding. Rooted in interpretivism, this study employs a hermeneutical approach in its efforts to seek understanding through the interpretation of texts.

According to Schleiermacher (1997), “hermeneutics and rhetoric are intimately related in that every act of understanding is the reverse side of an act of speaking [or writing], and one must grasp the thinking that underlies a given statement” (p. 97). Hermeneutics recognizes the interpretation of meaning as the “central theme, with a specification of the kinds of meaning sought and attention to the questions posed to the text” (Kvale & Brinkman, 2009, p. 50). In short, a hermeneutical approach primarily focuses on language and the context in which language is presented. According to Crotty (1998), language is pivotal to “the situations in which we find ourselves enmeshed, the events that befall us, the practices we carry out and, in and through all of this, the understandings we are able to reach” (p. 87).

The focus of hermeneutics is not limited solely to textual interpretations, as it is a methodology of text in context. Although economic conditions are social constructions,

they nevertheless provide context. Therefore, the current study is equally content and context-driven. As Berger (1995) argues, “hermeneutics is an approach to uncovering the meaning of a text” and to do so, context must be considered (p. 21). Additionally, while hermeneutical thought facilitates the cultivation of a multitude of interpretations, determining meaning is not a matter of simply abstract theorizing, rather a process continuously exercising practical judgment (Crotty, 1998). Berger supplements this by reasoning that hermeneutics is not objective intellectual analysis, rather an act of “entering into the text” (p. 21).

A central concept in hermeneutic philosophy is the hermeneutic circle.

Thompson, Pollio, and Locander (1994) explain a hermeneutical circle as:

A multidimensional concept that addresses several issues related to the culturally based nature of human understanding. This multidimensional quality has resulted in this term’s acquiring three someone distinct meanings in the social science literature. These meaning are (1) a methodological process for interpreting a text, (2) a philosophical view of the research process, and (3) a general model of the process by which understanding are formed (p. 433).

In order to successfully complete a hermeneutical circle, the data source(s) must be repeatedly examined until further interpretations cease to emerge.

2.4 Research Methodology/Method

Crotty (1998) outlines the research methodology as “the research design that shapes our choice and use of particular methods and links them to the desired outcomes” (p. 7). In addition, because each piece of research is unique, it calls for a unique

methodology (Crotty, 1998). Research methodology provides a rationale for the choice of methods and how those methods are applied to the study.

Contextual/situational rhetorical analysis, also known as rhetorical criticism, will be employed as the primary methodology for the current study. Wicheln (1925) states that, “rhetorical criticism should systematically analyze a speaker’s audience, perceived character, major themes, emotional appeals, arguments, arrangement of ideas, style and delivery” (as reprinted in Burgchardt, 2005, p. 137). Qualitative in nature, rhetorical analysis acknowledges the multiple interpretations that may result from each unique body of text. Furthermore, Krippendorff (2004) argues:

Texts have no objective qualities. Therefore, texts, messages, and data do not exist without an observer. There is nothing inherent in text; the meanings of a text are always brought to it by someone. Thus, texts do not have single meanings that can simply be ‘found,’ ‘identified,’ and ‘described’ for what they are (p. 22).

Rhetorical criticism then led to a categorization of the persuasive appeals utilized. After viewing and analyzing each video several times, connections for persuasive appeal were made. Continual interpretation of video content and the different contexts in which they were produced and employed resulted in recognizing three distinct yet varying modes of persuasive appeals present in each of the three videos: logos, pathos, and ethos.

Berger (1995) stresses the importance of recognizing the point of view of the researcher. He argues that critics are “subject to social and political influences, fashions (intellectual and other), trends, and the like” (p. 22). For reflexivity purposes, it is worth mentioning that the author of the proposed study has worked directly with the United

Way of the Tanana Valley on two major projects concerning interior Alaskan communities. In 2007, she served as a primary group facilitator for the United Way Compass Project. Most recently, the author served on the 2009 Live United Campaign, in which she presented to various University of Alaska Fairbanks entities and assisted in the organization of an on-campus fundraising event. In addition to previous involvement with the United Way of the Tanana Valley, the author lived and worked in Southern California in 2009 during the economic collapse. In conducting this research, the researcher diligently practiced researcher reflexivity, taking into account her history with the organization, personal experience and hardships with the economic downturn, and the effect it potentially had on the research.

2.5 Design

For the purpose of this study, two chapters of a non-profit organization were studied: the United Way of the Tanana Valley and the United Way of California Capital Region. The United Way of the Tanana Valley was selected because of its local relevance and the convenient accessibility to marketing materials. Materials produced by the United Way California Capital Region were also examined and included in the study, as they served as a paradigmatic representation of response to economic environmental crises. Furthermore, this research assumes that the videos served as the primary means to generate financial contributions from the local communities in which the videos were produced.

2.5.1 Procedure

The first step was to locate United Way marketing materials. After obtaining the necessary materials from the local United Way office, the United Way of Orange County was contacted in an effort to obtain materials similar to those of the Tanana Valley. After numerous failed attempts, the United Way of California Capitol Region was contacted instead. After agreeing to submit materials, the researcher traveled to the Sacramento office to personally retrieve them. Once the materials were obtained, it became necessary to specify the criteria for the analysis.

Ultimately, the procedure for obtaining materials proved more difficult than anticipated. As a result, the initial goal for correspondence and equivalence between the marketing materials from the different United Way offices was not achieved. However, after a visit to the United Way California Capital Region, the 2009 LIVE UNITED campaign marketing video from the Sacramento region was obtained. Each marketing piece obtained was critically examined until no further interpretations surfaced, therefore marking the end of the hermeneutical circle.

2.5.2 Selected Marketing Materials

2.5.2.1 United Way of the Tanana Valley: 2005 Campaign Video

Beginning in the office of Marilyn Romano, Chair of the United Way of the Tanana Valley 2005 campaign and publisher of Fairbanks Daily News-miner, this video has a slightly different approach than the other videos analyzed for this study. Instead of including numerous images of community members and local landmarks, the video

instead focuses on the reasons one should donate to the United Way. Romano introduces the campaign by offering her own reasons for giving to the United Way, followed by a presentation of the top ten reasons to give to the United Way of the Tanana Valley. At the end of the list, Romano asks the audience to give United Way volunteers the opportunity to discuss the impact the member agencies have on the Fairbanks community.

2.5.2.2 United Way of the Tanana Valley: 2009 Campaign Video

Produced by Steve Neumuth Advertising, this campaign video stresses the importance of education, income, and health through the voices of longtime Fairbanks community members, Bart LeBon, Vice President of Mt. McKinley Bank, and his daughter Alli LeBon, Human Resources Manager at Alaska Tent and Tarp. The video begins with Alli describing the United Way's mission as working toward advancing the common good by focusing on education, income, and health. Bart then reiterates the idea of education, income, and health by explaining the interdependence among community members and stating "we all win when a child succeeds in school, families are financially stable, and people are healthy." Throughout the video, images of the interior and Fairbanks community members smiling and helping one another in various settings are displayed as an unidentified narrator illustrates the importance of "living united."

2.5.2.3 United Way California Capital Region: 2009 Flash Mob Video

In 2009, the United Way California Capital Region did not have sufficient funds to professionally produce a LIVE UNITED campaign video similar to those from prior campaign years. Instead, the United Way California Capital Region decided to elicit volunteers from the Sacramento area to perform a flash mob. The video begins with a

brief glimpse of a practice session, which took place in the parking lot of the local office. Participants offered their attitudes regarding the event, while images of portraying unity and camaraderie among the volunteers were intermittently displayed. After offering an abbreviated representation of the hard work that went in to performing the flash mob, the video advances to the event itself. Taking place in a large shopping center, U2's hit single, "Beautiful Day" begins to play through the speakers placed in what appears to be the main rest/common area of the mall. One by one, a diverse group of volunteers flood the center of the mall, dancing in unison. At the end of the performance, as the music comes to a stop and the crowd bursts into applause, the performers disperse and resume their individual business as if nothing happened. The video ends with the LIVE UNITED slogan zooming to the center of the frame.

Chapter 3

Results

All meanings, we know, depend on the key of interpretation. –George Eliot

Rhetorical analysis was used to analyze the data sources. The three United Way videos served as the units of analysis. However, because analysis was conducted both extrinsically and intrinsically, within each video there were multiple levels concerning the unit of analysis. Therefore, the unit of analysis may represent a broader conceptualization, rather than a single notion. Given the nature of this data source, the unit of analysis meant single words or single sentences in one iteration, and then on another pass the unit of analysis might include single images or matching song lyrics. The hermeneutical method entailed multiple iterations because one must take into account the scripted, spoken, musical, and/or photographic content, as well as economic context. Therefore, one must take into account how different parts interact such that music, imagery and spoken language combine to create affects that may not otherwise be achieved or recognized by any single modality.

3.1 Data – United Way of the Tanana Valley 2005 Campaign Video

3.1.1 Logos

The majority of persuasive appeals identified were logically based, as most statements rationalized the need to donate to the United Way. According to Habermas (1984), “the giving of reasons-for and reasons-against has traditionally been regarded as fundamental to the idea of rationality” (p. 11). Providing reasons is involved in the various logical statements that surface throughout the video.

For example, a number of reason-based statements were made by the campaign spokesperson, Marilyn Romano, who reported:

Many of us have great reasons for giving to the UW. I know I do. Back when I was a little girl, I remember how one UW member agency shaped my life. It taught me respect, responsibility, and how to work *and* play with others (United Way, 2005).

After offering her personal involvement in and contribution to the organization, Romano asked, “So that’s my reason. What’s yours?” (Reasons, 2005).

According to McCloskey (1998), “persuasion of the most rigorous kind has blanks to be filled at every other step” (p. 17). One method of examining logic in speech is through the concept of the enthymeme. As Kuypers (2005) explains “the essence of the enthymeme is that some parts of the logical argument are omitted when the speaker or writer can predict that the auditors will support them” (p. 66). In short, in an enthymematic appeal, logic is not clearly spelled out for the audience. Rather, it invites the audience to fill in the missing links with information based on local knowledge.

Due to this unspoken connection between the speaker and the hearer, ethos also inevitably surfaces. Additionally, ethos is integrally connected to logos and pathos, and therefore one cannot rigidly divide the three into separate categories as the modes of persuasion. Romano’s presentation of her personal connection to the United Way was perceived as an enthymematic appeal in that it established her ethos, yet at the same time rationalized another’s purpose for giving to the organization.

Analysis also identified a logical structure in the presentation of the reasons themselves. After Romano's introduction, a list of the "Top Ten Reasons to Donate to the United Way" is introduced. Beginning from reason number ten and chronologically counting down to the number one, the list represents a number of pragmatic grounds to contribute to the United Way. For instance, "You'll thank us on April 15th...Really." is presented as the fifth most important reason and comes before the significance of ensuring that fellow community members have shelter each night (reason number seven). Reasons such as "Because once upon a time, someone helped you out" (reason number nine), indicate that returning the favor is the right thing to do, in view of the fact that it is disciplined and sensible repayment.

The most recognizable logical persuasive device was the single most important reason to donate to the United Way, "Because what matters to you is RESULTS." The statement of achieving results is fundamental to the North American value system that favors individualism, practicality and success. The statement represents personal gain and reifies results as tangible objects, therefore reinforcing a logical deduction for one's reasons to contribute to the United Way.

The choice to present the reasons in a list-like format also signifies the heavy influence of logos. The language "to do" is most typically interpreted to be action oriented and therefore agenda items are often presented in the form of a list. This use of language reinforces the video's overarching rhetorical message that donating is a fundamental, rational action.

3.1.2 Pathos

Myers (2007) contends that pathos can be more clearly defined and recognized with the use of an image upon which to direct the audience's emotions. Photography has been described as "one of the most moving and powerful instruments of communication ever devised" (Monk, 1989, preface). Moreover, previous research has suggested that the dramatic impact that photographs have on people attests to their emotional and persuasive power (Dyke, 1990).

A number of positive and heartening photos were coupled with reasons to donate to the United Way. Paradoxically, reasons strongly situated in logical justification, such as "Because what matters to you is RESULTS," (reason number one) were coupled with feel-good photos. Examples of inspiring and gladdening photos included a woman lifting a smiling child into the air, a small child looking up into an adult's eyes, and a baby sleeping on presumably its mother's chest. These photos elicit positive and warm emotions from viewers.

Pathos was also identified in the segment dedicated to the "Top Ten Reasons to Donate to the United Way" list. While some of the reasons to donate were based in pathos, emotional appeal was utilized primarily in the form of music and the photos that accompanied each reason to donate. Replacing reasons with the heartwarming quote, "We make a living by what we get, we make a life by what we give" (reason number four), allows viewers to make an emotional connection to the content.

Music served as a final emotional persuasive device. Budd (1992) argues that humans, by nature, are emotionally affected by music. Jazz music played throughout the

list segment and evokes a rich and wholesome sentiment. Consequently, the choice to incorporate jazz music had an uplifting and empowering effect on viewers, presumably to subconsciously increase one's willingness to donate.

3.1.3 Ethos

According to Habermas' (1984) interpretation of rationality, ethos and logos are interdependent components of rationalization. Habermas states that, "The close relation between knowledge and rationality suggests that the rationality of an expression depends on the reliability of the knowledge embodied in it" (p. 57). Further, Aristotle (1991) argues that, other than logical demonstrations, individuals trust good will, practical wisdom, and virtue. Many elements of the video demonstrated ethos as an underlying method of persuasion.

Recruiting Romano, a distinguished member of the Fairbanks community, was perhaps the strongest evidence of ethos in the campaign video. Romano, who at the time worked as the publisher for the Fairbanks Daily News-Miner, was filmed in a sophisticated and highly decorated office. Such an environment allows viewers to attribute success, while an occupational position such as publisher allows for the interpretation that Romano has a substantial amount of knowledge regarding the Fairbanks community. These aspects lend credibility to Romano's convictions and the United Way's choice to elect her as campaign spokesperson.

In order to establish a connection to viewers and portray a shared understanding of the Fairbanks community, the video incorporated images of the "The First Unknown Family," a distinctive statue located in the Fairbanks downtown plaza. The bronze statue

of an Inuit family dressed in warm winter clothes is dedicated to the First Nation Inuit people and stands amongst other local landmarks like the clock tower and the unofficial “last Alcan milepost” (Fairbanks Convention & Visitors Bureau, 2010). The statue serves as a distinctive monument for the Fairbanks community, therefore its presence throughout the campaign video instills a sense of connection between the United Way and community members.

The mediated nature of the video also contributed to an ethos-based mode of persuasion. The presentation of the “Top Ten Reasons to Donate to the United Way” mimics the classic and regular top ten lists appearing on David Letterman. This list, then, represents a media-centric form of humor, allowing the video to be more relatable to viewers. The mediated nature of the video was also linked to Romano who, as the publisher for the Daily News-Miner, is a distinguished member of the media. In addition, the special effects introduced at the end of the video serve as a final tactic to elicit positive perception of the video’s quality and design.

3.2 Data – United Way of the Tanana Valley 2009 Campaign Video

3.2.1 Logos

Logos was identified primarily in the occupational position campaign co-chair Bart LeBon held during the 2009 LIVE UNITED campaign. Bart LeBon introduced himself and his position as Vice President of Commercial Lending for Mt. McKinley bank, followed by Alli’s introduction as Human Resources Manager for Alaska Tent and Tarp. The United Way of the Tanana Valley’s choice to select a campaign co-chair in this

occupational position was clever and logical, just as one may assume that taking the advice of these particular community figures makes perfect, logical sense.

According to Keeton (2003), community banks are highly important in small communities. Mt. McKinley Bank has served as an important source of funding for local development. Having the Vice President of Commercial Lending at Mt. McKinley Bank and long-time Fairbanks resident Bart LeBon as one of the spokespeople represents the importance of further developing our community. Therefore, if the bank is supporting the United Way, then those in the community should be as well.

After the LeBons' introduction, a narrator begins to describe the ways in which individuals can help their community by donating to the United Way of the Tanana Valley. One statement in particular illustrated individuals' social responsibility to donate, as well as the personal gain one receives as a result. The narrator states:

There is a force in the Interior that reaches out to one. Because beneath everything we are, and everything we do, we are all people and we are all connected. When we reach out to one person, one family, or one community, we can influence the condition of all. This is how the United Way of the Tanana Valley is encouraging us all to live united (United Way, 2009).

Under the premises of the narrator's assertion, one can take the steps to fulfill their civic duties by contributing to the overall wellbeing of the community and its members.

Therefore, because he/she is improving his/her surroundings, he/she is improving his/her own life.

3.2.2 Pathos

Unlike the 2005 video, the presence of pathos was consistent throughout the entire 2009 Tanana Valley video. Pathos was recognized through a number of different forms. Although concrete, emotion-based arguments were minimal, the overall passion in the delivery of the video content served as a major source of pathos. Additionally, rather than appealing to pity or fear, the language in the video instead appealed to viewers' desires or wishful thinking.

The sincerity of co-chairs Bart and Alli LeBon, as well as the narrator, had a likely potential to be tremendously and emotionally impressive on the audience. Each spoke with a compassionate tone as they called on the community to help one another by contributing to the United Way. Alli LeBon's sustained eye contact also contributed to the compassion aura of the video, especially during scenes with the camera in close focus. The overall level of genuineness present in the video allowed viewers to perceive it and its spokespeople as trustworthy, and therefore elicited a feeling of sympathy and a desire to contribute their efforts to helping the cause.

Accompanied by the sincere and hopeful messages presented by the co-chairs and narrators, the music and photos also served as a valuable source of pathos. The narrator offered statements such as, "It takes everyone in the community working together to create a brighter future," which were accompanied by the peaceful strumming of an acoustic guitar and tranquil images such as a single kayak on a beautifully calm lake. In addition, Bart's request to "stand with us and live united" served as a meaningful metaphor that appealed to the assumed audience's desire for a strong community. This

metaphor was illustrated by presenting an image of two young children with their arms around one other in a park, with a young girl wearing a LIVE UNITED shirt. The verbal content of the co-chairs' and narrator's message, coupled with music and aesthetically pleasing photos, contributed a feeling of tranquility and a desire to strive for a strong and prosperous community similar to the one presented in the photos.

3.2.3 Ethos

Similar to the 2005 United Way video, the ethos in the 2009 United Way video was primarily concerned with community influence. The strong presence of community influence is illustrated through the selection of spokespeople and their positions within the community, the inclusive language employed, and a variety of photos displayed throughout the video. Each source of ethos demonstrates good will, virtue, and practical wisdom (Aristotle, 1991).

Father-daughter duo Bart and Alli LeBon served as an important reference for ethos. University of Alaska Fairbanks alumni Bart LeBon has been proactive in the Fairbanks community through his involvement in Greater Fairbanks Chamber of Commerce, the Downtown Association, the Interior Community Health Center and the Alaska Airlines Community Advisory boards (University of Alaska Fairbanks, para. 4, 2010). Serving as the co-chair is second generation Fairbanksan, Alli LeBon, who is also a University of Alaska Fairbanks alumnus. Bart and Alli, two long-time community members, working in conjunction with the United Way of the Tanana Valley to advance the common good, portrays an internal credibility for the campaign and its efforts

specifically for those who are familiar with the LeBons, as it relies on real locals' knowledge.

In addition to the LeBon co-chairs, Mt. McKinley Bank, represented by Bart LeBon, served as a major source for ethos. As the oldest and largest local financial institution in Fairbanks, it is a hometown, community-oriented bank (Mt. McKinley Bank, 2009). Further, the organization's mission statement emphasizes local interests by stating, "We are local people making local decisions" and "the more successful businesses a community has, the more successful the community becomes and that benefits us all" (Mt. McKinley Bank, para. 1, 2009). Thus, as a well-established organization in the Interior, one can assume that Mt. McKinley Bank has the practical knowledge to recognize community members' best interests and keep those interests at heart, which in turn is a strong indication of goodwill.

Yet another indication of goodwill was the inclusive language employed throughout the video. Pronouns such as "we," "our," and "us" were utilized to describe how donations to the United Way help to improve the Tanana Valley community. Holmes (2000) states that employing inclusive language is not only good business and politically correct, it also "captures audiences" by fostering a sense of community (p. 9). One of the many instances in which there is a presence of inclusive language is when the narrator states that the programs supported by the United Way are "working hard to build a better community for all of us." In the conclusion of the video, Alli pleads with viewers to, "Think 'we' before 'me'," which further reinforces the compassion and amity present throughout the video (United Way, 2009).

Alli LeBon's position as a human resources manager suggests her personal understanding of the difficult job market and increasingly high unemployment rates in the community. Individuals are likely to view her as a credible source as she expresses the need for "advancing the common good." One can assume she knows first-hand about the difficulties people face in the then-current economic conditions through her position in Human Resources. Therefore, Alli's testimonial for the United Way is one that portrays a personal knowledge of how the United Way benefits the Fairbanks community.

The influence of ethos was also identified in the photos of local monuments and parks displayed throughout the video. Like the 2005 video, the 2009 video also utilized a photo of the "First Unknown Family" statue located in downtown Fairbanks. Also similar to the 2005 video was the sense of connection between the United Way and the Fairbanks community. Because the statue serves as a distinctive monument for the Fairbanks community, one recognizes the United Way's familiarity with the Interior's most symbolic memorials and monuments.

3.3 Data – United Way California Capital Region 2009 Campaign Flash Mob Video

3.3.1 Logos

The current data source included a number of enthymematic appeals that served as both logos and ethos. The location and time at which the volunteers in the video performed was the strongest evidence of logos. Taking place at Arden Fair, a large shopping mall located in central Sacramento, the mall services "a trade area that spans a 25-mile radius and includes over 1.1 million residents in 432,000 households" (Arden Fair, About Company section, para. 1, 2010b). Additionally, the performance was

executed at 11:30am on a Saturday in the middle of the mall. Based on these contextual components, one can assume that a diverse and large group of individuals were exposed to the flash mob performance.

The location and time at which the performance took place are not the only logical components to the video. Viewers are likely to believe that the individuals in the mall, aside from mall employees, are consumers, therefore they are willing to spend money on material items. Mall employees, even, represent a fortunate group of people who are employed in the midst of a recession-ridden economy. What's more, according to the shopping center, the residents within the 25-mile radius of the Arden Fair Mall collect an average household income of over \$61,000, with 28% of those households earning above \$75,000 and 16% topping the \$100,000 mark (Arden Fair, About Arden Fair section, para. 1, 2010b). Based on these statistics, one can assume that those who physically viewed this performance while in the mall would be among those most capable and likely to give to the United Way. Not only are these people financially stable on average; they presumably have a surplus of money to buy material items, therefore allowing them to be more predisposed to contribute to fundraising efforts of their local United Way.

In addition to the assumption that the individuals at the mall were financially stable, Arden Fair prides itself as a Sacramento community partner. The organization strives to “meet community challenges through a combination of employee volunteerism, financial support, in-kind donations and partnerships with non-profit organizations” (Arden Fair, Social Responsibility section, para. 1, 2010a). Arden Fair donation

recipients include educational programs, health causes, and youth programs. These programs and causes are parallel to those that the United Way is committed to strengthening. Illustrative of this is the United Way of the California Capital Region's dedication to make dramatic improvements in the regions' education, income, and health (United Way of the California Capital Region, LIVE UNITED section, para. 2, 2011).

The time and place of the flash mob also contributed to an element of convenience. Those who were exposed to the flash mob have the convenient advantage of immediately donating on the spot is hard to logically argue against. Schreiber et al. (2006) state that inconvenience is a major barrier to donating. The authors contend that not having a convenient place to donate is most commonly cited as an important or very important reason for not donating (p. 545). All of these factors combined—financial stability, consumerism, and convenience—make it difficult for one to rationalize *not* financially contributing to the United Way.

This campaign video was later posted on youtube.com, where it has currently collected over 20,000 views (UnitedWayCCR, 2009). The search mechanism involved in locating the video on youtube.com represents a strong element of logos. In order to access the video, an individual must consciously and willingly search for the video (for whatever reason that may be) therefore representing rationalized motivation.

3.3.2 Pathos

Pathos was largely identified through music. Irish rock band U2's hit single "Beautiful Day" served as the song to which the dance was choreographed. The lyrics represent hope and an individual's capacity for love. The verse stating, "The heart is

bloom; shoots up through the stony ground” (Hewson et al., 2000) expresses our ability to maintain our faith and conviction throughout troubled times. The presence of pathos is confirmed by one viewer under the username adriannedevitt who commented, “Wow . . . I just got really emotional watching this. Amazing!” (UnitedWayCCR, page 2, 2009).

3.3.3 Ethos

Aside from the sentimental lyrics, the band U2 symbolizes good will. The band’s members, specifically lead singer Paul Hewson (most commonly referred to as Bono), are famous for their global philanthropic involvement. Similar to the United Way’s mission to improve education, income stability, and community health, U2 has supported causes related to health, children, literacy, poverty, and career support (Hyde, 2010). One may interpret the band’s audible presence in the flash mob as a representation of charity and compassion.

The diverse population that participated in the flash mob represents a strong presence of ethos. Prior to the flash mob, the volunteers gathered in the parking lot of United Way California Capital Region headquarters. Images of the smiling volunteers intermittently flashed in between interviewing United Way staff and “Choreographer Kate,” a volunteer dance choreographer facilitating the flash mob practice. Twice, snapshots of groups of volunteers holding one another’s hands were displayed. Such sentimental images contribute to a wholesome image of the United Way.

As the flash mob is being executed, individuals—ranging from young and old, black and white, short and tall—dancing in harmony demonstrate a sense of unity and collaborative effort toward a stronger future for everyone. One may interpret the

camaraderie and kindness that appears to be among the assorted dancers as nobility, not only on the United Way's behalf, but also a form of virtue from one's neighbors and community. Moreover, the diverse group makeup contributes to the United Way's awareness, as well as the volunteers' collective knowledge, concerning the assistance that individuals from all walks of life may need.

Chapter 4

Interpretation of Results

4.1 Logos

As seen in the results section, logos is represented in the fundraising rhetoric through rationalized reasons for giving, list-like and task oriented formats, organizational affiliation, and enthymematic appeals. The significance of logic-based appeals is addressed within Aristotle's Theory of Rhetoric. According to Aristotle (1991), logic functions as the "thought" component of "thought plus action." Such logical arguments contain evidenced statements that lead to conclusions.

In terms of rationality, when an audience is presented with a logical argument or reason-for donating to non-profit organizations, some people may conclude that it is logically necessary and socially responsible to donate. As Loudon states, "human beings are rational beings, and as such they still possess the ability to understand their moral obligations" (2002 p. 139). Not donating, then, is presumed to be both immoral and irrational. In order to fulfill one's rational cognition, he/she needs to take action. In other words, an individual makes a financial contribution because, if he/she has the available financial resources, it may be difficult to morally rationalize not donating.

4.2 Pathos

The persuasive appeals employed pathos through music, musical lyrics, photographs, and speech. Although pathos most commonly appeals to an audience's pity or fear, the persuasive appeals identified in the data primarily appealed to the audience's

desire for a community rich in health, education, and financial stability. Therefore, an appeal to community supportiveness seems to be the key theme for pathos in all three videos. In terms of Maslow's hierarchy (1943), our belongingness needs are the ones that are presumed to be felt most acutely during current times. This is not a unique observation in fundraising circles, as it echoes the trends illustrated in scholarly works such as *Bowling Alone* (Putnam, 2002) and *Better Together* (Putnam, 2003). The prevalence of pathos particularly in the rhetoric responding to economic crisis suggests several interesting things.

For example, the authors of both 2009 videos seem to replace fear appeals with community supportiveness appeals. A number of appeals to a "feeling/sense" of community surfaced throughout the video. Such appeals are illustrated as the presumed desires of the audience and consistent with the "common language" use of the term "community," which typically involves emotional attachment more than rational or economic based responses. Therefore, the authors are positioning these statements as pathos appeals, rather than logos appeals.

The makers of the campaign materials presume that individuals will most likely reach out to community members and community organizations for support rather than larger institutional structures. Putnam (2002) argues that Americans trust one another more after a crisis situation. After the September 11th terrorist attacks, Americans were more united, more apt for collective sacrifice, and most attuned to public purpose. In addition, individuals became more generous, as more Americans reported working on a community project or donating money than in previous years. Because the United Way

consists of local non-profit member-based agencies, it is an organization representative of the people in its very own community. Therefore, community members are likely to be more inclined to trust the organization's mission statement that promises, "to build a better community" (United Way, 2011, para. 1). Under these premises, despite numerous claims that human beings are rational by nature, the pathos appeals throughout the video are most effective modes of persuasion.

4.3 Ethos

Representing the importance of ethos, Sloane states "from its inception, classical rhetoric has grounded persuasion upon a speaker's knowledge of the varieties and complexities of human character" (2001, p. 263). Ethos is foundational to the art of rhetoric, but nevertheless, it cannot be separated from pathos and logos. For example, in the functions of an enthymeme, ethos works in conjunction with logos and/or pathos. According to Hyde (2004), "the moving of passions (taking something to heart) is a prerequisite of persuasion; truth alone is not sufficient to guide thoughtful actions of human beings. A speaker's ethos takes form in the light of the success of this process" (p. xviii).

In this study, the convergence of ethos with pathos and logos is most readily identified in the 2009 United Way flash mob video. As previously mentioned, the location and time at which the volunteers in the video performed was the strongest evidence of logos. However, because of the mall's philanthropic support and favorable reputation in the Sacramento area, this enthymematic appeal allows the audience to attribute a certain degree of ethos to the United Way as an organization.

Historical recognition of ethos has collectively represented it as the most influential mode of persuasion. Not to undermine the persuasive power of logos and pathos, as both are instrumental persuasive strategy, in order to maintain strength of logos and pathos a speaker must vouch for his/her integrity and the ability to evoke emotions and fact or logic-based judgments. Audiences are persuaded because they are won over by the speaker's vindicated rationalizations (logos) and their emotions are affected by the speaker's ideas and/or language. However, without attributing the speaker as high in credibility (ethos), vulnerability is introduced into the persuasiveness of logical and emotional appeal.

4.4 Conclusions

Although previous research has suggested pathos to be the most commonly employed mode of persuasion in fundraising campaigns, some element of logic must be present in order for a message to be persuasive. As argued in Chapter One, when individuals fall victim to economic hardship, they may be more inclined to respond to messages focusing on pragmatic motives based on logic. Therefore, a shift in persuasive tactics might be expected when an economic climate changes. This, however, was not the case for this study.

The first research question for this study sought to answer whether pathos was most prevalent in the United Way's 2005 marketing materials. As an extension to this, the second research question for this study asked, "Is there a stronger rhetorical influence of logos present in the United Way's 2009 marketing pieces?" In fact, pathos was more prevalent in the United Way of the Tanana Valley's 2009 campaign video than that of

2005. While there was no access to 2005 video from the United Way California Capital Region, it is improbable that there was a stronger influence of pathos than that of the 2009 United Way California Capital Region flash mob video. That is to say, the trends from X to Y in modes of persuasion was in same direction in both regions.

The final research question asked, “Is logos most prevalent in the United Way California Capital Region 2009 marketing pieces?” Similar to the 2009 United Way of the Tanana Valley video, the video demonstrated a stronger appeal to pathos. However, the context in which an audience was exposed to each video affected the primary modes of persuasion present within, and therefore each appeal balances pathos and logos differently. For instance, depending on the context in which the performance was viewed (in-person or mediated), the primary appeal in the United Way California Capital Region 2009 flash mob video may be identified as either pathos or logos. Specifically, pathos served as the primary mode of persuasion for the individuals who were present at Arden Fair and viewing the performance in person. However, because it was posted on Youtube.com, there is an additional element of logos present because of the search mechanism involved in locating the video.

Despite the context in which the video or performance was viewed, pathos served as an effective mode of persuasion. Through its diverse volunteer population, touching music, uniform choreography, and perhaps above all, its spontaneity, the flash mob served as a unique translation of LIVE UNITED. Thus, because of the symbolic representation of a harmonious community, one cannot ignore the heartwarming emotions the video elicits. Similarly, the fact that the videos for the United Way of the

Tanana Valley were primarily presented to audiences with a United Way representative present, therefore indicated the reliance on the interpersonal positive affect or pathos.

Consistent with the notion of rationality is the assumption that modes of persuasion will shift from pathos to logos during economic crisis. For this study, however, the shift was interpreted as the opposite, logos to pathos, therefore trumping rational thought. Not surprisingly, the presence of ethos in all three videos surpassed that of logos and pathos. As illustrated throughout the study, pathos, logos, and ethos work in concert to help the rhetor persuade his/her audience. No single appeal represented alone will achieve persuasion.

4.5 Practical Implications

A recent report completed by the U.S. Government Accountability Office (2007) found that nonprofit organizations have a significant role both in the economy as a whole and as providers of services. According to The Independent Sector (2011), a national non-profit resource center, the nonprofit sector includes more than one million organizations that spend \$500 billion annually. This study serves as a springboard for individual non-profit organizations to take action in examining their marketing pieces and modifying them to suit the economic context in which they are being circulated. As with any piece of qualitative research, the specific findings from this study can in no way be generalized to the entire population of non-profit organizations and their fundraising appeals. However, exploring the ways in which modes of persuasion are used in fundraising campaigns that were launched in polar economic contexts allows non-profit organizations to identify how traditional persuasive strategies may adapt. If they have the

ability to adapt, non-profit organizations may continue to play a vital role in rebuilding and sustaining the U.S. economy.

Questions regarding whether or not the United Way's adaptive modes of persuasion were successful in persuading those who were exposed to them are difficult, if not impossible, to definitively answer. As statistics regarding funds generated were not examined in this study nor factored into the interpretation of the results, one cannot draw conclusions about success of the campaign. Furthermore, a qualitative conclusion regarding each campaign's success proves to be difficult due to the essence of qualitative research, which is open to further or alternative interpretation. Rhetorical criticism is fundamentally subjective and favors plurality, which leaves the method open for numerous approaches and interpretations (Brock et al., 1980). For the purpose of this study and through the classic definition of persuasion, the success of the campaigns can be measured by their ability to change one's attitude and possibly evoke a shift in behavior. Therefore, success for this particular study can only be measured by each individual audience members' interpretation or behavior.

The conclusions drawn from this study lead to a number of pragmatic implications for organizations seeking to launch fundraising campaigns. First, in order to achieve maximum persuasion, one must be emotionally aligned with his/her audience. Although there was a shift toward pathos, in all cases it is best to keep pathos and logos balanced. Decker (2008) argues that emotions initiate action, but that those actions must be justified. Furthermore, the results from this study support previous research and the emphasis it places on the importance of ethos. Organizations must establish their

reputation as one that encompasses good will and virtue while demonstrating practical knowledge relevant to their target audience. From the overlap and synchronized utility of all three appeals surfaces effective and persuasive rhetoric. As Aristotle alleges, all three persuasive appeals are necessary and no single appeal alone is sufficient (1991).

Second, the context in which an audience is exposed to fundraising campaign materials and/or performances (e.g., a flash mob) may dramatically affect *how* an audience is persuaded and through which appeals. Social media has propelled advertising and marketing into a world in which marketing materials have the potential to receive exposure accessible virtually across the globe. However, the methods by which a population is exposed to marketing materials may introduce modes of persuasion that are different from the intended modes. Therefore, organizations must be aware of the alternative interpretations that may prevail over the intended interpretation due to the nature of social media outlets and changing economic conditions.

4.6 Limitations and Future Research

An inability to access the United Way of the California Capital Region 2005 campaign video served as a significant limitation. Additionally, unlike the 2005 and 2009 videos from the United Way of the Tanana Valley, due to the economic circumstances and insufficient funding, a production company did not professionally produce the 2009 United Way of the California Capital Region flash mob campaign video. The notable contrast between the nature of the videos produced for the United Way of the Tanana Valley and that for the United Way of the California Capital Region proved to be difficult to make strong links between the two chapters' persuasive strategies.

The author's personal investment in the Fairbanks community and her local United Way also served as a limitation. Kvale and Brinkman (2009) contend that reflexive analysis includes accounting for one's role in the research process by considering the epistemology of postmodernism, holding oneself responsible for accurately telling the story of the people personally studied, how the information was gathered, and how the author's subjectivity influenced the data analysis. One must be able to understand how one's own interpretive process, including emotional, cognitive, and cultural frameworks affect the research. In addition, a qualitative researcher's interpretive frameworks must be open to change throughout the course of study. Bracketing the researcher's personal experience—recognizing where personal insight is separated from the researcher's collection of data—is important because it allows the researcher to perceive the phenomena from a fresh perspective (Marshall & Rossman, 2011). Still, while the researcher continually took measures to step outside of the research and examine potential biases that have emerged, it is never possible to fully negate researcher biases and their potential to influence research.

Not surprisingly, non-profit organizations are in a near-constant battle to stay operational, and their crusade to advance the common good becomes more vulnerable when the economy takes a turn for the worse. There is a great need for future research to study adaptive and successful persuasive strategies utilized in fundraising campaigns during economic downturn. If not, non-profit organizations will continue to struggle with their ability to generate adequate funds and offer services to those who fall victim to inaccessibility to healthcare, inadequate education, and economic hardship.

References

- Anderson, B. C. (2011, March 5). The wealth explosion. *The American Conservative*.
Retrieved from <http://www.amconmag.com>
- Arden Fair. (2010a). *Social responsibility*. Retrieved January 20, 2011, from:
<http://www.ardenfair.com/About/SocialResponsibility>
- Arden Fair. (2010b). *The center of everything*. Retrieved January 20, 2011, from:
<http://www.ardenfair.com/About>
- Aristotle (1991). *On rhetoric: A theory of civic discourse* (G. A. Kennedy, Trans.). New York: Oxford.
- Berbrier, M. (1997). From logos to pathos in social psychology and academic argumentation: Reconciling postmodernism and positivism in a sociology of persuasion. *Argumentation*, 11, 35-50.
- Berger, A. A. (1995). *Cultural criticism: A primer of key concepts*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Bitzer, L. F. (1968). The rhetorical situation. *Philosophy and Rhetoric*, 1, 1-14.
- Blumer, H. (1969). *Symbolic interactionism, perspective and method*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.
- Brock, B. L., Scott, R. L., & Chesebro, J. W. (1980). *Methods of rhetorical criticism* (3rd ed.). Detroit, MI: Wayne State University Press.
- Brockner, J., Guzzi, B., Kane, J., Levine, E., & Shaplen, K. (1984). Organizational fundraising: Further evidence on the effect of legitimizing small donations. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 11, 611-614.

- Budd, M. (1992). *Music and the emotions: The philosophical theories*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Burke, K. (1969). *The rhetoric of motives*. Berkley, CA: University of California Press.
- Burghardt, C. R. (2005). *Readings in rhetorical criticism* (3rd ed.). State College, PA: Strata.
- Campbell, J. M. (2006). Changing children's attitudes toward autism: A process of persuasive communication. *Journal of Developmental & Physical Disabilities, 18*(3), 251-272.
- Crano, W. D. & Prislin, R. (2006). Attitudes and persuasion. *Annual Review Psychology, 57*, 345-374.
- Crotty, M. (1998). *The foundations of social research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Decker, B. (2008). *You've got to be believed to be heard*. New York, NY: St. Martin's Press.
- Dessoff, A. (2009). Tough time for new nonprofits - or old. *Nonprofit Guide 2009*, 1-72.
- Dillon, N. (2009). What is your plan? *American School Board Journal, 129*, 20-24.
- Dyke, E. J. (1990). *The function of photographs in fundraising appeals* (Master's thesis). Retrieved from <http://spectrum.library.concordia.ca/12/1/MM59159.pdf>
- Fairbanks Convention & Visitors Bureau. (2010). *Activities, attractions & tours*. Retrieved from <http://www.explorefairbanks.com/listings/category/2/activities-attractions-and-tours>

- Freitag, C. N. (2009) Charitable contributions decline as economic crisis continues. *Associated Content*, Retrieved October 22, 2010 from http://www.associatedcontent.com/article/1353398/charitable_contributions_decline_as.html
- Gallo, C. (2009, March). Why persuasive speaking matters. *BusinessWeek Online*, 16-16.
- Gronbjerg, K. A. (1991). How nonprofit human services organizations manage their funding sources: Key findings and policy implications. *Nonprofit Management and Leadership*, 2, 159-175.
- Habermas, J. (1984). *The theory of communication action (vol. 1): Reason and the rationalization of society*. Boston, MA: Beacon Press.
- Henning, M. L. (1998). *Friendly persuasion: Classical Rhetoric—Now!* Manuscript submitted for publication (copy on file with author).
- Hewson, P., Evans, D., Clayton, A., & Mullen, L. (2000). Beautiful day [P. Hewson]. On *All that you can't leave behind* [CD]. Santa Monica: Interscope Records
- Holmes, J. (2000). *Gendered speech in social context: perspectives from gown and town*. Wellington, NZ: Victoria University Press.
- Hyde, M. (2010, September 23). Bono: The celebrity who just keeps giving. *Guardian*. Retrieved from <http://www.guardian.co.uk/lifeandstyle/lostinshowbiz/2010/sep/23/bono-one-millennium-development-goals>
- Hyde, M. J. (2004). *The ethos of rhetoric*. Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press.

- Independent Sector (2011). *Independent sector: A vital voice for us all*. Retrieved March 3, 2011 from <http://www.independentsector.org/>
- Katula, R. A. (2003) Quintilian on the art of emotional appeal. *Rhetorical Review*, 22, 5-16.
- Keeton, W. (2003). The role of community banks in the U.S. economy. *Economic Review*, 2, 15-43.
- Killingsworth, M. J. (2005). Rhetorical appeals: A revision. *Rhetoric Review*, 24, 249-263.
- Krippendorff, K. (2004). *Content analysis: An introduction to its methodology* (2 ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Kvale, S., & Brinkman, S. (2009). *Interviews* (2nd ed.). Los Angeles, CA: Sage.
- King, C. L. (2010). Beyond persuasion: The rhetoric of negotiation in business communication. *Journal of Business Communication*, 47, 69-78.
- Kuypers, J. A. (2005). *The art of rhetorical criticism*. Boston, MA: Pearson.
- Littlejohn, S. W. & Foss, K. A. (2008). *Theories of human communication*, 9th ed. Belmont, CA: Thomson.
- Lindahl, W. E. & Conley, A. T. (2003). Literature review: Philanthropic fundraising. *Nonprofit Management and Leadership*, 13, 91-112.
- Louden, R. B. (2002). *Kant's impure ethics: From rational beings to human beings*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.
- Marshall, C. & Rossman, G. B. (2011). *Designing qualitative research* (5th ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

- Maslow, A. (1943). A theory of human motivation. *Psychological Review*, 50, 370-396.
- McCloskey, D. N. (1998). *The rhetoric of economics*. Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press.
- Monk, L. (1989). *Photographs that changed the world*. Toronto: Doubleday.
- Mt. McKinley Bank (2009). Welcome to mt. mckinley bank. Retrieved March 3, 2011, from: http://www.landmark.edu/Library/citation_guides/apa.cfm#Web_Pages
- Myers, M. (2007). The Use of Pathos in Charity Letters: Some Notes Toward a Theory and Analysis. *Journal of Technical Writing and Communication*, 37, 3-16.
- Neumuth, S. (Producer). (2009). *United way: Campaign video 2009* [DVD]. USA: Neumuth Advertising.
- Okrent, M. (2007). *Rational animals: The teleological roots of intentionality*. Athens, OH: Ohio University Press.
- Pollock, J. L. (2004). *Rational decision-making in resource-bounded agents*. Unpublished manuscript, Department of Philosophy, University of Arizona, Tucson, AZ.
- Puddifoot, J. E. (1996). The persuasive effects of a real and complex communication. *Journal of Social Psychology*, 136, 447-459.
- Putnam, R. (2002, February 11). Bowling together: The United States of America. *The American Prospect*, 13, 20-22.
- Putnam, R. (2003). *Better together*. New York, NY: Simon & Schuster.

- Ray, M. L. & Batra, R. (1982). *Emotion and persuasion in advertising: What we do and won't know about affect*. Unpublished manuscript, Graduate School of Business, Stanford University, Stanford, CA.
- Reasons*. (2005). [DVD]. USA: Moving Images
- Schleiermacher, F. (1997). *Hermeneutics: The handwritten manuscripts*. Missoula, MT: Scholars Press.
- Schreiber, G.B., Schlumpf, K. S., Glynn, S. A., Wright, D. J., Tu, Y., King, M. R., Higgins, M. J., Kessler, D. Gilcher, R., Nass, C. C., & Gultinan, A. M. (2006). Convenience, the bane of our existence, and other barriers to donating. *Transfusion*, 46, 545-553.
- Sloane, T. O. (2001). *Encyclopedia of rhetoric*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.
- Stafford, M. R., Tripp, C., & Bienstock, C. C. (2004). The influence of advertising logo characteristics on audience perceptions of a nonprofit theatrical organization. *Journal of Current Issues and Research in Advertising*, 26, 37-45.
- Tellis, G. J. & Tellis, K. (2009). *A critical review and synthesis of research on advertising in a recession*. Unpublished manuscript, Marshall School of Business, University of Southern California, Los Angeles: CA.
- Thompson, C. J., Pollio, H. R., & Locander, W. B. (1994). The spoken and the unspoken: A hermeneutical approach to understanding cultural viewpoints that underlie consumers' expressed meaning. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 21, 432-452.

- U.S. Government Accountability Office (2007). *Nonprofit sector: Increasing numbers and key role in delivering federal services* (OIG publication No. GAO-07-1084T). Washington, DC: Czerwinski, S. J. Retrieved from <http://www.gao.gov/new.items/d071084t.pdf>
- United Way (2010a). *History*. Retrieved October 24, 2010 from: <http://liveunited.org/pages/history/>
- United Way (2010b). *About united way worldwide*. Retrieved October 24, 2010 from: <http://liveunited.org/pages/about-united-way-worldwide/>
- United Way California Capital Region (2011). *A bold new approach to live united*. Retrieved from <http://www.yourlocalunitedway.org/live-united>
- UnitedWayCCR (2011, June 23). United Way California Capital Region Flash Mob 2009 [Video file]. Retrieved from <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pllKGGyK48w>
- United Way Tanana Valley (2011). *Organization*. Retrieved from <http://www.unitedwaytv.com/>.
- University of Alaska Fairbanks. (2010, September 21). *UAF alumni association*. Retrieved from <http://www.uaf.edu/alumni/awards/achievement/2009/>.
- Vatz, R. E. (1973) The myth of the rhetorical situation. *Philosophy and Rhetoric*, 6, 154-161.
- Waters, R. D. (2008). Examining the role of cognitive dissonance in crisis fundraising. *Public Relations Review*, 35, 139-143.
- Waters, R. D. (2009). Measuring stewardship in public relations: A test exploring impact on the fundraising relationship. *Public Relations Review*, 35, 113-119.

Appendix

Copies of the data for this study may be obtained by contacting the researcher through the following means:

Phone: (907) 388-7079

Email: asmiller@alaska.edu

Mail:

Alexis Miller

P.O. Box 81149

Fairbanks, Alaska 99708